



## A Review of *A Passage to India* : An Application of Post Colonial Theory

Mosharaf Hossain

University of Rajshahi

**Corresponding Author:** [Mosharaf Hossain mosharafedru175@gmail.com](mailto:Mosharaf Hossain mosharafedru175@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This article highlights the perspective of the white imperialist and the unsettling depiction of the interaction between the coloniser and the colonised. This depiction incorporates diverse manifestations of racial slurs, physical aggression, and prejudice directed towards Indians throughout the colonial period. Here, Forster emphasises racial conflicts, as well as ethnic turmoil, that emerge between the two communities. This study aims to analyse the cultural difficulties and interracial connections that emerged between Indians and British in a colonial environment. We will employ the analytical technique and the Postcolonial Theory as its conceptual framework. An examination of the book via a postcolonial lens confronts the colonizer's prejudiced convictions and reveals themes of clashes among diverse ethnicities, and profound disparities. The article emphasises significant differences and unresolvable divisions that result from the varied racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Nevertheless, fostering reciprocal affection, admiration, and comprehension are efficacious remedies that can diminish racial animosity, and unite individuals from diverse racial origins.

## INTRODUCTION

Postcolonialism aims to analyze and explore the consequences of cultural and racial clashes between two distinct groups: the colonizer, who attempts to assert their dominance, supremacy over the colonized. Over time, the colonized individuals begin to assimilate and conform to the culture, and lifestyle of the colonizer. Here, we use the Postcolonial theory extends its scope beyond the boundary of literary genre to explore the social, and cultural connections between the subordinate and the superior. In his essay titled "The postcolonial and the postmodern: the question of Agency," Homi K. Bhabha argues that "postcolonial perspectives arise from the accounts of former colonies in the third world and the narratives of marginalized groups within the global divisions of East and West, North and South" (2012 ). Edward Said's idea of colonialism highlights the Western nations' tendency to define themselves positively by contrasting themselves with Eastern nations, upon which they project all the negative features that they refuse to acknowledge inside their own people. Therefore, Postcolonial theory shares a lucid comprehension of how the dynamics between the dominant and subordinate function in literature. "In this case In dianness, for Indianness has a different function in each of the discursive sites considered here: the signifier Indianness is used by British narratives in the colonial period as a means of excluding and subordinating colonial subjects, whereas in the early postcolonial period Indian scholars utilized the idea to pose a countertradition within the field of English literary criticism"( Lisa, 1991 ).

The study employs postcolonial theory as its theoretical framework to capture the mentality of both colonisers and the colonised. Postcolonialism focuses on analysing the interactions between the coloniser and the colonised, as well as the relationship between the master and the slave. Literature functions as a medium for individuals who are marginalised, colonised, and oppressed to express themselves. Postcolonialism highlights the cultures of nations where we see colonisation and oppression, exposing how they function under colonial encounter. Since the late 1970s, literary critics have employed different term to examine the varied cultural outcomes of colonisation. Ting Toomey et al. depict "The world is made up of people from different cultures. Culture refers to the beliefs, values, and norms that an individual identity" ( 2018). Cultural conflict is the major issue in this novel, and we explore this throughout the novel. In this case, Turner et al. (2021) showcases "Conflicts arises when expectation from people of a certain behavior due to their con-sign, are not met" . Additionally, Stewart portrays "Cultural conflict is defined as conflict occurring between individuals on social groups that are separated by Cultural Boundaries" (2016). The theoretical foundation of this study relies on textual analysis to examine the mindset differences between the Western and Eastern cultures. He does not have a navigational instrument to guide and orient him in the middle of chaotic situations. This study is qualitative and largely utilises the approaches of description, interpretation, and investigation. The qualitative study utilised textual analysis as a research methodology, focusing primarily on the interpretation, inquiry, and analysis of

selected ideas pertaining to mindset and friendship. This approach overlooks any other themes or characteristics that might be present in the text under examination. "Cultural conflicts at the heart of *A Passage to India* and in the background are a conflict between two fundamentally different cultures, those of East and West. Dr. Aziz is emotionally, Fielding and Adela are intellect and professor Godbole is love" (R. Daghamin, 2019).

Bhupal Singh (2021) portrays "The novel is a clever picture of Englishmen in India, a subtle portraiture of the Indian (especially the Moslem mind) and a fascinating study of the problems arising out of the contact of India with the West". At the same time, E.M. Forster distinguished himself by experiencing a surge in popularity for his works, while their publications were losing favour in the literary community. As a result of these differences, both communities are unable to sustain a long-lasting sense of togetherness and genuine camaraderie, leading to their eventual separation based on their racial beliefs. Homi Bhabha argues "that the meeting point between the coloniser and the colonised, which he refers to as the third space of cultural expression, is significant. This place primarily challenges and undermines the dualistic thinking and fixed identities created by colonial knowledge" (2012). While Dr. Aziz is being held in custody, Mr. Turton cautions Cyril Fielding that he has consistently witnessed disastrous consequences whenever English individuals and Indians attempt to form close social connections. Adela Quested's lack of familiarity with Indian norms is evident when she asks about the number of marriages Dr. Aziz has. Furthermore, the Turton organises a "gathering with the aim of reconciling the split between the Eastern and Western civilizations. However, this event also serves to underline the ongoing tension between these two divergent communities. Mrs. Moore further notes that India is replete with enigmatic and chaotic elements that are beyond the comprehension of Westerners" (2005).

"Dr. Aziz is a fictional character a humble Muslim surgeon in *A Passage to India* by E.M. Forster" (Afettouche, 2022). The characters raise the central subject of the novel: whether an Indian citizen may establish a friendship with an English native. "Each section of the novel provides a distinct viewpoint on this concept. The "Mosque" section introduces the friendships between Aziz and the English. The "Caves" section disrupts these relationships. Finally, the "Temple" section suggests a ray of hope and unity after India gains independence from colonization" (Lan 493). The work contains numerous examples of racial hostility and misunderstandings between cultures. Consequently, the main theme of the narrative is the exploration of cultural understanding and the obstacles caused by interracial misconception.

## RESEARCH METHOD

I have read more than thirty journals as well as many books, newspapers and internet sources to put forward this article. Actually, it is not based on empirical based research rather theoretical based studies. This research study uses a qualitative comparative analysis approach to examine the representation of mindset in "A Passage to India". The methodological tools are used in the study includes textual analysis of exploring themes, language, imagery, and symbolism. The study also uses secondary data sources such as scholarly articles, essays, and critical analyses, to provide a contextual background of the works of Forster.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

"Since different people identify with different cultures it is not uncommon to find people from different cultures experience a cultural conflict. Cultural conflict has been defined as a kind of antagonism that occurs whenever there is a conflict between different cultural belief and values" (Thakore, 2013). Furthermore, Wood shares "The conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims is the other problem which spoils the societies in Chandrapore" (2015). It is a matter of fact, if we have fixed mindset, we cannot solve cultural discrimination, and face the same difficulties several times .

Devi clearly articulates the relationship sharing "The interracial associations between the Indians and the British and their unceasingly growing conflict brought about cultural and racial misunderstanding and religious variations are clearly portrayed in the main parts of the novel— Mosque, Caves, and Temple" (Devi, 2017,). The journey to Marabar caverns exposes the underlying racial tensions and biases that exist between the two groups. John Beer asserts "The Marabar caves are not a revelation of reality, but a touchstone by which reality is tested. They are a vortex in the sense in which Blake used the word"(cited in Bradbury, 1970 ). As Forster highlights throughout the novel "The English always stick together! That was the criticism. Nor was it unjust. Fielding shared it himself, and knew that if some misunderstanding occurred, and an attack was made on the girl by his allies, he would be obliged to die in her defence. He didn't want to die in her defence. He didn't want to die for her; he wanted to be rejoicing with Aziz"(Forster, 2005).The purpose of their travelling is not significant endeavor to provide Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested, with an authentic experience of India, rather than a formal one. Nevertheless, the misconceptions that arose throughout the voyage had devastating consequences due to significant cultural differences between them. Nevertheless, these cultural divides result in unmanageable rage and harmful consequences .The issue of race poses significant obstacles to any potential interracial relationships between Indians and English expats. Forster delves at the consequences that arise when two distinct racial groups attempt to surpass racial borders and establish deeper connections within a colonial setting. The story vehemently condemns the scourge of racism and delves into its repugnant ideology. To violate racial boundaries in India is strictly prohibited; it is an

unusual conduct that might lead to chaos and provoke to become a true friend of Aziz. However, this endeavor proves unsuccessful as both characters acknowledge and accept their racial disparities, leading them to mutually terminate their detrimental friendship under colonial rule.

The foreboding occurrences at the Caves might suggest Adela's strong attraction towards Dr. Aziz, hence emphasizing some racial biases. Adela believes that Aziz's attractiveness stems from his racial background. "She guessed he might attract women of his own race and rank"(A Passage to India , 2005). Hence, the book prominently features racial disparities, preconceptions, and misjudgments as a crucial element. Aziz's sense of identity is that the English conquerors are no longer fit to govern India. India itself appears to verify his patriotic beliefs. In colonial time, we do not see real friendship rather there is conflict everywhere. As we can explore, Mason adds "Dr. Aziz puts a moratorium on his relationship and friendship with Cyril Fielding so long as his country is colonized; however, nature, landscapes, animals, the sky, and the cosmos condemn this friendship forever"( 2016). One might assert that authentic friendships and positive relationships cannot thrive in the context of colonialism and imperialism, regardless of the extent to which the colonialists may appear receptive. E.M. Forster questions of whether it is possible for Indians to establish friendly relationships with their English rulers in colonial India. Thus , *A Passage to India* characterizes disgraceful and detrimental interracial relationships; it also underscores the abhorrent societal circumstances of a marginalized and stigmatized population. Forster depicts that racial hatred is unkind ; it is inappropriate and nonsensical to think such way.

"Off all the characters in the novel, Fielding is clearly the most associated with Forster himself. Among the Englishman in Chandrapore Fielding is far and away most the successful at developing relationships with native Indians. Fielding is an individualist who has no great allegiance to any group" (Khrisat, 2013). Fielding's support for Aziz depicts his willingness to transcend racial borders and disregard societal norms. From English eyes, when Fielding deviates from his cultural boundaries, he not only compromises his personal identity, but also endangers his fellow English community. Through the trail scene and Dr. Aziz's triumph, it becomes transparent that the British people are not always superior than Indians, and it dismantles the colonizers' traditional views. Professor Narayan Godbole embodies a harmonious convergence of Eastern and Western influences, appearing almost prophetic in nature. Godbole provides a response to the racial strife and the lack of acceptance amongst different races that is implied in the novel. He fully accepts everything as divine and transcends the disorder and emptiness of his racial environment in order to connect with the harmony and affirmation that exist beyond racial turmoil. Godbole's pursuit of the spiritual transcends the constraints of space and time, as he strives to attain the absolute by completely surrendering himself and extinguishing his inner consciousness. Godbole's perspective on life aligns closely with Forster's principles, and we observe Mrs. Moore' ability about redemption has spiritual connection with Godbole. Godbole's portrayal of

Hindu mystical concepts , in most cases, challenges the conceptual barriers of racism and mitigates interracial tension within the book.

In colonial India, as far as we can guess , the writer showcases the racial discrimination prevalent during a period of turbulence. 'Race' categorizes individuals into various groupings based on biological, ethnic, and physical characteristics. Throughout history, humans have consistently devised methods to categorize themselves into various groups based on size, hierarchy, and perceived superiority or inferiority. Indeed, individuals have a tendency to segregate themselves based on diverse factors, including language, religion, race, and other similar considerations. "Cultural mistrust and false accusations doom a friendship in British colonial India between Indian. An Englishwoman engaged to marry a city magistrate an English education. A Passage to India, novels by E.M. Forster published in 1924 and considered one of the author's finest works" (Naghshbandi & Zarrinjooee, 2015). *A Passage to India* serves as a vivid illustration of how interactions between two distinct races, cultures, and nationalities can lead to uncertainty . For instance, Aziz and Mrs. Moore experience a strong emotional connection and engage with one other intensely. Forster's novel raises a profound and contentious question: Can indigenous Indians form friendships with English settlers, or vice versa? In reality, Adela is the reason for Aziz in the narrative to experience significant suffering, pain, and loss. The English woman, feeling melancholic and chagrined, is unable to effectively express her anxieties and grief. Consequently, she acquires a deep understanding of human nature and experiences the remorse for the unselfish harm she has caused to him. Universal respect, and love transcend race and color, since they have the power to unite people regardless of their diverse environments and racial contexts. We see Miss Quested's transformation , crossing her cultural bounds and ultimately achieving salvation. She is a bold and audacious woman, and does not feel shame for her white ethnicity.

In this novel, E.M. Forster portrays a cultural conflict that we see in a colonial environment. "Cultural conflict is a type of conflict occurs when different culture values and beliefs clash it has been used to explain violence and crime" (Gill & Brah, 2014). He attempted to illustrate the human situation inside a foreign and incomprehensible cosmos. In the novel, Forster explicitly conveys his irritation and fury towards certain xenophobic English individuals he encountered while residing in India. This novel serves as a compendium of underlying inquiries, implying that the two races cannot form genuine friendships due to their disparities. Some characters have open-mindedness, liberalism, and genuineness like Mrs. Moore, Miss Adela Quested, and Cyril Fielding . "Mrs Moore, engulfed in her own failure and her own despair, refuses help. Nevertheless, her mere presence helps Adela' echo, and suggests the possibility of a mistake" ( Gertrude, 1953 ). However, it also introduces a different set of narrow-minded and bigoted Indian and Anglo-Indian characters. "Ronny does not like Aziz, and thinks that Aziz can never be friendly. Generally, he is a creature, good for nothing" (Forster , 2005). Aziz is equally confined, just like all the other characters in the novel. Aziz seeks solace in a neighboring mosque to alleviate the distress and concerns inflicted by the

English invaders in general. In contrast, Mrs. Moore is a deeply religious individual who is highly regarded and has a strong bond with the local population. Nevertheless, these are unattainable in actuality due to the inherent inclination of human beings to segregate themselves based on factors such as race, color, gender, language, and so on.

Aziz meets Mrs Moore who wishes to delve into the real India, rather than the formal one. This interaction gives a deep empathy and comprehension between them. "Madam, this is a mosque, you have no right here at all; you should have taken off your shoes; this is a holy place for Muslims" (A Passage to India , 2005). Good understanding is a backbone in a relationship that helps to freely share feelings with one other; yet, their divergent racial and cultural backgrounds make a little bit difference in common things . However, he gets joy from the mutual understanding and compassion they have, inspite of having racial backgrounds. We consider Adela Quested as inconvenient, with a deep need and desire to experience the authentic essence of India. In *A Passage to India*, She expresses this by saying, "I want to see the real India" (2005). She deeply understand and experience the real cultural and social aspects of India from the viewpoint of its people and her own ethnic background. Aziz tried best to make good friendship with British people, but he failed. Therefore, colonisers regard Indians lower class , and they think that native people should not have any administrative position .

"Mahmoud Ali, the attorney for Dr. Aziz, tells the Indian judge that they are slaves after all and that neither he nor she should be trying a case" (A Passage to India, 2005). It is stated that both he and Fielding had frequented brothels during the time when they were the same age as Aziz. While they managed to evade legal consequences, Aziz is likely to be penalised by the law for two offences that he is actually innocent of. Forster portrays both McBryde and the legal system in a manner that highlights their hypocrisy and injustice. "At this stage of the novel, Forster projects himself as a humanist, and he has to acknowledge that imperialistic and colonial gaze and psyche have really loosened the British control, and they have lost the Indian sympathy, and have upset the individual relations" (Forster,2005).

The study revealed that the colonial mentality manifested itself through characteristics such as isolationism, verbal aggression, arrogance, and psychological torment. Furthermore, their imperialistic and colonial perspective led to a pervasive sense of superiority inside them, prompting them to perceive themselves as rational. Capable of governing the vulnerable populations. The Imperialistic and colonial worldviews reshape mentality of the colonisers, which led to the establishment of reservations. The impacts became apparent when the issue of trust, amicable connection, and potential for friendship, which served as a test for the relationship, arose, and he concluded that friendship is not possible. Furthermore, the colonisers' belief that they are unquestionably capable of governing the indigenous population also has a negative impact on the locals.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Distinct cultural variances concerning social values , and religion in individuals' lives play a significant role between the two communities . These differences are also the cause of several misunderstandings that occur between various cultures. According to this novel, the Western world believes that they are significantly better than the Eastern world. As a result, the colonizers have attempted to instill sentiments of domination in the minds of the colonized. Considering this, Forster characterizes the deplorable and disgraceful circumstances , and they always consider them as a marginalised community . As we can see that Forster shows the racial intolerance and the issue of race that create divisions in human experience, have harmful consequences for both Indians and British people. The author , at the same time, highlights racial conflicts , and class inequalities .Human mindset determines the ultimate approach of communication with others and positive behaviour only can bring peace and happiness keeping racial barrier aside.

## **FURTHER STUDY**

In my studies, I have not covered reading all the texts regarding this topic , and there is a lot of scopes to write a another article about this idea. As a researcher, I think others will do a lot of job to come with a fruitful conclusion.

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