



A PASSAGE TO INDIA : A COMPARATIVE INTRODUCTORY STUDY TREATMENT OF INDIA IN RUDYARD KIPLING'S KIM AND IN E.M. FORSTER'S

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Abstract: A Passage to India is Forster's best known and most widely read novel. It deals with the problems of humanity at large in the novel. Though, the background of the novel is India and most of the characters are either Indian or Englishman who have come to India as officers, yet the issues that arise due to the interaction of these characters are of universal interest. A Passage to India is not only a true representation of the British-Raj in India but also a vivid portrayal of the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor. Mr. Turton and Ronny are the representatives of the imperialistic design of England. Similarly, Aziz, a Muslim doctor, has even been robbed of his opportunities due to political subjection, rather than the representatives of India alone. In fact, Forster is determined to depicting the clash of individuals. A friendship between Aziz and Fielding presents a hope that the British and the Indian can be good friends. But Aziz knows the ground realities of the British-Raj and ends up the novel with a note that there could be no friendship between the haughty British rulers and humble Indians. A close study of the English novels relating to India makes it clear that the setting of these novels is of great importance. It has rightly been observed by George Orwell, he remarks : "In all the novels about the East, the scenery is the real subject matter".

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INTRODUCTION

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) and E.M. Forster (1879-1970) both are known as important Anglo-India writers of fiction and non-fiction. One of the many distinguished characteristics of their work is the treatment of India. There were Kipling's *Kim* (1901) and Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) have been viewed as unique literary works in this regard. Both of them treat Indian culture, society, and people in realistic and amazingly perfect manner. But it is also true that both are in opposition to each other, since the former has been seen as Pro-imperialist whereas the later has been construed as a critique of British imperialism. In fact both *Kim* and *A Passage to India* serve as a telling comment on the importance of the role played by social and cultural identity in creating and perpetuation of the divide and rule policy of British. Both Kipling and Forster spent a part of their life in India. Thus, both *Kim* and *A Passage to India*, have been written on the background of the sub-continent. Both the novelists came into contact with India during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of twentieth century. Now, it has been endeavoured to study the social and political background of this period in the history of

India. This was the period when the inter-action between the British imperialistic rule and Indian nationalism was at its peak. Thus, a kind of nightmarish experience was a characteristic aspect of European life in India.

Both these novels are based on the theme of inter-racial relationship. Kipling's *Kim* presents a frequent image of India in British-Raj *Kim* reflecting the experience of a boy who wandered over India with a holy man, was supposed to be a realistic portrayal of native life, but to read it as such is to fill one's head with pleasant delusions. As a work of pre-independent India when India was colony of Britain, *Kim* is, Kipling's account of his imaginary childhood, the childhood he never had. *Kim*'s India is as he can desire great and wonderful land, the whole of India from Lahore to Benares and Banaras to Himalaya becomes *Kim*'s private playground, while evaluating and assessing the story of this spy *Kim* as novel of Indian life and philosophy and we get many parallels and contrasts in the novel. The first scene of the novel opens in Lahore and then the story moves to Ambala where *Kim* accompanies Teshu Lama in his search of The Great River of Arrow and his own childhood prophecy. The journey of *Kim* and Lama from one city

to another explores their experience about Indian like Mehbub Ali, Kullu women, Hurree Babu, Risalder and Bhsti etc. Kim also deals with other aspects of Indian society like the problem of over population in India, superstitious nature of Hindus, Muslim and Sikhs, different religions, i.e., Buddhism and Jainism, rigid cast system and illusory of some of the Indian rituals.

A Passage to India is Forster's best known and most widely read novel. It deals with the problems of humanity at large in the novel. Though, the background of the novel is India and most of the characters are either Indian or Englishman who have come to India as officers, yet the issues that arise due to the interaction of these characters are of universal interest. A Passage to India is not only a true representation of the British-Raj in India but also a vivid portrayal of the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor. Mr. Turton and Ronny are the representatives of the imperialistic design of England. Similarly, Aziz, a Muslim doctor, Hamidullah or even been robbed of its opportunities due to political subjection, rather than the representatives of India alone. In fact, Forster is determined to depicting the clash of individuals. A friendship between Aziz and Fielding presents a hope that the British and the Indian can be good friends. But Aziz knows the ground realities of the British-Raj and ends up the novel with a note that there could be no friendship between the haughty British rulers and humble Indians. A close study of the English novels relating to India makes it clear that the setting of these novels is of great importance. It has rightly been observed by George Orwell, he remarks: "In all the novels about the East, the scenery is the real subject matter".

Apart from the rendering of the scenic background, another pre-eminently important aspect is the respective author's reactions to the institution of British Imperialism in India. There is no doubt that the western imperialism in the East stood like an obstacle-one could as well call it a mental barricade between the people of the East and the west. That is to say, the British Imperialism did not remain a mere political phenomenon it became an emotional reality. And the nightmarish experience was characteristic aspect of European life in the colonies, and it is also present in the writings of Kipling and Forster.

In the present study an attempt has been made to compare how India is depicted in Kim and in A Passage to India; and how the geographical, social, political and emotional Landscape of India emerges in these novels.

BIOGRAPHICAL RUDYARD KIPLING

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) an English writer and poet, he was born in India at Bombay. His

ethos was one of unquestioning belief in the ideals of the British Empire and loyalty of king Nobel Prize for literature in 1907, his reputation has fluctuated of the decades, especially with the advent of the experimentalism of modernism continuing criticism of his apparent celebration of imperial supremacy.¹ His father named Lockwood Kipling was a knowledgeable, sensitive and illustriously versatile personality. Kipling's father John Lockwood Kipling who throughout acted as his mentor and guide, was a typical Anglo Indian, and in his autobiography Kipling remembers his father thus:

Many Folk in same quarters knew me for the son of my father, which in the East more than any where else is useful.²

He had got numerous books published to his credit. His mother Alice Macdonald, was a witty and lively woman. She had not Lockwood on a picnic at Lake Rudyard in Staffordshire, which became the origin of the unusual name that they choose for their first child in India. Rudyard was the apple of his parent's eyes, and enjoyed all the delights and privileges of an Anglo-Indian childhood. But very soon, he had to leave Bombay, for his family shifted to Lahore on his father's appointment to the curatorship of the Government museum.³ It is interesting to see the museum scene at the start of the novel Kim.

At the age of just six, Kipling was sent to England to receive proper education there. And in a year or two he entered the United Services College at Westward Ho! What that institution did for Kipling may be discerned even through the horse-play and ribaldry of Stalky and Co. When he was in his teens, he went back to work as a reporter and then a sub-editor of the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore; and also wrote for pioneer of Allahabad and other numerous papers. His earliest stories and poems, apart from his private collection of Schoolboy Lyrics (1881), appeared initially in these journals. The first book which appeared before the reading public was a small volume called, Departed Ditties (1886). It was produced in the office and published by himself when he was only twenty-one. This publication was rapidly followed by Plain Tales from the Hills (1888) which were mostly written before he was twenty and collected from the Gazette, in which he introduced the three musketeers, named Mulvany, other is Leoryed, this showed something of the underside of idle life at Shimla, which also sent an exploring eye into the mysterious native purlieus. This was followed by half-a-dozen pamphlets like, Soldiers three, This story of the Gadsbys, In Black and white, Under The Deodars, The Phantom Richkshaw and Wee WilkieWinkie (1888-89), these all revealed more of the peerless trio and a host of others and many aspects of Indian and

Anglo-Indian life being mirrored with the same pungent realism which was matched by the brilliance of story-telling power.

When Kipling was to be sent to England by the Gazette and the pioneer, he preferred to travel by way of China, Japan and the United States. The articles, which he wrote for these two papers, on his Journey across India and the other countries to which he ultimately visited secured permanence in two volumes- *From sea to sea* (1900), *Letters of Travel* which are certainly as candid, racy and sparkling as his fiction. He arrived in England to find himself already a great celebrity. He stayed there for the time being, and on meeting a young American, Wolcott Balestier, he collaborated with him on a novel named *The Naulakha* (1892) and also married his sister. This amusing contrast of western commercialism and oriental manner was preceded in publication by a longish story which is almost a novel, *The Light that Failed*, and by *Lipis Handicap* (1891). The first of three sets are more mature stories of the same India, *White and Black* and the other two bring *The Day's Work* (1898), *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892), had the same strain as *Departmental Ditties*. It was followed by *Seven Seas* (1896) and other miscellaneous themes, which show an outlook of a broader world. After the war of South Africa, he tempered patriotism with grave admonition in another set of occasional poems, *The Five Nations* (1903).

But, like some other, Kipling was more of a poet in some of his prose works. He did superbly not only in the snatches of the verse, but he also did excellently in forming chapter – headings. Kipling's stay with Balestier in Vermont resulted fruitfully in his composition of *Captains Courageous* (1897), a story of the New England Cod-fishers. It was here also that he began his master piece, *The Jungle Book* (1897), a story of the New England Cod-fishers. It was here also that he began his master piece. *The Jungle Book* (1894) with the second *Jungle Book* (1895), revealed a depth and catholicity of vision rivaling *Kim* (1901). It was his amplest portrayal of the life of modern India, native and European. He had given his own version of his Schoolboy years in *Stalky and Co.* (1899). And now having lost the eldest of his two daughters, he offered these as if it were a liberation of the dead in his, *Just so-stories for little children* (1902), playful and enjoying tales to be followed after *Duck of Pook's Hills* (1906) and its sequel *Rewards and Fairies* (1910).

Kipling was now living in a beautiful old house under the Sussex downs in countryside by old legend; his imagination was softened and mellowed by the loss of his child. He often found comfort in writing such tales of old England and fairyland, or such a piece

of serious fancy as "They", the scene of which is the name old house adjoining the other-world.

The last of his miscellaneous stories, however, *Debits and Credits* (1926) and *Limits and Renewal* (1932), though as deft as ever in technique, added nothing to his going on at home and abroad. From time to time he gave the nation benefit of an accurate judgement and misgivings. From now onward whether it was song, poem, article speech or interview, all these proclaimed his views with uncompromising trenchancy. He was always stirring and often provocative.

Kipling revisited South Africa in 1898 and again during the Boer war. He came to Canada in 1907. There were occasions for solemn admonition in the press. He has long prophesied war with Germany and, for that matter with Russia; when the great war of 1914 broke out, he threw himself into the campaign for national service with all his energy, and he celebrated the deeds of the submarines and destroyers with the old force and vividness. His only son was one of the missing at Ypres. To the end he retained his distinction as a poet and novelist of the empire; he was certainly not one of those whom their own country fails to recognize. And among his many honors, it is not irrelevant that he followed Scott, Meredith and Hardy, he received more regard for being a recipient of gold medal of the Royal Society of Literature. And above all, he had been awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1907.

A fairly large number of short stories that are written by Kipling, based largely upon the background of Indian sub-continent. He also wrote many poems on this particular background.

But among of his writings his master piece novel *Kim* published in 1901, is the most widely loved book.⁴

The remarkable novel has retained its popularity ever since its publication. While writing in the year 1901, Andrew Long wrote about his novel;

Mr. Kipling in *Kim* in Cassell's Magazine is once the Kipling who won our hearts. His theme is India, where he is always at his best; and races, the Lamas, the sounds, scents and smells form a few pages than from libraries of learned author.⁵

Kim Kipling's superb master-piece, is a product of his remembrance of India from his childhood – a reminiscence lovingly described book which is in the author's own words, not a novel but "Nakedly Picaresque and Plotless". Carrington suggests that no other English man has written of India with such a loving interest as Kipling and *A Passage to India* is the only work that can be laid beside it and in this instance, Forster, not Kipling is the political writer.⁶

EDWARD MORGAN FORSTER

Edward Morgan Forster, a celebrated novelist, was born on January 1, 1779, at London. In October 1880, Forster's father died. His mother, when she was hardly twenty five, was left.

With a small baby and without any support except what was extended to her by her husband's relatives.⁷

Thus, Forster never knew his father; and his early upbringing was nourished and dominated by three women; his great aunt MarrianeThoruton, an affectionate but dictatorial woman his witty, lively maternal grandmother, Lusia; and his mother, Lily, who provided him a series of happy homes, which accompanied the novelist in his early travels abroad, and continued to influence him, until her death in 1945. This, female dominated world appeared in various guises in his novels and this probably helped him to determine the pattern of his psychological development.

Fortunately, out of these three women, MarrianeThoruton was the most important. On her death in 1887, he left the eight year old boy & 8,000; without this legacy, he would never have been able to go to Cambridge, or to travel in Europe and India. It was this debt that he repaid in the themes of people who were no longer alive but living in other's lives, as in the case of Mrs. Moore, who lives on in the winds of her children and Dr. Aziz in *A Passage to India*.

The early years of Forster's life exerted a crucial influence on his later development. For instance, when he was eight, Forster was sufficiently impressed by his mother's high- principled decision not to respond to the sentimental request to give the dear 'Queen' one penny, that he was determined not to cheer when the queen rode by. But the sight of a policeman made him to take off his sailor-hat and cheer with the rest. This incident obviously foreshadows Forster's later anti-imperialism, which developed at Cambridge, and powerfully reinforced by his residence in form (1915-1919) and India from (1912-13 to 1921.)

Forster's school, experience provided him with the vital elements in this vision of life: Firstly a hatred of the conventional values that were taught there; secondly, a recognition that the public school system was responsible for the characteristic of the English middle class, and their inability to give proper importance to the emotional aspect of life. In his

Some Notes on the English Characters which was originally given as a talk in India, but later utilized for Publication.⁸

He speaks of the any way English public school boys are taught to believe that the school is the world in miniature, and are, therefore, expected to understand the complexities they face when they go into the real world. They go forth into it, he writes, with well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds

and undeveloped hearts. And it is this undeveloped heart

that is largely responsible for the difficulties of English men abroad, an undeveloped heart but not a cold one. The difference is important. This doctrine of 'the undeveloped heart' is embodied in all Forster's fiction. Take the example of Ronny Heaslop in *A Passage to India*, who is an imaginable, self-righteous official.

In the novels of Forster whole set of religious terms-salvation, grace, conversion, transfiguration – become assimilated into an essentially secular vision.

Men now seek their happiness on this earth not in heaven; when men can no longer find the true ground of their being in god they consequently their ideals become self-realization, self-fulfillment or just sheer getting on.⁹

Here, the uniqueness of Forster lies in the other worldly qualities and harking back to an older religion with pagan rites and priestesses guarding the holy shrines, as in the case of Mrs. Moore in *A Passage to India*.

Cambridge, it is clear, became the symbol of the undivided life, and all Forster's novels explore the possibility of men and women achieving it is complicated by difference of national temperament. For example in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) and *A Room with A View* (1908), the difference is between the English and the Italian, and in *A Passage to India*, the contrast is between the English and the Indians, between Muslims and Hindus.

Forster came to see through the crude form of imperialism. He saw through the liberal traditions and naive faith also in progress. All this falls to recognize good and evil in man. He firmly believed that things would not get better and better as liberalism promised that it was blind to the horror that science had in store for the human race and that it had tragically failed to foresee the race and that it had tragically failed to foresee the future. Forster, as a beneficiary intellectual of the whole tradition, criticises it from within. This made his work a special authority. But, in spite of his dissatisfaction with the weaknesses of the liberal tradition, his writings affirm its central creed; the importance of the individual and the sanctity of personal relations. While writing in the 1930s after *A Passage to India* (1924) with the chastening vision of the difficulties that beset men of goodwill but of different cultural background, Forster recalled Helen Schlegel's statement in *Howards End* that personal relations are the only thing that matter for ever and ever, and further confirmed his earlier faith by saying, 'I still believe this as regards the private life. This attempt to reconcile contradictory elements within the self and within the society is not only typical of Forster's liberal – humanistic Inheritance, it is also an inheritance he often puts to the ultimate test in *A*

Passage to India, it is also typical of his great debt to romanticism.

Forster lived a long and relatively uneventful life. A late Victorian by birth, he survived both world wars and finally died in June 1970, at the age of ninety one. His career as a writer began and ended at Cambridge, where he spent the last twenty five years of life. It was fortunate for someone who believed so passionately in personal relations that a private income, together with growing success as a novelist, made it unnecessary for him to adopt a profession or to accept any permanent appointment. Although he proclaimed the importance of work through Margaret Skeletal in *Howards End*, he himself found personal fulfillment in living rather than in work. He was free to travel as soon as he came down from Cambridge in 1901. His first two visits to Europe made him a writer. After the publication of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View* (1908), and *Howards End* (1910), he once again travelled extensively abroad. He visited India in 1912-13 and again in 1921, when he acted as private secretary to the Maharaja of Dewas senior.

These visits provided him material for his best known novel, *A Passage to India* (1924). During a part of First World War 1915-1919, he served with the Red-Cross in Alexandria. This experience undoubtedly deepened his insight into human nature and extended his range of knowledge and sympathies, thus preparing him for writing his master-piece, *A Passage to India*.

The First World War certainly destroyed Forster's faith in old-fashioned political liberalism. This war increased his hostility to the complacency and arrogance of the English middle-class and the inequalities in the society. So, it was natural for him to turn from liberalism to socialism in 1920s.

In 1927, Forster was elected a Supernumerary Fellow at his old college 'King's College' Cambridge, and he remained one until 1933. In 1934, he became the first President of the National Council for Civil Library and held the same office again in 1942. He attended many international conferences of writers, and addressed the Paris Conference in 1935 on the subject of Liberty in England. A prominent member of the Humanist Society, he was often invited to deliver public lectures; the best known of these are his Rede Lecture on Virginia Woolf (1941) and the Ker Lecture in (1945), on the Development of English prose between 1918 and 1939.

In later life, Forster retained his interest in India and continued to keep in touch with it in a variety of ways. He frequently wrote book reviews on Indian topics and gave regular monthly talks over the B.B.C., Eastern service from 1940 onwards, a stream of Indian

visitors was received by him at Cambridge; and in 1945, he paid his third visit to India. On this occasion, he recorded his impressions of the numerous changes that had taken place since his first two visits from 1912-13 and 1921. He felt enthusiastic to see some of the changes that had taken place about the development of some of the arts especially the cinema, but he could see no permanent solution to the tragic problem of India's future.

The only kind that cuts a little ice, is affection or the possibility of affection.....But it must be genuine affection and liking. It must not be exercised with any ulterior motives. It must be an expression of the common humanity which in India and England and whole the world over has been so thwarted of late, and so despised.¹⁰

Even twenty years later and world war between, the messages was much the same as that in *A Passage to India*.

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