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'Spots of Time' in *a Passage to India*

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Abstract

In this research paper I shall argue that the pattern of growth in A Passage to India is Wordsworthian. Wordsworth's theory of personal growth is explained by his concept of 'spots of time'. The most English kind of literary identification – with Wordsworth and Romanticism – enables Forster to reach out to attempt to comprehend the non-English and the non-Western. In A Passage to India, Mrs Moore endorses the Wordsworthian view of Nature by making Grasmere a standard of essential English identity. Forster blends the Wordsworthian notion of 'spots of time' with the spiritual side of Hinduism. This side of Hinduism Forster sees embodied in the moment of the birth of Krishna.

Key Words: Wordsworth, theory, romanticism, spots of time, passage to Indian, India.

Introduction

Forster, like Wordsworth, believes in the validity of 'spots of time' as transformative and restorative: "There are moments when the inner life actually 'pays', when years of self-scrutiny, conducted for no ulterior motive, are suddenly of practical use" (Forster, 1992, p. 204). Wordsworth's effort to retrieve childhood innocence finds an equivalent expression in moments of intense emotional and mental states. He attaches great value to these moments by virtue of their visionary nature: "Those recollected hours that have the charm / Of visionary things" (1979, I, 632-3). He names them as 'spots of time', which bring about "the power of truth / Coming in revelation" (1979, II, 392-3). His theory of personal growth is explained by his concept of 'spots of time'. They tend to illuminate a significant part of his memory, and this particular chunk of memory is linked with a very intense emotional association in the past. As he writes, "Emotions which best foresight need not fear, / Most worthy then of trust when most intense" (1979, XIV, 122-3). As 'spots of time' occur in the emotional state of an individual, that is why the experience is made meaningful by "subjective, creative consciousness"; Easthope (1993) sees "subjective experience as a domain of transcendence" (p. 33). Wordsworth believes that a 'spot of time' holds in its wake an

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incredible potential to set before him a whole new range of meanings and significance of his experience of life; it has also an incredible potential to reveal the hitherto unexplored aspects of the nature of things. There is the interplay of the creative powers of his mind and the external objects of Nature in that minimum unit of time. Wordsworth sees his whole existence microscopically focused into those transitory moments. The nature of these moments is ambiguous and problematic because there are no fixed criteria or established tradition or institutional support which can legitimize and determine their authenticity. As Maltby (2002) argues from the post-modernist perspective, "The case for a literary visionary moment is that it is enmeshed in metaphysical and ideological assumptions…the premises that underlie it may be construed as politically suspect and epistemologically unsound" (p. 3).There are two kinds of 'spots of time' recorded in *The Prelude* – those moments which come from memory, and those which happen in response to a powerful immediate perception. In the former, the experience has already taken place in the past, and it is the force of the present moment which brings it back. The very reason why the moment is brought back to consciousness speaks of its significance in terms of its intense nature. In the latter category, Wordsworth feels the power of the immediate imaginative perception which engenders a special insight into the reality of things. Forster (1992) offers two possibilities of the illuminating moment – of Wordsworth's 'spots of time'; either they may strike one unawares or they may be induced through deep reflection on the inner life: "visions do not come when we try, though they may come through trying" (p. 213). Forster seems to be favouring the instantaneous nature of the illuminating moments which tend to arise from very intense emotional and imaginative states. As Wordsworth (1979) writes in *The Prelude*, "Emotions which best foresight need not fear, / Most worthy then of trust when most intense" (XIV, 122-3).In this research paper I shall argue that the pattern of growth in *A Passage to India* is Wordsworthian. Colmer (1975) describes the power of imagination "to seize on the symbolic moments of truth" (p. 12).Though 'the symbolic moments of truth' which occur during the novel appear to be catastrophic, they are not inefficacious; they have a great potential to transfigure a character from deep seated beliefs into a much expanded individual. Though there is an instance of the catastrophic 'spot of time' in *The Prelude*, it is not inefficacious and does not bring about catastrophic consequences in the sense that inner reconciliation takes place

in the end. Wordsworth recalls a catastrophic 'spot of time' in *The Prelude* when he foresees the death of his father.

In the first couple of pages of *A Passage to India*, Forster draws a contrast between the ordinary (intelligible) and the extraordinary (unintelligible) aspects of Nature. The novel introduces right at the start the most crucial aspect of its narration, that of the Marabar Caves: "Except for the Marabar Caves – and they are twenty miles off – the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary" (Forster, 2005, p. 5).(Marabar is a variation on the actual Barabar – situated in the North Indian state of Bihar. Forster first visited the caves on January 28, 1913).Why is Chandrapore so ordinary in comparison with the 'extraordinary' caves? One of the possible reasons is that Chandrapore is part of British India where differences between the natives and the British are in sharp focus. Forster's choice of a dull and uninteresting locale of the novel seems to be motivated by a desire to represent the lopsided relationship between the Empire and the colonial subject.It seems that the city has lost its past too, and is deprived of its holy powers. For example, the river Ganges is considered sacred in India, but its holiness means nothing here. What remain of the past are some decent houses dating back to a couple of hundred years. However, there is an altogether different side to the city; there is a dividing line between this part and another where Anglo-Indians live; the city seen from the raised Civil Station is a "city of gardens" (Forster, 2005, p.6). This part of Chandrapore is an expression of 'the rural civilization of England'. It keeps the British in a daily contact with 'imagined England'. By doing so, the British regain a sense of essential English identity in India. Nevertheless, there is another side to this argument. The division in the landscape implies colonial assumption of control over Nature. Forster challenges this perception of Nature seen from the optics of Empire. Nature takes on a beautiful and well-formed appearance here; the trees, "toddy palms and neem trees and mangoes and peepul", rise above their simple heights and look wonderful here (Forster, 2005, p. 6). The Ganges looks "a noble river" (Forster, 2005, p. 6). This part of Chandrapore "shares nothing with the city except the overarching sky" (Forster, 2005, p. 6). Nevertheless, Nature embodied in the 'extraordinary' caves suggests dynamic forces of chaos which tend to disrupt self-complacent beliefs and ideas, whether of the Empire's or the individual's. The caves belong to the autonomous realm of Nature. Forster prepares readers in advance to expect something 'extraordinary' attached to the caves. Much of it is left unsaid about

them until they are visited by Dr Aziz and his guests. Forster employs the Marabar as a metaphor of transformation. It explains why the caves are 'extraordinary'. Not all characters respond to it in the same way, and realize to the full the transformation it brings about.

Mrs Moore and Adela Quested, while on the train to the Marabar Caves, recall Grasmere. As Mrs Moore exclaims with wonder: "Ah, dearest Grasmere!' Its little lakes and mountains were beloved by them all Romantic yet manageable" (Forster, 2005, p. 129). Mrs Moore endorses the Wordsworthian view of Nature by making Grasmere a standard of essential English identity. In order to relocate English identity, Baucom (1999) goes back to Wordsworth's "redemptive localism" which sees English identity as continuous (p. 32). He sees in Wordsworth "an obsessive interest in discovering the principles that would not only connect England's unborn, its living, and its dead but would guarantee that the nation's past, present, and future would fundamentally alike" (1999, p. 20). Since places have a certain aura about them, so Wordsworth "awarded the resonant English locale the power to preserve Englishness against Enlightenment modernity. England – with only the slightest hyperbole – against France, and in time, Englishness against the British Empire" (Baucom, 1999, p. 30).Baucom (1999) quotes from James Chandler's *Wordsworth's Second Nature: A Study of the Poetry and Politics*: "Wordsworth's election of Englishness over Frenchness as dramatized, and enabled, by his discovery of the famous 'spots of time' – those redemptive locales which, Chandler suggests, are also Burkean 'spots of tradition'" (p. 31). Baucom's study reveals that Forster chooses Englishness as against the British Empire. The caves are romantic too but they are unmanageable by virtue of the fact that they are unintelligible. They are, as we are told, infinite and eternal; they are not even holy. Closer examination of them does not reveal anything of significance but they assume a romantic aura in different light shades and at a certain distance: "These hills look romantic in certain lights and at suitable distances" (Forster, 2005, p. 118). The question is how to make sense of what one sees here. The caves seem to exist in their own right. They are part of Nature but resist human categories of understanding; their accents unfamiliar yet to human ears. The visitor finds himself in a befuddled state after visiting them. The perceptual difficulty arises from the fact that they all look alike even in the smallest possible details. The difficulty is further enhanced by the fact that "Nothing, nothing attaches to them"

(Forster, 2005, p. 116). Though the caves are dark from the inside, they tend to illumine the dark, obscure regions of the visitor's unconscious. In the dark, round chamber of the caves, there is a meeting of the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. The disturbance in the personal unconscious evokes greater and unmanageable disturbance in the collective unconscious as it is reflected by the echo which is negative and disturbing. The Kawa Dol is a further extension of mental confusion: "One of them is rumoured within the boulder that swings on the summit of the highest of the hills; a bubble-shaped cave that has neither ceiling nor floor, and mirrors its own darkness in every direction infinitely" (Forster, 2005, p. 117). The expedition to the Marabar proves catastrophic to all the characters except Professor Godbole; all unities break apart, and negative unities take their place. As a consequence of Adela's charge of attempted rape against Aziz, the Indians, in spite of having numerous differences among themselves, unite in hating the British; whereas, the British become one monolithic order in imposing their hegemony over the Indians. The crisis that arises in the caves spreads into many directions: Aziz's invitation to intimacy turns upon his own head; he spends an enormous amount of money in order to procure himself affection and kindness of his guests but what he gets instead is a serious charge of attempted rape by Adela. Adela loses her balance of mind in one of the caves and comes out transfigured as a hideous incarnation of her muddled intellect. Mrs Moore is greatly agitated after having gone into one of the caves; the echo unsettles her so much that the effect of it undermines her spiritual capacities. No one in the novel except Godbole escapes the muddle they create in their minds.Godbole and Cyril Fielding were to arrive together at the Marabar but they miss the train because of Godbole's prayer. Whether he prolongs his prayer deliberately or not, it remains unclear. It upsets Fielding but he manages to join the guests later. Why did Godbole conceal vital information about the caves when they were first mentioned at Fielding's tea party? Why does he remain impervious to the catastrophic effect of the caves and the echo? I shall address these questions toward the end of this paper.

Mrs Moore's visit to one of the caves brings about a 'spot of time'. She is never the same again after first entering one of the caves as the narrator remarks on her condition:

> Crammed with villagers and servants, the circular chamber began to smell. She lost Aziz and Adela in the dark, didn't know who touched

> her, couldn't breathe, and some vile naked thing struck her face and settled on her mouth like a pad. She tried to regain the entrance tunnel, but the influx of villagers swept her back. She hit her head. 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 (Forster, 2005, p. 137).

Mrs Moore feels claustrophobic in the atmosphere of the cave; the crowd, the heat, the noise, the smell, her old age, and to top it all, the 'terrifying echo', all contribute toward creating that atmosphere. It distracts her senses in those few moments of blackout when she struggles to find her way out. The material side of her experience terminates when she is finally led out of the cave but the spiritual side of her experience continues to perturb her: "The more she thought over it, the more disagreeable and frightening it became. She minded it much more now than at the time" (Forster, 2005, p. 139). It is the Wordsworthian experience of delayed revelation. In an experience like this, the revelation does not occur at the time of happening, but the memory of it at a later stage brings about transformation. Much of her earlier disturbance and uneasiness could be relegated to her old age, "Coming at a moment when she chanced to be fatigued" (Forster, 2005, p.139). In *Howards End*, Ruth Wilcox shares with Margaret Schlegel before her death that she is 'fatigued'. The weight of her experience is much more than her 'fatigued' faculties could bear. The assiduous reminder is the recurrence of 'the terrifying' echo which reduces everything, whether grand or petty, to nothingness: "it is entirely devoid of distinction…'Boum' is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it, or 'bou-oum', or 'ou-boum' – utterly dull" (Forster, 2005, p. 137). She thinks that "the echo began in some indescribable way to undermine her hold on life" (Forster, 2005, p. 139). What she sees is nothingness and herself as diminished by that nothingness. The revelatory moment proves exceedingly disruptive to her moral certitude as it leads her to a complete disillusionment of her sense of the authentic. The enormity of her experience puts into doubt "poor little talkative Christianity", the hitherto source of her authenticity (Forster, 2005, p. 139). Up till now, she believed that she was living in an intelligible universe and Christianity was the moral guide that had explained everything to her. Nevertheless, Christianity could not save her in that disruptive moment. She continues to ponder over the effect of the echo on her: "it had managed to murmur: 'Pathos, piety, courage – they exist, but

are identical, and so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value'" (Forster, 2005, p.139). She does not know yet how to fill in the void created by her experience in the cave. What she realizes is that she is face to face with "an area larger than usual" (Forster, 2005, p. 139).

Mrs Moore becomes disinterested in everything after the spiritual crisis: "She lost all interest" (Forster, 2005, p. 140). She had come to India to perform her duty, but the sudden, unexpected experience in the cave upset her scheme of life. At the time of crisis over Adela's charge of attempted rape, her insight into character guides her to the effect that Aziz is innocent. Her brief meeting at the mosque has given her assurance about the nature of his character. In the context of her son's marriage with Adela, she questions the nature of love and marriage: "centuries of carnal embracement, yet man is no nearer to understanding man" (Forster, 2005, p. 126). In other words, she implies that 'carnal embracement' is not the only means of understanding the other. She develops a foresight about the possibility of Ronny's marriage with Adela, and feels that it is not the meeting of hearts because the connecting thread is missing. It reminds readers of her belief in 'the secret understanding of the heart'.However, she is embittered and uneasy but her insight into their relationship is clear.

The narrator describes Mrs Moore's spiritual condition as she formulates her response to the catastrophic moment in the cave: "She had come to that state where the horror of the universe and its smallness are both visible at the same time – the twilight of the double vision in which so many elderly people are involved" (Forster, 2005, p.195).She achieves mystic oneness with the universe: "To be one with the universe" (Forster, 2005, p. 196). The connecting thread she discovers is love: "The unspeakable attempt presented itself to her as love" (Forster, 2005, p.196). Forster echoes Wordsworth's idea of love as the mainspring of all truth and beauty: "By love subsists / All lasting grandeur, by pervading love; / That gone, we are as dust" (1979, XIV, 168-170).She realizes soon after leaving Chandrapore that there are other places of greater significance than Chandrapore. She complains to herself: "I've not seen the right places" (Forster, 2005, p. 197). While on the train to Bombay, she develops a sense of communication with the passing natural scenes; they seem to be saying to her: "So you thought an echo was India; you took the

Marabar caves as final? What have we in common with them, or they with Asirgarh" (Forster, 2005, p. 198)? Nothing is final in India.

What really happens to Adela in the caves is a matter of speculation too. Adela charges Aziz with an attempted rape at Kawa Dol – the highest of the Marabar caves. Her faculties are arrested by the 'terrifying echo' which haunts her time and again. She is only relieved by a 'spot of time' which tends to restore her sense of the stable self. Adela's 'spot of time' happens in response to a powerful immediate imaginative perception.When Mrs Moore's name is mentioned at the trial, the courtroom begins to resound with her imperfectly understood syllables, "Esmiss Esmoor" (Forster, 2005, p. 212). Though Mrs Moore's physical absence is regretted by the defence, we are told by the narrator that the same day she dies at sea; she comes back as an 'unquiet yet kindly ghost' and blesses her worshippers. In *Howards End*, Ruth's death does not end the story of her life at the Hilton churchyard; she continues to exist as an "unquiet yet kindly ghost" spiritually connected with the consciousness of those who share similar concerns with her (Forster, 1992, p. 254).The narrator remarks that she is "Indianized" as a "Hindu goddess" (Forster, 2005, p. 212). Mrs Moore's name chanted thus soothes Adela's distracted senses. The 'terrifying echo' that causes hallucination in Adela is exorcised. She regains sanity and sees everything much more vividly than before. She recalls to her mind all that had happened at Kawa Dol: "The fatal day recurred, in every detail, but now she was of it and not of it at the same time, and this double relation gave it indescribable splendour" (Forster, 2005, p. 214). She relates the hallucination to her "private failure" – her engagement to Ronny (Forster, 2005, p. 214). She recognizes that her indecisive mind invents a strange fiction of having experienced something which actually has roots in her momentous decision of giving herself away in a loveless marriage to Ronny. Soon after realizing her mistake, she withdraws the charge.

Fielding, too, experiences a 'spot of time' in connection with the caves. It happens in response to a powerful immediate imaginative perception. It does not bring about immediate transformation of his character but it sets the foundation for his later transformation.The narrator remarks on his uneasy relation with the caves: "He finds it difficult to discuss the caves or to keep them apart in his mind" (Forster, 2005, p. 116). Though Fielding is uninterested in the caves as they "bored him", they remain on the edge of his consciousness (Forster, 2005, p. 118). He is an aesthete, and loves the

beauty of form. The caves tend to elude his aesthetic categories but at the same time he finds it difficult to repress their reality. Also he is a non-believer; the existence of an otherworldly realm seems to him the fictional excesses of untutored imagination to his rational categories of understanding. There is an occasion in the text when Fielding finds himself as a suspect among his own people at the Club, and sees his own people using violence against him, he moves on the upper veranda to cool himself. In the last rays of the dying sun, he casts a glance at the Marabar; they look beautiful to him at such a distance. He speculates on what might have happened there. All of a sudden, it gives him an intuitive insight into 'what might have happened there': "He did not know, but presently he would know" (Forster, 2005, pp. 178-9). The knowledge of 'what might have happened there' reveals itself to him. What is it in fact? It is not clear to him. It is quite probable that his rational categories of understanding – "analytic industry" (Wordsworth, 1979, II, 379) – fail to decipher the visionary significance of that "Lovely, exquisite moment" (Forster, 2005, p.179). He sees everything as the Marabar. He wonders whether he has actually experienced such a moment: "He experienced nothing himself; it was as if someone had told him there was such a moment, and he was obliged to believe" (Forster, 2005, p. 179). In that ponderous pause after the moment has passed, he questions himself whether his life has been a success or otherwise. He sees his whole life summed up to him: "After forty years' of experience, he had learned to manage his life and make the best of it on advanced European lines, had developed his personality, explored his limitations, controlled his passions – and he had done it all without becoming either pedantic or worldly" (Forster, 2005, p. 179). He thinks that he has done all he could but it does not satisfy him, "as the moment passed he felt he ought to have been working at something else the whole time" (Forster, 2005, p. 179). He thinks that he does not know the answer himself or perhaps never will. He had only come here on the upper veranda to cool himself. Symbolically speaking, his eviction from the British circle signifies his rejection of what they represent in India; the result is the exaltation of his stature on the upper veranda where he experiences the beautiful moment. The 'spot of time' does not disrupt his mind as it has done in the cases of Mrs Moore and Adela. He does realize the futility of his past achievements but he could not connect himself with what Mrs Moore did and faced the acutest spiritual crisis within herself. Unlike Mrs Moore, he simply feels sad and engages himself with the

practical matter of Aziz's release. His immediate next action is to support Aziz with a clearer mind.

Fielding's 'spot of time' leads him to a point where he sees in Adela his own mirror image. Earlier, she is introduced in the text as "the queer, cautious girl" (Forster, 2005, p. 21). Though her intellectual outlook is limited, she experiences so much during the course of her stay in India that she ends up acknowledging the limited nature of her perception. She seems to exhibit the tourist's curiosity of seeing a new place. Therefore, she is not well-equipped emotionally to see 'the real India'. What she sees is the 'picturesque' India as portrayed by tour guides. She is described as honest and straightforward: "who always said exactly what was in her mind" (Forster, 2005, p. 23). Mrs Moore affirms to Ronny about Adela's frankness: "She is very, very fair-minded" (Forster, 2005, p. 30). She tells Ronny on another occasion that "she's much too individual" (Forster, 2005, p. 44). Fielding says of Adela to Aziz that "the girl is a prig" but that is not the point to use against her (Forster, 2005, p. 109). He traces it back to the system of education that forms the character of Adela. He labels her as "one of the more pathetic products of Western education" (Forster, 2005, p. 109). Nevertheless, he appreciates her moral courage at the trial. She defies her own people and incurs their wrath; as a result of speaking the truth, she is disowned by her community. By doing so, she puts an end to her future in India; she breaks off her engagement because she does not love Ronny. Later she admits to Fielding: "I was brought up to be honest; the trouble is, it gets me nowhere" (Forster, 2005, p. 225). The narrator remarks that "it came from her heart, it did not include her heart" (Forster, 2005, p. 230). Therefore, she could not win over the Indians' hearts like Mrs Moore does. The Indians could not appreciate her more than offering her a few garlands. Truth uttered with a lack of emotion cannot satisfy the Indians: "Truth is not truth in that exacting land unless there go with it kindness and more kindness and kindness again, unless the Word that was with God also is God" (Forster, 2005, 230). What they want is 'kindness'.

Adela's last meeting with Fielding reveals a few clues about the possibility of what might have happened in the caves. They try to find a satisfying explanation but they get themselves into an area of thought much larger than themselves. There is another possible explanation of what might have happened in the caves given in the conversation between Godbole and Fielding at a time when the crisis of the Marabar was just beginning to

escalate. The meeting between Fielding and Godbole, soon after Aziz's arrest, is very interesting. Fielding is greatly concerned over Aziz's arrest and he really wants to do something for him so as to avoid the catastrophic consequences which might include everyone at Chandrapore. To his utter surprise, he finds Godbole least interested to do anything for Aziz. He is rather concerned about his own project of opening a school at a distant Native Hindu State. He has come to see Fielding because he is undecided as to whether the high school should be called "Mr Fielding High School" or "King-Emperor George the Fifth" (Forster, 2005, p. 166). It annoys Fielding. Godbole explains in philosophical terms in response to Fielding's question whether Aziz has done it or not: "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" (Forster, 2005, p. 166). It seems that it is decreed from above and none can actually do anything to avert the preordained consequences. He further elaborates about good and evil: "they are both of them aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one, absent in the other…Yet absence implies presence, absence is not non-existence" (Forster, 2005, p. 167).Adela is positive about Mrs Moore's knowing about it as she says to Fielding: "Mrs Moore – she did know" (Forster, 2005, p.230). It is reminiscent of Helen Schlegel's remark to Margaret about Ruth: "I feel that you and I and Henry are only fragments of that woman's mind. She knows everything" (Forster, 1992, p. 328).Fielding expresses surprise at it. Adela supplies the word, "Telepathy, possibly" (Forster, 2005, p. 230). It is not unusual for a Forster character to have this ability to see beyond apparent facts. As Royle's study affirms, "The world of the novel is a world of the telepathic and the unconscious" (1999, p. 4).No more of it is further exchanged because they have reached a dead end in their conversation; both are unsure of Adela's possible explanation. The narrator comments on the ambiguous nature of their explanations:

> Were there worlds beyond which they could never touch, or did all that is possible enter their consciousness? They could not tell. They only realized that their outlook was more or less similar, and found in this a satisfaction. Perhaps life is a mystery, not a muddle; they could not tell. Perhaps the hundred Indias which fuss and squabble so tiresomely are one, and the universe they mirror is one. They had not the apparatus for judging (Forster, 2005, p. 248).

Both possibilities are left open for readers to speculate: either their inaccessibility to the realm beyond or all that in its entirety entered into their consciousness; their indecision between whether life is a mystery or a muddle; diversity in unity, multiplicity of India and the universe as one. They realize that their outlook is similar, and limited. Adela is interested in personal relations but she realizes that we are mortals: “all these personal relations we try to live by are temporary” (Forster, 2005, p.249).(In *Howards End*, Ruth, quite contrary to her family’s expectations, bequeaths Howards End to Margaret whom she meets only near the end of her life; by passing on this dearest possession to her means that she values Margaret above her blood relations. Forster exalts spiritual relations over blood relations).The narrator describes them as “dwarfs” even “at the height of their powers – sensible, honest, even subtle” (Forster, 2005, p. 249). They are not questers in the sense Mrs Moore is: “Not for them was an infinite goal behind the stars, and they never sought it” (Forster, 2005, p. 249). Fielding’s ‘spot of time’ on the upper veranda of the Club had put into doubt his past achievements in order for him to realize that he ‘ought to have been working at something else the whole time’. Probably it is the ‘infinite goal behind the stars’. In his conversation with Adela, he recognizes that he himself is ‘one of the more pathetic products of Western education’. Their conversation reveals a subtext of such a ‘wistfulness’ to seek ‘behind the stars’. Later on her way back to England, Adela while at Port Said in Egypt, remarks to a fellow passenger, an American missionary: “Every life ought to contain both a turn and a re-turn” (Forster, 2005, p. 250). It has already begun to show signs of the initiation of her spiritual quest.

The crisis of the Marabar transforms Aziz into a different person: “He grew harder and less approachable” (Forster, 2005, p. 253). In his conversation over compensation with Hamidullah, he pretends to believe that he has let go of Adela for her own good but at the same time, he regrets having done so. He actually does not forgive her, and fails to see the point Fielding makes about her. He fails to recognize Adela’s moral courage in saying the truth at a time when it was supposed to be most unlikely for her to say it but she says it because she is brought up to be honest and truthful. On the other hand, Aziz’s obtuseness toward her annoys Fielding. Under Fielding’s insinuation not to file a case of compensation against Adela, he becomes suspicious of Fielding. Fielding appreciates Aziz’s emotionality but he has gone too far to forgive

Adela. As the narrator remarks, "The sequence of his emotions decided his beliefs, and led to the tragic coolness between himself and his English friend" (Forster, 2005, p. 256). Aziz's suspicion is intensified by the circumstantial evidences he sees in his situation. Hamidullah speaks in the tones of affirming the rumour Mohammad Latif is spreading that Fielding had an affair with Adela. Mohammad Latif is a leech and lives off other people's expense. Aziz pretends not to be bothered by it, but after a while, he expresses himself in a most decisive tone, which is indicative of his present mood, "No one is my friend. All are traitors, even my own children. I have had enough of friends" (Forster, 2005, p. 254). His wailing outcry of suspicion amounts to a general truth. The ghost of the Mutiny (1957) has finally entered Aziz's mental and spiritual apparatus. He is already enraged at the disgraceful treatment he receives at the hands of the British officials. He also understands that he would continue to be regarded as a suspect by the British officials. However, it is not the case with Fielding. He is appreciated by the Viceroy for challenging his own community's sense of right and being on the side of truth; the gesture of appreciation by the Viceroy is meant to win him back to their community. Consequently, he is given back his place in the club.

In that much embittered situation after his arrest, Aziz suffers tragically; he casts his lot with Indians. Nevertheless, he reveals a different aspect of himself in a brief conversation with Das, the assistant magistrate; he speaks about the ambiguous nature of the term "the general Indian" because "there is no such person in existence" (Forster, 2005, p. 251). He also acknowledges to Das that it is not possible for any creed to accommodate the whole of India. He foresees a secular future of India: "The song of the future must transcend creed" (Forster, 2005, p.253). Aziz's words if seen in today's world are so true of India. Consequently, he turns his direction toward poetry. His love of poetry is the only autonomous realm where he could give form to his chaotic feelings as he says to Hamidullah, "There are many ways of being a man; mine is to express what is deepest in my heart" (Forster, 2005, p.254). Aziz's maternal grandfather was a poet and a freedom fighter as well.He declares to Hamidullah: "I am determined to leave Chandrapore. The problem is, for where? I am determined to write poetry. The problem is, about what" (Forster, 2005, p. 254)?Hamidullah suggests to Aziz the subject for his poetry: "The Indian lady as she is and not as she is supposed to be" (Forster, 2005, p. 255). Hamidullah, being a distant relative and an elderly, experienced person,

suggests to Aziz that he continue his profession the same way as before at Chandrapore but his insinuations could not pull back Aziz from pursuing the course of action he has set for himself. In spite of acknowledging the limitation of religious faith to 'embrace the whole of India', he seeks a religious solution to his dilemma. Aziz slips back to religion in moments of crisis. His determination to leave Chandrapore for an unspecified direction is an evidence of his intensely ambivalent attitude toward his situation. In Islam, it is highly advisable to migrate if the circumstances are too oppressive to bear or if it is no longer possible to live according to the principles of Islam. It is supremely exemplified in Prophet Mohammad's decision to leave his native place, Mukkah, for Madina. He was motivated to migrate because the infidels had made it enormously difficult for him and his followers to live according to his belief. Another nearest parallel can be found in the Khilafat (Migration) Movement (1919-1924) led by Maulana Mohammad Ali Jouhar (1878-1931). The major purpose of this Movement was to save the institution of Caliphate – in the Saudi version of Islam, it is considered to be the highest living authority to act on behalf of God – because the British disintegrated the Ottoman Empire. It is beside the point here that this Movement led Muslims to a greater disaster. It appealed to Indian Muslims to leave India and go to Afghanistan. Aziz's decision to migrate seems to have been motivated by religious and political examples. On the other hand, it is also possible that he is determined not to live and serve in British India.

Fielding's efforts at clearing up the dark clouds of misunderstanding between them do not find a passage into Aziz's otherwise generous heart. Aziz's withdrawal of generosity is founded on his un-investigated suspicions: "Suspicion and belief could in his mind exist side by side" (Forster, 2005, p. 263). Fielding tries to have a frank talk with Aziz but he is so much deceived by the inauthentic rumours spread by an unreliable character like Mohammad Latif. Aziz rather closes himself up in his suspicions. The narrator generalizes on the emotional instability of the Oriental character: "Suspicion in the Oriental is a sort of malignant tumour, a mental malady, that makes him self-conscious and unfriendly suddenly" (Forster, 2005, p. 263). Despite Fielding's 'good heart' and 'good will', his attempt at regaining their lost intimacy could not dispel the dark clouds of misunderstanding. Fielding could easily sail through difficulties but "Travelling light is less easy as soon as affection is involved" (Forster, 2005, p. 264).Their friendship as Forster's alternative to mutual

hatred, distrust and suspicion between the British and the Indians could not go on. Both Fielding and Aziz could not hold on to the perceptions the crisis of the Marabar brings about. Aziz knowing full well that the future of India 'must transcend creed' slips back to Islam, and begins to share the general climate of mutual hatred, distrust and suspicion between the British and the Indians. Fielding realizes that his perception is limited but he goes back to it.

Fielding reflects that the atmosphere of Chandrapore is fully charged with the 'echo'. The evil associated with the Marabar is beginning to encompass everything now: "Everything echoes now; there's no stopping the echo. The original sound may be harmless, but the echo is always evil" (Forster, 2005, p. 260). He could "never develop" the echo because "It belonged to the universe that he had missed or rejected" (Forster, 2005, p. 260). It rather thwarts his further efforts at understanding the nature of things. He not only acknowledges his own limited perception but also that even Islam does not give satisfying answers: "Like himself, those shallow arcades provided but a limited asylum" (Forster, 2005, p.260). His own limited powers cannot dispel this evil as he finds the new administration in Chandrapore operating on the same old principles.

Fielding leaves India for a break and goes to Venice. As the narrator remarks, "He had forgotten the beauty of form among idol temples and lumpy hills; indeed, without form, how can there be beauty" (Forster, 2005, p. 265). He marks the limits of his perception in "the joys of form" (Forster, 2005, p. 265). He seeks repose on the Western edge: "though Venice was not Europe it was part of the Mediterranean harmony. The Mediterranean is the human norm" (Forster, 2005, pp.265-6).Adams (2003) comments in connection with Fielding's embrace of the Mediterranean as the human norm: "Fielding, as a kind of Odyssean traveller returning from his encounter with the monstrous, re-establishes his connection with the ancient norm in traversing the Mediterranean" (p. 36). By doing so, "Forster seems still to dream of an England blessed with Mediterranean clarity. He is fighting to keep England in the orbit of the classical norm, to prevent the centrifugal forces of modernity from reducing the nation to chaos and dust" (Adams, 2003, p. 36).

Whether 'the Mediterranean is the human norm' or Mrs Moore's 'spot of time', Forster explores these questions in the third section of the novel, "The

Temple". The locale of the third section of the novel is Mau – hundreds of miles away from Chandrapore. Forster's conception of Mau is based on Dewas State Senior and Chhatarpur; both are situated in Central India. Forster explains his relation with Central India: "Central India is my India" (1983, p. 265). In a letter to Aunt Laura on February 19, 1913, he draws a comparison between Native States and British India: "Granting that Native States are worse governed and hotbeds of petty intrigue, they are yet more comfortable socially. The Englishman gets on better with the Indian here, and the Mohammedan with the Hindu, and even the poor people show a cheerfulness and air of self-respect that one seldom notices in British India" (1983, p. 200). The India of this section of the novel is not a politically conscious India. As Forster (1983) observes in his visits to India, he was amazed at the general state of political indifference in Indians: "Most of the inhabitants of India do not mind how India is governed" (p. 104). As private secretary to Maharajah of Dewas State Senior, he was able to see closely the workings of the Political Department in dealing with the ruler of a Native State: "It is strange that the Political Department, which has to deal with the princes, should specialize in bad manners" (1983, p. 44). Forster's choice of Mau as the last section of the novel is motivated by his intention to realize 'the philosophical scheme' of the novel. The shift from British India to a Hindu Native State highlights the shift of emphasis from the political to the philosophical arena. In the context of the first two sections of the novel, the world of politics tends to reflect the broader division not only between the British and the Indians but also among the various ethnic groups of the British and the Indians themselves. There is a gap of two years between the end of the previous section and the beginning of this one. The novel seems to express its positive energies on a much larger scale than in the first two sections of the novel. The monsoon, the temple, the music, and the Hindu festival called Gokul Ashtami all work together to generate an atmosphere of positivity and creativity. Forster himself witnessed the ceremony of the birth of Krishna – Gokul Ashtami – at Maharajah's palace. He writes in connection with the mysterious nature of the festival: "When the festival was over one was left with something inexplicable, which grows a little clearer with the passage of the years" (1983, p. 73).

Hindus from all sections of society assemble in the palace corridors to witness the birth of Krishna; their expressions become that of beauty itself the moment

the image of Krishna is revealed to them. In the middle of the Dionysian din and noise of music and their indistinct voices, the laws of society and reasonable behaviour are thrown aside; practical jokes take the legitimate form of behaviour. Forster captures the moment of spiritual joy in an ecstatic atmosphere where polyphonic voices become one voice. Though the whole spectacle of Gokul Ashtami looks like "a frustration of reason and form", it produces the effect of harmony; all melts into one common expression, that of love (Forster, 2005, p.270). It reminds readers of Fielding's reflection on 'the Mediterranean harmony' in Venice where he takes delight in 'the joys of form'. He reflects on "the harmony between the works of man and the earth that upholds them, the civilization that has escaped muddle, the spirit in a reasonable form, with flesh and blood subsisting" (Forster, 2005, p. 265)."God is love. Is this the final message of India"(Forster, 2005, p.271)?Forster's central belief – love – is linked to the 'unseen'. The narrator remarks earlier in the text, "Beyond the sky must not there be something that overarches all the skies, more impartial even than they" (Forster, 2005, p. 36). The Wordsworthian model of growth follows from simple love of Nature and humans to higher love which he associates with "the Almighty's Throne" (1979, XIV, 187). He draws a relation between spiritual love and imagination: "This spiritual Love acts not nor can exist / Without Imagination, which, in truth, / Is but another name for absolute power / And clearest insight, amplitude of mind, / And Reason in her most exalted mood" (1979, XIV, 188-192). Finally, what follows from the cultivation of spiritual love is "Faith in life endless, the sustaining thought / of human Being, Eternity, and God" (Wordsworth, 1979, XIV, 204-5). Forster creates a patchwork of different points of view which seem to converge in his notion of the 'unseen'. Beer's study on Forster reveals "the existence of a possible metaphysical dimension in human experience which is accepted and acknowledged by the human imagination itself under certain conditions" (1962, p. 122). The individual identities merge into one common identity "to melt into the universal warmth" (Forster, 2005, p.272). In Hinduism, it is called "bhakti", which is "our union with the divine through love" (Forster, 1983, p. 71).The Saviour is born at last: "Infinite love took upon itself the form of SHRI KRISHNA, and saved the world" (Forster, 2005, p. 273). The effect of harmony is achieved through 'a frustration of reason and form'. It goes beyond not just science and history but beauty too. The narrator comments that "By sacrificing good taste, this worship achieved what Christianity shirked: the inclusion of merriment. All

spirit as well as all matter must participate in salvation, and if practical jokes are banned the circle is incomplete" (Forster, 2005, p. 274). The whole spectacle of Gokul Ashtami puts into shade Fielding's assumptions of beauty which he derives from 'the Mediterranean harmony'. Adams' study reveals that "it ['the Mediterranean is the human norm'] does not serve as the novel's final word" (2003, p. 37).

In the white heat of the moment of the birth of Krishna, Godbole, all of a sudden, remembers Mrs Moore by chance. The object that connects the two is a wasp he happened to see sitting on a stone; earlier in the text, Mrs Moore, too, one night before retiring to bed, felt tenderness for a wasp sitting on the peg. Mrs Moore – who has been 'Indianized as a Hindu goddess – achieves spiritual oneness in "that place" in his consciousness "where completeness can be found" (Forster, 2005, p. 272). It transcends all barriers as Godbole perceives in that moment that he is no longer a Brahman and she a Christian woman. All distinctions evaporate in that moment of union. Godbole and Mrs Moore attain a mystical union not only with one another but also with the cosmos. As Adams (2003) explains in connection with Forster's search for a lasting home: "Home is no longer a particular household, England, the Mediterranean world, or the British empire, but a metaphor for universal unity and harmony" (p. 37).Godbole wonders "whether she was a trick of his memory or a telepathic appeal" (Forster, 2005, pp. 275-6). Godbole's 'spot of time' reaffirms Mrs Moore's 'spot of time'. Childs (2007) affirms that the novel is "at its core about metaphysics" (p. 192). Godbole's 'spot of time' – though located within the high point of religious ecstasy embodied in the moment of the birth of Krishna – releases humanity from the fetters of existential pressures; it puts living and the non-living beings on a scale of unity that transcends all kinds of barriers. It charges the atmosphere of Mau with creativity. Forster treats the subject from the viewpoint of a mystic who sees transcendental unity and interdependence in all things. In Hinduism, all living and non-living beings exist in a continuous chain of being. For example, the narrator remarks about Indian animals: "no Indian animal has any sense of an interior…it is to them a normal growth of the eternal jungle" (Forster, 2005, pp. 30-1). It also explains Forster's sense of amazement at finding little privacy in India. At the end of the novel, Ronny's letter to Fielding, which Aziz reads by chance, explains: "The longer one lives here, the more certain one gets that everything hangs together" (Forster, 2005, p. 293).

As Fielding's assumption of 'the Mediterranean as the human norm' is called into question by Gokul Ashtami, so Hinduism, too, is called into question by its irrationalities. Forster remains rather ambivalent toward Hinduism as a whole: "Hinduism, so solid from a distance, is riven into sects and clans" (2005, p. 278). He finds it contradictory in terms of its beliefs and practices; Hinduism is not even properly mapped out. At Fielding's tea party, Aziz speaks of Hindus as "Slack Hindus – they have no idea of society" (Forster, 2005, p.63). For example, Godbole arrives at the party later than the other guests. He misses the train to the Marabar. He conceals vital information about the caves when they are first mentioned at Fielding's tea party? Forster (1983) declares that "I don't follow the Hindu mind very well" (Forster, p. 275. He comments on the Hindu character that it is "unaesthetic" (1983, p. 52). He states categorically on another occasion, "There is no dignity, no taste, no form, and though I am dressed as a Hindu I shall never become one" (1983, p. 64). At the Maharajah's palace, Forster happens to witness the celebration of the birth of a baby; he is amazed at seeing so much money and time wasted on the celebrations only because it is their tradition. He quotes the Maharajah's words in this context, "tradition is too strong to be changed" (1983, p. 46).Godbole is so 'enigmatic' that even Fielding could not find a proper category to put him into: "for no eye could see what lay at the bottom of the Brahman's mind" (Forster, 2005, p.165). When Fielding visits Mau in his official capacity as the inspector of schools, he finds to his utter astonishment that the high school exists only on paper. Godbole is the minister of education here. His total lack of interest in education is explained by two things: 'religion is a living force to Hindus', and 'tradition is too strong to be changed'. Indians take little interest in education as Fielding comes to think of it: "few Indians think education good in itself" (Forster, 2005, p.301). Forster (1983) quotes the Maharajah's sarcastic statement on the subject of education: "The germs of the present unrest in India were laid by that benefactor of human race, education" (p. 24).Nevertheless, Fielding's interest in education is "a continuous concern to him" (Forster, 2005, p. 301). Earlier in the text, it is Mahmoud Ali who expresses a keen interest in education: "Mr. Fielding, we must all be educated promptly" (Forster, 2005, p. 246). It is quite probable that he is suggesting the Western mode of education.

Aziz is now the Maharajah's physician in Mau. He departs from Aurangzeb's fundamentalist zeal to purify Islam from idolatrous practices and superstitions. It is illustrated in his aversion of the holy Muslim shrine in Mau. It is forbidden to go to temples in the Saudi version of Islam he follows. He becomes more tolerant toward Akbar's eclectic view of life: "When Aziz arrived, and found that even Islam was idolatrous, he grew scornful, and longed to purify the place, like Alamgir. But soon he didn't mind like Akbar" (Forster, 2005, p. 282). He tends to relax hold of his earlier religious position but he continues to cherish his ill-founded suspicions regarding Fielding. He believes gossip about Fielding and Adela. He does not even care to open letters written to him by Fielding. Even when he comes to know that Fielding has arrived at the European Guest House in Mau, he vows not to see him. He tears up Fielding's note written to him to announce his arrival in Mau. The note enrages him because Fielding is accompanying his wife and her brother.

Aziz does not encourage Fielding at all to renew their intimacy. It is only accidentally that he happens to come across Fielding. He does not bother to answer Fielding's questions. It is only when he pronounces Ralph Moore as Mr Quested, he realises that he is Mrs Moore's son and Fielding has married Mrs Moore's daughter. He instantly forgives Mahmoud Ali for keeping the news of Fielding's marriage to himself. Even though Mahmoud Ali has deceived him he thinks that he is one of his own people. He renews his determination to stand by his own people: "My heart is for my own people henceforward" (Forster, 2005, p. 288). He puts on a very stern expression toward English people. He declares to Fielding: "I wish no Englishman or Englishwoman to be my friend" (Forster, 2005, p. 288).

How far Aziz can hold on to his determination not to be friends with English people? It happens that Ralph is stung by bees; so Aziz goes to the Guest House in order to give him medical treatment. Here he happens to read without permission two letters: one written to Fielding by Ronny and, the other written by Adela to Stella. The content of these letters harden him once again. He feels driven to believe in Ronny's letter that Fielding has cast his lot with the Anglo-Indians. Ronny writes in the letter about Fielding: "I'm relieved you feel able to come into line with the Oppressors of India to some extent" (Forster, 2005, p. 293). Adela's letter to Stella upsets him too because he reads in the letter something which is not there. As a result, he becomes so

unkind in treating Ralph that at one point Ralph protests against it. He complains against Aziz's unkindness the way Aziz complains against the unkindness of the British officials in India. Suddenly, he remembers his promise to Mrs Moore that he would be kind to Stella and Ralph. In their brief conversation, Ralph affirms Mrs Moore's love for Aziz. At last, Aziz recognizes in Ralph something of Mrs Moore and becomes kind and affectionate toward him: "indeed until his heart was involved he knew nothing" (Forster, 2005, p. 298). He calls Ralph an oriental as he once called his mother at the mosque. At this point, Aziz's hardness is gone. His deep-seated love for Mrs Moore remains the most central in his preoccupations. It had never died down in spite of his suspicions. The narrator remarks that "She had not borne witness in his favour, nor visited him in the prison, yet she had stolen to the depths of his heart, and he always adored her" (Forster, 2005, p. 297). The generosity he has been associated with earlier on in the text follows on forgiveness: "One kind action was with him always a channel for another, and soon the torrent of his hospitality gushed forth" (Forster, 2005, p. 297). He offers to take Ralph on a boat trip.

Once the admission of error is made, the only thing that remains is love. He writes a letter of apology to Adela; he acknowledges her moral courage in going against her own community. He could have continued to nourish ill-will against Adela and Fielding all his remaining life, but it is no longer possible for misunderstandings to thrive because the spirit of the good is very much in the air. The festival is not over yet. It goes side by side with whatever is happening between Aziz and Fielding. The last part of the festival is to throw the palanquin of Krishna into the river. As the final moments of the procession are under way, their boats collide with each other and bring them together. The moment the village of Gokul is thrown into the river, their boats overturn. They are into water the same moment when the festival concludes. The evil of the Marabar has gone. The narrator remarks that "Friends again, yet aware that they would meet no more" (Forster, 2005, p. 301). Fielding and Aziz regain their lost intimacy. He tells Aziz that his trip to Mau has been a success. Stella and Ralph find peace here. His relationship with his wife has not only improved here but also hopes to evolve with the passage of time. In the light of his improved relationship with Stella, Fielding comes to think of Mrs Moore as a necessary link between the two of them: "There seemed a link between them at last – that link outside either participant that is necessary to

every relationship" (Forster, 2005, p. 303). Since his momentary experience on the upper veranda of the English Club – 'he felt he ought to have been working at something else the whole time' – he is on a questing mission to explore that 'something else'. He tells Aziz that his wife is already after that 'something else'. His marriage affirms his ties with what Mrs Moore represents in the text. As Fielding expresses a keen interest in the spiritual side of Hinduism, "What I want to discover is its spiritual side, if it has one"; Aziz says to him, "Living with them teaches me no more" (Forster, 2005, p. 304). Aziz fails to see that Fielding is not interested in the various forms of Hinduism which he witnesses in his daily contact with Hindus.

Conclusion

Their friendship is finally triumphant over the negativity or the evil of the Marabar but they cannot meet because Fielding thinks that "socially they had no meeting-place" (Forster, 2005, p. 303). Their last ride together reveals that Aziz clings on to his lot with Indians; he makes a mention of 1857 Mutiny; he shows a clear intention of throwing the British out of India. He also says to Fielding that they cannot be friends till the British leave India. Fielding, too, thinks that he may not be able to stand against his whole community for an Indian. He is no longer a sadhu who tends to 'travel light' because he is a married man and his wife is expecting a child. The configuration of the landscape causes their horses to part in a single file. In that moment, the whole landscape of Mau seems to suggest that "No, not yet"; however, the sky says that "No, Not there" (Forster, 2005, p.306). Their final parting could be explained in the light of Forster's letter written to Malcolm Darling on 15 September 1924:

> I have acquired a feeling that people must go away from each other (spiritually) every now and then, and improve themselves if the relationship is to develop or even endure. *A Passage to India* describes such a going away – preparatory to the next advance, which I am not capable of describing. It seems to me that individuals progress alternately by loneliness and intimacy, and that legend of the multiplied Krishna (which I got, like so much that is precious to me, by intercourse with Bapu Sahib) serves as a symbol of a state where the two might be combined (Furbank, 1991, p. 124).

Here Forster re-examines his values which he tends to associate with King's college – most of all personal relationships. It is evident that he continues to believe in the sanctity of personal relationships. He also acknowledges that they are "the most real things on the surface of the earth" (Furbank, 1991, p. 124). However, he marks the limits of the 'King's view'. In other words, he means to say that the institutional mode of education is limited. As he goes on to say in the same letter, "The 'King's' view oversimplified people…We are more complicated, also richer" (Furbank, 1991, p. 124).As Aziz's ceaseless adoration of Mrs Moore does not require a political context to provide a meeting-place socially, so why would Fielding and Aziz need one? In the context of Fielding and Aziz's friendship, their parting is 'preparatory to the next advance' in their relationship. Forster blends the Wordsworthian notion of 'spots of time' with the spiritual side of Hinduism. He takes from Hinduism the side of religion that "can at certain moments fling down everything that is petty and temporary in their natures" (Forster, 2005, p. 289). This side of Hinduism Forster sees embodied in the moment of the birth of Krishna.

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