

Conflict and Reconciliation between Rule and Resistance in *A Passage To India* and *A Passage To England*

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ABSTRACT

The integration within Indo-British before and after the partition is a well-thought theme in Edward Morgan Forster's novel *A Passage to India* and Nirad C. Chaudhuri's travelogue *A Passage to England*. Forster in his novel unveils the integration difficulties within Indo-British in India before the partition. But Chaudhuri in his travelogue discerns the differences between the English and Indians after the partition. The exploration of the nature of conflict between rule and resistance, and the search for reconciliation of this conflict in both texts direct the passage of this article. By the content analysis of these books, the article follows the critical analysis of qualitative data through the thesis-antithesis-synthesis process. The research aims to probe into the nature of the conflict between Indo-British from the Western point of view on the East and the Eastern one regarding the West. It also explores the reconciliation of this conflict through the perspective of humanity. The analysis makes the future work possible to search the conflict and the reconciliation in any literary texts out of humanity.

Keywords: Conflict, reconciliation, rule, resistance, humanity

Brief Biography of the author: I, MahmodaKhatonSiddika, completed B.A. (Honours) and M.A. in English from University of Chittagong. Now I am serving International Islamic University Chittagong as an Assistant Professor of English. Besides, I am doing my MPhil degree from Bangladesh University of Professionals.

Introduction

A Passage to India reveals Anglo-Indians with colonial head exercising the imperial rule over Indians in India. They build-up a structure to sustain their colonial rule in a small town of India, Chandrapore. They make a fence in the integration of Anglo-Indians and Indians, which creates a conflict between

them. Breaking the structure either by the Anglo-Indians or the natives, it falls in a heavy blow from the central power of Anglo-Indian. The Indians regard them as evil forces and this thinking builds a heap of hatred towards them. Their nationalism arouses an emotion of resistance to colonial power. On the other hand, Chaudhuri, in *A Passage to England*, the rule for welfare prevails in England. India, even after getting independence, has to struggle with the distress of ordinary people. The rulers of Indian country alienate them from ordinary people following the trend of their colonial rule of Anglo-Indians as imperial rulers. The different ruling system in both countries creates tension within the writer and he tries to find out the explanation of the conflict through his travelling. So, the thesis attempts to show the conflict of rule and resistance probing into the reconciliation of this tension following thesis-antithesis-synthesis.

Discussion on *A Passage to India*

In *A Passage to India*, Anglo-Indians, as a group ruled by the head from the Civil Station of Chandrapore, are the embodiment of intellect dominated colonial power and they dominate the emotional subject race, Indians. They activate their all engines to rule the Indians to sustain their ruling power. But Indians hold their hidden psychological resistance out of nationalism against British imperial rule. So, there prevails a conflict of the ruler and ruled. The novel has several characters involved in exercising British interests in India, and several characters as Indians to meet the colonial system, which creates a social space. The cultural difference establishes a dichotomy between English officials and Indians in Chandrapore, which shows the difference in the way of Western thinking. Forster's novel deals with the failure of human being's ability to communicate satisfactorily and their failure to eliminate prejudice to establish relationships for the sense of alienation as a ruler and ruled. Through the process of the rule of Anglo-Indian as a thesis and resistance from Indians as antithesis, the thesis reveals the nature of this conflict and explores the reconciliation of this conflict.

The Rule of Anglo-Indian as Thesis

The British Raj shows an attitude of a controller and an administrator. Most of the British men working in India become racist and harmful figures and this attitude is explicitly visible in the development of Ronny's character. His purpose is the purpose of English colonialists, and he is almost a caricature of what is English who represents the standards and beliefs of that culture wholly. In contrast, Aziz represents the standards and beliefs of Indian culture entirely. Thomson says that "through that image (the cave) we behold this darker truth: authority inevitably divides the governors and the governed" (Thomson). The colonial rulers are in the role of oppressor, no matter how individually kind or open-minded they are. They hold themselves as superior to everyone in India. The English in India officially treat Indians as a part of their colonial rule. They are convinced that the British Empire is a civilizing force to rule the natives in a just way. Ignoring Aziz and Professor Godbole's true calling, Mr. Heaslop does not give a positive response to entering Indian house when he comes to take his mother from an Indian

home. The English administrator in India has come to rule over the Indians as Ronny expresses that India is not a drawing-room “to do justice and keep peace” (69). He is a bureaucrat in India and is trained to believe that all Indians are a type, a “spoilt westernized” (93), and bloodshed will prevail without them in India. Being an administrator he never neglects an inch to hamper his administration. Ronny’s role as British with colonizer’s head knows well of Indian’s thinking towards them as “the brutal conqueror, the sun-dried bureaucrat” (53). The Anglo-Indians are like totalitarian administrators that they even do not accept Indian’s any non-acceptance even in the private conversation for their rule that “nothing’s private in India” (54). They do not think India as their home. The club’s system of playing the National Anthem and the Anthem of Army of Occupation to remind the members of the club “that he or she was British and in exile” (47). This attitude creates some sensation and the will power for any kind of application. Ronny forces his mother not to describe anything regarding Dr. Aziz. The British maintain their superiority “to everyone in India” (61). “India likes gods” (69), but “Englishmen like posing as gods” (69). The English treat everything in India as everyone does like an administrator showing that “English people are so calm at a crisis” (105). Even Mrs. Moore becomes astonished at her son’s “tolerant and conventional his judgment” (60) in the Bridge Party of the English and Indians. The English isolate themselves from others as British since their purpose in India is to rule, not “to be pleasant. We’ve something more important to do” (69). They control Indians to sustain their colonial rule not to be pleasant with Indians. The British come to India as rulers to rule Indians, not to be a part of a human being to attach with other human being in the globe. Anybody among them who tries to be part of Indians becomes intruder to their group. They spread their net to sustain their ruling practices only. So, the ruling body does not tolerate any mess up with Indians. Overall in India, “British officialism remained, as all-pervading and as unpleasant as the sun” (258). “The destiny of the English seems to resemble their predecessors, who also entered the country with the intent to refashion it, but were, in the end, worked into its pattern and covered with its dust” (215). Edward unearths that “Forster’s point is that in failing to treat the subject race as people, the imperialists cease to be people themselves: they become as much as, or more than, those they rule” (Edward). The novel, as Royle exposes, is “a complex representation of problems concerning race and colonialism” (Royal)

This colonial rule regards personal relations with Indians as a nasty matter. Brandaburremarks that *A Passage to India*:

attempt[s] to deal with colonialism (or post-colonialism or neo-colonialism) concerning the destructive impact on personal relationships caused by the racist assumptions and psychopathology inherent in colonial imperialism. (Brandabur)

Indo-British relation in India is like a subordinate and a master. They only maintain the formal relationship of ruler and ruled with Indians. Indians are not treated as human beings or a worthy individual. That’s why, Indians show a permanent sense of subordination, and the English expect from Indians as any subordinate does. Major Callendar’s calling but not being present without any information makes Aziz think that

“I can do nothing and he knows it. I am just a subordinate; my time is of no value” (45).

For the non-racial feeling, Fielding only does not nourish “the herd-instinct” (80) within himself. A silly aside, “the so-called white races are pinko-gray” (80) at the club makes a dangerous effect on him to bear. He does not know what the color white connotes, because the white race is as like as “God save the king by a god” (80). It is taken as scandalized and spreads “to the rest of the herd” (80). Afterward, the Englishmen accept him positively, but their wives continue to dislike him. He fears them because if it spreads to feminist England, it will harm him “in a community where the male is expected to be lively and helpful” (80). He only attends to the club to play billiards or tennis. Fielding ignores England’s holding India because it is a matter of politics, and he does not argue that the British should leave India. However, any British cannot question about race and Empire. Within Indian’s conversation, it is clear, “England holds Indian for her good” (124). The conversation hints the economic exploitation in the colonial rule of India as Fielding mentions to Adela and Godbole that now mangoes are sold in England, “they ship them in ice-cold rooms. You can make India in England apparently, just as you can make England in India” (90). England retains her control over Indian for her good though the English claim to be in India for the good of the Indians. At the same time, the novel indicates the material drive of imperialism in India. The Empire’s taken India’s possessions gives an idea obliquely through a minor character, Miss Derek, who is always out of sight with her Indian employer’s expensive properties. The leading Indian role, Aziz, at one point displays his bitterness about the compensation money as he believes that Fielding and Adela have stolen from him. Moreover, the roads named after victorious generals are the “symbolic of the net Great Britain had thrown over India” (39). The imperial rule makes “fatigues everyone in India except the newcomer” (40).

Resistance from Indians as Antithesis

The Indians are confusing, unreliable, and unordered in their town for the colonial rule of Anglo-Indians. They do not show any visible resistance against the imperial rule. Only they establish a committee with Notables Indians, which forms a national movement to abuse the English as their original work, but “nothing constructive had been achieved” (119). Its primary purpose is to force the English to leave India without outright rebellion. If the English are to leave India, this committee will not be in function. Fielding in a native outlook feels his awkwardness in the banquet of Indians because it is riotous, and it is “unknown to the West” (250). Indian’s resistance is hidden, for Indian’s minority confirms the majority’s desire and view “most of the inhabitants of India do not mind how India is governed” (126). Moreover, Indians find out “Oriental womanhood” (290) with purdah as a burden that must be removed “otherwise we shall never be free” (290).

Indians are in oscillating between the resistance of imperial power and the acceptance of Anglo-Indian rule. Aziz himself is aware of the two sides of all Indians, “Aziz sketched a

comic salaam; like all Indians, he was skillful in the slighter impertinences. ‘I tremble, I obey,’ the gesture said, and it was not lost upon Fielding” (296). He shows his resentfulness towards the British imperial rule in India, and at the same time, he is willing to expose the skillful arrangement of the English emperor in India. NawabBahadur readily acknowledges a terrible limitation of Indian people, which is superstition. In another way, he makes applause the British’s rule of “reason and orderliness” (108) in British India, which “have been as successful as British India” (108). Indians lose their confidence to believe in English after the trial. Aziz’s rejection to claim Adela’s compensation of twenty thousand rupees for disgracing him proves that “here is a native who has behaved like a gentleman” (250). He declares to Fielding to be anti-British for saving him from any misfortunes.

The closing paragraph of this novel possesses a depressing condition of Indo-British friendship on a political level in the presence of British Raj as the friendship between Fielding and Aziz builds up out of oppression and political confusion, which exposes apparent division and conflicts. The irritation of Fielding by saying that “the British Empire really can’t be abolished because it’s rude” (314) adds flumes to Aziz’s hidden desire for Indian independence. His target is “to shake the dust of Anglo-Indian” (40). Ronny rightly considers Aziz as a falling bird since “he refused to fall without a struggle” (93). At last, he shouts to clarify his desire to be free from England, “India shall be a nation! No foreigners of any sort! Hindu and Moslem and Sikh, and all shall be one! Hurrah! Hurrah for India! Hurrah! Hurrah!” (315). Aziz predicts to unite all religious groups against imperial rule. Though he does not know how it happens, he, as an anti-British Indian nationalist, knows only “down with the English anyhow. That’s certain” (315-316). Aziz only wants to get rid of the Anglo-Indians “all you Turtens and Burtons” (314). After the trial, the narrator’s comment displays the eventual demise of the Empire by the power of India’s spirit. The novel shows that imperialism will no longer be in winning side:

The triumphant machine of civilisation may suddenly hitch and be immobilized into a car of stone. At such moments the destiny of the English seems to resemble their predecessors’, who also entered the country with the intent to refashion it, but were, in the end, worked into its pattern and covered with its dust. (215)

India wins over the imperial machine because her internal strength comes from inclusiveness. The novel displays the Lieutenant Governor’s rhetoric to show a lack of real concern for the welfare of the Empire’s colonialists and subjects of the colonies, which predicts the decline of the Empire:

Sir Gilbert, though not an enlightened man, held enlightened opinions. Exempted by a long career in the Secretariat from personal contact with the peoples of India, he was able to speak of them urbanely and to deplore racial prejudice. (257)

Even Mrs. Moore sees his son's behavior in India devoid of justice and ethics apart from justifying the Empire:

How he did rub it in that he was not in India to behave pleasantly and derived positive satisfaction there from! He reminded her of his public-school days. The

traces of young-man humanitarianism had sloughed off. (70)

This situation indicates the transient existence of the rule of colonialism. It is Aziz's expectation that if he cannot make it possible, the next generation of Indians must do it. Aziz explores his core desire to see Indian as an independent nation, "we shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then ... and then... you and I shall be friends," (322). Aziz clears Fielding's asking this reason by expressing his desire at the political level. When India is free from British Raj, they will be friends. They are not friends now because the earth does not want, and they are born out of a gap. This situation implies that sub-human India dislikes inter-racial friendships, and therefore their union is transitory. They wrangle about politics and form that only Indian Independence from British Raj can smooth the association of him and Fielding. Davidis (1999-2000) exposes that "the conclusion makes it clear that men can come together with other men only when Indians are equal to Englishmen and when the history of colonial India is rewritten". Such friendship is all but thwarted by the conflict and tensions of colonial rule. Aziz is paradoxically the instrument of reconciliation between himself and the British people for the distinctiveness in his own character and feature. But "every life ought to contain both a turn and return" (262).

At this point, there is a reversal of hatred to friendship. Aziz, after the rejection of the English violently, expects that they will be friends again when all political disagreements are resolved. In the final paragraph, Forster reveals the separation. The setting and storytelling of the novel revolve around negative to positive and vice-versa, and everything positive indicates negative and negative does it positive. The paradox lies everywhere in the novel. Edward (2002) reveals:

pessimism is unrelieved at the end of the novel. The final chapter begins with the idea of reconciliation: the reconciliation of Aziz and Fielding by friendship... that final negatives-'No, not yet and No, not there'- are far from conclusive. On the contrary, they imply the possibility of positives: not yet, but perhaps in another time; not there, but probably in another place.

But this possibility of reconciliation in their integration tries to find out the concrete explanation of this conflict to make a real platform of reconciliation in *A Passage to England*.

Discussion on *A Passage to England*

In *A Passage to India*, Anglo-Indian's rule is for continuing colonialism and the Indian resistance is for their nationalism during the colonial era. On the other hand, in *A Passage to England*, after the colonial period, the rule for the welfare of the country prevails in England. In contrast, the practice in India as an independent country creates a space between the ruler and the ordinary people. The different political atmosphere of the English and the Indians creates conflict. So, the thesis explores the explanation for the tension of rule and resistance existed in the Indians and the English.

Rule and Resistance as thesis and antithesis

The writer presents England as “Timeless England” (186). England is the Mecca for the political people of India, and the House of Commons is like a stone of Kaaba. The building of House of Commons is “with impeccable taste and propriety” (187). The ordinary English people regulate the ruling party’s business for the time being. It reigns, not governs. The House of Commons’s greatness lies in going against Churchill in the peacetime after the two world wars.

The English people lose their ambition in politics, even the interest as they solve all kinds of political and economic problems. In India, all people keep alive in their politics. All places are full of rifle fire, tear-gas bombs. England loses her interest in the outside world. But, she does not give farewell to politics; the writer is surprised by the military preparation in England. The English are “living like a nation of a gentleman without the means of a gentleman on the national scale” (194). The writer gives a term for England a welfare state because her government makes a significant contribution to the welfare of her people. On the other hand, Indian minorities have exploited the majority. Everywhere in India, a painful impression is formed to observe “the diseased, underfed and deformed persons” (204), which are absent in England. This kind of situation lures the Eastern people to live here, which is “a terrific reputation” (206) for the English.

The members of the House of Commons in England follow “some pre-established pattern of behavior” (188). Its principal function is reigning, not governing there. The general people have the power to choose the party to rule them for sometimes. The House of Commons is the center of power in this country. The purpose of a party is “the rule of reason and justice” (190). The House of Commons keeps peace in wartime but turns against the party in peacetime, which is “reflected greatness” (191).

The English people do not feel interested in political ambition as well as in political excitement. But the politician correlates personal and political life with politics. English politics is like water flow in a swimming pool, but Indian politics as the flow of a river. The common characteristics of the contemporary world are absent in English politics like tear-gas, bombs, buses on fire, etc., for solving all kinds of political problems, and forming the economic and social peace, “nothing left for them to do” (194). They can control political power, even they do not feel grief to lose their empire. Their thinking of politics is based on “only administration” (195) to control the bureaucracy. They develop themselves day by day by the peculiar yearning:

To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost

Which blamed the living man. (196)

The English nation tries to give up politics, but ironically, politics does not do so. The resistance from foreign invaders is shown in English’s accumulation of military power. The show-down of military forces in England during peacetime creates a contradiction in what practical political life is. It is irony of fate that the farewell to politics becomes a life without politics.

Moreover, English statesman behaves in the House of Commons like a schoolboy in a class, but the Indian statesman is like a teacher in a class. Everybody in England behaves with a fixed code of conduct. The English do not feel interested in politics, whereas all people lead with political ambition. English government utilizes its great force to build England as a welfare state to bring the welfare of the people. But India is viewed with lifelessness everywhere. Distress is shown all over the place. So, Indians or the Eastern people want to integrate with the English way of life to show their willingness to accept positive things in the world. The English do not tolerate those Indians who want to be English, because of their losing the Indian Empire. On the other hand, the Indians tolerate them to continue this kind of activity. They only can tie with each other mentally in the world. So, this kind of English who cannot tolerate becomes bored and that of Indians who allow them to do so become “querulous set of foreigners” (16).

Reality as synthesis

It is seen that rule and resistance bear two different contexts in these two texts. In *A Passage to India*, the rule is the rule of colonialism and the resistance comes out of nationalism before partition. On the other hand, in *A Passage to England*, rule and resistance are related to two independent countries after partition, but rule and resistance become visible with different practices in two countries- India and England. This situation leads to separation between Indians and the English and this separation is not for the non-acceptance of anyone, but it is clear that “every nation has its peculiar manner of self-projection” (95). Since climate controls over capacity, it is foolish to talk about it. Only we can express that the English man “is now behaving more handsomely by us than we are doing by him” (96). A human being’s attitude is based on climate or weather where he is. The unpredictability of English weather shapes their minds and trains their sensibilities by coping with the changing weather. So, the Englishmen can face all kinds of pleasant, unpleasant things in a positive way or good humor. According to the weather, they expose their personality. The alienation of Indians and English is for the fusion of light and temperature. The tropical people do not feel gay in England for “the mood of pensive wonder” (18) though they are happy in England because the English always enjoy the dawn. Warmth is needed for tropical people to make sense of reality, which the English people enjoy this warm except in summer. In another way, the writer admits that “climate and weather have shaped different modes of exercising individuality liberty in the East and the West” (74). White (1953) says that “the gaps and separations between human beings are not the only ones. Men themselves are separate from the rest of creation.”

During the writer’s journey, he ignores the questions of the colonizer’s relationship with colonized people, the tale of power, race, subordination, experiences of cultural deduction. Though *Passage to England* is a postcolonial narrative, and its author is a colonized Indian, Nirad C. Chaudhuri is not a mongrelized narrator, which does not

make his writing disruptive. This book tells something more than binary opposition, ambivalence, colonial experience, and it denies the sense of orient and occident. Out of knowledge gathered from the reading English literature and history books, the writer constructs his understanding of England in his foreigner's imagination. Chaudhuri, in his travelogue, explores that the integration conflict between them creates alienation for non-acceptance, which is for the disadvantage and advantages of geographical location. But, the writer optimizes to form a single line of humanity with exercising collective responsibility also. It builds up a new entity in the world to erase the negative one and to integrate into a positive one, which will create a welfare world.

Sometimes for the author, the idea and the image contradict to form a composite picture of England. He feels that his bookish knowledge does not deny with actuality. But when the author enquires about the Cumnor Hills and the BablockHythe, his friend places a comment about Indians visiting England with a secure literary connection. The very image of England becomes an illusion, changing the author's idea with the real England. Thus NiradChaudhuri, at one point, says, "the only ties felt in the heart that we can have with England are those created by the things of the mind" (16).

Conclusion

At last, it is noticed in the thesis that the conflict between Indo-British is apparent in the colonial era for the relation of the colonizer and the colonized. This relation revolves round racial, civilizational, cultural, and social integration conflict in their dealings with each other. So, everyone feels suffocated for this conflict and expects to erase this conflict for peaceful living as it is seen in *A Passage to India*. Forster views none of his characters as an emblem of futility. Even Mrs. Moore, who succumbs to nihilistic despair, is a positive force, practising the belief that life is worthwhile in itself. Fielding's "I want to go on living a bit" and Adela's "So do I" (241) express the dominant view. Neither Fielding, not Aziz succumbs to the catastrophic forces around him. No one becomes disordered and disorganized. Aziz is moved with Indian nationalism, Fielding with Anglo-Indian sentiment, but both remains to uphold the belief that life, friendship, and human brotherhood are worthwhile. So despite the novel's negative implications, it communicates a sense of the power and the value of life, which recognizes the possibilities of human beings to search for meaning and to express themselves through their institutions, art, and friendships. Moreover, after the end of the colonial era, the global sense shapes their new relation erasing conflict of rule and resistance that find a soothing explanation of their relationship pointing the right and the wrong as it is seen in *A Passage to England*. The writer amplifies his travelogue in a various way. It is a refined expression of insights into the English way of life as he is singing a panegyric on England. But the author's Anglophilia often forces him to gloss over the faults of the English. His views on the British are tempered with consideration and sympathy. But his erudite style, his love for English way of life, his ability to straddle the two diverse worlds of West and East with ease and his deep understanding of Indian way of life, especially the middle class, in particular, place him as a link of reconciliation between

two nations. The two writers display humanism to promote the understanding of the two races but not hatred between them since heartlessness, ideological zeal without humanity can destroy the world. They firmly believe that ideological zeal in the form of British colonialism or Indian nationalism or independence will be dangerous if it is without the recognition of common humanity.

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