If any single word can express the spirit behind the creation of *A Passage to India*, it is 'love'. In the very first encounter with the Maharaja of Chhatarpur in 1913, Forster was mystically impressed by his simple dictum: "love is the only power that can keep thought out" (MD, 25). Love, therefore, is the only source of meaningful communication when all other alternatives have been exhausted because it reaches out to grasp the wholeness of the universe while thought tends to analyze the object by fragmenting and dissecting it into parts. Reason or thought may look at things steadily but misses the meaning that lies in their wholeness. We perceive, in Forster, a gradual loss of belief in thought, reason and logic. When Margaret, at the end of the novel *Howards End*, realizes that life is going to be melted down all over the world and London will ultimately devour suburban Surrey, and even the countryside 'Howards End', one day she resignedly believes that 'one's hope was in the weakness of logic' (HE, 316). When logic and reason become unbearably absurd the only thing the weary mind falls back upon is love.

*A Passage to India* is born of such love. Understanding is the natural ally to love. If the attempt to connect the prose and passion in life transforms Margaret into an optimistic
but sad spectator of the drama of life, Fielding's love for India and the Indians takes him to a better appreciation of the forces of life. For Margaret the real test for personal relations lay in her success or failure in 'connecting' herself with people opposed to her own life-style. She only partially succeeds in this test because the connection is purchased at the expense of vitality, her search for harmony and peace culminates in her reconciliation with her own 'self'. But Forster has not yet reached the end of his tether. Despair at the gloomy present and hope for a better future are still at war. Logic and love, the conscious and unconscious parts of the self vie with each other to gain supremacy and he is still groping for a lasting peace in his being, an understanding more satisfying than the uneasy truce we find in Howards End.

A Passage to India is thus the culmination of the long quest that began with Forster's first attempt in "The Story of Panics."

In a programme note for the dramatization of A Passage to India Forster says: "The India I described has been transformed politically and greatly changed socially. I also tried to describe human beings; these may not have altered so much. Furthermore - taking my title from a poem of Walt Whitman's - I tried to indicate the human predicament in a universe which is not, so far, comprehensible to our minds.«1 Although Forster admits that the novel 'dates' historically, yet the universal elements in the novel don't let the book go down as another
historical novel. "The reader of any book about India should remember as he closes it that he has visited only one of the Indias", comments Forster.2

The plot of the novel subserves the story and larger questions of life make the novel timeless. It is not the particular incidents of a particular period that the book recounts. The faithfully explored particular always has the tendency to generalize itself. While the personalities of Aziz, Fielding, Adela, Mrs. Moore and other characters are bound by time and space, the personal in their lives beyond time and space. L.S. Myers in The Pool of Vishnu says:

The personal alone is universal.
The popular leader, the subtle statesman or lawyer - they speak only for the monster of the day and their words die. But the man who speaks for all men, is heard by all men, and his words don't die.3

It is the personal 'self' of Forster speaking out from its core that is embodied in the characters like Fielding, Mrs. Moore and Adela, and makes the story an exploration of the greatest universal predicament of mankind. It has the values that are eternally valid. Like Tolstoy's War and Peace, the novel transcends the temporal limits of time and space.

While India presented to Forster a perfect model of his conception of Greek ideals, she was also for him something more than could be defined or expressed in words. She was as
vast, complex, puzzling and elusive as life itself. His attempt at an interpretation of India is also his effort to arrive at an adequate interpretation of life. She is culturally and historically as old as life itself and hence to know her is, for Forster, to fathom and apprehend life and find his own identity in the vastness of the universe. India, in spite of its poverty, its grey and dull landscape and muddling contradictions, is an irresistible call of life which puzzles one with her intractability and incomprehensibility. The narrative runs:

How can the mind take hold of such a country? Generations of invaders have tried, but they remain in exile. The important towns they built are only retreats, their quarrels the malaise of men who cannot find their way home. India knows of their trouble. She knows the whole world's trouble, to its uttermost depth. She calls 'Come' through her hundred mouths, through objects ridiculous and august. But come to what? She has never defined. She is not a promise, only an appeal. (PI, 148-149).

But is it possible for the human mind to take hold of a country as vast and mysterious as life? Is life too not just an appeal? It is in this sense that A Passage to India is for Forster a study of the predicament in the incomprehensibly mysterious universe. Fredrick C. Crews subscribes to the view that India is the principal figure in the novel and to fathom her would be to comprehend the whole creation. "The image of India as a whole is more important than any of
the figures, English or India, 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, as opines F.C. Crewe.

Forster has summed up the dominant theme of *A Passage to India* in the following words:

...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. It is — or rather desires to be — philosophic and poetic...5

Evidently India was the epitome of the universe for him, and by deciphering the seemingly intractable horizons of this land he has tried to locate man’s place in the infinitely vast expansions of the universe.

*A Passage to India* is divided structurally into three parts namely ‘Mosque’, ‘Caves’ and ‘Temple’, each part corresponding to the three major seasons of Indian climate: the Winter, the Summer and the Rains. On the human plane also the novel treats life at three levels i.e. physical, emotional and spiritual. The first part ‘Mosque’ deals with the physical aspects of human life and conduct. The second part, ‘Caves’,
focusses on the mental and psychological faculties of the mind while the last part, 'Temple', has spiritual implications. The novel is thus architecturally conceived and planned and the three sections not only give it an aesthetic form but also provide a symmetry and wholeness to the physical, mental and spiritual divisions of human consciousness. Peter Burra, in his suggestive essay on Forster, describes the three parts by comparing them with movements in a symphony:

...Mosque, Caves, Temple - are planned like symphonies in three movements that are given their shape and their interconnections by related and contrasted localities...the 'Marabar Caves' are the basis of a 'tour de force' in literary planning. They are the keynote in the symphony to which the strange melody always returns.

Many critics have seen the 'Mosque' section of the book as a Muslim section just as 'Temple' is thought to be a section wholly devoted to Hinduism. But while the last section no doubt discusses in detail the birth of Krishna and the Hindu rituals related to it, the 'Mosque' section does not treat the Muslim religion in that sense. Rather the mosque only provides a platform where Aziz happens to come across Mrs. Moore and the story begins to unfold itself. Apart from this function the mosque does not play any other role as a religious symbol. Forster had no such fascination for Islam as he displayed for Hinduism. He told K. Natwar-Singh in June 1962, "Some of my best friends have been Muslims. I have been attracted by
Islamic culture, but I do not like the orderliness of Islam. In any case I have not thought much about religions. 7

As we have seen the first part of the novel does not so much deal with Islam as the title 'Mosque' would have us believe. It is rather the fore-ground of the field where the great battle between racial, emotional and spiritual forces is to be fought. This section demarcates the physical outlines of the forces involved and divisions that exist between these forces. The gulf existing between the Anglo-Indians and the natives, the yawning gaps between the Hindus and Muslims, the cracks within the seemingly united Anglo-Indians and the chaos within the Hindu society in the form of castes and creeds, all of them point towards a land eternally divided against itself. The problem of establishing even a semblance of unity in such a land is as gigantic as the formidable task of finding an order in the chaos of life and as difficult a riddle to solve as to seek one's own identity in a 'self' ridden by multitude of unconscious forces set against our conscious efforts to be one with ourselves.

The novel is therefore a book of fragmentations and divisions, and to overcome the gulf, gaps and chasms and to seek a unity in this almost intractable diversity is the herculean task the novelist has set before himself. "The fissures in the Indian soil are infinite," (P1, 289) but hopefully "perhaps the hundred Indias which fuss and squabble..."
so tiresomely are one and the universe they mirror is one." (PI, 261).

The land having such divisions, diversity and variety cannot but present a gloomy picture of its landscape. The city of Chandrapore has 'nothing extraordinary' about it. It is "scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely" (PI, 31). The streets are mean, the temples are unimpressive. "The woods and even the inhabitants are made of mud and people continue to live in sub-human conditions like some low but indestructible form of life" (PI, 31). Against the sad, grey and dull prospects of the landscape, the sky is the only redeeming feature:

The sky settles everything - not only climates and seasons, but when the earth shall be beautiful. By herself she can do little - only feeble outbursts of flowers. But when the sky chooses, glory can rain into the Chandrapore bazaars, or a benediction pass from horizon to horizon. (PI, 32).

And it is indeed the sky, with the life-nourishing rains, at the end of the novel which gives birth to Krishna, the embodiment of the unity, order, peace and joy, who gives hope to humanity and redemption to human soul. Against this background of the earth and the sky, Aziz, the native surgeon in the local hospital, meets Mrs. Moore, who he thinks has no business to step into the mosque. Aziz, already prejudiced against the English, angrily objects to her presence in the
holy shrine but he is silenced by the prophetic lady when she tells him that she has already left the shoes at the entrance. The two quickly make friends with each other and on her remarks that she does not understand people very well and that she only likes or dislikes them, Aziz declares, "Then you are an Oriental" (PL, 45). Ironically the brief meeting between these two survives even beyond the grave.

Aziz, who has had a tiff with his boss Major Callendar, the Civil Surgeon, is pacified by the strange presence of 'the Oriental' Mrs. Moore. Her son, Ronny Heaslop, the City Magistrate, is a typical public-school product who has a developed mind but an under-developed heart. He is arrogantly rude towards the natives and his bureaucratic stance sticks crudely over his otherwise sincere and intelligent face. "One touch of regret—not the canny substitute but the true regret from the heart—would have made him a different man, and the British Empire a different institution" (PL, 70).

Mrs. Moore has brought Adela Quested from England, to arrange her marriage with Ronny. Adela, the curious and queer girl, in an effort to know Ronny and his place of working, India, is too naive a girl to understand both. She is committed to Ronny, and hence to Anglo-India but drawn towards the 'real India' and the resultant muddle in her becomes the cause of the explosion which rocks the whole of Chandrapore. But she acts only as a catalyst, the fuel in the form of burning hate in
the Anglo-Indians against the natives and revengeful anguish in the natives against the rulers is already present. The scenario of mutual distrust disappoints both Adela and Mrs. Moore who had been expecting much from their romantic tour to this ancient land.

Both of these new visitors have a desire to see the 'real India' and Fielding, the College Principal, tells them the simplest way: "Try seeing Indians" (PI, 48). Adela, who is tired of seeing picturesque figures pass before her 'as friezes', is enthused at the mention of a Bridge Party the Collector Mr. Turton proposes to hold. The party - to bridge the gap between the Britishers and the Indians - is organized the very next week and invitations sent to a select group of Indians belonging to the gentry. The party however does not come up to the expectations of the two ladies. The Anglo-Indians never try to reach the Indians on equal footing, refusing even to be courteous to the majority of them. Ronny later on frankly tells his mother, "We're not here for the purpose of behaving pleasantly...we're not pleasant in India, and we don't intend to be pleasant. We've something more important to do" (PI, 69).

The pious lady in vain tries to moralize her son, "The desire to behave pleasantly satisfies God...The sincere if impotent desire wins His blessing. I think everyone fails, but there are so many kinds of failures. Goodwill and more goodwill and more goodwill..." (PI, 70-71).
But she finds her words falling on deaf ears and feels that "she had made a mistake in mentioning God" (PI, 71). Even God's power seems to be waning in India. The Englishmen were posing themselves as gods here. Adela has a foretaste of her proposed married life with Ronny. A horrible scene of her doomed future flashes in her mind when she finds one-sided show of the English couples in the Club at the Bridge Party:

In front, like a shutter, fell a vision of her married life. She and Ronny would look into the Club like this every evening, then drive home to dress; they would see the Lesleys and the Callenders and the Turtons and the Burtons, and invite them and be invited by them, while the true India slid by unnoticed. Colour would remain - the pageant of birds in the early morning, brown bodies, white turbans, idols whose flesh was scarlet or blue - and movement would remain as long as there were crowds in the bazaars and bathers in the tanks. Perched upon the seat of a dogcart, she would see them. But the force that lies behind colour and movement would escape her even more effectually than it did now. She would see India always as a frieze, never as a spirit... (API, 66).

Adela, though queer and somewhat muddled, is a girl of reasonable intelligence and knows the simple truth that India is a spirit and that those who want to know her truly must regard her spiritually. She is also aware of the challenge that "she had come up against something that was both insidious and tough" (PI, 57). In Fielding she finds a natural ally against this challenge. Next time when he arranges a tea-party at his residence, Adela and Mrs. Moore find the two Indians,
Aziz and Prof. Narayan Godbole, quite absorbing. Aziz casually invites the two ladies to an excursion to the nearby Masabar caves and the ladies readily express their curiosity to see these mysterious hills. Ronny drops in to break the tea-party on a discordant note. Adela, offended by his impertinence breaks the engagement off with him that afternoon, only to renew it soon after. "She lacks sureness of Lucy Honeychurch, and lets the moment of truth pass by her from each other that they cannot reach us," Trilling remarks at her dilemma.

The first part, thus, is the physical side of India with its all too clear divisions, separations and barriers. While the trivialities of Indian life emphasize the smallness and insignificance of man and his affairs, Forster's repeated reference to the Indian sky, the moon and the stars, and cosmic distances between the heavenly bodies demonstrate his desire to connect the trivial life to the divine scheme of the universe. Alan Wilde expresses the predicament of man so intensely conveyed to us by this great novel in these words:

Caught between the two infinities of immeasurably small and the immeasurably large, the men and women of Chandrapore illustrate, in less dramatic and cosmic ways, the failure to communicate that follows inevitably from living in such a universe as Forster describes.

Much has been written about the Indian and Anglo-Indian characters in A Passage to India. Of the Anglo-Indian characters,
only three characters stand out as decent, respectable and sincere people who have a keen desire to have a rapport not only with Indians but also among themselves. Fielding, Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested have at least one thing in common; they are genuinely interested in seeing the 'real India' and do not fight shy of meeting the Indians at personal level. Fielding, "a blank, frank atheist" (PI, 254) comes closest to the viewpoint of the author for his bold stand against the irrational and arrogant attitude of his fellow countrymen and even supports Aziz in the moment of crisis fully believing that he is innocent. But despite so many qualities, he fails to develop as a round character. He gradually succumbs to the officeladom and bureaucratic goadings of the Anglo-Indian set up. Adela Quested is a rational, well-meaning but queerly cautious girl. Like Lucy Honeychurch she is inquisitive and decent in her behaviour but is sexually inhibited and prone to fancies. She is so immature and unsure of herself that she gradually falls into the trap of the Anglo-Indians who use her against the natives. But she does have the genuine desire to experience the 'real India' and occasionally comes quite close to the authorial voice. After the crisis in the caves, she is "no longer examining life, but being examined by it" (PI, 245). Mrs. Moore on the other hand is more of an haunting figure than a real personal and is an improved version of Ruth Wilcox of Howards End. Like her, she cuts across the whole plot of the novel like a mythical being.
Which one of these three characters represents the author’s views? One important difference between *A Passage to India* and the other novels of Forster is that in this novel he does not make only a single character the mouthpiece of his philosophy and a vehicle of his point of view. While in the earlier novels the protagonist embodied the authorial voice and all other characters and situations were compared to or contrasted with the point of view of this central character, in *A Passage to India*, the point of view shifts rapidly from one character to the other. The result is that the particular object looked at from shifting angles of view is perceived more thoroughly and impartially and the judgement thus passed is more valid and convincing.

When the subject is as complex, mysterious and elusive as India, it is natural that the technique of shifting point of view is required to keep the vision from blurring. Therefore instead of looking at this gigantic land through the eyes of a single round character, Forster has focussed on it from three different strategic points of perception. Fielding, Adela and Mrs. Moore are the three comparatively simple characters but they serve as the three aspects of the author’s ‘self’. While Fielding is the rational self at the conscious level looking at the vast and varied scenario with his empirical reasoning, Adela is the author’s personal unconscious i.e., his ‘shadow’, that has the curiosity to know itself and the world around but does not
have the strength and sureness to stand up on its own. This self, repressed, inhibited and bottled up, irrupts and explodes impulsively in the form of hallucination, fancy and schizophrenic outbursts. Mrs. Moore represents the deepest, elemental and intuitive recesses of the self. She lifts herself to apocalyptic heights and is capable of a visionary revelation of truth. It is mostly through her vision that Forster is able to look at the mundane world and its trivialities from starry heights. So Forster has attempted to reach the crux of Indian complexity from three directions and the three characters are nothing but the rational, emotional and spiritual selves of the author. Their combined convergence into a single unified vision gives a three dimensional view of the reality that is India. What critics call a 'double vision' or what Virginia Woolf terms as 'split vision' in Forster is in fact this 'multi-vision' beamed into a unified, penetrating insight.

The authorial voice makes the minimum intervention in the narrative of the novel. To keep his characters objectively individual, Forster keeps an aesthetic distance from each of them, carefully manipulating an 'insidious shifting' of his focus. To the combined views of the characters, he adds yet another comprehensive and somewhat fixed point of view, which keeps the overall control over them. McConkey stresses this aspect of the authorial voice in the following words:

Forster may shift his attention from character to character, but he does so
by viewing them all from a remove; the focus that he employs requires the maintenance of an established distance from the characters and their world. That focus is the basis of all his irony; it is central to his 'double vision' and without it, of course, we could never hear the unique accents of the Forsterian voice.10

Fredrick C. Crewe, similarly refers to the multifaceted technique of this detached point of view:

Such a novel can have no hero or villain, since the blame for the failures of communication rests on the whole conflict of civilizations, indeed upon human nature generally. Because this is so, the novel relies less upon single personalities than its four predecessors, instead of following one character's internal debate between values represented by a few other characters, we stand before a special panorama in which a multitude of 'flat' characters are briefly glimpsed.11

Even Forster himself shows his weariness of the conventional method of the novelist, In a letter to G.L. Dickinson he writes:

I am bored not only by my creative impotence but also by the tiresomeness and conventionalities of fiction form; e.g. the conviction that one must view the action through the mind of one of the characters and say of the others 'perhaps they thought'...If you can pretend you can get inside one character; why not pretend it about all the characters?12

Although the viewpoints of the three Anglo-Indian characters combined together fairly represent the authorial voice, yet it is the unnoticed, intuitive and mythical vision
of Professor Gobbo which makes it more comprehensive and embracing. Howsoever intriguing, irrational and puzzling this character may look on the surface, he alone symbolises the synthesizing power that holds the crumbling world of the novel together. Gobbo points to those potentials and possibilities in the human self which hold the key to the transcending order and unity generally missed in the appearance of the things in the universe. It is this vision which finds its fulfilment in the final spiritual section of the novel appropriately titled "Temple". But the middle section "Caves" highlights the necessity and justification of such a vision ironically arising out of Mrs. Moore's paradoxically hallucinating anti-vision.

(b) Caves

The caves section is central to the theme and plot of A Passage to India. To the Paris Review interviewers Forster told:

There must be some major object towards which one is to approach. When I began A Passage to India, I knew that something happened in the Herabar Caves, and that it would have a central place in the novel - but I did not know what it would be...The Herabar Caves represented an area in which concentration can take place. A cavity...They were something to focus everything up; they were to engender an event like an egg.13

The caves play a pivotal role in the plot of the novel.
But this section also forms the most difficult and elusive part of the book and naturally no other aspect of the novel has attracted as much critical attention as this section. It underlines the loneliness, emptiness and horror that exists within the human self. The drama within the inner world is no less chaotic and unwieldy than the drama going on at the vast social and cosmic stage of the physical universe.

The views of Forster on sex, his own homosexuality, and panic and guilt attendant upon it have a direct bearing on the question as to why he thought that a sex-scandal would be the most appropriate thing to dramatise in the caves and to arouse the wild passions among the Anglo Indians and the natives. Moreover, the hallucination symbolising psychic disintegration of the faculties in the self have a potential to bring the conscious and unconscious powers in direct confrontation and give the character a visionary moment of self-awareness. While Fielding, the rational side of the author, does not suffer from any impact of the caves and their echoes, Adela and Mrs. Moore, representing the 'personal unconscious' and 'collective unconscious' respectively of the author's self undergo vital transformation in the caves.

What happened in the caves? The question has been lengthily debated by critics ever since the publication of the novel in 1924. Ralph Wright reviewing the novel in New Statesman (21 June, 1924) writes:
There is a queer kind of mystery connected with the caves, where the terrible thing occurred, which is never cleared up. This in itself would hardly matter. What does seem to me to matter is a kind of mystical attitude to the caves, a suggestion of nameless horror that is impossible to explain. I do not believe in nameless horrors, and I suspect Mr. Forster of doing so. 14

John Middleton Murry reviews the cave scene in Adelphi (2 July, 1924) in the following words:

A cave of Marabar is the symbol of the universe for E.M. Forster; no wonder then that he should have waited so long before inviting an echo from it... "But in the twilight of the double vision, a spiritual muddle is set up for which no high-sounding words can be found; we can neither act nor refrain from action, we can neither ignore nor respect infinity." Whether or not this is Mr. Forster's condition, in that last half sentence is contained the genesis and import of A Passage to India. 15

These contemporary reviews of the book underline the supra-human nature of the caves. What makes the caves horrible and devoid of any meaning is their a-human antiquity that extends back to infinite antiquity of time. Rebecca West in another contemporary review emphasizes their incompatibility to the Western mind. Forster's description of the caves, she says:

...is only the first verse of a poem about the caves which in the end creates a symbol of that willingness to imagine an eternity that is not motherly, an infinity which is not kind, an absolute that is not comforting, which makes certain forms of Indian mysticism terrifying to the Western mind. 16
If India is the universe in epitome, the caves are India in miniature. They are the final test of man's power to comprehend the reality of life. It is not Adela who has come to test India rather it is India who is testing her. This applies as much to all the visitors to India, including Forster, and if they fail in the final test as symbolized by the caves, they fail to look at the reality of life itself. Had Forster seen India only with the eyes of Adela, the novel would be no more than a typical Kipling story about India. Mrs. Moore and Fielding are better equipped to meet this challenge. Fielding, the conscious part of the author's self remains more or less intact with the help of his rational 'good-will plus culture and intelligence' (PI, 80). Mrs. Moore representing the 'collective unconsciousness' undergoes the most profound upheavals of the soul, leading her and her creator to the 'state of double vision' where "the horror of the universe and its smallness are both visible at the same time" (PI, 212).

This section opens with religion and geography as the yardsticks to measure the antiquity of the landscape where the caves thrust above the soil 'like fists and fingers' (PI, 32). Hindu religion is one of the oldest faiths on earth. Siva is considered the oldest god. But compared to geology, the Ganges flowing through the hair of Siva is not as ancient. "Geology, looking further than religion knows of a time when neither the river nor the Himalayas that nourish it existed" (PI, 137). But
Dravidian parts of the Indian peninsula "are older than anything else in the world... If flesh of the sun's flesh is to be touched anywhere, it is here, among the incredible antiquity of these hills" (PI, 137). This part of the pre-historic hills contains the Marabar caves. "There is something unspeakable in these outposts. They are like nothing else in the world. They are older than all spirit" (PI, 137). Hence the caves are 'extraordinary' and the rarest of the oldest things in existence. They are identical and indistinguishable from one another.

Nothing attaches to them, and their reputation - for they have one - does not depend upon human speech. It is as if the surrounding plain or the passing birds have taken upon themselves to exclaim 'Extraordinary! and the word has taken root in the air, and been inhaled by mankind. (PI, 138).

Confronting the extraordinariness of this 'flesh of the sun's flesh' would in itself be mind-boggling challenge to any visitor. And if the visitors are new to India the impact on their mind is bound to be unbearably shocking. When Aziz along with Adela and Mrs. Moore, visits these caves he is spared of the crushing impact because, though he has never been to these caves, being a native he is mentally disposed of towards their mystery. But the impact on the two Western minds is sudden and complete. While Mrs. Moore, being a maturer person, feels the impact of the vision in the cave betraying apparently minimum physical and mental disturbance to Aziz, Adela is
terrified by her hallucination and cannot control the disintegration that takes place in her psychic set up. On their way to the caves, the visitors encounter a few illusory experiences which forewarn them in some queer way of the kind of disillusion awaiting them in the caves. As soon as they mount the elephant to reach the base camp, "a new quality occurred, a spiritual silence which invaded more senses than the ear...Everything seemed cut off at the root and therefore infected with illusion." (PI, 152). A kind of illusory myopia affects their vision and prejudices them against seeing the reality. Adela for example, notices a thin rope-like object in the water-course they are passing by and calls it a snake. More utterance of the word 'snake' creates a confusion even among the local villagers and Aziz also agrees that it must be a black cobra. But a look at the object through field glasses shows that actually it is nothing but a withered and twisted stump of a toddy-palm. The bright sun-light, the films of heat radiated by the hills and the first encounter with the strange and primal aspects of Indian landscape cause the confusion between the illusion and reality in both Adela and Mrs. Moore.

The very first cave above the abandoned tank looks like a 'black hole', and prospects of visiting black holes of this kind fill the visitor with awe and panic. Mrs. Moore's first reaction is: "A horrid, stuffy place really" (PI, 153). Although she is the first victim of the horrible echo and dark sensation
of the caves, Adela's encounter in them with 'shadow' of her own self takes precedence because it takes place in the shadowy region of her unconsciousness and is comparatively easy to explain.

Almost all the critics of the novel agree that Adela's 'insult' or the supposed molestation is nothing but a hallucination of her morbid and unstable mind. The morbidity and lack of sureness in her character have already been indicated in the narrative. Her 'queerness' has also been referred to at several places but it is here at the critical moment of her life that this queerness combined with morbidity leads her to this hallucination. While the text of the novel does not anywhere specify or even indicate what actually happened in the cave where she supposes Aziz insulted her, the analysis of her state of mind just before this incident sufficiently explains that she is unconsciously drawn towards Aziz. Even if one may rule out the possibility of an animal thrill in Aziz, Adela's fancy for this 'animal thrill' is hard to discount. The appearance of "a rock, resembling an inverted saucer and nicked by a double row of footholds,"(PI, 162) reminds her of the pattern caused by the wheels of Nawab Bahadur's car on the road, while she sat inside it clasping Ronny's hand. Naturally under the psychological 'law of association' a faint but definite image of her hand touching Ronny's in the car must have flashed in her mind. While she is absorbed in her marriage
plans, this image causes her to think seriously about love. As Aziz holds her hand, she suddenly realizes that she has never loved Ronny and that her marriage is bound to be loveless. "She and Ronny - no they did not love each other" (PI, 162), Adela reflects. All of a sudden she feels depressed and desperate.

The discovery had come so suddenly that she felt like a mountaineer whose rope has broken. Not to love the man one's going to marry! Not to find it out till this moment! Not even to have asked oneself the question until now! There was esteem and animal contact at dusk, but the emotion that links them was absent. Ought she to break her engagement off?" (PI, 163).

And it is precisely at this point that she asks Aziz, who still holds her hand, if he was married and had children. She almost envies his physical beauty, "What a handsome little oriental he was and no doubt his wife and children were beautiful too, for people usually get what they already possess... she guessed he might attract women of his own race and rank and she regretted that neither she nor Ronny had physical charm. It does make a difference in a relationship - beauty, thick hair, a fine skin" (PI, 163). The contrast here between her depression on the thought of loveless marriage and Aziz's sturdy and handsome personality is starkly felt by Adela. Only healthy and beautiful parents are capable of begetting beautiful children and Adela and Ronny, both not being handsome, could not hope to have beautiful children.
Here it would be pertinent to have deeper peep into her unconscious feelings and fortunately Forster has left behind him revealing material intact in the form of the manuscripts of *A Passage to India* which throw fresh light on the intended and implied workings of his character’s minds. Oliver Stalybrass has pieced together the large number of typed and hand-written folios of these manuscripts. The manuscripts, at the point of Adela’s above mentioned mental dilemma shed new light on the process of her conflicting thinking. In this version expunged from the finished novel, Adela with her hand in Aziz’s reflects on her lack of love for Ronny.

If the ideal lover had come her way she would have thrown ‘meagre’ Ronny aside, but he never would come. For Miss Quested had no illusions about her personal attractiveness. ‘Her vanity was intellectual and she knew that no one would admire /admired/ her for it’. Always from a little girl she /too/had been plain and she must expect a plain man/meagre, so she dare not expect a perfect mate/17.

(Note: In the manuscripts the signs < > mean deletion while / mean addition).

We find that Aziz, handsome and attractive as he is, evokes in Adela’s unconscious self the image of the ‘ideal lover’ for whom she could even throw ‘meagre’ Ronny aside. But at the same time she realizes that such an ideal lover would never come in her life. Later describing her state of mind to Fielding she says, “I was not ill but just then a sort of sadness began that I couldn’t detect at the time...no nothing
as solid as sadness; living at half pressure expresses it best, Half pressure" (PI, 240). The gap between the cherished ideal and the painful reality in her is so wide that at this 'half pressure' she plunges into a state of mental disorder which induces a terrible hallucination and results into a bizarre behaviour. Unconsciously she avenges her own lack of physical beauty by maligning the physical charm of Aziz which she envies and an instant love-hate complex overpowers her whole being. The expunged portions quoted above strengthen our contention that Adela was extraordinarily over-charged on the question of love and ideal lover in the 'extraordinary' caves, and her state of mind, supplemented by the animal instinct with her hand clasped in Aziz’s, was ripe for the kind of explosion and hallucination of which she becomes a victim at the level of her psyche. Even the pattern of her thinking has a sensually lustful tinge about it when she reflects on Aziz’s marriage and his physical charms: "Probably this man had several wives - Mohammedans always insist on full four, according to Mrs. Turton" (PI, 163), she reflects. The words 'insist on full four' not only connote an implied lust she invests Aziz with but also reflect her own lust having its roots in her unconscious being.

Psychologically speaking, it is Adela's projections of her unconscious feelings which create in her an illusion that she is being molested by Aziz while the fact is that she herself
wants, somewhere deep in her being, a physical union with her 'shadow' projected in him. It is her 'shadow', an archetype of the self, which projects itself in the form of this illusion. The 'shadow', according to Jung, is "that hidden, repressed, for the most part inferior and guilt laden personality whose ultimate ramifications reach back into the realm of our animal ancestors and so comprise the whole historical aspect of the unconscious." The reference to 'animal ancestors' also implies the animal thrill in physical contact rousing sensual, biological instinct. After the tragic hallucination Adela's mental set up is badly disturbed and a kind of 'dissociation of sensibility' follows. "She vibrated between hard common sense and hysteria" (PI, 199). Her recounting of the experience becomes a riddle for the Anglo-Indians and her mentioning of a shadow only further mystifies it:

"I went into this detestable cave," she would say dryly, "and I remember scratching the wall with my finger nail, to start the usual echo, and then, as I was saying there was this shadow, or sort of shadow, down the entrance tunnel, bottling me up. It seemed like an age, but I suppose the whole thing can't have lasted thirty seconds really. He never actually touched me once. It all seems such nonsense." (PI, 199).

Adela's disillusiones therefore are the product of her morbid state of mind and her encounter with her personal unconscious in the form of her 'shadow' is a psychic experience that comes in the way of her understanding her own self.
Mrs. Moore's experience is, on the other hand, more profound and intense because her encounter with her 'self' takes place a layer deeper in the collective unconscious, and instead of meeting her 'shadow', she is stunned by a kind of lightening vision, in what Jung calls 'anima'. The encounter shatters her psyche and a dissociation of sensibility, even greater than that suffered by Adela, is set in motion bringing about a total transformation in her outlook of life.

Mrs. Moore, who is already suffering from physical exhaustion and mental brooding is at even less than the 'half pressure' when she is struck by the very first cave she enters in the company of Aziz, Adela and a host of people who join them from the local village. The cave with its primordial extraordinariness plays havoc with her nerves and she nearly faints in it.

The horrid smell makes her gasp frantically and in an effort to regain the entrance tunnel, she hits her head on the wall. "For an instant she went mad, hitting and gasping like a fanatic. For not only did the crush and stench alarm her, there was also a terrifying echo" (PI, 158). The echo is devoid of all distinctions it recreates the same monotonous noise. 'Boum' or 'bow-oum' 'ou-boum'. Every word and sound produces an echo beyond which she sees the abyss, 'the horror and emptiness' of the universe.
The caves pose a cold indifference to the human world which, at this ultimate visionary moment, shatters the religious edifice of Mrs. Moore's faith in Christianity. She begins to doubt whether the name of Jehovah can be meaningfully evoked in the vast impersonality that is India and the universe symbolised by her. While Christianity never teaches abandonment of personality, the Indian mysticism threatens to dissolve and devour her personal being, which is a rude shock to her hitherto comforting faith in Christian values. The refusal to abandon the ego embodied in her personality turns out to be a severe limitation upon her capacity to grasp the transcendent truth. The caves pose a challenge to the very sense of reality of her selfhood.

It will be interesting to note the subtle shifting of people's attitude towards man's position vis-a-vis the divine power when Forster scans it from the western Christianity to the Eastern mysticism. Love, the cardinal virtue of Christianity, emphasizes personal relations as the chief agency to establish universal brotherhood. It is "an appendage of bodily life"; (AH, 303) Forster says, and therefore a Western, whether he is a believer or a non-believer, is conditioned to see himself as a separate entity, however close he might consider himself to the Divinity. "God is not Love in the East. He is Power, although Mercy may temper it. Of this power, in any solemn moment, the Oriental becomes conscious even if he be unorthodox
and it gives him a spiritual hardness that is often intimidating" (AH, 303). The Oriental, especially the Arabian Muslim, seeks a direct communion with God, giving love and human relations a secondary place. Yet "their meditation, though it has the intensity and aloofness of mysticism, never leads to abandonment of personality. The self is precious, because God, who created it, is Himself a personality" (AH, 304). But in India, neither love nor communion with God is sufficient for salvation. To see God, rather than to be God, is the dominant feature Indian mysticism. Forster goes on to say, "Farther afield, in Persia and India, another idea, that of Union with God, becomes prominent, and the human outlook is altered accordingly" (AH, 304).

These important observations by Forster bring into relief the dilemma of Mrs. Moore who being a devout Christian is faced with a radically different and challenging proposition of abandoning her personality as required for 'Union with God'. They assume even greater significance in view of the fact that Forster wrote them in 1923 when he was writing A Passage to India.

Referring to the sudden impact of Mrs. Moore's encounter with the echo in the cave, Alan Wilde remarks:

In the face of so many and so diverse customs, cultures and religions, the old woman is unable to retain her belief in an ordered world overseen by the Christian God; confronted by Mohammedanism, by Hinduism, by an India so different from the tidier England she has known, she succumbs, fully now, to the blight of relativism. Her cosmos is shattered and she withdraws into all that is left her as solid and substantial—into herself.19
Confronting oneself, confronting the unpalatable but compelling mysteries of life, is like facing one's 'anima' and 'shadow' in Jungian terms and implies facing the ultimate dilemma of human condition. It is like meeting one's ghosts, the forces lying deep down in one's self but which one seldom confronts except in dreams, hallucinations, or acute psychical crises.

While the 'eternal moment' for a typical Forsterian protagonist is the moment of vision, the ultimate moment in the novel is an antivision for Mrs. Moors. It is a vision that leads her from faith to nihilism. A quotation from Frederick C. Crowe's study of the novel will illustrate this point:

Readers who have claimed that Mrs. Moore has suddenly been transformed from a modest Christian to a mystical Brahmin have to overlook the prosaic quality of her feelings here. She has had in effect an antivision, a realization that to see through the world of superficial appearances is to be left with nothing at all.20

The 'antivision and the sense of 'horror and emptiness' accompanying it are caused in Mrs. Moore by the yawning and bewildering gap that exists between the present moment of her life and the most ancient moment of earth's history in the caves, which, the narrator says, "are older than anything in the world" (PI, 137).

Advaita P. Ganguly aptly compares Mrs. Moore's psychic state with the Hindu mythological figure Arjuna who is baffled...
at Krishna's unfolding of Himself as the repository of the cosmic spirit.

...her cynicism, her sense of horror together with a sense of resignation from the worldly duty is closer to Arjuna's experience after his vision of the World-Spirit and Time the destroyer in the figure of Krsna (The Bhagwat Gita, Chapter X). The vision of the Godhead reconciles and unifies as it is the vision of the One in the many, the Many in the One, and all are One. 21

According to Ganguly, Mrs. Moore does not reach complete identity with the divinity as that can only be attained in the state of Samadhi by the aspirant. Her experience is not "complete forgetfulness of everything external or internal - technically called Samyama. Hence she has 'double vision' after her experience." 22

It is at moments like these that the isolation of man in the cosmic vastness becomes a harrowing experience. Man, standing at the centre of this infinite timeless expanse looks one moment at the incredibly receding frontiers of the unseen and the unknown and the next moment at the trivial and petty business known as 'daily life'. "If this world is not to our taste, well at all events there is Heaven, Hell, Annihilation - one or other of these large things that have scenic background of stars, fires, blue or black air" (PI, 212) continues the narrative.

A parallel account of Forster's personal experience at
this stage of his life illustrates the author's affinity with this character in the novel. During the years 1922-23 when Forster was writing *A Passage to India*, he was passing through a very sad and frustrating phase of his life. His exciting stay in India was already over and the India remembered gave him both a sense of haunting fascination for this country and an acute sense of failure of personal relations and human communication. A letter he wrote to Syeed Masood on 23rd May, 1923 reveals this disturbed state of his mind:

...I am left with plenty of trusty acquaintances and relatives, but life is alarmingly empty in other respects, and no doubt will continue to empty itself as I grow older. All that remains positive is the expression of oneself through art, and this I cannot attain to...Personal relations succeed in this way less and less...I am well 'successful', and cheerful outwardly, but my heart aches.23

In the manuscripts of the novel Mrs. Moore's brooding thoughts take a similarly pessimistic colour when she reflects on the isolation of man in an indifferent universe:

Never before had she felt so detached from her fellows, or had thus despised their efforts to communicate. Wrong - the whole thing wrong - the instrument and signals of human gestures and cries are wasteful mistakes, a stony bypath that leads nowhere. Millions of years of talk and carnal embraces, yet man is no nearer to understanding man...There are colours and sounds we cannot perceive. There is also life we cannot perceive. Man is not the measure, he can only focus a tiny spot, he cannot define what is remarkable about the Marabar Caves.24
The above passages reveal an almost identical undercurrent of thinking shared both by Forster and Mrs. Moore. Mrs. Moore’s vision is a totally pessimistic and negative revelation in the manuscripts while in the finished work the vision is rendered less pessimistic, having a potentiality of embracing the unity behind the chaos, and the silence behind the echoes.

The ‘double vision’ looking simultaneously at the two planes of life - mundane and the cosmic - invests Mrs. Moore with prophetic outlook and makes her observe the commerce of life from a detached and distant height from where the dwarfness of man and his so-called passions - hate, love, snobbery, quarrels and wars - look nothing but foolish and absurd actions of idiots. She becomes indifferent to the daily life, but her faculties so far tuned to the ordered and logically propounded Western philosophy and Christian values, cannot connect themselves to this new savage reality in the caves and the result is a massive psychic dissociation. “But in the twilight of double vision a spiritual muddledom is set up for which no high-sounding words can be found; we can neither act nor refrain from action, we can neither ignore nor respect Infinity” (API, 212). A strange irritability and cynicism bordering on nihilism results in her nature.

Visions are supposed to entail profundity but - wait till you get one, dear reader!
The abyss may also be petty, the serpent of eternity made of maggots; her constant thought was, 'Less attention should be paid to my future daughter-in-law and more to me, there is no sorrow like my sorrow', although when the attention was paid she rejected it irritably. (PI, 212-13).

The vision until it hardens in time into a wholesome and stabilized insight free from muddledom, remains a 'split vision' symptomatic of the dissociation of the psyche. It is probably for this reason that Fredrick C. Crews refers to it as 'antivision' because it has not yet achieved the maturity and wholesomeness of a mystic vision. It is only the baffling onslaught of a divine flashlight on the untrained human mind so frequently alluded to by William Blake in his mystical poems.

What had spoken to her in that scoured out cavity of the granite? What dwelt in the first of caves? Something very old and very small. Before time, it was before space also. Something snub-nosed, incapable of generosity - the undying worm itself (PI, 212).

Thus to Mrs. Moore, the echo in the caves appears as an 'archetype of the self', a vision from the depth of the collective unconscious which connects a person to the very protoplasm of life, the primal stuff that blooms and flowers into life upon the earth. In Jung's words "it is quite within the bounds of possibility for a man to recognize the relative evil of his nature, but it is rare and shattering for him to gaze into the face of absolute evil."25 The 'undying worm' in
the cave represents the absolute reality having evil overtones for Mrs. Moore who has been fed all her life on the Christian morals of relative good and evil. While facing the absolute, so starkly naked, she reaches a point where every meaning becomes absurd and yet there is a method, a design and therefore a meaning behind even the most absurd of the things.

The more she thought over it, the more disagreeable and frightening it became...
The crush and smells she could forget, but the echo began in some indescribable way to undermine her hold on life. Coming at a moment when she chanced to be fatigued it had managed to murmur: 'Pathos, piety, courage - they exist, but are identical, and so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value. (Pl, 160).

The caves render everything identical, instantly showing the oneness of the universe. Every thing 'amounts to the same' and hence no value is attached to any thing since they and their values are identical. Every thing just 'exists' without any attributive quality or value. And, looked from a detached angle, the vision affirming the unity and oneness of the universe should have been a welcome experience. But for the ordinary Westerner one's identity, to be dissolved into the vast nothingness of the universe, to be 'lost in oneself' is naturally a terrifying proposition, perhaps as horrible as meeting one's death. Mrs. Moore is overwhelmed by the ultimate and absolute 'nothingness' of the universe and the yawning void of absurdity stares her in the face. Jung's comments on such a condition
are again relevant here. "In such a visionary state we sink into a final death...a kind of voluntary death. It is a surrender of our own powers, not artificially willed but forced upon us by nature." Mrs. Moore gradually withdraws herself from the business of life like Margaret who also shows in her later days, tendency to lose interest in the mundane activities of life and to merge herself in the visionary image of Mrs. Wilcox.

Mrs. Moore and daily life gradually become incompatible and out of focus, the trivial and absurd fuss about life and love no more attracts her attention: "Why has anything to be done, I can't see. Why all this marriage?...The human race would have become a single person centuries ago if marriage was any use" (API, 207). As soon as Adela meets Mrs. Moore for the first time after the cave scandal an 'extraordinary' expression of relief comes over her face and she murmurs Aziz's name twice, telling Ronny that Aziz was innocent and that she had committed an awful mistake in accusing him. Not only does her echo vanish, her muddled vision at once attains a clarity under the strange influence of Mrs. Moore's presence. To the shocked Ronny Mrs. Moore tells in a very casual and indifferent tone, "Of course, he is innocent" (PI, 209). And finally when Adela asks him whether it is possible for her to withdraw the case, Mrs. Moore remarks, "She has started the machinery; it will work to its end." (PI, 211) and Roony infuriated at this remark at once decides that his mother ought to leave India immediately.
Mrs. Moore leaves for Europe shattered by her antivision and the unhelping attitude of fellow Anglo-Indians and probably finds a solution in the eternal silence that lies behind all the chaotic noise and echoes of life and death. It was against this background of a hallucinating experience of spiritual horror and nihilism that the Indian message of love struck Forster as the only solution to the unquenchable quest. Only love keeps the haunting logic and maddening reason away and brings peace in their place. The striking words of the Maharaja of Chhatarpur, "Love is the only power that can keep thought out", (HD, 25) carried the essence of the Indian philosophy which replaced the sense of horror and emptiness that had been bedevilling Forster and his characters in his earlier novels. The Indian mysticism propagating unconditional surrender of the personality and emphasizing complete union with the divine seemed to hold the key to the nagging questions troubling the mind of the writer and the last part of the novel "Temple" is an optimistic resolution of the warring forces witnessed in the first two sections of the novel.

(C) Temple

Though Mrs. Moore leaves India, and dies on her way to England, a little short of attaining the wholeness she aspires for, she has served the purpose of her creator. Forster, as we noted earlier, uses the shifting point of view in order to get the maximum perception of life through this narrative technique.
Chaos, in any form, would drive the terrified person into a searching for an order. It is natural that the primordial caves should compel the author to seek some meaning in life at some appropriate place. Temple, the nearest formal approximation of the caves is the obvious choice. Cave is closely associated with the temple, both physically and spiritually. The origin of faith in gods and consequent formation of organized religion can be traced to the horror the primitive man experienced when in the pre-historic age he first encountered the cave in all its barren meaninglessness. He gave the name, God, to the unseen powers which lay beyond his comprehension. The worship of these powers in the form of gods gave him a sense of security from the abyss symbolising absurdity and nihilism of life. It is, therefore, not without significance that the most ancient temples in India and other ancient civilizations like Greece and Babylon came into being in caves themselves. The people of pre-historic period not only decorated the caves with images and idols of gods to drive out the terror of the chaotic abyss from them, they also inscribed and carved their walls with human figures to bring man in harmony with them. When C.G. Jung asked a local pundit at Turukalukundram (South India) why the ancient pagoda there was covered with obscene human sculptures, he got a very revealing explanation:

...a local pundit explained to me that the old temples were purposely covered on the outside, from top to bottom, with obscene sculptures, in order to remind ordinary people of their sexuality. The spirit, he
said, was a great danger, because Yama, the god of death, would instantly carry off these people (the 'imperfect') if they trod the spiritual path directly, without preparation. The erotic sculptures were meant to remind them of their dharma (law) which bids them to fulfil their ordinary lives. Only when they have fulfilled their dharma can they tread the spiritual path. The obscenities were intended to arouse the erotic curiosity, so that they should not forget their dharma, otherwise they would not fulfil it... That was also why the two seductresses stood at the entrance of the temple, luring the people to fulfil their dharma, because only this way could the ordinary man attain to higher spiritual development. And since the temple represented the whole world, all human activities were portrayed in it; and because most people are always thinking of sex anyway, the great majority of the temple sculptures were of erotic nature. For this reason too, he said, the lingam (phalus) stands in the sacred cavity of the adyton (Holi of Holies), in the garha griha (house of the womb).27

The world famous cave-temples at Ajanta, Ellora, Khajuraho and elsewhere have the same significance and embody in their architecture and sculptures this ancient wisdom of Indian philosophy. It is perhaps for this reason that Forster, after abandoning his faith in highly arid and puritanic principles of Christianity and humourless figure of Christ, found in Krishana and His amorous dancing (rasa-lilas) the symbol that could connect the spiritual life to the ordinary, mundane human activities and yet act as a 'redeemer' of man's sufferings. The temple too, likewise, presented to Forster a symbol that brought man to the spiritual fold at the private, personal level. His fascination for Hindu temple is brought
about by his following remarks:

Now I learn that the Hindu temple symbolizes the world mountain...The Hindu temple is not for community worship. It is for the individual. Buddhism and Christianity have congregations, and monks and sermons, so they need large places to meet in. Hinduism doesn't and however large and elaborate the Hindu temple is outside, the inner core of it is small, secret and dark. Today one hears of nothing but the community spirit...I weary of it, and it was with relief and joy that I saw those great temples where the individual is at the last resort alone with his god, buried in the depths of the world mountain. I came away feeling not only that Hindu art is a remarkable achievement - that I had always realized - but that it was an achievement that I might interpret in view of my own experience and needs.

The temple is in fact a direct derivative of the cave. The inner core of the temple resembles a cavity which is 'small, secret and dark'. Again calling this cavity a garbha-griha (a womb) and its association with lingam (phallus) makes it a meaningful meeting place of the mundane and spiritual worlds. The unity of the physical and the spiritual brings about the 'wholeness' - man's most cherished goal. While the primitive cave terrifies man into disintegration of his sensibilities, as we saw in the cases of Adela and Mrs. Moore, the same cave in the form of the temple is capable of integrating the fragmented self into a whole, thus bringing about a divine relief and joy into a whole.
The 'Temple' section is a detailed account of the eight-day festival of Krishna's birth during the rainy season. The celebrations take place in the palace of a native Maharaja of Mau in Central India. The festival coincides with Fielding's return to India about two years after the cave scandal. There has been an estrangement between Aziz and him owing to the spill-over of the cave scandal and Aziz feels hurt by his self-inflicted suspicion that Fielding must have married Adela in England. To avoid the post-scandal bitterness at Chandrapore, Aziz has sought an employment in the court of the Maharaja at Mau where Prof. Godbole has already shifted to open a public school in name of King George V. The point of view in this section mainly rests with Godbole, though it also occasionally shifts to Aziz and Fielding. It is however the lofty authorial voice that looks at the trivialities of life from a distant and wide angle in which the wholeness and unity of the author's self finds its expression.

Apart from Hinduism, if any other philosophy came close to Forster's outlook on life, it was the ancient Greek philosophy, with as much emphasis on the physical side of life as on its spiritual side. The body, for the Greeks, was the temple at the core of which resided the soul. While Christianity and other religions placed body and soul in different compartments so that lowering of the soul to physical level carried a stigma or a sense of guilt, the Greeks nourished the soul through the
body and the spontaneous co-ordination between the two elevated man to the heights of joy and fulfilment, free from any sense of moral guilt. The Hindu view of life presented to Forster an equally fascinating and congenial attitude to life where mundane activities, including sex, were considered a sacred duty (dharma) without any terrible sin or guilt attached to their fulfilment. The ancient Hindu concept of treating the body as a temple of the soul is close to the Greek philosophy. Describing the Greek traits in the character of Maharaja Dewas Senior, Forster writes in The Hill of Devils:

As a boy, he had thought of retiring from the world, and it was an ideal which he cherished throughout his life, and which, at the end, he would have done well to practise. Yet he would condemn asceticism, declare that salvation could not be reached through it, that it might be Vedantic but was not Vedic, and matter and spirit must both be given their due. Nothing too much; in such a mood he seemed Greek. (HD, 114-15).

K.W. Gransden aptly remarks on Forster's this unique Indian experience: "It took him out of himself and enabled him to transcend his limitations. It added the wine of life to the tea cup of experience. It brought him face to face with religion, which finds little place in the early books."

Indeed Forster, being a professed agnostic, gives no importance worth the name to religion in any of his earlier novels. Even in his stories it is not religion but the Greek principles of pagan, rustic and primitive life which make his
characters behave in fantastic and supernatural manners. India, with her irresistible appeal of balanced physical and spiritual ideals, filled him with religious awe and though consciously he has several times denied that he has anything to do with religion, even Hinduism, *A Passage to India* and *The Hill of Devi*, from which the novel draws heavily, both testify to his profound attraction for religious symbology.

The Maharaja of Dewas Senior himself was a Krishna disciple and a curious conversation with him, recorded in *The Hill of Devi*, attracted Forster to Hinduism. "...salvation then is the thrill we feel when God again becomes conscious of us" (HD, 25) the Maharaja remarked. Similar mystical axioms are repeatedly referred to by Godbole, the spokesman of the Hindu philosophy in the novel. His queer, equivocal and roundabout manners make Godbole, and his Hinduism, very difficult nuts to crack for the Western mind. Although this Hindu Brahmin appears scantily in the book and is more of a shadowy figure than a well cut out character, his appearance still leaves a strange, mystic and sometimes irritating feeling in the other characters as well as in the reader. Gertude M. White aptly remarks that Godbole "is utterly immersed in the life of spirit; so much so, indeed, as to be completely unfitted for practical action or decision. He dwells entirely in the world of being, and men of action...find him maddening."30 James McConkey on the other hand calls him a prophetic character, "for he is the
one who ever becomes the human counterpart of the Forsterian voice. To no locality on earth is Godbole indebted; he always did possess the knack of slipping off...for, like the voice, he is detached, though never to the extent of the full mystic."

In the very first meeting with Adela, Mrs. Moore, and Aziz at Fielding's residence, Godbole almost irritates his listeners with his apparently fussy conversation. When asked what the caves look like, he says: "It will be a great honour...There is an entrance in the rock which you enter, and through the entrance is the cave" (PL, 91). To their further queries he repeats his favourite syllables: "Oh no, Oh no." To the exasperation of his listeners 'he would pass over the one relevant fact in a position, to dwell on the hundred irrelevant!' (PL, 92). After the long-drawn discussion, they find Godbole begin from the same starting point. He finally sings a song inviting Krishna and explains it in the following words:

I will explain in detail. It was a religious song. I placed myself in the position of a milkmaiden. I say to Shree Krishna: "Come! Come to me only." The God refuses to come. I grow humble and say: "Do not come to me only. Multiply yourself into a hundred Krishnas, and let one go to each of my hundred companions, but one, O Lord of the Universe, come to me." He refuses to come. This is repeated several times. The song is composed in a rag√√√√√√ appropriate to the present hour, which is the evening. (PL, 96).

The song, though seemingly insignificant, reverberates in the ears of the listeners for years to come and we find
Godbole dwelling upon the same song in the last section of the novel.

Reviewing W.G. Archer's *The Love of Krishna*, Forster explains the symbolic import of this song based on the round dance (mandala nritya or Rasa-lila) in the following words:

Mystically, his [Krishna's] amours—or rather the longings that were felt for him—symbolised the longings of the soul for God. The famous round dance, in which each girl believes that she, and she alone, dances with the beloved is ridiculous in terms of the body, possible in terms of the spirit. The infinite has enough to go round—and enough to spare.32

Godbole's indifferent attitude to Aziz and Fielding after the cave scandal looks intriguing on the surface when he refuses to answer a very direct and simple question of Fielding: Is Aziz innocent or guilty?

"...Dr. Aziz is a most worthy young man, I have a great regard for him; but I think you are asking me whether the individual can commit good actions or evil actions, and that is rather difficult for us." (PI, 185).

To Fielding's annoyance, he adds:

"...nothing can be performed in isolation. All perform a good action, when one is performed, and when an evil action is performed, all perform it. To illustrate my meaning, let me take the case in point as an example. I am informed that an evil action was performed in the Marabar Hills, and that a highly esteemed English lady is now seriously ill in consequence. My answer to that is this: 'The action was performed by Dr. Aziz...It was performed by his guide...It was
performed by you...It was performed by me...And by my students. It was even performed by the lady herself. When evil occurs, it expresses the whole of the universe. Similarly when good occurs." (PI, 185-86).

Godbole's attitude to Aziz is akin to Mrs. Moore's indifference to Adela. Both these mystical figures present a combined overview of the things and are, as McCorthy remarks, the two parallel running veins of the Forsterian voice in the novel. The paradox of their utterings reveals a deep meaning if examined closely from the Hindu viewpoint of philosophy.

The echo of the cave makes evil and good one and the same thing in its 'Du-bam' or 'Bou-oum'. The good and the evil dissolve their distinctions and become the two sides of the same coin. Godbole emphasizes the point:

"We were discussing good and evil. Suffering is merely a matter for the individual. If a lady has a sun stroke, that is a matter of no significance to the universe...It is an isolated matter, it concerns herself...Good and evil are different, as their names imply. But in my humble opinion, they are both of them aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one, absent in the other, and the difference between presence and absence is great...Yet absence implies presence, absence is not non-existence, and we are therefore entitled to repeat, 'Come, come, come, come'." (PI, 186).

Paradoxically evil implies the presence of good just as the absence of the Lord implies His presence and not His non-existence. The subject of good and evil has haunted humanity ever since man came on the earth. Forster has made the subject
one of the central critical problems. Jung relates good to warmth, or heat that can be measured scientifically, and evil to cold. The presence of heat to the given degree implies the absence of cold in a proportionate measure. There is in fact no entity in physical world known as cold, while heat is something whose presence can be physically verified. All things are more or less 'good' and just as cold is nothing but a diminution of warmth, so evil is nothing but a diminution of good.  

Godbole's contention that God is present in the one (i.e. good) and absent in the other (i.e. evil) is true in logical as well as moral terms. Looking at the problem from the psychological point of view Jung further writes. "In other words we do not know what good and evil are in themselves. It must therefore be supposed that they lose their validity outside the human sphere."

Godbole, by virtue of being a Brahmin as well as the Minister of Education in the state of Mau, is the chief priest in the Gokal Ashtami celebrations. His ritualistic actions, his singing and dancing before the Deity and participation in the procession, all have been recorded in minute details in the novel. The novelist has recaptured the stream of consciousness in Godbole during all these actions. He stands in the presence of God.

Thus Godbole, though she was not important to him, remembered an old woman he had met in Chandrapore days. Chance brought her into his mind while it was in this
heated state, he did not select her, she happened to occur among the throng of soliciting images, a tiny splinter, and he impelled her by his spiritual force to that place where completeness can be found. Completeness, not reconstruction. His senses grew thinner, he remembered a wasp seen he forgot where, perhaps on a stone. He loved the wasp equally, he impelled it likewise, he was imitating God. (PI, 283-84).

In Godbole's heightened state of consciousness, Mrs. Moore appears vividly with "her faintly clinging forms of trouble" (PI, 287). And finally coming out of the temple, when his ecstasy is over, he reflects, "One old English woman and one little, little wasp. It does not seem much, still it is more than I am myself" (PI, 288). At the first glimpse these disjointed 'splinters of images' do not seem to mean much, but at the metaphysical plane, they symbolize the unity underlying all processes and phenomena of the universe. The wasp and Mrs. Moore come out of Godbole's unconscious self as separate images at separate moments, but their unity in his conscious mind also reminds us of Mrs. Moore's first encounter with a wasp in the first section of the novel.

Although G.K. O'Meas opposes the reference to Hindu philosophy's Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (Action, Knowledge and Devotion) doctrine in respect of the three sections of the novel made by Glen O. Allan, James McConkey and Wilfred Stone, there is no denying the fact that these tenets of Hindu view of life were very much there in the mind of Forster when he was
writing this novel. Forster's close study of Hindu scriptures like *Bhagavad Purana* and his love of the Indian deity Krishna must have left a deep imprint of the principal Hindu doctrines on his mind. Advaite P. Ganguly's comparison of Mrs. Moore to Krishna's friend and disciple Arjuna, especially in the context when the former baffles and overwhelms the latter by demonstrating his divine powers is particularly relevant. Drawing thin but perceptible line between the approaches of Godbole and Mrs. Moore to the divinity, Ganguly writes:

Godbole approaches God through his worship of the deity Krana. In his song he communicates with Krana and in the temple he stands in Krana's presence. Here God is a Supreme Person. Mrs. Moore's approach is different. She worships no deity. God is in her thoughts and the greatest she knows - something powerful, and mysterious, apprehensible by a meditative mind. She follows the path of knowledge. According to the Holy man, and Krana in the Bhagwatgita (Ch. XII), those who search God through the hard path of knowledge miss the joy of sensory experience. As the BRAHMAN is not an object expressible in a concept or presentable to mind as an object, it is inexpressible subjectivity. In the ordinary day-to-day experience of the outer or inner world, the Atman or the soul in union with the body, is immersed in phenomenal multiplicity and remains veiled because of it. So when the cosmic vision is achieved, as happened in the case of Mrs. Moore, the soul undergoes a negative process, emptying itself of every distinct operation of mind. Krana says earlier to Arjuna before the transfiguration: "When his subdued thought is fixed in the Self, free from longing after all desirable things, then it is said, "he is harmonised".35

The rhythmic recurrence of these motifs in the final section of the novel epitomizes man's quest for union with a
spirit which transcends his isolated self. Godbole's mysticism in a way serves as an antidote to the dry and horrible nihilism of 'emptiness and nothingness' of Mrs. Moore. "These two sides of the metaphysical question", avers June Perry Levine, "create the tension which continues to support A Passage to India years after its political relevance has given way."36

Rhythmic cycles of this kind have also been noticed in A Passage to India by critics like Peter Burra and E.K. Brown. In A Passage to India, one of the most aesthetically compact books ever written, whose thought, like music's cannot be fixed nor its meaning defined (this) is an extreme instance of one passage calling back to another", 37 remarks Peter Burra, referring to the association of the wasp with Mrs. Moore. E.K. Brown compares the last section of the novel with the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven as its 'rhythmic rise-fall-rise' brings it close to the greatest novel in Forster's view, War and Peace. Describing the ritual of submerging the clay idol in the lake waters, he says:

A part of God's retinue, now turned to mud, is swept back to shore and Godbole happily smears on his forehead. The goblins are routed. All are one. The spirit of ceremony with which this third part began reappears, to affect all the personages. Even a letter from Adela Quested, and another from Ronny Heaslop, which had confirmed Aziz in his suspicions, float in water with the sacred clay. The passage to India is over, and it has not been a failure. One of the voices of India that Mrs. Moore had not heard has spoken with trenchant power and strangely her own voice has spoken in unison with it.38
The passage to India is over and it has not been a failure. But has it been a success either? The parting of Aziz and Fielding with India calling in her hundred voices, 'No, not yet...No, not there' (PI, 316) raises doubts over its success. But then success and failure, like good and evil, are again relative terms, and the absence of failure in Godbole's terms should imply presence of success. And even if the novel has been only a partial success, Forster has achieved his aim. He has followed the predicament of man in the universe to the farthest possible horizon. And because he admits that the universe is incomprehensible to human mind and we can comprehend even the known and the knowable only upto a certain limit, such a limited success is no mean achievement. "Perhaps life is a mystery, not a muddle, they could not tell. Perhaps the hundred Indias which fuse and squabble so tiresomely are one, and the universe they mirror is one. They had not the apparatus for judging" (PI, 261) the narrator concludes.

June Perry Levine's perspicacious remarks about the total meaning of the novel emphasize the same mystical strain:

Intertwoven with the initial duality of separation and union is a second duality: the manifestation of all things, under the veil of illusion (the Hindu Maya) seemingly permanent, is actually transient, while beneath the surface, man can catch a glimmer of an attainable absolute which is posited as Truth. The doctrine also sounds much like orthodox Hinduism. However, that may be, it informs the novel and completes, with Forsterian tentativeness, the picture of man's
Thus, Forster has strived to comprehend India through several strategic angles, and though Fielding, Adela and Mrs. Moore individually face defeat at the hands of forces active on the physical, emotional and spiritual planes, Forster, not a mystic in strict terms, does reach a mystical level where he feels at peace with himself. He succeeds in identifying the potentials and limitations of man's and hence his own self in the unknowable vastness of the universe. His basic search for his identity of the self is carried one step further in *A Passage to India* and with an artistic subtlety, he brings the reader too to the point of self-discovery.

Reflecting on the mystery of the inverted phrase, "God is Love" the narrator naturally wonders, "Is this the final message of India?" (PI, 283). And perhaps he is right in hinting at the finality that India gives to the message. Love, however muddled in its form or attributes, is the language of the heart. Words, phrases, even lengthy discourses are irrelevant when man listens to the language of the heart. Mind and reason become only secondary weapons which man desperately uses when he lacks the quality of the heart. The Maharaja Dewas Senior's wise words, which provided great strength to Forster's dwindling spirits after the first world war, were "Tell him from me to
follow his heart and his mind will see everything clear" (HD, 114).

The final message of India, love, is thus the ultimate message of the novel too. And because love means giving oneself away to the others, by following the call of the heart and the soul, it implies merging one's 'self' into the cosmic 'SELF'. Reviewing Reverend Martin's book The Gods of India, Forster asserts that in the Hindu religion:

The divine is so confounded with the earthly that anyone or anything is part of God... Guidance there is but not towards a goal that has ever seemed important to the Westerner. And the promise is not that man shall see God, but he shall be God. He is God already, but imperfectly grasps the mystery. He will realize the universe as soon as he realizes himself. 40

Mrs. Moore's self-negating overtures after the cave episode, her lack of desire to involve herself into the drama of life and her uneventful death on her way back to England show a dissolution of her 'self'. The difference between life and death becomes meaningless to her. If one is 'Oh-boum', the other is 'Sou-own' for her. Existence is mere an echo and silence, even if it is eternal silence, is preferable to the vicious, circular, reverberation of the echo in the cave of the cosmos. Mrs. Moore's passing away from echo into silence is a new dimension of cosmic love. While the earthly love binds the person's loyalties only to his kith and kin, keeping the self as the centre of such self-directed affection, the cosmic love leads one from self to selflessness, distributing man's
affection and concern among all forms of existence. It is this kind of liberated love that invests man with a vision which serenely transcends the ripples of life to see the real meaning of existence in the birth-death-rebirth cycle. The birth of Lord Krishna and its attendant ceremonies may look absurd, repulsive and even dehumanizing to the western eye, but for the devout Hindus it "touches something very deep in their hearts" (HD, 103).

Commenting on Godbole's attempt to become one with God by simultaneously identifying himself with Mrs. Moore, the wasp or the stone, McConkey observes:

...identification with the absolute comes only with the extinction of individual consciousness, with the final and total separation of soul from the physical realm...And so the rebirth suggested in the final pages of the novel is one to be brought about by a love which, in turn, can be obtained only through as great a denial of self and the physical world as it is possible for mankind to make.41

Self-renunciation and selflessness the two prominent features of Hinduism, Forster seems to suggest, are the only means to achieve complete awareness of the self. It is this cardinal truth of the East which has attracted serious attention and interest of the thinkers and philosophers of the West. But it is by no means an easy path to tread for any seeker after truth. It demands the greatest sacrifice,
that of the dissolution of one's own identity and individuality. One has paradoxically to pay the price of the most precious jewel by renouncing it the moment one retrieves it. But the instantaneous gaining of and parting with the self, however painful, leaves a permanent treasure behind in the self-less personality of the seeker. The mystical and contemplative mind becomes replete with eternal joy or what Indian mysticism calls 'paramananda'. Such an elated soul would hardly mind the body dissolving itself into the medium from which it was evolved. Having attained this state of mystical contentment, Forster hardly needed write any fiction after *A Passage to India*. The quest for self was over, only contemplation and reflection remained with him till his death in June, 1970.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


7 Natwar Singh, op. cit., p. xii.

8 Trilling, p. 130.

9 Alan Wilde, p. 131.

10 McGonkey, p. 21.


12 See Oliver Stallybrass, 'Introduction', A Passage to India (Penguin, 1985), pp. 15-16.


15. Ibid., pp. 237-38.

16. Ibid., p. 254.


19. Alan Wilde, p. 139.


22. Ibid.


31 Ibid., pp. 159-60.


34 Ibid., p. 269.

35 Ganguly, op. cit. p. 159.

36 Levine, p. 105.

37 See Appendix II, *A Passage to India*, p. 325.


39 Levine, pp. 169-70.
