CHAPTER - 5

Last Experiments:

i) A Passage To India

ii) Maurice

Forster's next novel, A Passage to India, encompasses the European boundaries where he has tried to expose failures of human efforts in achieving a vision envisaging the brotherhood of man. In A Passage to India, Forster moves away from his European contexts toward Eastern and aims at human failures in terms of relationships between the British in India and Indian. The scene changes, then, to India where human attempts to establish the brotherhood of man on a larger canvas also fails and the East and the West remain apparently two separate entities in the novel, however, symbolically, the union can be interpreted as possible.

Forster's A Passage to India, in humanly and technically, a large, full and mysterious novel, as it contains some of the author's richest and extended social observation. Forster creates its meaning by creating a world in which all faith can be challenged to a large extent. And so, willingly, in the book, forster tries to present and create a world in which men believe so many things.1 From this experiment we know that Forster's A Passage to India, is a novel in which the human world and humanism itself can be placed against larger strength or intense efforts. It is the greatness of Forster that in this novel, we find, the world of Turtons and Burtons in conflict as the basis of his work since the spiritual East clashes with the material West.
Although, the apparatus hardly fits the book, which in fact scanty as it in, takes place, not in the battlefield of any individual soul, but on the plane of international issues, and the conflict is external to the author's mind. It appears that Forster, perhaps, remembers acutely Tolstoy's War and Peace while he is working on his novel. He admits that after reading the War and Peace, 'the great clouds' and then 'sound' begin powerfully to rattle on one's memory.\(^2\) Despite the fact that A Passage to India is no more a War and Peace: its range is narrower, its world less populous; yet from it too one may say that great chords reverberate. Its suggestive power is immense. It is unquestionably one of the great English novels, and the one novel of Forster's that fully justifies his reputation as a major twentieth century novelist.\(^3\)

Indeed, Forster could bring out the finer points of the texture of implications and suggestions. He was primarily concerned with the personal relationships, not as a means of social order, but as ends in themselves. This was the heart of his message. One example in this regard is that, "social organisation is one expression of man's instinct for order; love and friendship, or what Forster calls personal relationships."\(^4\)

To some extent, Forster's A Passage to India, is written at the extreme sharpness of his creative impulse. If the book can be said to have a hero, Cyril Fielding must be the hero, a character who evidently embodies upon life. In Fielding, we find a union of qualities seen as separate in Howards End. Fielding is humane, cultured, enlightened, progressive, but he is also capable, reliable, and self-assured: he has a sense of the importance of
"personal relationships" but he also has "grit" and his hands are definitely "on the rope". Ideally, then, he should be an harmonious figure. Yet it seems that there is some dissatisfaction on his author's part with the finality of the value which he embodies.  

Forster's liberal culture consisting of humanity, disinterestedness, tolerance and free intelligence—all is divorced from the grips of dogma, religion or rigid traditional conventions. As such, Fielding, perhaps, embodies every thing for which Margaret married Wilcox. Wilcox is balanced, practical and quite adept in tackling intelligently every thing in the world. He speaks in the agnostic's terminology in the novel. He says that the educated and thoughtful people in England are invariably atheists now and concludes that the west does not bother about belief or disbelief now as it used to do fifty years earlier. *(Howard End)*

Although Fielding does not wholly subscribe to Wilcox's contentions, but this is there in *A Passage to India* as is the case with Forster's other novels. However the agnostic temperament in *A Passage to India*, though pervades through the fictional universe, lacks a commanding, grasp. The portrayal of characters in Forster's novels has been done so intelligently that their forms are shapely delineated. Perhaps, Forster's creative faculty, then had been successfully operating in the novel as his characters are created as living organisms sensitive to the impact of every experience quite naturally. Human spectacle in relation to human beings is closely and intimately observed. Moreover, Forster is quite consistent with his own view that characters in a novel are never the same as they are expected to be in
real life because the limits prescribed by art divides them from us. They are real in a sense that they are not like us but because they are convincing. In the light of the above view, Mrs. Moore’s vision in the cave reveals two things. Firstly, through it is the result of muddle-dom and exhaustion, nevertheless, it is quite consonant with the novel’s recurrent meaning that human values are without transcendent sanction. Secondly, Moore’s vision is analogous to the ultimate insight of the Hindu mystic the merging of the Brahman & ‘Atman’. In other words of ‘Self’ and ‘Nonself’—wherein the value is annihilated. However, this arguments has been contested and Mrs. Moore’s vision, as such, has been interpreted as an “anti-vision”, a kind of parodic inversion of the Hindu mystics perception.

Instead of merging her own soul with the world soul, she reduces the world-soul to the scale of her own wearied ego. Her desire to attain oneness with the world soul has been echoed, not answered. The theme of separateness in A Passage to India has been vastly expanded and every where dominant and every relationship has been fenced by separation of race from race, sex from sex, culture from culture, even to the extent of man from man. Infect, between the separation of the English and the Indians, there exists a deep chasm. Aziz and his friends are brilliantly delineated in the novel and the cultural differences keeps them apart from the Englishmen.

The problem, then before Forster in A Passage to India is to explore three interrelated aspects, the religious, the social - political and the personal. Herein, all order that man envisions or achieves is at best partial
and temporary. The advocacy of three major religions—Christianity, Islam and Hinduism in the novel assumes metaphysical order underlying and informing the phenomenal world. Each one of the three religions shows "the unseen" with the value and purports to approach or to express man's relationship in the novel.  

Structurally Forster's *A Passage to India* consists of three sections with three major symbolic metaphors 'Mosque', 'Caves' and 'Temple' having 'arch', 'echo', and 'sky' as the recurrent metaphors each. These are places of worship or primal abodes with both positive and negative meanings. The positive meaning of the Mosque is that it stands for brotherhood of Islam and in the context of Forster's novel, it opens possibilities of relationship and friendship between Aziz and Fielding, Aziz and Mrs. Moore where as the negative aspect of the Mosque is meant to frustrate all that for which the Bridge Party in the novel is arranged. The bridge between the English and the Indians results in utter failure in the novel. The symbol associated with the Marabar caves in the novel is a complex one. The Marabar caves may imply a physical and spiritual wasteland. The structure of the Mosque may also suggest a prelude to the main issues and as such the Caves stand for a physical and spiritual wasteland, and temple as an escape from it, supported by a promise of spiritual fulfilment. Again these three sections of *A Passage to India* are believed concurrently to symbolise the three stages of mankind's spiritual history and development. The first stage represented by a superficial optimism, the second by disillusionment and despair, and the third by a qualified spiritual achievement. These three stages in *A
Passage to India are represented by and embodied in Aziz, Mrs. Moore and Godbole.

Even though, A Passage to India skilfully unfolds these symbolic metaphors, its structure suggests another kind of cycle—the cycle of Indian seasons in a year. Forster writes, in the 'Author's Notes', that these three sections 'represent the three seasons of the Indian year winter, summer and the rains'. This seasonal setting of the three sections is highly suggestive of the mood of the characters and the spirit of the situations in the narrative and dramatic structure. Yet another significant aspect of the symbolic structure of A Passage to India has been suggested in the context of the idea and experience of a spiritual waste land and rather a limited spiritual fulfilment. 'Mosque'in this context serves merely as a Prelude to these two overpowering experiences.\(^\text{14}\)

Indeed, A Passage to India is Forster's best known and most widely read novel. Public and political reasons no doubt account for this; in England the book was a matter for controversy and its success in America, as Forster himself explains it, was due to the superiority Americans could feel at the English botch of India. But the public, political nature of the book is not extraneous; it inheres in the novel's very shape and texture.\(^\text{15}\) This leads us to subscribe to the view that "this public, political quality works for good". A Passage to India is the most comfortable and even the most conventional of Forster's novels. It is under the control not only of the author's insight; a huge, hulking physical fact which he is not alone in seeing, requiring that the author submit to its veto-power. Consequently, this is the least surprising of Forster's novels, the least capricious and, indeed, the least
personal. It quickly establishes the pattern for our emotions and keeps to it. We are at once taught to withhold our sympathies from the English officials, to give them to Mrs. Moore and to the 'renegade' Fielding, to regard Adela Quested with remote interest and Aziz and his Indian friends with affectionate understanding.\(^{16}\)

Forster states his theme early in the book in a simple way: can an Indian be friends with an Englishman? But his treatment of this theme summons up the whole of Forster's increasingly sombre vision of human nature and destiny. His essential concern, is neither political nor social, but religious. But Forster cannot imagine religious experience from within. Three great religions are passed under review in *A Passage to India* and none seems to Forster to have the answer to our needs. Christianity is parochial, Islam ethnocentric, Hinduism incomprehensible. Yet strangely enough it is Hinduism, which to the rational humanist seems the most quaint or senseless, that Forster finds the most preformed. The naive reader, attracted by the only sensational incident in this novel, wants to know what happened to Miss Quested in the cave. Was she assaulted by an Indian? If so, which Indian? Or was she hysterical? Did she imagine it? Forster leaves the matter unclear. He imagines a point of view, projected through the traumatic experience of the elderly Mrs. Moore, from which such questions do not make sense or do not matter. The human voice which asks them comes back in a meaningless boom from the Marabar Caves.\(^{17}\)

*A Passage to India* is said to be perhaps one of the most inclusive and ranging novels ever written. It is not a domestic novel dealing with family
life and peace. It is not even political or spiritual either. It is adventurous. \(^{18}\) And it represents, indeed, a marked change from anything Forster had ever done before; and shows him confronting a new kind of experience in a new way. In the profoundest sense, *A Passage to India* at a deeper level depicts and shows well about Forster's subtle awareness of his Indian universe, a world through which his self has tried to understand; interpret, so too, aesthetically project his vision of a mysterious, muddled and baffling civilization in its relationship to the West. At times, the physical landscape or of the natural world in the novel in sometimes beneficent and other times hostile to human craving. In fact, *A Passage to India* is a novel of wider dimensions and deeper realism compared with his earlier novels; it reveals Forster's cosmic vision, a complete engagement of his imaginative self with the Indian world. While, its finest achievement is abased on its ecstatic unity which emerges from its threefold division, so to say, its deep humanism, its striking realism, its baffling muddles and subtle mysteries. Here, in the novel Forster maintains the uniform ecstatic form and the greatest beauty of created world.

We can say that: "the theme of separateness, of fences and barriers, the old theme of the Pauline epistles,"\(^{19}\) so common in Forster's earlier novel find tremendously expanded and universally dominant in *A Passage to India*. The separation of race from race, sex from sex, culture from culture, even of man from himself, in what underlies every relationship. The separation of the English from the Indians is merely the most dramatic of the chasms in this novel. This sense of separateness broods over the book,
pervasive symbolic at the end of the very earth requires, and the sky approves, the parting of Aziz and Fielding and perhaps accounts for the remoteness of the characters: they are so far from earth other that they cannot reach us. But the isolation is not rarely adumbrated; in certain of its aspects it is very precisely analysed and some of the most brilliant and virtuose parts of the novel are devoted to the delineation of Aziz and his friends, to the investigation of the cultural differences that keep Indian and Englishman apart.\textsuperscript{20}

Certainly, \textit{A Passage to India} has several themes which contribute to its structure. And indeed, belief in the efficacy of 'personal relations' is an important element of Forster's credo, and also this attitude and settled mode of thinking is closely linked up with the theme of the novel. In fact, the value of friendship, or exploration of the possibilities of friendship is central to the novel.\textsuperscript{21} Forster's concern in his \textit{A Passage to India} has been guided by the down to earth problem more than anything else. It is not about the problem of India, not even about the exploration of personal relationship in world so diverse and different.\textsuperscript{22} Forster has a wider canvas in the novel where social, political, religious and moral issues find deeper entry and very substantially dealt with. Perhaps Forster was not trying to define and redefine the problems of abstract relationships in the novel but since these relationships are surfaced in the novel in the form of complex and subtle web, they can remain wholly untouched upon. Since everything in the novel is so intricately connected with everything else under the operation of this complex web that one is naturally tempted to believe that the novelist was
meaningfully searching the ways in which these relationships can be personally established meaningfully. Hence Arnold Kettle’s arguments that the novel is not about abstract personal relationships in a world which is a great muddle does not sound appropriate. It is difficult to pin down any aspect of a novel as *A Passage to India* and to say that it is this or that with an assured definiteness is simply partial. Every character, every theme and image contributes to the central pattern of the book. The precise establishing for instance, of Miss Quested’s character is essential not merely to make convincing her own actions in the story but to make clear the exact nature of the strains and problems she imposes on the Aziz - Fielding relationship. The description of the Hindu religious festival in the last section of the book is there not just to add colour and variety to the scene but to incorporate an essential element in the problem confronting Aziz and Fielding, Forster throughout the novel constantly uses religious themes and symbols not in the way of intellectual arguments but to deepen the sense of intangible forces involved. Aziz’s sense of the past, his constant harping on the Mogul Emperors, is no mere personal idiosyncrasy but the expression of one of the many factors working upon the actual present situation.\(^{23}\)

We can perhaps, partially agree with the observation that “... the book is not really about politics, though it is the political aspect of it that caught the general public and made it sell. It’s about something wider than politics, about the search of the human race for a more lasting home, about the universe as embodied in the Indian earth and the Indian sky; about the horror lurking in the Marabar Caves and the release symbolized by the birth
of Krishna.\textsuperscript{24} It is not easy to know what to make of the dominant Hinduism of the third section of the novel. The last part of the story is frankly a Coda to the plot, a series of resolutions and separations which comment on what has gone before - in it Fielding and Aziz meet and part this time forever; Aziz forgives Adela Quested and finds a friend in Ralph Moore. Fielding, we learn, is not really at one with his young wife; Hindu and Moslem, Brahman and non-Brahman are shown to be as far apart as Indian and English, yet English and Moslem meet in the flooded river, in a flow of Hindu religious fervour; and everything is encompassed in the spirit of Mrs. Moore, mixed up with a vision of the ultimate nullity, with the birth of Krishna and with joy in the fertile rains.\textsuperscript{25}

Certainly it is not to be supposed that Forster finds in Hinduism an answer to the problem of India; and its dangers have been amply demonstrated in the case of Mrs. Moore herself. But here at least is the vision in which the arbitrary human barriers sink before the extinction of all things.\textsuperscript{26}

One can naturally be tempted to think that: "a truly great novel is a tale to the simple, a parable to the wise, and a direct revelation of reality to the man who has made it a part of his being ..."\textsuperscript{27}

Love in the novel has a unifying power over reason and thought which are analytical and often tend to elude the reality. As such, "whether or not A Passage to India provides 'a direct revelation of reality', it certainly tells a story, and it also speaks, as it were in parable, for tolerance and liberalism... Love is the only power that can keep thought out. For 'thought' her means
that which analyses in this connection, douses reality in time, and misses meaning.\textsuperscript{28}

Forster's use of the word "extraordinary" suggests that it will substantially contribute to the development of the story with its 'fake' connotation. There is a difference in the use of the word between the characters and the author. The characters use it as extraordinary whereas the author means extraordinary by it. The first use is delusive but the second use of the word suggests something external to the ordinary. It is in this way perhaps, that Forster has used the device of faking—adding extraordinary meaning, perhaps a ritualistic significance to the Marabar Caves not in the way in which Frank Kermode has suggested.\textsuperscript{29} Their round echoing chambers echo the curving sky, beyond which lies for Christian, Moslem, and Hindu an inspiring vision of eternity. But the chambers, the novel suggests, are the reality; the universe leading to heaven, hell, nirvana, or what you will, only a projection of man's desire.\textsuperscript{30} When subjectively viewed, the caves are psychological. Each man, enclosed in his own cave, tries to reach out and commune with his fellow man; but the caves separate man from man; keeping each in his own compartment, discouraging intimacy between Moslem and Hindu, English and Indian, white man and dark, high caste and low. The echo that terrifies Mrs. Moore and rages up and down Adela's nerves extends to the world beyond, for it, too, with its mixture of races, creeds, and classes exemplifies spiritual muddledom.\textsuperscript{31}

No doubt the caves and echoes are too suggestive, Forster strains physical plausibility to imply with their aid too much. They muddle the
reader as well as the casual visitor. Nevertheless, their general intent is clear—to point to the problems that confront man when he tries to chart a course in a disordered world.

Critics have variously argued and interpreted the significance of the Marabar Caves in Forster’s *A Passage to India*. What they all have missed is that ‘Marabar Caves’ is a metaphor in the novel. The caves enshrine a mystery in their labyrinthine structure; perhaps a mystery as huge as the vast space outside and above them. This mystery cannot be approached empirically, perhaps Forster’s insistence is on the infinite power of the human spirit to negotiate with the ‘extra-ordinary’ mystery. And if *A Passage to India* is about a spiritual journey, the metaphor of the Caves serves the purpose well in the thematic and structural contexts of the novel. Here we have to bear in our mind that Forster’s humanism encompasses the limitations of the East and the West and assumes the stature of a universal humanism for the universal man under a universal umbrella. As such, Forster’s *A Passage to India* is a great novel. The greatness of the novel lies in its author’s powers of ‘expanding symbols and thematic structure’ with a mystery. The device of expanding symbols and thematic structure adds appropriately to the main theme— the infinite journey of the man’s soul in search for order, harmony and peace in a world divided differently into caste, creed, culture, colour and national boundaries. This order in an apparently disordered universe can merely be glimpsed but ‘never seized for sure’. Forster has at his command the most appropriate technique which enables him to achieve greater mastery in his novel. Thematically
order and mastery are described in such a way in *A Passage to India* that they are in appropriate assonance with novel's rhythmic processes accompanied by intricate repetitions. Forster has used repetition to assure us that the harmony is there a step ahead rather in its very complex form. It is so complex that it must remain a mystery.\(^{34}\)

Forster in his *A Passage to India* creates poetry which moves from temporal to the numinous and thus embodies a prophecy. The retention of the providence in the fictional world of the novel has again been done with a superb mastery. The rhythmic movement of the novel and its story become a part of human consciousness and experience. Thus the numinous element in the novel passes through human experience into humanity at large. It is in this way that Forster's prophetic vision in the novel comes nearer to the real but again the reality remains intricate and mysterious.\(^{35}\) Thus to most of his early critics, Forster's work presented problems and difficulties. These were less (as with Joyce or even Lawrence) problems of technical complexity than problems deriving from an 'oddity' in his vision and in his methods of presenting it.\(^{36}\) As we have been, Forster made two visits to India. He began *A Passage to India* after the first the war suspended it, but he took it back with him on his second visit, only to find that he could not complete it while he was immersed in the Indian scene. He continued it on his return to England but found such difficulty that he might never have completed it without the warming of Leonard Woolf, who told him that to have it unfinished might be to afflict himself with permanent dissatisfaction. One difficulty was journalistic: the India of his pre-war visit
had changed considerably by the time of his post-war return. Another was that he could no longer abide by his original conception of the novel, which was too light and gentle to accommodate the more sombre and complex experience provoked in him by the succeeding decade. Further, he was also dissatisfied with the scale of interest afforded by this characters.\(^{37}\)

He implies that it is India that matters—not Indian politics merely, but India as a universe, a confusion of cultures and races, of religions and natural growth, such as defies the European instinct to find coherence and meaning in everything it contemplates. And yet a novel needs a setting accessible to normal experience, and so Forster invents one which is small and seems commonplace while exposed to all the muddle and mystery he wishes to convey. He describes it in his short first chapter, which is so characteristic of his style that it is worth fairly close study; it also indicates what he can have meant by describing the novel as 'a meditation' although we need not accept the description as adequate when we judge the novel as a whole.\(^{38}\)

We have to remember that Forster's *A Passage to India* is not an 'anti-colonial fiction' for the obvious reasons that if it were such a novel it would have suffered from documentation. This is a superb novel which has assumed the stance of a modern classic, quite relevant to the period between the two world wars and even today in as much as it seeks to search for an order and 'a basis for solid durable values' in our world so full of confusion and chaos. Forster's picture of India exhibits 'multitudes of people, its races, creeds, and hierarchies' with conflicting aims and aspirations. The novel is the most important writing of our century.\(^{39}\) India in *A Passage to India* is muddled and mysterious. The Indian landscape is equivocal
which is suggestive of its futile and dry character. 'Mosque, Temple', and 'Caves' predominate the novel and present the most cryptic muddle in the novel. Apart from all these, A Passage to India is not simply an international novel in the Jamesian sense of attempting to resolve contrasting value systems by means of a cosmopolitan scale of value but a global novel. The contrast of England and India is not the end of the issue, since India is schismatic within itself; India's challenge is the challenge of the multiverse, a new version of the challenge that Henry Adams faced on looking at the dynamo. What the city is as metaphor in Howard End, India is in Passage; it is a metaphor of contingency. Forster is not simply interested in raising the social comic irony of confronting one social world with the standards of another; he stretches through the social and political implications to religions and mystical ones, and finally to the most basic question of all—how, in the face of such contingency, one structures meaning?

The geographical scale of the novel is, in short supported by a vast scale of standpoint. Forster attempts a structure inclusive of the range of India, and the judgements of the book are reinforced by the festivals and rituals of three religions, by the heterodoxy racial, political, cultural, religious, and mystical of this multitude nation and by the physical landscape of a country which both invites meaning ('Come, come') and denies any. 'Nothing embraces the whole of India, nothing, nothing' says Aziz; the landscape and the spirit of the earth, divide men, and even the sects are divided within themselves just as the earth is: The fissures in the
Indian soil are infinite: *Hinduism*, so solid from a distance, is riven into sects and clans, which radiate and join, and change their names according to the aspect from which they are approached.  

Forster's social comedy works to provoke, among a variety of different and sympathetically varied groups, those ironic international and intranational encounters that come when one value system meets another and confusion and muddle ensue. But his other aim is to call up, by a poetic irradiation, the ironies lying within the forces of mystery and muddle in the constituted universe of nature itself. For here, too, are deceptions, above all in the absence of Beauty, which is traditionally a form for infinity, so that the very discourse of Romanticism becomes negative under the hot sun who is not the unattainable friend, either of men or birds or other suns (who) was not the eternal promise, the never withdrawn suggestion that haunts our consciousness; he was merely a creature, like the rest and so debarred from glory. There is much in India that invites a cosmic meaning, but it places man and infinity together. (Part I, Ch.7) 

All this stretches Whitmanesque enterprise called up by the title to a vast level of inclusiveness. It also involves Forster in a placing of the social and human world of his novel in a way he has never approached before. One way of putting the situation is to say that the human plot of the novel is set into singular relation to the verbal plot, with its radiating expansiveness of language. The human plot of the novel is essentially a story hinging on Adela Quested, who comes to India to marry, has doubts about her marriage when she sees what India has made of her fiance, and tries herself to create
a more reasonable relationship between British and Indians. She takes part in an expedition, arranged by an Indian, to the Marabar caves, in one of which she believes she is attacked by him. She accuses him of attempted rape, and although at the trial she retracts her accusation, the incident has sown dissent and discord, and has exposed the political and institutional tensions of the country.

The plot moves up from the world of personal relationships to the social world (which in this case involves political relationships), and is set largely in and around the city of Chandrapore, at a time not stated but evidently intended to be in the 1920's. The dense social world that Forster delineates so skilfully consists primarily of racial or religious groups with their own customs and patterns. The English, whom we see largely through the eyes of Adela Quested and Mrs Moore, visiting India together, are identified with their institutional functions. Mostly professional middle-class people, they have gone through a process of adaptation to their duties, which are as Ronny says, 'to do justice and keep the Peace'. They have learned the importance of solidarity, conventions, rank, and standoffishness; and their judgements and their social order are those of a particular class in a particular situation. These ethics are dutiful and serious; they have a deep sense of rational justice; they are distrustful of mysticism and lethargy; their deep Englishness has been reinforced by their situation. They operate at the level of political and social duty, and their relationships the ties that bind the characters together and enable Forster to thread the way from one
to another—are those of the political and social roles they play.

The other group, which we see first largely through the eyes of Aziz, consists of Indians, though these are themselves divided by religions and castes. Here again what we see are primarily the professional classes, linked to the British by their duties and to their own people by their familial and friendly relationships. The two main groupings that emerge here are, of course, The Hindus and the Moslems, and Forster differentiates carefully between them, and their respective versions of India. Where they differ radically from the English is in their long and adaptive response to the confusions of their country, a response which obscures the firm lines of value that the British in their isolation can protect and permit lethargy, emotionalism, and mysticism. Forster explores Indian custom and faith in great detail, noting its own patterns of classification, its own way of making and not making social and moral distinctions, above all recognising that Indians have adopted to a different physical environment by being comprehensive or passive rather than orderly or rationalistic.

These worlds—Anglo-Indian (to use the Phrase of the day), Hindu, Muslim—are given us in full as they connect and draw apart, and Forster enters imaginatively into each of them. And to a large extent what interests him is not the relations between people, the normal matter for the novelist, but their separation. In the novel’s social scenes we are always conscious of those who are absent, and much of the discussion in the early part of the novel is devoted to those not present—the whites are talked of by the Indians, the Indians by the whites. And this suggests the vast social inclusiveness of
the novel, which spreads beyond the communities established for the sake of the action into a cast of thousand: nameless marginal characters who appear for a moment and are gone, like the punkah wallah or the voice out of the darkness at the club, and the inhabitants of Chandrapore who seem made of 'mud moving'. (A Passage to India, Part I, Ch. I)

Out of this complex social world derives a complex moral world, in which the values of no one group are given total virtue, The English may have thrown the net of rationalism and 'civilisation' over the country, but India's resistance to this—"The triumphant machine of civilisation may suddenly hitch and be immobilised into a car of stone" (A Passage to India, Part II, Ch. 24) puts them in ironic relation to Indian reality; they scratch only the surface of its life, and theirs is a feeble invasion. On the other hand, the passive comprehensiveness of India is seen as itself a kind of social decay, debased as well as spiritual, leading to a potential neglect of man. Of course, intimations of transcendence are present throughout the novel. Structurally they run through the seasonal cycle, from decisive hot sun to the benedictive healing water at the end, and from Mosque to Caves to Temple. By taking that as his order, Forster is able poetically to sustain the hope of a spiritual possibility, a prefiguring of the world beyond in the world below. The climax of this theme is Godbole's attempt at 'completeness, not reconstruction'. But what happens here is that divine revelation is shifted to the level of the comic sublime; Forster's rhetoric now puts what has been spiritually perplexing—the webs, nets, and prisons that divide spirit as well as society—back into the comic universe of muddle. The Mau festival is the
celebration of the formlessness of the Indian multiverse, seen for a moment inclusively. The poetic realm of the novel, in which above all Mrs Moore and Godbole have participated, and which has dominated the book's primary art, is reconciled with the muddle of the world of men, in an emotional cataract that momentarily repairs the divisions of the spiritual world (through the festival itself). It satisfies much of the passion for inclusiveness that heaven should include all because India is all.  

The situation of the novel is partly familiar, partly new. In many ways the basic contrast between India and England, or between India and England, or between India and Anglo-India, brings us back to the world of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Room with a View*. The English sexual prudery, the emphasis on duty and good form, the distrust of everything foreign are all brought into expected relief against the spontaneity of a manifestly unenglish country. The colonial administrators of Chandrapore and their bigoted wives stumble through a typically comic series of misinterpretations of India and individual Indians, just as the earlier tourists misinterpret Italy; and some of the central English characters Adela quested, Cyril Fielding, Mrs Moore undergo the customary Forsterian shift of sympathy toward the 'native' point of view. Socially, however, the novel is much more complicated than the earlier ones. India, too, has a stratified society, one that is in fact more rigidly discriminatory than England's; and the Indian protagonist, Aziz, is only slightly closer to, say, Gino Carella than are the Englishmen in the novel. He, too, is restrained on all sides by barriers of class and race.
Similarly, we look in vain for romantic suggestions that India, like Italy, stands for a passionate release of the human spirit; India is apparently more of a muddle than a mystery, and it distinctly does not embody a tidy moral for the English visitors to ponder on their way home. This brings us to a basic difference in the way Forster now regards his subject matter. The foreign civilization is no longer a moralized backdrop to the novel's action, but is itself a kind of protagonist. It is not simply that we come to know that Indian Aziz more thoroughly than any of the English characters, but that the image of India as a whole is more important than any of the figures, English or Indian, who move across it. To understand India is to understand the rationale of the whole creation; but the characters do not understand it, and Forster's plot makes us ask whether human faculties are capable of such understanding at all. After each character has made his feeble effort to grasp the total pattern, we are left again with the enormous and irrational presence of India, a riddle that can be ignored but never solved.

The literal plot of *A Passage to India* seems at first to be unrelated to this symbolic level of meaning. Its chief issue is one that is suitable to a detective story: whether or not Aziz has actually attempted to rape Adela Quested in the Marabar Cave. This, however, is bound up with the whole problem of Anglo-Indian misunderstanding, for the occasion of the supposed assault is a picnic organized by Aziz in the interest of interracial friendship. Adela's near disastrous hallucination is, completely apart from its religious implications, a symbolic breakdown of the effort at mutual sympathy between the two countries. As the name 'Quested' suggests, Adela
is in perpetual quest of knowing the world she moves about. The process of 'knowing' is very subtle in the novel. She is actually trying to know things out of a total 'muddle' in the novel. Her hallucination which we as readers understand is quite natural to her quest. Adela herself has come to Chandrapore not simply to marry Ronny Heaslop, the City Magistrate, but to 'know India' on its own terms. Mrs Moore, too her travelling companion and Ronny's mother has come with a willingness to understand and love the Indians. Much of the early by-play of the plot is taken up with the efforts of Adela and Mrs Moore to be generous toward India - efforts that are thwarted not by Indians, but by the suspicious and snobbish colonial officials, including Ronny's Heaslop. When a genuine rapport between East and West seems finally imminent, however, it is shown to be impossible. Indians and Englishmen must remain apart, not because Indians are venal and shifty (as Ronny and his friends believe) but because of fundamental differences in temperament, social structure, and religious outlook. The one hope for unity is, as we might expect, a trust in the power of affectionate friendship among individuals; but even this proves inadequate, as we find in the crumbling of relations between Aziz and Cyril Fielding, the liberal and humane principal of Chandrapore's Government College.\textsuperscript{44}

The Indian landscape as presented in the novel contains tropical luxury 'with mud, flies, snakes, leopard, hyenas, and dust' which thwart all attempts towards harmony and order. The mud itself in the landscape exude muddle. Mrs Moore is never at ease in such surroundings even though she has all the moorish experiences of the Lake Districts of England.\textsuperscript{45}
Another difficulty which a nature loving traveller is to surmount, here is the mushroom growth and expansion of jungles. The disproportionate growth of jungles further thwarts all human attempt to find harmony and order in India. We are told that Ronny and Adela had 'serious walks and talks' at Grasmere in England.\textsuperscript{46} The world of nature in England at least gives an impression of order and harmony which is completely wanting in Indian jungles in the novel. (A \textit{Passage to India}, Part I, Ch.3)

Forster's picture of Indian society is also tarnished by the 'celebrated Indian confusion' which is patterned in keeping with the theme of the novel. This picture is of union and division. Aziz has invited the English people and professor Godbole to the Marabar expedition but while preparing for it "trouble after trouble encountered him, because he has challenged the spirit of Indian earth which tries to keep men in compartments".\textsuperscript{47} (Part II, Ch. 13) Forster's account of social image of India is based on this compartmentalization and stratification of Indian society into caste, religion, and economic status. The temple symbol in the novel signifies most clearly Hinduism, the religion of Godbole. Godbole presides over the ceremony at Mau in which the worshippers 'love all men, and whole universe' and in which 'the Lord of the universe in born'. The west regards this Hindu ritual as 'triumph of India was a muddle ... a frustration of reason and form' (Part III, Ch.33).

Forster's account of the ceremony is short through with comic, sometimes farcical touches, with the result that of all the symbols the Temple seems the most crudely ironic. Its twofold meaning is expressed very well
in the final picture of Fielding's and Aziz's relationship. For a brief time, after being reconciled during the jumble of the Hindu ceremony, they are friends; but their friendship, like the unity of India, is unstable. In the concluding words of the novel we are told that the 'temples' as well as 'the tank' (i.e. the Mosque), and 'the sky' do not want them to be friends. This, we may say, is a finely poised irresolution, the only possible conclusion for a novel of irony. The Temple is a symbol of Hindu unity, in love which is no unity. This is further evident from Aziz's reception of Mrs Moore and Adela Quested at the railway station.

Forster's Portrayal of Aziz, Hamidullah, Mahmoud Ali and other Muslim characters suggests another aspect of the social image of India. A distant cousin of Aziz, Mohammad Latif, a gentle, happy and dishonest old man, maintained unoffended silence except 'now and then he belched, in compliment to the richness of the food'. Forster shows his acquaintance with the hangers on in an Indian community. The herd instinct of Aziz and his group and their superficial response to poetry are also well brought out. Aziz quotes poetry and his themes are 'the decay of Islam', and the 'brevity of love'. The Indians, writes Forster, took the public view of poetry, not the private (one) which obtains in England? The Muslims seem deeply involved in the poetic atmosphere created by Aziz's recitation at that moment. (Part I, Ch. 2)

Indian reaction to Forster image of India and the portrayal Aziz's character is worth mentioning here. It is alleged that Forster has devoted much to the problems of personal relationships in A Passage to India which ultimately undermines his political significances:
... Mr. Forster is too charitable with the Indians. Aziz would not have been allowed to cross my threshold, not to speak of being taken as an equal. Men of his type are a pest even in free India.⁴⁸

Aziz's encounter with Dr. Panna Lal and his reaction to the treatment of Godbole's illness by Dr. Panna Lal are interesting sidelights on social and religious relationships between groups of Indians. So too, the relations between Indians and Anglo-Indians have been sharply portrayed by Forster and are a vital element in projecting the social image. And indeed; the sketch of Mrs. Turton is comic and amusing and yet it throws light on the role English ladies and wives of bureaucrats played in complicating the relations between the English and Indians. At times, Mazor Callendar's treatment of Aziz, and Ronny's rebuff administered to the attention seeking Muslim doctor at Fielding's tea party show Forster's trenchant exposure of Indo-British social relations in the early twenties. These scenes may be contrasted with those which describe the meeting between Aziz and Mrs. Moore in the Mosque and the friendly exchange between Aziz and Fielding especially when Aziz offers his own gold collar stud to Fielding and helps him to put it in the 'shirt back's hole'.

In many ways, Mrs. Moore, Cyril Fielding, and Adela Quested are so prominent among the English or Anglo-Indians who consciously, as well as unconsciously are involved in the process of confrontation with India and their responses are clearly divergent. And then there are the Indians, Hindus and Muslims, who face a dual problem of confrontation with the English and also with each other. They comprise in part the image of India and the
process of self-discovery. For instance, Professor Godbole in essentially the unfolding of that image. At times, to the Anglo-Indians, India is tiresome and baffling but it is no less incomprehensible to men like Aziz and Hamidullah, since their 'simple' minds, in their confrontation with Marabar, encounter, 'Ancient Night', and primeval darkness.

It is true that literally speaking the social image depicted in A Passage to India is basically one of schism and division. The English are little gods and they create their own heaven in the exclusive Anglo-Indian club. Hindus and Muslims are entangled in various forms of social relationships and create their own little worlds. Friendships are formed and forged but misunderstandings and alienation cast a dark shadow over the world of human and social relationships. Bitterness replaces affection, hatred comes in the place of love and the ways of men towards men are strewn with thorns. Forster greatly cherishes the value of personal relations; they are for him an indispensable condition of a humanistic and liberal creed and consequently the blindness of the Anglo-Indians to this intensely significant value is the principal cause of this human and social tragedy.

The tragedy of the British empire in India, Forster suggests is in part due to the projection on Indian tropical soil of the British mentality moulded by the British Public School system. Ronny Heaslop has no perception of the truth of personal relationships between the English and the Indians and the only bond he can conceive is that which subsists between the ruler and the ruled. The failure of his private world, expressed in his inability to love Adela, is extended to the outer life and thus the life without holds the
mirror to the life within. The British Public School cultivated the qualities of leadership, capacity or action, tact, courage and patriotism, but it also created narrowness and a feeling of superiority. It was blind to the value of personal relations. The Anglo-Indian club, the odd Bridge Party, the dramatic trial scene and its ramifications contribute to the political image of the novel. The discussion between Aziz and his friends about the English in India is quite revealing and underscores the complex nature of Indo-British political and social relationships of that period. The English in England are good and hospitable but on their arrival in British India they are claimed by the herd mentality of bureaucratic Anglo-Indians. They join the local tribe of Anglo-Indians and are thus drawn to the 'armies of the benighted'. Fielding is a singular exception and he is in many ways the representative of the Forsterian political point of view. His mind has been nourished on the values of culture and liberal education. He is close in spirit to that small but distinguished minority of English intellectuals who manned the civil service, some of whom made a great contribution to the renaissance of Indian arts and culture. Fielding is "a holy man minus the holiness", and he swims against the main powerful current of Anglo-Indian community life in India.

The political image is marked by mutual distrust and fear between Anglo-Indians and Indians. Forster's portrayal of political and racial tensions in the wake of Aziz's trial and Mohorrum and the spectacle of panic of Anglo-Indians is considered rather exaggerated. The English in India can be accused of many failings but not of cowardice. However, Forster's basic exposure of Anglo-India and the main implications of its portrayal are true and valid.
The Anglo-Indians stand for much that Forster dislikes: insensitiveness, officialdom, stupidity, repressiveness, rudeness. Forster evinces objectivity in his portrayal of the Anglo-Indian and Indian life in his last novel. Forster shows his abhorrence to Anglo Indians for their insensitiveness, officialdom, stupidity, repressiveness, rudeness and etc. In sharp contrast with the British in India, Indians are described in terms of being the children of nature, affectionate, courteous, eager, irresponsible, and wayward. He is not blind to the defects as well. Indians are also described as double dealers, impracticable, conscious and unconscious. Even their intriguing action does not produce any effect. Forster does not spare the Indian rulers whose presence is indispensable in the movements of a crisis although a crisis is foreign to the spirit of the East. But *A Passage to India* is not about racial contrast and disabilities. It is both intensely personal and intensely cosmic, and between the two lies the problem of English in India. Forster's 'no' to the question whether the English can make a working arrangement with the Indians is rather superfluous. Forster rules out any possibility of an Englishman in India to establish terms of intimacy with an Indian on individual basis. (Part I, Ch.3) The effect of the experiences at the Marabar Caves on the two good intentioned ladies has been too strenuous and their impression of India as such fell a little short of disintegration. Perhaps this may be the central theme of the book notwithstanding the solicitude and affection with which Dr. Aziz had arranged it for the pleasure of the visitors. Forster does not hesitate to show the inherent absurdity between Aziz's cordial hospitality to the guests and the clear horror writ large on the faces
of the visitors after the Caves expedition. With an artistic subtlety Forster works out the disastrous fluctuations of human personality when in close contact with the black magic of India.52

Since Forster's stay in India was confined to his assignments with the princely states like Hyderabad and Dewas, he missed to sense the stirrings of the resurgent British India. Moreover, India very often attracts foreign intellectuals towards her religious and spiritual rituals. And it is here, perhaps, that Forster was most effectively and intensely caught up. Since social and racial aspects of the life of Indians externally contribute to the religious and spiritual attractions, it is difficult to wholly do away with them. Beneath these surfaces A Passage to India is about a spiritual quest. And as such all attempts to seek ultimate meaning of life in India is foiled by this "devastating spiritual nihilism".53

In A Passage to India, which did not appear till fourteen years later, the clash seems at first sight to be a purely racial one. The distinction between types is less prominent, the political passion what describes the disastrous anomaly of the British in India is more obvious. The propagandist element in the book is undeniable, but one hardly concludes that it was written with that for its final purpose. For one thing, in the last part of the book—'Temple'—the problem is a different one. For here the cleavage was between Brahman and non-Brahman; Moslems and English were quite out of the running, and sometimes not mentioned for days. The intrusion of the English at Mau is incidental and designed only to reintroduce what is the real theme of the book the friendship of Fielding and Dr. Aziz. The
rocks that rise between them on their last ride together, the horses that swerve apart—they symbolize Indian differences, it is true, but differences that are not more great, only more particular, than the difference, it is true, but differences that are not more great, only more particular, than the differences that exist between any two men, between Philip and Gino, Rickie and Stephen, Schlegels and Wilcoxes. Once again, therefore, the author's interest is in the clash of human beings, the struggle which any one individual must endure if he is to achieve intimacy with any one other. The fundamental parsonal difference is again deliberately heightened by an external circumstance—the difference of race. And in doing so, the image of India, a land of immense geographical, religious, racial, linguistic and cultural diversities is central to the structure of the novel. In certain of its aspects, Forster projects the various degrees of comprehension of this image by the principal characters, Aziz, Fielding, Adela, Mrs Moore and Godbole. So, India in Forster's *A Passage to India* assumes the stance of a microcosm of the universe itself.

By the way, *A Passage to India* contains themes and matters quite familiar to us from Forster's earlier novels. The rival claims upon man and nature very clearly divide the fictional universe into two distinctly separate hemispheres with its avowed claims of the seen and the unseen, the public and the private, the powers of human activities and institutions and the ultimate mysteries for which the right institutions and activities exist. It may be argued that Forster's apparent sympathies are directed towards the testing field of human relationships which together reveal immense
possibilities and disasters based on human goodwill, culture and intelligence as stepping stones for honest intercourse. The clashes of interest and custom as barriers between the West and the East can be transcended with Forster's liberal ethos. But the presentation of these in the novel is rather a complex fact technically as well as materially. The world of mystery in the novel is described in the language of a 'poetic' evocation and the world of muddle is made to appear to employ the language of a comic evocation and which again appears to be the principal side of the picture manifesting normal state of man. It is evident form the novel that Forster reveals new powers and resources hitherto unknown in his previous works and which certainly add new dimensions to his sensibility accompanied by a new sense of complexity. The novel encompasses the boundaries of internationalism and assumes a global stature. *A Passage to India* as such begins with a contrast of England and India and gradually acquires a universal significance in terms of human life in general.

Forster's technique in the delineation of characters in the novel is based on a dual aspect of man. In his social role man is subject a chain of pressures, constraints and circumstances about which he is seldom aware of and he must rid himself of them if he has to grow at all. The second aspect, however, is intimate, elusive, often inexpressible by direct means but manifest in details of human experience. It is capable of being shared by different individuals unexpectedly. In occasional touches of melodramatic, violent events, sensational confrontations, incredible turns of plot with a view to reflecting a rigid moral outlook. Forster's character's can be divided into
for distinct groups of those who are saved and others who stand damned. It appears that Forster rarely conveys a sense of unpredictability of human nature. Since personal relationship is an important element contributing to the theme of the novel, one evinces union and separation, fusion and fission, love and hatred, sympathy and apathy, affirmation and negation among Forster's characters in the fictional world of *A Passage to India*.

Since Forster deals primarily with the middleclass men, women and society in *A Passage to India*, has main concern, as it appears, is the projection of the sociolinguistic problems especially in the context of the interaction of two distinct cultures of the East and the West in Indian settings. Lack of adequate communication between the two peoples emerges as a very resounding theme. It appears that Forster was trying to project this incapacity to communicate in language and style. This incapacity assumes a glaring posture particularly when Indians converse among themselves in English. The idioms and phrases used by the Indians are different from those that the native speakers use.

The three major sections which serve as the structure of the central design of *A Passage to India* are three major metaphors. 'Mosque', the first section, is the arch, 'Caves', the second section is the echo; and 'Temple', the third is the sky. 'Mosque' represents the sense of brotherhood of Islam opening possibilities of human relationship and friendship in its positive sense. In its negative sense it survives as curious failure to bridge the English and the Indians. The metaphorical implications of the Marabar Caves are complex. They may imply a collapse of human relationship, friendliness,
and affection, or a world without a divine touch, without a word of God, without love and spiritual joy.

The problem, then, in _Howards End_ has been to see life steady and whole in the English farms and Forster provides us with a hindsight in Chapter XLIV of the novel where Margaret's speech as a concealed plea for charity towards homosexuals in _Maurice_ hints at the composition of the novel. Thus Forster's journey from symbolism of Howards End brings him face to face to confront the problem of homosexuality in a wider context which was enormously acute to him personally, socially and perhaps nationally as a serious malaise infecting the world.

_Maurice_ is the narrowest and least resonant of Forster's six novels. Forster views Maurice and his world solely in relation to Maurice's homosexuality; and Maurice himself is so obsessed with his problem that he relates everything else to it. His obsession, of course, is understandable; he lives not in a world in which 'Gay is Beautiful', but in England before the first world war a country that only a few years before the time of the novel had sent Oscar Wilde to prison for sodomy. In its preoccupation with the protagonist's sexuality, _Maurice_ markedly contrasts with _Howards End_ and _A Passage to India_. Obviously, between the composition of his two most wide-ranging novels, Forster felt a special need to give fictional perspective to a problem of the deepest personal concern. Mauric's life, like that of other Forsterian travellers, is a psychological journey, leading in Maurice's case from inner darkness to inner light. Sojourning in various places, each with its special values and opportunities, Maurice is led to realize his sexuality and then to try to accommodate it to the demands of society. Only
after prolonged struggle and doubt does he find in his love for a man of
totally different class and background the means to salvation.\footnote{57}

The plot of \textit{Maurice} is simple, too simple, indeed; and no doubt had
Forster from the beginning been writing for publication he would have
developed a more intricate pattern of characters and events. The story
centres on Maurice Hall's parallel and contrasted relations with two young
men. First, he is loved by and loves a fellow Cambridge undergraduate,
Clive Durham. But Clive's homosexuality is only a temporary stage in his
development; he discovers that he is capable of normal heterosexual
relations, is repelled by masculinity including Maurice's and gives himself
up wholly to the rather trivial duties and responsibilities of a country
gentleman. Maurice then meets a second man, Alec Scudder, and ultimately
discovers perfect happiness in this relationship, now able to recognize
frankly 'the wisdom of the body' as he had not been able to in his platonic
relationship with Clive.

Ironically he meets Alec at Clive's dilapidated country estate Penge.
Even more ironically, Alec is only an under-gamekeeper there. With sly
humour Forster has noted that he is senior in date to the 'prickly
gamekeepers of D.H. Lawrence'. The happy ending for the two men involves
retreat to the 'greenwoods', but it carries with it, however, \textit{improbably}, the
suggestion that the future of England belongs to them. They must live
outside class, without relations or money; they must work and stick to each
other till death. But England belongs to them. That, besides companionship
was there reward. Maurice's sister kitty, many years later, comes across them
living out their greenwoods idyll as woodcutters; they had \textit{stayed}
disintegration & combined daily work with love. Thus *Maurice* reveals clearly
the fusion of classes in a redeemed England is at least in Part an apologia
for and a celebration of the middle class homosexual’s love for a strong
man in the class below him. Private and public myths share a common
structure.

Within the relatively simple framework of the plot there is considerable
complexity. Forster’s mode is still domestic comedy and there is still a fairly
subtle interplay of poetic vision and comic spirit, although the comedy in
the main effects only the minor characters. It hardly touches the
protagonists. Forster’s lack of detachment towards two of the major figures
— his sympathetic involvement with *Maurice* and his disgust with Clive, the
sexual turncoat undoubtedly disturbs the unity and tone of the whole work.
The cast is reasonably large, but only the three men are more than lightly
sketched. Many of the very English scenes spring vividly to life, as when the
well-intentioned Mr Ducie, in the opening scene, instructs the unheeding
*Maurice* in the technical details of sex. He does so by drawing the male and
female sexual organs on the sand. But when he sees people approaching,
he rushes to blot out the trees, ‘sweating with fear’.

In sketching Maurice’s early development, Forster draws on some of
his own experiences, as he had done in *The Longest Journey*; for example,
Maurice’s relationship with the garden boy, George, parallels Forster’s with
Ansell. But, in other respects, Forster makes his hero as unlike himself as
possible. Maurice Hall is hearty, athletic, slow and conventional in his
responses; he has no literary or artistic ambition; and on being sent down
from Cambridge for missing lectures, he becomes a stockbroker. Yet despite the dissimilarities, Maurice shares something of his creator's fineness of imaginative perception. Since we are specifically told that at Sunnington, his public school, he had lost the clearness of vision 'which transfigures and explains the universe', and not enough happens to him later as the result of his relationship with either Clive or Alec to restore it, the imaginative dimension of Maurice's character becomes slightly improbable. It is recognized for the device that for communicating the author's own superior insight into the events and a means of eliciting sympathy for the sexual outsider, the man who has 'cut himself off from the congregation of normal man' (Ch. 42).

In the first of the novel's four unnamed division (Chapters I-II), we follow Maurice's life from his last day at Prep school to the exalted moment of recognition when his Cambridge friend Clive calls to him in sleep and Maurice, 'laying his hand very gently upon the pillows,' answers 'Clive'. Maurice Hall, like all Forster's heroes is fatherless. His mother is affectionate but overprotective; his two sisters, Ada and Kitty, likeable; his upbringing a comfortable suburban one, with things arranged so that he may grow up like his 'dear father in every way'. The first emotional crisis arises when he comes back from prep school and discovers that the garden boy George is no longer there. His mother mistakes his tears for signs of overtiredness; but the description of his night terrors and of the comfort he derives from the whispered name of George, establishes this incident as an unconscious intimation of his psychological need for a male friend and lover. It thus
foreshadows the first visionary moments with Clive and Alec, a connection that is firmly reinforced later by recurrent allusion and image.

The theme of the ideal friend, later to be expanded in the first part of *A Passage to India*, is further developed in the account of Maurice's life 'as a mediocre member of a mediocre school' at Sunnington, where all is muddle and obscurity, except for two recurring dreams. (Chap. 3) After his confirmation, Maurice tries to persuade himself that the 'friend' was Christ. Although he cannot find a suitable embodiment of his vision, it remains 'more real than anything he knew'. He passes through an 'obscene' stage at school and then begins 'to make a religion of some other boy', and through a close friendship with one develops his capacity for the feelings of 'beauty and tenderness that he had first felt in a dream', and then 'the growth stopped'. (Chap. 4) The Cambridge of the remaining chapters of Part I is unmistakably the Cambridge of Forster's youth, with its details of luncheon with cheerful Deans, pianolas, expeditions by motorcycle and sidecar, and its thinly disguised portraits of real people, Lytton Strachey as Risley for example actually Forster first met Strachey in G.M. Trevelyan's rooms and was scared off by his extraordinary voice and behaviour, as a paper to the Memoir Club reveals (KCL). It is equally the Cambridge of *The Longest Journey*, seen through the eyes of one of the athletic set that Rickie wished to regard as brothers. Yet it is in no sense a mere repetition of the earlier novel. The affected young undergraduate Risley, with his exaggerated gestures and curious habit of heavily accenting one word in each sentence, in the first to attract Maurice's attention. He thoroughly shocks Maurice by calling his
relative, the Dean, a 'eunuch'. "You could call your cousin a shit if you liked, but not a eunuch. Rotten style!" But, all the same, this forms Maurice's initiation into the irreverent frankness of Cambridge; and the unknown beckons.

It is in the course of paying a visit to the 'queer fish', Risley, that Maurice meets Clive Durham, who has come to borrow pianola sheets of—inevitably—the Pathe'Aique. Maurice soon finds himself out of his depths in the clever conversation and rushes out into the night. But he waits around until after midnight, hoping to intercept Clive Durham, who eventually appears and invites him, 'out of civility', to have a drink. Clive is tired, and Maurice drinks up and leaves. (Ch. 6)

Maurice has discovered the illusive 'friend'. But progress toward greater intimacy is chequered. At first, Maurice is shocked at Clive's declaration of love, and a coldness develops. He tries to love women unsuccessfully; and then, when he comes to accept the naturalness of homosexual love, he finds to his dismay that Clive insists that it should remain platonic. His agony works inward and he discovers the 'I' that he, like the Wilcoxes, had been 'trained to obscure' (Ch.10). At last he learns to connect the 'idealism and brutality that ran through boyhood'; they are 'joined at last, and twined into love'; it was 'neither body or soul, nor body and soul, but "he" working through them both' (Ch. II). The way is now prepared for the slightly unrealized midnight revelation when Maurice answers Clive's sleeping call. This brings to a close the first part of the novel.
The second part explores the developing relations between Maurice and Clive, the two years' happiness they enjoy after Maurice has been sent down from Cambridge, Clive's psychic illness, his search for health in Greece, his discovery that he is 'normal', and his return home. The peak of the relationship is the whole day's outing by motor-cycle from Cambridge. The imagery here, as in *A Passage to India* so many years later, places human relations within a perspective of a receding infinite. The whole day, it is stressed, was ordinary, 'yet it had never come before to either of them, nor was it to be repeated.' Maurice's later visit to Penge confirms them in their new found happiness. Like a lover from one of the earlier novels, Clive appears with 'the sunlight behind him'. They develop a new language for their love. Concerned as they are 'with a passion that few English minds have admitted,' they establish 'perfection in their lives, at all events for a time' (Ch. 16). 58

The reason for this is very clear: *Maurice* is not a further experiment in the endless mission to achieve a comprehensive image of human reality; it is a particular case - history. The 'case' is homosexuality, and therefore on that arouses instantaneous prejudices on either side in most readers. However the weakness of the novel as art is not its theme, but the fact that any 'case' is by definition a restricted study, closing on a segment of experience rather than-as a novel should—opening itself to the range of it. As a case-history, Forster treats the theme with an objectivity which deserves respect: Maurice is in many ways a character remote from the novelist himself, a Wilcox with element in him of Schlegel. The novel in thus is no
way a work of self indulgence. The hero is a commonplace boy from a commonplace middle class family, regarded as a success by his public school because he attracts no attention there, and then disregarded at Cambridge until he gets set down for insolence to the authorities. Even this is only a temporary setback to his conformity; he enters his father's stockbroking firm, and is respected by his fellow commuters for his practicality and normality, even when he sometimes teases them with unorthodox ideas. But alongside this external existence, Forster shows the painful exceptionality of his inner growth, explicable to no one about him and for a long time unintelligible to himself.

He cannot explain his misery when he comes home from school to find that his friend, the garden boy, has gone; he cannot understand his failure with girls, and suffers incommunicable agonies of jealousy when his best friend at Cambridge falls in love with his sister. Eventually—this is the 'happy ending' which Forster agreed was artistically debatable—he removes himself from society to live alone with a young gamekeeper, in whom, across the immense social gulf which is shown very explicitly, he finds a powerful physical attraction. Forster does not directly explain how Maurice comes to be homosexual, but his family circumstances go some way to accounting for it, as do Forster's own in explaining himself. The story is thus on the whole convincing, and by it the reader can learn to understand and sympathise with the homosexual's predicament. Only at the conclusion, when Maurice vanished into the greenwood with Alec, does the implausibility of this happy ending raise doubts. What have they in
common, besides their mutual physical attraction which may well prove temporary, to give such a union permanence? Evidently Forster needed a myth to console him, and so he contrives one. 39

In Maurice, Forster's young men are as prone to swooning and fainting fits as the heroines of Victorian fiction, but these sudden collapses are clearly intended to represent intense raptures and, more importantly, psychic break downs. Clive's sudden fainting at a dinner two years later, during one of Maurice's visits to Penge, is at first unexplained as rather passes off as a relapse after 'flu. What has happened, as an ingenious but clumsy retrospective account makes clear, is that during Clive's first bout of 'flu, he has begun to discover his normality through attraction to the nurse. His breakdown thus arises from his inability to connect his old knowledge and his new understanding of his nature. It is another cause in his instinctive revulsion from Maurice's masculinity. 60

Forster arranges the narrative so that Clive's letter from Greece announcing his self-discovery comes almost as much as a surprise to the reader as it does to Maurice: "Against my will I have come normal. I cannot help it." 96 Yet the farewell scene before the departure for Greece, when Maurice stays at Clive's flat, in spite of Clive's polite discouragement, reveals essential features of the disintegrating relationship; it therefore prepares the reader for Clive's telegram. The coming together of the two men in bed (bodies not touching) suggests the lovely frustration of each. Clive, who lacks the self-knowledge to understand the sources of his unhappiness and
discontent, plunges into morbid speculations about death and an eternity made up of triviality. "Would that we had never been lovers. For then, Maurice, you and I would have lain still and quiet." By contrast, Maurice throbs with passion that he refrains from expressing through tender regard for Clive. The text stresses the ideal of 'tenderness, as Lawrence's text does in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, later with Alec the ideal becomes the peculiar combination of 'toughness and tenderness', that Forster looked for in life. Maurice hopes that he can cure Clive's strange breakdown where the doctor has failed, and even after he receives the telegram from Greece, he is confident he can restore the former relationship. He writes cheerfully to summon Clive to return from Greece, but his reference to Mrs Durham's dreadful mistake in closing a right-of-way is one of those details that Forster delights to include in his fiction, a recognition of the deep structure underlying public and private morality; the same motif of the right-of-way recurs in the short story 'Arthur Snatchfold' (LTC, P. 107).

The account of Clive's return from Greece is one of the most expressive episodes in the novel. Clive, at this stage, we must be made to see, is about to enter a world of convention, of stifling emotion, with his psychic energies bound in the loose but smothering ties of a respectable marriage with Anne. He does not immediately answer Maurice's summons, but returns from Greece at his own leisure and one not being met, goes straight to the Halls' house in the suburbs, only to find that Maurice is not there. He feels himself strongly drawn toward Ada, because her voice reminds him of Maurice. She represents a mid point between his old and new desires, a 'compromise
between memory and desire'. In her simple unargumentative way, she represents the 'tenderness' that 'reconciles present with past'. Earlier in this scene, Clive has associated the Hall women with the 'evening primroses that starred deserted alley at Penge'; and since the evening primrose has been the symbol of his happiness with Maurice, this detail unobtrusively signals the transposition of Clive's values. So too, does the dramatically convicted entry of Maurice. The two sisters who are taking First Aid classes, ask if they may use Clive as a patient, and he is 'happy to be bandaged'. "So you don't love me?" 64 he challenges, still confident in his powers to win Clive back to reality, but no challenge can now rescue Clive from his chosen social cocoon. Appeals to the Past, Maurice dismissal of middle-class comfort and respectively, his insistence to Clive that "You and I are outlaws" have no effect, because they are based on the assumption that Clive is simply muddled, not irrevocably changed. Maurice cannot believe in the reality of Clive's changed sexuality, because it proved an illusion in his own case when he willed himself to make love to Miss Olcott. The mention of this incident exasperates Clive. "Oh for God's sake, Maurice, hold your tongue. If I love anyone it's Ada." He gives her simply as an exemplary function and is stung to jealousy and rage at what he considers disloyalty. Although the novel presents the reversibility of homosexuality through Clive, Forster is unable to present the process fairly and dispassionately.

Things go badly out of focus at the beginning of the third part of the novel. There is the sentimental emphasis on Maurice's loneliness 'One cannot write these words too often: Maurice's loneliness: it increased'. There
is the improbable and unrealized interview with his dying grandfather, who has rejected ‘orthodox’ views of the Unseen for an absurd but more sincerely felt parallel between God and the seen; and there is the moving but unconvincing elevation of Maurice to status of a hero of humanism. A succession of incidents, presumably invented to exhibit something of the possible range of homosexual relations, convinces Maurice of the necessity of seeking medical aid. The first is when he is strongly tempted to seduce a personable young Woolwitch Cadet, nephew of the local doctor; the next concerns a client, a handsome young Frenchman. (Ch. 30)

The next concerns a boy at the East End Mission from whom Maurice is saved because ‘the feeling that can impel a gentleman towards a person of the lower class stands self-condemned’. But it is an incident with a stout, greasy-faced man in a railway carriage that makes Maurice decide to consult a doctor. The main point is that lust has replaced love and Maurice is appalled. But there is a good deal of muddled thinking here about sexual and social issues. Lytton Strachey queried some of it in a letter to the author, asking why he should regard the Dickie incident with such grave disapproval, and remarking facetiously that what was wanted as a solution to all Maurice’s problems, was ‘a brief honeymoon will that Charming young Frenchman’ who would have shown Maurice that ‘it was possible to take the divagations of a Prick too seriously’.

Neither Dr Barry nor the Harley street hypnotist whom Maurice consults is able to cure him. Dr Barry is too old-fashioned to do much more than increase Maurice’s sense of guilt; and by the time he pays his second visit to
the fashionable hypnotist. In the 'terminal note' to Maurice, Forster glances at his difficulties in leading up to Alec should 'loom upon the reader gradually'. In fact, the novelist succeeds remarkably well in his declared aim of developing Alec from 'the masculine blur past which Maurice derives into Penge through the croucher beside the Piano and the rejecter of a trip', Alec's emergence from the greenwoods imparts an appropriate mythic dimension to his character and prefigures the lovers' happy, greenwoods exile. Alec comes as an answer to Maurice's feeling that 'he himself was an outlaw, Perhaps among those who took to the greenwood in old time there had been two men like himself—two. At times he entertained the dream. Two men can defy the world (Ch. 26). In his commonplace Book Forster wrote 'two people putting each other into salvation is the only theme I find worthwhile. No rescuer and rescued, not the alternating performance of good turns, but it takes two to make a Hero'.

There are just enough details about Alec's Parents, education, and plans to emigrate to ground him in social reality. Moreover, the process by which Maurice connects the isolated details relating to Alec and then relegates them to the darkness is completely convincing. (Ch.37)68 'It is the darkness that Alec comes. 'Ah for darkness' the darkness where we can be free'. Maurice unable to sleep, has the illusion of a portrait that changed, now at his will, now against it, from male to female and came leaping down the football-field where he bathed' an obvious variation of his early dreams of the garden-boy George. He yearns for love and infinity of space —'big spaces where passion clasped peace, spaces no science could reach . . . , and
arched with majestic sky and friend. Later he springs up, asleep, flings open the window with the cry "come". Alec, who has been waiting below, answers the call. "Sir, was you calling out for me? ... Sir, I know ... I know" and touched him. What is so revealing about this scene, apart from the element of wish-fulfilment, is the particular configuration of images. Here, in a diminished form, are all the images that were made so meaningful in A Passage to India. In Maurice, the call "Come" is an appeal that receives a human answer: in A Passage to India, the call is to Krishna and remains unanswered. Yet must continue to be made, as Professor Godbole insists. The contrast reflects the different between writing privately—indulging in a sentimental dream—and dealing publicly with the real world; it also reflects the advance in wisdom and maturity Forster made between 1914 and 1924.

Throughout the novel, but especially in the fourth and final Part, homosexual and social themes reinforce one another. In sleeping together at Penge, the upper-class Maurice and the under-gamekeeper Alec offend against the social and sexual taboos of Edwardian society, yet neither can at first abandon inherited attitudes and manners of speech. The precise rendering of the conflict between love and social conditioning gives the last chapters a complexity that is largely absent in previous sections. Maurice's dream of an ideal friend, embarrassingly sentimental when it first appears, is now placed in a more realistic and ironic context. The image of the 'crack in the floor', which appears in Maurice's interviews with the fashionable medical hypnotist as a symbol of the uncrossable gulf that separates him from normal heterosexual love, serves here to establish the
link between class and sexual taboos.

Personal and public themes fuse in the cricket match at Penge between the house and the village, an ingenious inversion of public school values and the cliches of Edwardian fiction. When Maurice joins Alec at the wicket, 'the game took on some semblance of reality'. In the context of the whole novel, their partnership at the wicket comes to represent the strength of their love and the promise of a redeemed, classless England. 'Maurice's mind had cleared and he felt they were against the whole world ... and all England were closing round the wickets.' When Clive, who has been absent on trivial affairs relating to the estate, replaces Alec at the wicket, Maurice immediately collapses and is bowled first ball. The whole scene reinforces and is reinforced by a complicated pattern of contrasts, the most obvious of them being the contrast between the adventurous spirit of an older England, the England of the greenwoods, and the formalized rituals of the Edwardian country gentry, represented by Clive's pointless activities and the dilapidated house, Penge, with its leaking roof.

The two sides of Maurice's nature struggle for mastery, the side attracted to the 'life of the earth' and the side that says 'Anyhow, I must stick to my class'. Some dramatic event is necessary to bring about a resolution. Forster places this event ironically in the British Museum, 'the great building suggested a tomb, miraculously illuminated by the spirits of the dead'. A great Assyrian bull looks down on Alec's half-hearted attempts to blackmail Maurice. His threats represent the temporary victory of stereotyped behaviour over genuine feeling. But Maurice finds himself 'trying
to get beneath the words' to the love and panic that lie beneath. He comes
to recognize that 'their union; as they move from object to object in the
Museum 'at a single impulse', 'was the stranger because on the surface they
were at war'. The falsity of blackmailing gesture is exposed and the real
identity of the two men in shared feelings of love and fear emerges through
the finely conceived encounter in the Museum between Maurice and his
former prep school master. Mr. Ducie presents the necessary challenge from
outside and a reminder of the false values of the past. He mistakes Maurice
for another former pupil, Wimbleby. 74 Maurice's lying reply, "No, my name's
Scudder" prompts Alec to a last futile gesture: "It is n't", he says to Mr.
Ducie, "and I've a serious charge to bring against this gentleman". 75 But,
Maurice's lie is also a spontaneous recognition of shared identity and
foreshadows his more conscious realization, after the night spent together
in London, that 'they were one person.'

The conversation that takes place before Alec leaves the London hotel
and Maurice returns to his former desolating loneliness is richly expressive
of the tensions, uncertainties, and petty snobberies on both sides that
rewaken after a night made perfect by 'the toughness and tenderness, the
sweet temper, the safety in darkness'. Alec's snarling resentment at any
interference with his plans to emigrate, his contemptuous dismissal of
Maurice's offer of a job, his 'shrewd working class' sense of where his present
interests lie, all give this scene its extraordinary psychological conviction.
But they also throw doubt on the credibility of a permanent relationship
between the two men. And the comment, 'Maurice saw through the
brassiness to the misery behind it', does not entirely allay our doubts. Yet, undoubtedly, much of the strength of this last part of the novel springs from Forster's technique of contrasting the misunderstandings and jangling disharmonies of outward appearance with the deep inner harmony that unites Alec and Maurice and which brings them together finally at the boat-house at Penge, after Maurice has entered the estate 'through a gap in the hedge', struck with 'how derelict it was, how unfit to set standards or control the future'. The love that unites them transcends class and conventional morality and constitutes a judgment on that morality. 76
Notes and References


3. See Martin, P. 143.

4. Ibid., P. 159.


7. Ibid., PP. 43 - 44.


(See also Rama kant Asthana, “Henry, James: A Study in the Aesthetics of the Novel” [Ph. P. Diss., New Delhi, 1980], PP. 32, 37.)


10. Trilling, P. 130.


12. V.A. Shahane, E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (Delhi, 1977), P. 5.


15. Trilling, P. 123.

16. Ibid., PP. 123 - 34.

17. Robson, P. 96.

19. Trilling, P. 130.
20. Ibid., P. 130.
23. Ibid., P. 137.
25. Trilling, PP. 36 - 37.
26. Ibid., P. 137.
28. Ibid., P. 90.
29. Ibid., PP. 90 - 95.
30. Martin, P. 152.
31. Ibid.
32. E.K. Brown, "Rhythm in E.M. Forster's A Passage to India", in *Bradbury*, P. 144.
33. Ibid., P. 159.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
37. Gillie, P. 130.
38. Ibid.
40. Ibid., P. 144.

42. Bradbury, *a Casebook*, p. 236.

43. Ibid., p. 239.

44. Frederick C. Crews, "A Passage to India" in Malcolm Bradbury ed. *E.M. Forster: A Passage to India* (a Casebook), pp. 166 - 68.

45. Martin, p. 146.


47. Shahane, p. 50.


49. Ibid., pp. 56 - 57.

50. L.P. Hartley, review of *A Passage to India*, Spectator, 28th June 1924, pp. 1048 - 50.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid., pp. 49 - 50.

53. Martin, p. 6.

54. Bradbury, pp. 28 - 29.

55. Martin, p. 128.

56. Imagery of light and dark recurs throughout the novel to suggest the social and psychological forces afflicting Maurice. See Martin, *The Endless Journey*, p. 128.
57. See Martin, P. 128.


60. Colmer, P. 119.


65. See Ibid., PP. 120 - 21.

66. Ibid., P. 121.

67. Ibid.

68. Colmer, PP. 121 - 23.

69. Quoted in Colmer, Ibid., P. 123.

70. Cited by Colmer, Ibid.


72. Ibid., P. 124.

73. Ibid., P. 124 - 25.

74. Ibid., P. 125.
