



Franz Fanon And Edward Said: A Postcolonial Aanalysis Of E.M. Foster's A Passage To India.

Prof. Gazala Gaiys

Principal GDC Higher Education of Jammu and Kashmir

Abstract

E. Forster attempts to enrich the anti-hostile communication between British colonizers and colonized Indians in his novel *A Passage to India*. The novel shows how cultural conflicts between British and Indians occurred repeatedly in India during the colonial period. The English in this novel see themselves as superior and treat the Indians with complete injustice. Finally, a British colonial presence in India was considered a very real possibility and gave rise to an ongoing cultural conflict. Forster illustrates the cultural clash between the British colonizers and the Indian colonized. The belief of British superiority over Indian culture creates a barrier to establishing personal relationships based on equality. This superiority complex and nationalist sentiment lead to cultural conflicts in India, emphasizing the damaging effects of colonialism on both colonizers and the colonized. This superiority has created a kind of otherness among Britishers for Indians. The West, according to Said, constructs the Orient as its "Other," an image that is fundamentally different and inferior, in order to bolster its own sense of self and justify its power.

Franz Fanon argues that colonialism creates a sense of inferiority and alienation in the colonized, leading to internalized racism and a desire to emulate the colonizer. In *A Passage to India*, characters like Dr. Aziz experience this, particularly after the Marabar Caves incident where he is falsely accused of assaulting Adela. The British community's immediate assumption of his guilt, based on racial prejudice, highlights the psychological toll of colonial power dynamics.

The paper examines the novel *A Passage to India* through the prism of postcolonial theory especially two great postcolonial theorists Franz Fanon and Edward Said.

Key Words: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, Orientalism, Psychology, Other. Orient etc.

Introduction:

Postcolonial theory is a literary theory or critical approach that deals with literature produced in countries that were once, or are now, colonies of other countries. It may also

deal with literature written in or by citizens of colonizing countries that takes colonies or

their peoples as its subject matter. The theory is based around concepts of otherness and

resistance. Postcolonial theory became part of the critical toolbox in the 1970s, and many

practitioners credit Edward Said's book *Orientalism* as being the founding work.

Typically, the proponents of the theory examine the ways in which writers from colonized countries attempt to articulate and even celebrate their cultural identities and reclaim them from the colonizers. They also examine ways in which the literature of the colonial powers is used to justify colonialism through the perpetuation of images of the colonized as inferior.

One of the most prominent themes of Postcolonialism has been the relation between imperialism and identity. Fanon, a psychoanalyst and philosopher born in Martinique, presented one of the most searing and provocative analyses of the relation between colonized and colonizer in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) as well as in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon remains perhaps best known for his explosive justification of violence in *The Wretched of the Earth*, where it is cast as the appropriate response to the violence perpetrated by colonialism and as the mediation through which the colonized can begin to reclaim their self-conscious agency. His is a deeply unsettling argument, shaped undoubtedly by the brutal period of French colonial rule in Algeria and the war for independence (1954–62) there, which Fanon experienced firsthand. Violence was inevitable and necessary, Fanon seemed to be arguing in *The Wretched of the Earth*, but it also has to be overcome. One has to move from reaction to the construction of something new, which for Fanon included overcoming the binary oppositions imposed on the colonized by the geopolitical structures of the Cold War. It is there that the foreshadowing of some important themes that became central to postcolonialism is found. For example, Fanon combined a material and psychological analysis of the consequences of colonialism, which looked to both the micro- and macro effects and experience of colonial government.

Among those consequences and their effects, as identified and investigated by Fanon and other theorists, are: both the colonized and the colonizer are implicated in the horrors of imperialism, and both will have to be decolonized; the colonized have to find a way of overcoming the imposition of alien rule not only over their territory but also over their minds and bodies; seeking recognition from an oppressor in terms that the oppressor has set hardly provides a genuine liberation from the grip of colonialism (an effect that anticipates an important debate in contemporary political theory over the "politics of recognition"); the colonizers have to make sense of how the brutality of colonialism relates to their own apparent humanism. In *Black Skin White Masks* (1967), Fanon uncovers the black man's worries in the breakout of postcolonial period. His treatment of racism psychoanalytically is an ironic perusing of the black man's breakdown. His contention provocatively advises that black men attempt to look like or to appear whites; yet in the guarantees of white men, black men will not be endorsed. This negative perspective from Fanon derives from the bases of a time when a group judged blacks by their color:

Every colonized person in other words, every person in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation. That is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (12)

Fanon explains how human psychology is closely connected to sociopolitical forces. In the coinage of psychology and politics, he exhibits the effects of colonial violence on the mind and behavior of the colonized and holds this psyche responsible for the worse relationships.

Discussion:

A Passage to India begins and ends by posing the question of whether it is possible for an Englishman and an Indian to ever be friends, at least within the context of British colonialism. Forster uses this question as a framework to explore the general issue of Britain's political control of India on a more personal level, through the friendship between Aziz and Fielding. At the beginning of the novel, Aziz is scornful of the English, wishing only to consider them comically or ignore them completely. Yet the intuitive connection Aziz feels with Mrs. Moore in the mosque opens him to the possibility of friendship with Fielding. Through the first half of the novel, Fielding and Aziz represent a positive model of liberal humanism: Forster suggests that British rule in India could be successful and respectful if only English and Indians treated each other as Fielding and Aziz treat each other—as worthy individuals who connect through frankness, intelligence, and good will. Apparently, the novelist is interested in bridging the gap between East and West, but deep inside there is an ocean of difference between two regions and cultures. Edward Said emphasizes that the way the East is portrayed in Western discourse is not just an innocent reflection of reality but a tool of power that has real implications for politics and international relations. It conveys the idea of “European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” (7). Therefore, Orientalism is “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (3). A Passage to India is loaded with British ideology of superiority and it presents its colony India as lesser and inferior. In fact, British hegemonic discourse over the colonized India is fully manifested in this novel.

India was one of the most valuable and populous of all colonies of Britain; it was recognized by British as the “jewel of the crown”. The British came to India with the strong motive or with high hopes to use Indian resources for their own profit. E.M Forster's A Passage to India explores the relationship between English Empire and Indians. The novel can be read from the perspective of a colonial writer who from the very beginning reveals Indians as inferior. He writes:

By the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely... the streets are mean, the temples are ineffective, and through a few fine exists they are hidden away in gardens whose filth deters all [...] Chandrapore was never large or beautiful.(9)

In British's collective imagination, India is depicted as a barbarous and evil land, the very antithesis of the west. In the opening chapter in A Passage to India, the Indian residence contrasts sharply with the British administrative district. In Forster's description, the Indian city, Chandrapore, is confusing and “nothing extraordinary”. It is dirty and “undistinguishable from the rubbish” (3). Along the river Ganges are the dusty bazaars and dark alleyways which only unveil the trace of backwardness and poverty of India. Even the wood seems “made of mud” and “the inhabitants of mud moving” (3). It seems that everything in India that meets the eye is “so abased [and] so monotonous” (3). While the Anglo-Indian's residence, which is above the Chandrapore, the prospect alters: “On the second rise is laid out the little civil station and viewed hence Chandrapore appears to be a totally different place. It is a city of gardens” (3). It is ironical that the English civil station “shares nothing except the overarching sky” with the inland where the natives live (4). Besides, Forster presents the aesthetics of Eastern and Western architectural structures as indicative of the differences of the respective cultures. Architecture in India is confused

and formless: Earth and building blend with each other, the structures are drab and coarse. In a way, the middle of India is mirrored as nonchalant about logic and form. Western architecture, however, is described as representative of a general, honor form and proportion through Fielding's eyes when he is in Venice. And Fielding reads in this structure the self-evident correctness of Western reason, a merit that is what the East lacks. The comparison between the Western and Eastern landscape gives a presence of power domination of the Occident against the Orient. It also shows the superiority of the Westerners as a race over the Orientals. As Said explains, Orientalism is believed to be more of a sign of European Atlantic power over the Orient.

According to Fanon Frantz, the colonial world consists of two parts: dividing lines and barriers; both represent military force over the land of other nations to control and subjugate its people with the rule of oppression. Forster in his novel shows that Indian people are not only oppressed but also, they are deprived of their freedom due to their inability to establish good relationship with the colonizers. First and foremost, to show that the forces are different between the white race and the others and implicitly justify the colonial system the West imposes over the East. Forster begins his novel with a view of the sky gradually transforming from blue to white. Then he says, "The sky can do this because it is so strong and so enormous"(3), a significant reference to the British Empire's practice of dehumanizing indigenous just because they have different cultures, identity, and religious beliefs. Through the lens of imperialism, this indicates that Indian people are considered as a barbaric people and there is a heroic duty to rule and civilize. In part one, in *A Passage to India* the main character, Aziz introduces to the readers as a cheerful, intelligent individual who frequently arrives late who representing the colonized subjugated race.

But after receiving a message from his boss, in the governmental hospital he works for Aziz says, "I have hustled as a subordinate should" (5). In this quotation, Forster depicts Aziz as a character convinced of his inferior status within the colonial system and serves colonizers who believe in their superiority over others. Furthermore the "other," who symbolizes the colonized, has no authority and cannot react to the persecution they may receive from their colonizers as a result, of their "inferiority and backwardness" from the white man's perspective. In their study, Daier and Tinawi, found similar results that Forster in his literary work reinforces the colonialist ideology of superiority; its narrative enhances the stereotype and the differences between the east and the west created by the west regarding India and Indian people.

Consequently, Aziz's boss grants himself the right to dehumanize him and demands that he does what he deems appropriate, ignoring the fact that he is human, and has the right to have a private life. Aziz has dignity; thus, he hesitates to get off his tango and approach Callender's bungalow lest he experiences harassment, as is typical in colonizer attitudes towards colonized. Even though he arrives at a time after "riding furiously" (21), finding Mr. Callender left the compound without leaving any message but cursing him. Subsequently, he decides to compose a message for him, which he tears up as an implicit rejection of the oppressive colonizer's humiliation. Forster portrays how Indian and the colonized people are humiliated and disrespected by the colonizer. Which corresponds with Said (1994), who indicates that the East, particularly Indian people are portrayed as alien, irrational, and erotic in western culture, whereas the west is depicted as rational, friendly, and familiar. Deep in his mind, Aziz disguises the colonizer as Forster demonstrates that he wants to "shake the dust of Anglo-Indian off his

feet" (5).. Even though he received his education under British auspices, he never accepts the British presence in Indian Territory. After visiting the Callender's bungalow, Aziz notices the clean roads named after their generals. "The roads, named after victorious generals" (5). Thus, he feels like an alien in India. In the following quotation, Forster shows how Aziz feels excluded in his country due to the colonizers' existence who attempt to dehumanize the ingenious people. Such negative impact of the colonizers is addressed in Said's book *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), in which he has highlighted the negative impact of colonialism on people who belong to different nations, particularly those who are under the impact of empire. In a similar vein, Fanon claims in his book *Wretched of the Earth* that the strong shoes protect his feet, although the streets are clean with no stones to injure him. (39). In chapter II, we can notice how the two men argue whether if it is possible to be friends with colonizer or not. Besides how the land and the colonial system can change a man from a mediocre to one who has privileges and authority over other races, even if he has innocent intentions. The argument they have, is as follows:

"I only contend that it is possible in England," "It is impossible here. Aziz! The red-nosed boy has again insulted me in Court. I do not blame him. He was told that he ought to insult me. Until lately he was quite a nice boy, but the others have got hold of him." "Yes, they have no chance here, that is my point. They come out intending to be gentlemen and are told it will not do. Look at Lesley, look at Blakiston, now it is your red-nosed boy and Fielding will go next. (7)

In the above quotation, Forster depicts how the English seem good when they are new in the country or if they are in their homeland, away from any political aspect, and no matter what social rank they belong to. Then he mentions how the colonial system corrupts them when they are out of their land and become followers of the colonial system where the friendship between colonizer and colonized is incompatible and is affected with the position they occupied. Ronny Heaslop is Mrs Moore's son from her first marriage. He is the City magistrate at hypothetical city Chandrapore. Ronny with a colonial mindset finds the natives sick and backward and shows it from time to time. He claims that India is like a baby who needs someone to look after it and we the Britain are nurturing India like a son. He exclaims that India has no capacity for self-government which often leads to infertility and immaturity. The English officers in the novel think themselves as civilized and superior, they never cared about natives; they didn't try to enter in the heart of their subjects. There have been always conflicts between East and West as both have different cultures and both misunderstood each other. People of both the communities didn't have faith in each other. The manner and attitude of the English towards the native Indians reveal their imbalanced relationship and the binary opposites. Ronny's description of the Indians is what Said believes as a repetition of Orientalist construction of stereotype. At the time the Bridge Party is arranged, the young representative of the Raj, Ronny, "is full of suspicion for the Indian guest" (41). He judges the Indians as "seditious at heart" and believes that the Indians are always concealing a secret . For Ronny, he is not "out here for the purpose of behaving pleasantly", but "to do justice and keep the peace" (22). The English couple Mr. Turton and Mrs. Turton stands for another typical Occidental dominance over the Orient. Mr. Turton's impression towards the Indians is tintured with prejudice. He states that "when they had not cheated, in was bhanga, women, or worse, and the desirables wanted to get something out of him" (. 20). The same insolence is shown in Mrs. Turton when she reminds Mrs. Moore: "You're superior to them, anyway. Don't forget that. You're superior to everyone in India except one or two of the Ranis and they're on equality" (19). Mrs. Turton hardly treats the Indians as individuals with their own personalities and identities. She treats them as if they were commodities (41). In effect, the attitude towards India and Indians held by British collectives is clearly expressed by A. J. Balfour when he gives a lecture in the House of Commons. Balfour claims, "broadly speaking, the east, and you never find traces of self-government" (33). Thus, there is undoubtedly a necessity that "this absolute government should be exercised by us". And it is undoubtedly "a good thing to them" (33). The westernization of Indians is shown not only through their mastery of the language, but through their garments. At the infamous Bridge Party, when Mrs. Moore asks for an introduction to know who the visiting Indian women guests are, she is met with Mrs. Turton's friendly warning that they are superior to the Indians. Able to speak a little Urdu, the language of the natives but only in the "imperative mood", Mrs. Turton finds, nevertheless, "the haughtiness of her hierarchical security" is greatly unsettled by the Indian women's mastery of English (128). She is, indeed, shocked: "Why, fancy, she understands!" (19). Still, she discovers that "some of the group was westernized and might apply her own standards to her" as the way they all dress

themselves in the “lighted” European costume (19). In the collective thought of the British, the-subaltern is backward and clumsy. But Mrs.Turton as a representative finds her position being challenged by the subaltern Indians who can speak the same language and dress the same costume. The Indians’ mastery of English is greatly in line with Said’s claim of “the subaltern can speak” because they have their own voice, culture, and identities. In a sense, this is what Said means “the resistance” of power. There are many evidences of misunderstanding between colonizers and colonized in novel *A Passage to India*. Miss Adela Quested came from England with desires to explore Ancient India, as she said “I want to see real India”(22).She was a good human being, she sympathized with Indians as well but she possessed a misconception about native Indians particularly about Muslims that they had loose character and all were selfish with cunning minds. She was of the view that they possessed many wives. She was curious to see ancient India for this; she along with Mrs. Moore and Aziz went to Marabar Cave. There she asked Dr. Aziz, how many wives he has? Aziz replied one, in my own case. He understood that English people will consider Natives cruel. He perceives that they have delusion about Indian people, they think Indians are neither good human being nor trustworthy. The incidence of Marabar caves proves the insensitivity of Britishers towards Indians. The cave was quiet and dead, it represented an ancient, inhuman void, the more terrifying aspect of the universal oneness embraced by Hinduism.

When Adela was roaming there in the cave, she feels something unusual about it as it seems almost alien and malicious and quite unfriendly to humans and that make her unconscious and she accused Aziz of molesting her. She blamed him for the attempt of sexual assault. That charge was a turning point in life of Aziz as well as his behavior towards Britishers. This makes him believe that English were insensitive towards natives. In the contention of hovering on one being or seen as the “other. Fanon (1967) argues that “a black man thinks himself to become whiter by utilizing the dialect of the white man, by taking upon himself the world of the other” (17). Therefore, during to the struggle against colonization, blacks under the psychological weight of their mediocrity attempt to demonstrate recognizable proof that they are equal to whites, and "need to demonstrate to white men no matter what, the wealth of their idea, the equivalent estimation of their insight” (18).

Conclusion:

A Passage to India is loaded with British ideology of superiority and it presents its colony India as lesser and inferior. In fact, British hegemonic discourse over the colonized India is fully manifested in this novel. Through portraying the westernized Indians, the collapse of the English fundamental truths, and the failure of the charge case, he has, indeed, deconstructed the binary oppositional pattern of Orientalism. The study concludes that Forster in his novel represents the colonized as inferior and the colonizers as superior. Besides, he shows that communication between the colonizer and the colonized is challenging to be achieved according to the misunderstanding between the East and West in his novel. Edward Said, states that “the connection between the subordinate and the colonizers who claim that they want to civilize them” is all about power and domination of various degrees of a complex hegemony”(13). This study seeks to prove that the friendship between the colonizer and the colonized is impossible. However, the colonialists and any form of slavery will always be met with resistance by the oppressed. *A Passage to India*, shows us how the westerners view the oriental as inferiors, subordinates, and even sub-humans and do not have a right to manage their own lives. the novel shows us how the colonizers look at themselves and the colonized. They see themselves as superior and the light for India, and without them, Indians would never be able to handle their affairs properly as they are sub-human and backward.

Furthermore, the novel highlights the absurdity of how colonizers justify their presence in India. According to Fanon, the colonial world consists of two parts: dividing lines and barriers; both represent military force over the land of other nations to control and subjugate its people with the rule of oppression. Forster's depiction of the caves can be seen as the colonialists’ attempts to present them themselves as a source of enlightenment for India.

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