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**Anthropocentrism in Western Thought:  
A Philosophical Study of E. M. Forster's  
*A Passage to India* (1924)**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master Degree in English Literature and Civilization

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that reference or acknowledgment is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

I am duly informed that any person practicing plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary sanctions issued by university authorities under the rules and regulations in force.

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the teacher who made me discover the book, *A Passage to India*, and who transmitted me her fervent passion for literature: Mrs. Maameri.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation attempts to examine E. M. Forster's novel, *A Passage to India* in a philosophical light, using Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophy suggesting two different modes of perceiving reality as "will" or "idea". The main subject of my analysis is the extent to which the three main English characters of the novel: Mrs Moore's, Miss Quested's and Mr Fielding's western philosophical ideas of life, including rationalism and Christian monotheism, can survive the hostile tropical landscape of India and the mysteries of the Marabar caves. Throughout this dissertation E. M. Forster's special treatment of the non-human world and of human's detachment from the rest of the living species is rendered explicit. The undermining of human control over good and evil, and their inability to generate the right meaning will also be discussed. Along the same line, this study demonstrates the crumbling of Mrs Moore and Miss Quested's mental conceptualization of the universe as they discover their physical existence and their kinship with the rest of nature. That is "the will". It further explains the reason why Mr Fielding was never able to escape the excessive control of his mind to experience reality through the will of his body. Finally, it concludes that E. M. Forster's message through this novel is mainly to criticize the state of Western modern civilization, based on the complete optimism in progress found both in modern rationalism and traditional Christianity because of its consequent objectification of nature, the non-human species and the anthropological exclusion of native Indians. The conclusion also explains Forster's idea of a true human civilization based on a genuine and creative human endeavour that is only possible when the human being learns to embrace all the aspects of his existence, including his physicality.

**Key words:** *A Passage to India*, anthropocentrism, the human vision of reality, cognitive perception, human body, mysticism, non-human world, exclusion.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

Edward Morgan Forster is a famous English modernist writer, known for his great interest in the sanctity of personal relationships between individuals. He is further one of the novelists who harshly criticize the conventions of the English middle class. Indeed, his literary approach consists more particularly in the introduction of his characters into different cultures and mentalities. In his view, his characters have to face their subtle shortcomings. Obviously, throughout his literary production, he clearly portrays human sufferings, ailments and notably oppression that the rich ruling class imposes on the poor peasants and working class. Additionally, Forster denounces the atrocities of Western colonialism, including terror, oppression and hegemony it has planted in the colonized societies. For this purpose, in our study, we intend to demonstrate how all these serious issues have been depicted in E. M. Forster's most prominent novel, *A Passage to India*. Interestingly, in the latter, the author makes his main humanistic English characters, Mrs. Moore, Miss. Quested and Mr. Fielding, face the hostile landscape of India and the intolerable colonial exclusion of the native Indians.

The events of the novel revolve around "the Marabar case" which caused jeopardy in the city of Chandrapore, bringing to light the dormant racial antagonism between the English and the Indians. Miss Quested, who came to India in order to decide whether or not to marry Ronny, the city magistrate of Chandrapore, is interested in the Indian culture and way of life. However, her interest to see "the real India" is unacceptable to the representatives of the empire for it is incompatible with the superior posture they occupy in front of the natives. As a result of a friendly excursion between apolitical English and Indian individuals, of which she was part, the young lady has the impression of being sexually assaulted, and a young Indian doctor is wrongly accused.

Each one of the three aforementioned characters represents a vision of life. Mrs. Moore represents Christian humanism, and Miss Adela Quested honest intellectualism, whereas Mr. Fielding epitomizes pragmatic rationalism. These visions are inherent in Western thoughts; all expect order and harmony from the happenings of life. Yet, in *A Passage to India*, Forster creates an atmosphere of cultural, philosophical, and religious diversity where the characters, more than in any of his previous novels, suffer misunderstanding and confusion as their principles and visions of life do not provide them with spiritual assistance.

The Marabar scandal where Miss Adela Quested has the impression of being raped generates an uncontrollable evil. The innocent doctor Aziz becomes anti-British and unable to maintain his friendship with Mr Fielding, and Mrs Moore is taken by an immense sense of the futility of existence. What actually happens in the Marabar caves, in addition to the echo that affects the characters are not explained; they have left a mystery. And it is precisely the ability to deal with the unknown that lies at the heart of the novelist's message.

In *A Passage to India*, E. M. Forster tests his characters' ability to accept the mysteries of life, and accept their inability to generate meaning. This is why the landscape is prominent in the novel. In fact, Forster makes the inarticulate, non-human world stand out because it is the part of the universe that lives instinctively. That is, through the body and not through the mind. It is also totally indifferent to human affairs and to the meanings they attach to life. In the light of the foregoing, my aim is to explain the falling apart of Mrs. Moore's Christianity and Mr. Fielding and Miss Adela Quested's rationalism in relation to the extent to which they can connect to the non-human world. In addition to the harsh landscape, Forster uses the Hindu philosophy as an antithesis to the western attitude; because of the reverence for all manifestations of life, and their acceptance of the unknown.

Being a modernist writer, E.M. Forster was aware of the place that man holds within the rest of the natural world. In his naturalistic works, respectively *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *On the Descent of Man* (1871), Charles Darwin aptly establishes the animal nature within the human being. Therefore, in *A Passage to India*, Forster stimulates his characters to this reality. The reason behind this is Forster's complete disappointment with the so-called progress of modern civilization, which is probably most explicit in his short story, *The Machine Stops* (1909). The superficial values based on materialism that caused human estrangement from one another, the destruction of nature, and the subjugation of other races are all aspects of modern civilization resulting from the optimism in human reason. Moreover, with the advent of the First World War, with its mass mechanized bloodshed, Forster's disillusionment reached its height. As the superior position of man amongst other living beings became not viable, obviously the message behind *A Passage to India* is that human beings should remember the kinship they share with the non-human world.

*A Passage to India* is Forster's only post-war novel. The crisis of meaning and the modern inability to arrive at "a common metaphysical picture of man" (Bantock, p. 26), along with the characters' inability to understand themselves and each other, are sensed more acutely than in any other of his previous literary works. Furthermore, the colonial theme

constitutes a vivid representation of the novelist's pessimistic view of the state of modern civilization. Though Forster maintained his interest in personal relationships between those who are not fully conditioned by the, uncultured middle class, whose impact is intensified since they represent the Empire, he puts them under the test of power.

It is worth noting that *A Passage to India* has been considered by critics either as a political novel, or a philosophical one. *A Passage to India: a Socio-Historical Approach* (1958) by G. K. Das, and Jeffrey Meyers' book, *The Politics of A Passage to India* (1971) are interesting examples of the first approach, providing an exhaustive comparison between the similitude found in the novel and the actual political scene. However, considering that the failure of the official "bridge party" in the novel was announced as early as the first sentence of the Fifth Chapter and that Forster's focus throughout the novel was the spiritual upheavals of his main characters, it is the second approach that is more aligned with E. M. Forster's aim: "So long as it is only viewed as a discussion of the racial problem in India, it is a remarkably simple novel." (J. McConkey, *The Novels of E. M. Forster*, p. 2). In fact, in his book, *A Preface to Forster*, Christopher Gillie comments, in a passage taken from a letter Forster wrote when he was working on his novel, *A Passage to India*, and where he expresses his desire to emphasize the atmosphere of India:

He [Forster] implies that it is India that matters - not Indian politics merely, but India as a universe, a confusion of cultures and races, of religions and natural growth, such as defies the European instinct to find coherence and meaning in everything it contemplates. (p. 130)

Critics who have maintained a philosophical interpretation, such as Glen O. Allen in *Structure, Symbol and Theme in E. M. Forster's A Passage to India* (1955) and John Drew's *The Spirit behind the Frieze* (1958) have emphasized Forster's use of Hindu philosophy in the symbology and the plot as a contrast to western expectations.

The main questions that this study attempts to answer are:

- How does the choice of the tropical setting, where the non-human is prominent, and the cultural confusion of India impact the western aspects of Mrs. Moore, Fielding, and Miss. Quested's personalities?
- Why are the Marabar Caves central to the plot? And what do they symbolize?
- What is the link between Forster's criticism of the state of modern western civilization through the colonial theme, and the exposition of anthropocentrism in Western Thought?

The aim of my paper is to demonstrate how Mrs. Moore, Miss Quested and Mr. Fielding's philosophies of life, based on which they reject the colonial racism, is rooted in the belief of the supremacy of humans above the rest of the living species. Thus, my work consists in exploring anthropocentrism inherent in Western thought. Stated differently, the awakening of *A Passage to India's* above-mentioned characters to their physical existence, which they share with the other living species, will be clearly revealed. The consequent crumbling of their former ideal Western criteria: Christianity and rationalism will be discussed too.

Anthropocentrism is the philosophical vision that maintains man's ultimate superiority and dominion over the non-human world. This vision is mainly justified by man's ability to reason and create.

In this regard, and to come close to E. M. Forster's philosophy, I opt for an approach based on Arthur Schopenhauer's masterpiece, influenced by Hindu philosophy, *The World as Will and Idea* (1819). The latter suggests two ways of perceiving the world, one as an "idea" and another as a "will". The former way consists of the cognitive perception of the physical reality within the frame of the three essential forms of knowledge: space, time and causality, as Schopenhauer aptly makes it: "There is no object without a subject." (p. 6) Obviously, the existence of something depends on the mind of the perceiver, who, not being able to exclude his mental processes from his perception, is bound to experience the world only as a phenomenon and not its inner nature. "This perceptible and real-world is obviously a phenomenon of the brain, in the assumption that the world as such might exist independently of all brains there lies a contradiction." (Ibid, p.158) However, Schopenhauer assumes to have found a "*narrow door to the truth*" that is, to a true inner experience, not mediated by cognitive cognizance: the physical body. The awareness of the life of the body lies outside human intellectual conceptualization. Therefore, humans' experience of their physical existence means experiencing the inner drive common to the rest of the living species. According to Schopenhauer, this inner drive is "the will to life".

Everything presses and strives towards existence (...) Let anyone consider this universal desire for life, let him see the infinite willingness, facility, and exuberance with which the will to live presses impetuously into existence under a million forms everywhere and at every moment (...) in such phenomena, then, it becomes visible that I am right in declaring that the will to live is that which cannot be further explained, but lies at the foundation of all explanation. (Ibid, 106-7)

Thus, in Schopenhauer's view, all human efforts that explain life with "high sounding terms" is only a pretext to continue living, that is to obey this instinctive inner drive that is devoid of any inherent purpose.

The first chapter of my study is concerned with E. M. Forster's paradoxical religious nature despite his atheism, in order to show his interest in the mysterious origin of life. It also aims at explaining the spirit of India through the indifference of nature to human affairs. In The second chapter, the focus will be on the characters' awakening to their physical bodies and the weakening of their mental perceptions and their control of reality.

**CHAPTER ONE**  
**The Indian Landscape**  
**and the Origin of Life**

## 1- Forster's Religious Nature

In his essay *E. M. Forster and «the Part of the Mind that Seldom Speaks»: Mysticism, Mythopoeia, and Irony in A Passage to India*, Michael Roeschlein focuses on Forster's mystical questionings by quoting an interesting dialogue between Cyril Fielding and Dr Aziz:

“(...) But I do not want to be a religious poet either.”

“I hoped you would be.”

“Why, when you yourself are an atheist?”

“There is something in religion that may not be true, but has not yet been sung.” (p. 251)

Through this conversation, Forster aptly voices his opinion about religion through Fielding who, of all the characters in the novel, is obviously the most associated with E. M. Forster himself. Indeed, the author never attempts to deny the mysteries of life. That is why references to metaphysical existence are found in all his previous novels though without much elaboration. The Character of Mrs. Moore is a sign of Forster's intention to elaborate on his spiritual questions. She is an exceptional religious character in Forster's fiction, unlike the dogmatic Harriet Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, or Mr. Beeb in *A Room with a View*. Mrs. Moore hence represents Christian humanism at its best, and as will be demonstrated in Chapter Two, she succeeds in areas where his rationalists fail.

It is worth keeping in mind that Forster is a humanist, yet his humanism does not mean an absolute faith in human reason: “The human mind is not a dignified organ, and I do not see how we can exercise it sincerely except through eclecticism” (Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, p.100). Furthermore, the limitations of the human nature that Forster is aware of and his concern for moral life are similar to religious quests. (Crews, p. 169) However, Forster is an atheist, “God, I disbelief help thou my unbelief.” (Forster, p.65) This also is in line with T. S. Eliot's criticism of anti-religious humanism:

If you find examples of humanism which are anti-religious, or at least in opposition to the religious faith of the place and time, then such humanism is purely destructive, for it has never found anything to replace what it has destroyed. (Eliot, *Prose: Literature, religion, and society*, p.475)

Obviously, the passage above seems at first to fit in Forster's context, for he implies in his fiction that human goodness could be attained without divine grace. (Crews, p.170) Nonetheless, Forster's non-adherence to any form of organized religion means that none satisfied his individual eclectic nature, the meaning and purpose of life being too wide and mysterious to be synthesized in one creed:

Forster is unchristian, not because he is irreligious but because Christianity fails to meet his idea of religious truth. Being an eclectic, he finds its intolerance to heresy unappealing (...) because he sees a measure of goodness within the natural world, he dissents from Christian otherworldliness and hatred for carnality. (Ibid., p. 170)

Forster's attitude towards religion is ambivalent. Despite not being satisfied with any religious institution that claims certitude, he does not believe that the tangible world is all there is. That is why he used the Indian atmosphere to expand his concerns over the origin of life.

## **2- The Spirit of India**

Forster mentions in Chapter 14 that "there are moments in the most thrilling day in which nothing happens." (p. 132) Similarly, there are chapters in the novel that suspend the continuity of the plot, to shift the focus from the flow of human affairs to the inarticulate, non-human world. Indeed, Christopher Gillie points out in his book, *A Preface to Forster*, that *A Passage to India* is the only one of Forster's novels that does not start with characters. Human movement is suspended from the very first chapter, where the narrator starts by mentioning that "except for the Marabar Caves, the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary." (p. 9) The main focus of the chapter, however, is not on the extraordinary caves but on the different aspects of Chandrapore. This includes the deception it has for the seeker of beauty and form in the bazaars, the movement of the land when "the little civil station" which "provokes no emotion" appears, the tropical pleasance "endowed with more strength than man or his works" and the description of the "strong and enormous sky" which thanks to the sun "decides when the earth shall be beautiful". We will only be reminded of the caves in the last sentence. The narrator here is adopting the same attitude as the Hindu professor Godbole in that he refrains from mentioning the most important detail. This indicates from the beginning the challenge that Forster faces as a modernist writer to convey the essence of experiences and the solution he would find in using symbolism inspired by Hindu philosophy.

The first question that the novel raises before the possibility of friendship between

English and Indians, in the second chapter, is not verbally formulated, but only hinted at. “Why are the Marabar Caves extraordinary?” Nothing is said in the first chapter, and nothing

would be said in response to the characters' questions throughout the novel. It is the same with the echo and what or who exactly assaulted Adela in the Kawa Doll. It is only by following the writer's description of what is "ordinary" that it is possible to close to understanding the central relation of the caves to the possibility of surpassing political differences between individuals. In other words, how the unasked and unanswered question englobes the asked and answered one.

According to the first chapter of the novel, Chandrapore could be seen as a city of mud "swelling here, shrinking there, like some low but indestructible form of life", or as "a tropical pleasaunce", where the palm and neem trees "rise from the gardens where ancient tanks nourish them (...) seeking light and air and endowed with more strength than man or his works" (p. 9) What is common in these two sides of India, representing ugliness and beauty, is the absence of the western man's ordering influence. In fact, the "sensibly planned" environment that the English officials have created for themselves in the civil station where "roads intersect at right angles" is trivialized by being mentioned first only as a vantage point to "the city of gardens", and when described, it is in the midst of the rising and falling movements of the land: "On the second rise is laid out the little civil station." (p. 10) This is a proof of Forster's intention to exhaust western expectations of clarity and order in the novel. Moreover, the verbs Forster uses to describe the tropical scene transmit the life within it, as opposed to the arid civil station which "procures no emotion". In making this contrast between a beauty natural and alive and a calculated beauty of the surface, there is a reference to Forster's criticism of the English character which is mainly middle class: "He has been taught at his public school that feeling is bad form (...) he must bottle up his emotions or let them out only on a special occasion." (p. 2) Hence, real detachment from the imperial attitude requires the ability to perceive life outside the usual civilizational scope.

The new comers, Adela and Mrs Moore, being humanists, could both detect the rigidity and closedness of the English environment: "We're not even seeing the other side of the earth that's our complaint," declared Adela to sustain her desire to see the real India, and "the old lady agreed." (p. 27) They also both agreed on the rejection of the exclusion and the simplistic categorization of natives, and they expected India to easily agree with them. However, the India that Mrs Moore and Adela were to discover is totally indifferent to human positions, arguments, and aesthetical or spiritual expectations, as it is clearly shown through this passage: "It matters so little to the majority of living beings what the minority, which calls itself human, desires or decides." (p. 111)

In chapter 4, the narrator speaks of the circles that Mr Turton's invitation dismissed, "Humanity grading and drifting beyond the educated vision until no earthly invitation could embrace it." (p. 30) The remark precedes the satirical passage about the Christian missionaries' conception of a divine hospitality where the intention of the heart rather than the colour of skin matters. This conception became gradually narrow and reticent as other forms of life were introduced. While the most advanced approved of mammals, "he became uneasy to the descent to the wasp." (p. 30). Forster went further in testing the "mercy of God", "and oranges, cactuses, crystals, and mud?" By doing this, he highlights the human being's place as another form of life, and the modern uneasiness in categorizing aspects of the physical reality due to new discoveries.

The late nineteenth-century European science derived from Newton's mechanical model of the universe, came to be questioned by modern discoveries: "Advances made in the areas of sub-atomic and astrophysics during the high modernist period by Albert Einstein, Louis de Broglie, Erwin Schrodinger and Paul Dirac showed that beyond the apparently stable and harmonious world of classical physics, there lay a meta-world." (Sheppard, p. 17). Thus, nature became inscrutable to the human mind as it escaped the ordered human conception of harmony, causality and objectivity:

It was radically different from the physical reality instigated by classical physics... composed of decentred, multi-dimensionally fluctuating energies rather than centred, regularly orbiting material particles... irregularities and discontinuities. (Sheppard, p.17)

The Indian landscape, therefore, is both hostile to the Christian conception of a heavenly union, and to modern positivism which after the deprecation of religion "reached the stage of becoming an end in itself." (Chiari, p. 9)

Mrs Moore is not the only religious English character in the novel. As Glen O. Allen points out in his paper, "Structure, Symbol, and Theme in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*", Forster's idea of religion is to be understood as he mentions in chapter 2 when talking about Aziz: "An attitude towards life" (p. 20). In this sense, the dry honest intellectualism of Adela, and the "traveling light" philosophy of Fielding are their own sort of religion because they operate and see life through them, and most importantly because they are founded on faith in the sufficiency of reason and personal will for self-understanding, the understanding of others, and the grasping of the complexities of the universe. "Having dispensed with God, the enlightened 19th-century free thinker filled that gap with Man, whom he assumed was the

measure of all things.” (Sheppard, p. 17) The colonial enterprise rested upon this idea, the pretext of enlightening “primitive races” shifted from spreading Christianity to scientific and industrial progress. Indeed, during her heated discussion with Ronny, Mrs Moore criticizes the English who like “posing as Gods” alluding to the full knowledge Western man feels entitled to possess. While Mrs Moore situates the definable Christian conception of God above man, Forster implies a larger idea of a larger unifying realm in his description of the mighty sky.

The last section of the first chapter is devoted to the “overarching sky”. Forster does not attempt to attach attributes to the expansion it suggests because it is outside human reach, he only hints at its presence, “Beyond the sky must there not be something that overarches all the skies, more impartial even than they? Beyond which again...” (p. 51) The crucial quality he gives to the sky is its ability to decide when the earth shall be beautiful. A metaphorical reading of Forster’s statement is more aligned with his metaphysical questions in the novel. It is a suggestion of a higher control than that of humans. He relates the exceptional ability of the sky to the sun: “It is strong and enormous its strength comes from the sun.” (p. 10) There is an interesting parallel between Forster’s treatment of what lies “behind the stars”, and the Marabar caves, “nothing, nothing attaches to them. (...) their reputation does not depend on human speech.” (p. 124)

In the same chapter, he gives a brief geological history of India, distinguishing the more recent Himalayan India from the Primal one; the southern part of the peninsula which contains the Marabar Hills. Here we are given the first particularity of these caves: “They are older than anything in the world.” (p. 123) He refers to the Big Bang explosion when he mentions that they originate from the sun and they are witnesses of the formation of our globe. “If flesh of the sun’s flesh is to be touched anywhere, it is here, among the incredible antiquity of these hills.” (p. 124) Therefore, the caves are the closest one can get to the mysterious origin of life, and in this sense, they are extraordinary.

Obviously, the link between the non-human world and the caves lies in the acceptance of this latter of not having definite answers about the origin of life. The next chapter will explain how the experiencing reality from the body – that is, like any form of life – will make the characters accept not having answers.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **Human's Grasp of Reality**

## 1- From the Mind Conceptualization to the Awakening of the Body

In his essay *On Education*, Schopenhauer criticizes the “artificial method of education” which goes against “the natural development of the mind.” This method consists of reading and learning “general ideas” before any real experience, and hence expecting the world to be subjugated to one’s own preconceptions:

You will be told that the particular observations which go to make these general ideas will come to you later on in the course of experience; but until that time arrives, you apply your general ideas wrongly, you judge men and things from a wrong standpoint, you see them in a wrong light, and treat them in a wrong way. (p. 51)

Adela Quested represents this method of education. The logic that Adela had been trained to see life through proved to be of no assistance to her, in regards to seeing “the real India”: “She accepted everything Aziz said as true verbally. In her ignorance, she regarded him as ‘India’” (p. 71)

Her complete unawareness of the existence of a non-verbal mode of communication, of subterranean factors, that direct speech cannot convey is at the core of the Marabar catastrophe. By taking Aziz’s invitation seriously, being oblivious to what could offend him, and then giving a wrong, though the only logical explanation her mind could find of her frightening experience, Forster shows that education alone is an inadequate tool for understanding another culture. Moreover, it is a very implicit gesture of power, for though the intention is good, it assumes that truth is to be found within the mind. Thus, it is an unconscious complete denial of the other culture’s mode of behaviour. That is why she found herself after the incident belonging to the Anglo-Indian Camp she had so vehemently criticized.

There is a sharp contrast between the way Adela and Mrs Moore were first introduced that is very revealing of their degree of closeness to life, and the authenticity of their experiences. While Adela is presented within the closed environment of the club, stating her theoretical desire, Mrs Moore is introduced in Chapter 2 which is mainly focused on the Indian setting, and not until Chapter 3, where all the English characters are introduced. This

indicates her openness to the new environment, and her true readiness to know about different creeds and connect to people. Indeed, while Adela only operates through her mind, Mrs Moore sees through her heart. This is the main reason Mrs Moore succeeded in connecting to Aziz. As he happens to be a Muslim Indian who always held “pathos to be profound”, her mode of perceiving the world was perfectly compatible. Indeed, she enters the mosque when he was shedding tears over “the secret understanding of the heart” which is what they will achieve. When Mrs Moore was compelled to use reason by her son Ronny in Chapter 3, she was able to see the inconsistencies and unreliability of Aziz. Still, she thought, “What a false summary of the man, the essential life of him has been slain.” (p. 35)

Her friendship with Aziz will ironically prove more durable than Fielding’s although this latter defied the rest of the Anglo Indians and was ready to risk his position to defend him against the false accusations. The reasonable Fielding expresses his exasperation to Aziz’s refusal to let Adela off paying despite the fact that it was through her enormously brave renunciation of the accusation that he was saved, and will finally find no other resource but to succumb to the irrational by the invocation of Mrs Moore’s name to achieve his goal. The narrator’s comment in Chapter 16: “The girl’s sacrifice – so creditable in western notions – was rightly rejected (...) it did not include her heart,” is a proof of Forster's interest in decentralizing the western point of view by showing another mode of evaluation that is not based on rationalism.

The difference between the two characters is contained in their reaction to “mystery” and “muddle” at Fielding's tea party. While Adela shrieks at any form of the unknown, Mrs Moore only accepts mystery because it suggests a comforting purpose and meaning behind it. Thus, in their different ways, both expect life to be ordered, and from human action to matter. However, the Christian principle Mrs Moore adheres to enables her to accept human failure, and weakens her control over life, “I believe everyone fails.” (p. 26) “Adventures do occur, but not punctually.” (p. 51) Therefore, the extent of the authenticity of experience is the extent of the character's ability to let go of reason. This is what makes Mrs Moore the only character who achieved, in addition to a durable connection to an Indian, an instinctive awareness of the non-human world that is prominently present in India: “In England the moon seemed dead and alien; here she was caught in a shawl of the night together with the other stars.” (p. 30)

There is a correlation in the novel between the weakening of her belief, “Since her arrival to India he – God – has never satisfied her less.” (p. 52) And her awakening to the

aliveness of the non-human world: “A sudden sense of unity, of kinship with the heavenly bodies, passed into the old woman and out, like water through a tank, leaving a strange freshness behind.” (p. 30). She was also able to address the wasp lovingly (p. 37) This means that she started to experience another type of relation to reality, one that lies outside human conceptualization.

The sense of kinship in the first instance means that she had a glimpse of a common origin, not a heavenly one as she had expected “to be one with the universe, so dignified and simple.” (p. 203) But bodily, a physical unity which is chemically true. In other words, India made her aware of her physical presence, common to every other manifestation of life. That is why in the second instance, her spontaneous remark to the wasp was a kindness that exceeds the scope of “one’s neighbour”. Therefore, beyond her religious teachings and its focus on the human only. This mode of perception is immediate; it escapes the laws of the mind. Consequently, the source of her dissatisfaction after articulating her Christian beliefs to Ronny is the rift between her unconveyable experience situated in the present instant and an idea of a transcendent reality situated in human abstraction. She was unable to feel neither the omnipresence of God nor the exceptionality of human beings, and hence her beliefs became impersonalized ideas.

Adela was unable of restraining her “well-equipped mind” from planning and veering to the “manageable future” and, could only now and then “pay tribute to the present” by commenting on it. (pp. 134-35) This explains why, upon perceiving the green bird at the maiden, her first impulse was to ask for its name. Similarly, she insisted on identifying the enigmatic animal that hit them on the Marabar Road. Perceiving reality as a mental identification hindered her from accessing the real essence of things. In Schopenhauer’s terms, she was unable to go beyond the subject-object relation:

We shall therefore remain at the outside of things: we shall never be able to penetrate into their inner nature, and investigate what they are in themselves, in other words, what they may be by themselves. (*The World as Will and Representation*, p. 195)

What things may be by themselves means a metaphysical experience of things that goes beyond the mental recognition:

Transcendental knowledge is knowledge which passes beyond the bounds of possible experience and strives to determine the nature of things as they are in themselves. Immanent knowledge, on the other hand, is knowledge which

confines itself entirely to those bounds; so that it cannot apply to anything but actual phenomena. (p. 28)

The bounds are present à priori in the mind: time, space, and causality. Physical division, what Schopenhauer calls “the principium individuations” is the result of perceiving the world under the principle of sufficient reason, which hinders the experience of cosmic unity felt by Mrs Moore.

During Ronny and Adela's conversation at the maiden, the narrator comments: “Experience rather than character divided them”. They are similar in their ability to rationally face a difficulty “they were softened by their honesty (...) none would have examined a difficulty so frankly and coolly.” (p. 83) Adela thought her intellect enough for her to become a self-controlling individual, totally independent from her English background, and she was disconcerted by facing her inability to express passionate feelings. In fact, recognizing the gap between her idea of what her behaviour should have been and what it really was, she comments: “We’ve been awfully British over it.” (Ibid.) India exposes the western illusion of control when Adela unconsciously declared that she would not stay in India: “I didn’t mean it, so why did I say it? I feel I haven’t been frank enough, attentive enough, or something (...) if one isn’t absolutely honest, what is the use of existing?” (p. 95) This reflects the extreme extent to which she sees herself as the product of her own conscious will. Exposing the poorness of the inner life of the “advanced” side of civilization is a common theme in Forster’s novels.

This awareness of physicality, as an important constituent for a full human experience, is probably the result of Forster's crippling homosexuality, as Christopher Gillie reveals it in his *A Preface to Forster*: “I’m going to be a minority (the term he used for homosexuality) if not a solitary, and I'd better make a copy out of my position.” (p. 32) The link between love and physicality is made in Forster’s third novel *A Room with A View (1908)* through the moralizing speech of his character, Mr. Emerson : “I only wish poets would say this, too: love is of the body; not the body, but of the body. Ah! the misery that would be saved if we confessed that!” (p. 682). Whereas through these words that she did not cognitively understand, Lucy discovered that she loved George, Adela remembering the animal thrill, discovered that she did not love Ronny.

Through the character of Adela, the link between emotional and physical deprivation is more explicitly made: “There was esteem and animal contact at dusk, but the emotion that linked them was absent.” (p. 150) what she had found estimable in Ronny's character was the

distanced examination with which he received her refusal to marry him: “The news hurt Ronny very much. (...) He controlled himself and said gently, ‘you never said we should marry, my dear girl; you never bound either yourself or me – don’t let this upset you.’” (p. 82) His reaction that she admired, represented the purely rational aspect of their civilization that Aziz would have despised and condemned as “ranged coldly on shelves”. Therefore, her idea of herself as an individual that is independent from her native civilization is not real.

The “thrill so frequent in the animal kingdom” that she experienced upon their hand touch in the car represents a glimpse of a physical awakening “as local and temporary as the gleam that inhabits a firefly.” Thus, her crisis was the inability to connect the brain to the body through ‘an undeveloped heart’. Her experience in the caves caused an emotional release in spite of her personal will: “She would break down entirely, (...) No one realized that she thought tears vile, a degradation (...) a negation of her advanced outlook and the natural honesty of her mind.” (p. 190) That is why, after the cave incident she was opened to a new experience during the trial that cured her of the echo, which actually meant that it cured her of her pathological obsession with analysing and controlling life and herself. Before the trial, the instances where her echo diminished were the ones in which she did not rely on her intellect:

- “Ronny, he’s innocent; I made an awful mistake.” (...)
- “My echo’s better.” (p. 198)

Adela was able to hear what lay beneath verbal expressions,

- “Aziz is good. You heard your mother says so.” (...)
- “Mother never said so.” (Ibid.)

Her agitated situation between doubt, tearfulness, and logic disappeared at court when she experienced a new sort of memory, that included her physical senses and was not only restricted to her mind:

The fatal day recurred, in every detail, but now she was of it and not of it at the same time. (...) Now the sun rose again, the elephant waited, the pale masses of the rock flowed around her and presented the first cave, she entered and a match was reflected in the polished walls – all beautiful and significant, though she had been blind to it at the time... she created the Kawa doll, saw the niches up the curve of the stone, and felt the heat strike her face. (p. 221)

This new awakening of her senses that “were abnormally inert” (p. 189) relieved her from the prison of her mind by making her accept what she could not know: “And something caused her to add: ‘No one else was present to my knowledge. We appeared to be alone.’” (p. 222)

she was able to recognize the limitation of her grasp of reality: “She was no longer examining life, but being examined by it; she had become a real person.” (p. 238)

It may seem at first contradictory that Adela, the character who mostly relies on logic to make sense of the world around her, could be impacted by something that lay outside the scope of intelligence, while Fielding, unlike her, was closer to life and had the ability to sense the unsaid undercurrents beneath direct speech could not. Forster made both Fielding and Adela representative of the modern side of western civilization, while her theoretical nature repels him: “She struck me as one of the more pathetic products of Western education. She depresses me.” (p. 116) They both agree on the sufficiency of reason and the non-existence of otherworldliness as their dialogue after the trial indicates:

- “Because the dead don’t live again,” said Adela to Fielding.
- “I fear not,” the latter answered.
- “So do I,” claimed Adela.

There was a moment’s silence, such as follows the triumph of rationalism. (p. 234)

While the reader might develop a sort of admiration for Fielding’s strength of personality and practical humanism, as opposed to Adela’s helpless strive for absolute sincerity, and spurious perpetual excitement, Forster creates in their interview after the trial, a sudden confusion of the reader’s sympathies:

- “I ought to feel grateful to you, I suppose, but...”
- “I do not expect gratitude. I only thought you might care to hear what I have to say.”
- “Oh, well,”

And the narrator comments: “He grumbled, feeling rather schoolboyish.”

This change of attitude regarding Fielding may be explained by this latter’s reaction to “mystery” and “muddle”.

At the tea party, Fielding shows a complete indifference as to distinguishing mystery from muddle, and the negligent tone in which he states that “India is muddle” reflects the extreme sense of security he finds in his rationalism and philosophy of traveling light “I can never be in trouble, I travel light.” (p. 35) His sense of right and wrong is rooted in his experience rather than any form of mental conceptualization, hence, he represents the pinnacle of Individualism. Yet the upshot of his life can be summed up to a purely European quality “equilibrium”, which means self-mastery through reason:

After forty years’ experience, he had learnt 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. A creditable achievement ... (p. 187)

Thus, the use of reason is more deeply entrenched in him than in any other character. Indeed, while Adela feels dissatisfied at not being able to have a passionate “thorough talk”, he “had to admit that he did not mind” his inability to be moved “by waves of emotions” and to establish intimacy. Moreover, while Mrs Moore was able to experience kinship with the stars, and Adela to perceive the bird, there is no instance in the novel where Fielding’s senses were attracted by the non-human existence. The strength of his personality, and his satisfaction, means a solid western conditioning that blocks the experience of something that lay outside the human grasp: “Fielding ran up to see one cave. He wasn’t impressed” (p. 156) In another passage, the narrator comments, “clarity prevented him from experiencing something else.” (p. 115) What Forster tests in this novel is not the extent to which his characters can be individuals, but the extent to which they can go beyond their own personalities which is a purely human quality. In fact, Wilfred Stone interpreted Adela’s impression of being raped as the rape of personality, the violent bringing back to a state of bare animal existence.

In the preface of the first edition of *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer states: “I believe that the influence of the Sanskrit literature will penetrate not less deeply than did the revival of Greek literature in the fifteenth century.” (p. 13) Later on, he quotes passages from the Vedas and the Puranas to draw a parallel between his argumentative philosophical description of the unity that the mind fails to comprehend:

It is Mâyâ, the veil of deception which blinds the eyes of mortals, and makes them uphold a world of which they cannot say either that it is or that it is not”  
(p. 31)

Hindu Philosophy influenced Forster as well. *The Hill of Devi*, The collection of Forster’s letters during his second visit to India where he worked as the private secretary of the Rajah of Dewas state, shows his interest in Hindu philosophy. In the first of their conversations about religion, he states. “He believes that we – men, birds, everything – are part of God.” (p. 25) Unlike Mrs Moore’s “God is love” or Aziz’s dome containing “the 99 attributes of God”, the absolute God “Brahma” in Hinduism has no definition, hence no mental conception except that it is a unification of all the apparent physical divisions: “God is equally immanent, though perhaps not equally evident in man, wasp, and stone and no one is to be preferred above another.” (Glenn O.Allen, p. 6). Where modern science proved

that reason evinced disruptions in the physical reality rather than homogeneity, Forster found in Hinduism a mystical conception of unity that both included physicality and his idea of a transcendental reality that embraces the unknown:

He (Forster) is making the point that Hinduism is more open to certain kinds of experience than is Christianity or Islam and that we of the West, in particular, are impoverished by our repression of the irrational and the unseen. The world of logic and common sense is there and it is important, but it is not enough. (Wilfred Stone, p. 3)

Hence, Forster's interest in Hinduism rests in the embrace of complexity, as will be further developed in the following part.

## **2- The Echo between Good and Evil**

The human awareness of the inevitability of death is frequently referred to in the novel for it lies at the heart of the different human attempts to give meaning to life. Here are few instances where it was referred to in the novel. In fact, speaking about Mrs. Moore, the narrator comments: "She found him [God] increasingly difficult to avoid since she got older." (p. 26) while Aziz was mourning his deceased wife, the narrator expresses the character's internal thoughts: "Would he meet her beyond the tomb? Is there such a meeting place?" (p. 55)

Finally, during Adela and Fielding's post-trial conversation, the latter declares:

It is difficult as we get on in life, to resist the supernatural. I've felt it coming on me myself. I still jog on without it, but what a temptation at forty-five, to pretend that the dead live again. (p. 234)

This repetitive reference to death indicate Forster's concern with the existential questions that death imposes on the human intellect. Schopenhauer expresses this idea in his essay *On the suffering of the world*:

The pains of life are made much worse for man by the fact that death is something very real to him. The brute flies from death instinctively, without really knowing what it is, and therefore without ever contemplating it in the way natural to a man, who has this prospect always before his eyes. (Schopenhauer, p. 10)

The capacity to love talked about in the previous section explaining Adela's crisis is not merely restricted to her marriage with Ronny; it falls under the existential questionings of the novel. As Judith Scherer Herz remarks, "Forster constructs a pattern that, far more than the plot of marriage, colonization, and friendship, provides the novel with its narrative power." (p. 1) Indeed, through his rhythmic symbology, Forster made all these themes

coordinate to serve a higher purpose; much like each independent musical note serves in the making of a masterpiece.

The union of Adela and Ronny, of East and West, of Fielding and Aziz, are in Forster's sense manifestations of the human instinctive need for divine love, and a universal explanation of suffering, for the multiplicity of viewpoints that causes division is the result of humans' ignorance about the ultimate purpose of life. Godbole's call to Krishna "come, come, come..." (p. 78) is expressed in different ways by the entire humanity which receives only echoes of silence as the extraordinary dimension, if it exists, is as inarticulate as the ordinary one. In fact, in Chapter 9, the narrator comments on poetry as follows:

Less explicit than the call to Krishna, it voiced our loneliness nevertheless, our isolation, our need for the Friend who never comes yet is not entirely disproved. (p. 103)

Considering that the caves stand for the unreachable essence behind the tangible reality, the exquisite imagery that Forster draws of the reflection of a match, in the granite of the caves, is a clear allusion to the human quest for meaning in the sky: "A mirror inlaid with lovely colors divides the lovers, delicate stars of pink and grey interpose." (p. 124)

Glen O. Allen explains Forster's description of the flame resulting from the striking of a match and its reflection on the walls of the caves, "one breathes air, the other stone," as an indication "of the inadequacy of intelligence or reason in its effort to discover within the limits of its categories the ultimate nature of the universe." (p. 943) Hence, of the main characters, there are those who were affected by the echo of the Marabar Caves; Adela and Mrs Moore, and those who were not: Fielding and Aziz. The extent to which the caves and their echo can affect the characters is the extent to which the mind's conceptualization of reality has hold of their personalities. It is therefore not surprising that Mrs Moore who has had the sensibility of connecting with the non-human world is the one who had the least resistance to understanding the unarticulated message of the echo which "is entirely devoid of distinction (...) whatever is said the same monotonous noise replies." (p. 145)

Consequently, the echo is the absolute indifference to meaning and order that logical linguistic structures provide. Wilfred Stone, who interpreted the caves and their echoes from a psychoanalytic perspective, argued that it represents the unconscious, "something prehistoric, pre-human, before language, before morality, which is a nightmare for those who seek refuge from the primal forces of nature." (The caves of A Passage to India, p.7) This irrational unconscious is what Schopenhauer referred to as "Will", the blind force of life that

preceded the human species and makes them part of all forms of life, undistinguished by their capacity to generate meaning. “Before man and his itch for the seemly had been born,” mentions the paragraph preceding Mrs Moore’s experience, “the planet must have looked thus.” (p. 83)

The vision presented of this unreachable realm is indifferent, offering no solace for earthly suffering and the anguish of death:

What had spoken to her in that scoured-out cavity of the granite? (...) something very old and very small. Before time, it was before space also. Something snub-nosed, incapable of generosity. (p. 203)

Glen Allan mentions that:

the principal difference between the metaphysics of Schopenhauer and Shankara the great Hindu enlightener is that the ultimate monism of the former lies in that simple substance, the blind striving will, while that of the latter is a monism in which no qualities can be attributed. (p. 944)

However, for the English newcomers in need of everything to be meaningful and harmonious, the mere sensation of cosmic indifference is a form of evil. In fact, Mrs Moore had the same reaction as Adela in trying to identify the villain after her emergence from the cave, however the former was able to see that “she had been among the mildest of individuals, whose desire was to honour her (...) nothing evil had been in the cave.” (p. 146)

At the core of the novel lies the theme of good and evil. Despite the well-meaning intention of the characters, evil spreads uncontrollably: “[T]he evil was propagating in every direction, it seemed to have an existence of its own, apart from anything that was done or said by individuals.” (p. 184) In his paper, *E. M. Forster*, Lionel Trilling points to Forster’s interest in the “good-and-evil”, that is, the complexity of living a moral life. It is not easy to designate “the heroes and villains” of Forster’s fiction, and since in *A Passage to India*, he expanded his metaphysical questionings at the expense of his message, human control over these opposites is at its nadir. Hence, Forster’s interest in the Hindu conception of good and evil expressed in *The Hill of Devi* becomes clearer:

When I asked why we had any of us ever been severed from God, he explained it by God becoming unconscious that we were parts of him, owing to his energy at some time being concentrated elsewhere. (...) I think I see what lies at the back of this – if you believe that the universe was God's conscious creation you are faced with the fact that he has consciously created suffering and sin, and this the Indian refuses to believe. (Forster, p. 25)

This metaphysical conception exempts individuals from responsibility over evil, and contradicts the idea of the natural goodness of life.

Schopenhauer expresses the same concern for the question of evil in the monotheistic conception of the universe in the same essay:

That a God like Jehovah should have created this world of misery and woe, out of pure caprice, and because he enjoyed doing it, and should then have clapped his hands in praise of his own work, and declared everything to be very good – that will not do at all! (p. 13)

The conception of an essentially good omnipresent God which for Mrs Moore is defined as “love” and who promises heaven for good actions and hell for evil ones, is mainly based on a mental distinction. Indeed, in his essay, *Hinduism in A Passage to India*, Michael Spencer explains that Mrs Moore’s spiritual breakdown described by the narrator as “robbing infinity and eternity of their vastness” in relation to the eastern and western conception of salvation. Heaven and hell in monotheistic beliefs represent mental distinctions and an expansion of “Time” and “Space”. They are also based on a mental distinction between good and evil actions. Whereas in Hinduism true salvation is the liberation from the illusionary world of space and time, and it rests upon refraining from action all together.

Hence, Mrs Moore’s complete spiritual breakdown is the result of the absence of distinction in the echo:

[I]t had managed to murmur, “Pathos, piety, courage – they exist, but are identical, and so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value.” If one had spoken vileness in that place or quoted lofty poetry, the comment would have been the same – “ou-bourn”. (p.125)

When the Hindu professor Godbole explains to the exasperated Fielding their view of good and evil he says:

Good and evil are different, as their names imply. But they are both aspects of my Lord. 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. (p. 174)

Therefore, the emphasis on the importance of human action present in western thought is absent in such a philosophy. Christopher Gillie demonstrates the practical manifestation of Godbole’s statement at the level of the plot:

Aziz did not in fact assault Adela, but his expensive and ostentatious, much concerned to display his talent as a host but very little concerned with the real comfort of his guests; whatever happened in the cave, the effects of exhaustion and discomfort on Adela and Mrs Moore had much to do with it. The guide employed by Aziz lost touch with Adela so his incompetence has also been a contribution. His inclusion of Fielding seems at first unfair: though invited, he had not been present, because he had been in the company of Godbole and both had missed the train. (p. 100)

The echo has cut off the fine thread that was keeping Mrs. Moore's engagement in human affairs; her complete resignation has also been compared to the Hindu's passivity, because, contrary to the fundamental importance of action in Monotheism, and Rationalism as well, the way to escape the endless cycle of space and time is to renounce action. Such a realization and detachment from the comfort of her monotheism, however, meant that life may not be a mystery after all but a muddle, for the metaphysical world was as inarticulate as the physical one to which she newly felt a belonging. She felt that "Outside the arch, there seemed always an arch, beyond the remotest echo a silence." (p. 51) The same kind of silence after Godbole's call to his Lord Krishna to "come", "there was a moment of absolute silence; no ripple disturbed the water, no leaf stirred." (p. 45) Humans who were capable of philosophizing on the origin and purpose of life could but articulate their "ideas" of the world which is no longer a source of satisfaction after her glimpse of the "will".

Signs of her apathy regarding human affairs and personal relationships began earlier than her cave experience: "[M]y duties here are evidently finished, I don't want to see India now, now for my passage back, was Mrs Moore's thought." (p. 52) In another instance, the narrator states: "She felt increasingly that though people are important, the relationships between them are not." (p. 93)

Indeed, her experience in the caves that marks her complete annihilation and renunciation from action, "She didn't want to communicate with anyone not even with God," (p. 105) gave a definite form to the detachment she had been feeling from her arrival, "her mood took a definite form at last," (Ibid.) comments the narrator.

The experience of the caves was an accentuated synthesis of all the impressions explained above: physicality, retirement, and cosmic indifference, "There had been a crush, stench, and a terrifying echo in the Marabar cave." (p. 145) The crush represents the physical shock she had received when she "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." (p. 145)

The stench was a result of the gathering of villagers and servants in the cave. So far, we have an extreme bodily experience, and disgust of people, which is ironic considering that her creed was one that embraced all peoples. In her essay, *Listening to Language*, Judith Scherer Herz explains that the caves rob whatever is uttered of its meaning; it is then the source of Mrs Moore's annihilation and retirement and adoption of silence. Her refusal to testify in the favour of Aziz is the result of her complete despair in the importance of human action and her realization of the ineffectiveness of language to transmit the essence of experiences, "[I]f you don't know you don't know, I can't tell you," she answers Adela when this questions her about the meaning of the echo (p. 195) These are indications of her complete metamorphosis, "[H]er Christian tenderness had gone or had developed into a hardness." (p. 194)

Her reaction can be explained in Schopenhauer's philosophy. In *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer maintains that there are two ways a human could come to terms with the realization of the draconian reality of the will: theoretical egoism or compassion. (p. 298) This means, choosing an attitude that mainly focuses on the inevitability of subjective individual suffering, or one that recognizes the similarity of that suffering in other bodies. Since compassion had previously been based on her Christian belief from which shed had been violently disillusioned, Mrs Moore took the former way, "[S]he was actually envious of Adela, all this fuss over a frightened girl." (p. 203)

The reason behind her bitter egoism however becomes clearer in the novel as we consider that back in Chapter 14, she thought, "in particular too much fuss has been made over marriage ; centuries of carnal embracement, yet man is no nearer to understanding man." (p. 134). Additionally, in Chapter 8, the narrator states: "[S]he was past marrying herself; even unhappily, her function was to help others. Elderly ladies must not expect more than this." (p. 92) The first quote indicates that after the sense of physical kinship shed had experienced with the non-human world, marriage to which humans attribute lofty abstract significations, and high importance, such as Adela's "cultivated uncertainty", amounted to her to sexual intercourse. Though Mrs. Moore was not one to entertain her reason with reflections about the nature of things, shed had an instinctive insight into what constitutes true connection: not through words but through a shared bodily experience. However, as it is indicated in the second quote, shed was past experiencing it herself. Thus, her awakening to her physical existence was an awakening to her loneliness and weakness: "My body, my miserable body," she complained in Chapter 22, "[W]hy do I get headaches and puff when I walk?" (p. 197)

Therefore, when Mrs Moore awakened to her physical existence, all the human abstract ideas of right and wrong lost their value, and the caves reduced her existence to mere animal egoism.

# **CONCLUSION**

Edward M. Forster's aim through his novel, *A Passage to India*, is not to preach the Hindu vision of life, nor to advocate nihilism and muddle, but to deconstruct all the premises of Western civilization by providing an antithesis to the Western centrality of man. The evil that Forster is concerned about is human's potential for destruction and subjugation in the name of science and progress, or what is expressed in Christian terms, "building Eden on Earth," to quote from Joseph Chiari's book *The Aesthetics of Modernism* (p.10).

This study permitted answering the fundamental questions formulated in the introduction. The cultural confusion in the novel greatly undermined the characters' ability to generate the right meaning out of situations, and to have control over their conceptions of good and evil; the prominence of the indifferent non-human world caused Mrs. Moore and Miss. Quested to awaken to the physical aspects of their existence to which they had been oblivious. Hence, the excessive dependence on mental processes of Time, Space, and Causality in the experience of reality found in both Rationalism, and Christianity of the afore mentioned characters was transformed to an acceptance of the unknown and of human limitations. The deep entrenchment of reason in Mr. Fielding's personality prevented this latter from accessing the unusual realm of the 'will' of which Mrs. Moore and Miss. Quested had a glimpse.

The Marabar Caves are a concentrated synthesis of the complete unavailability of absolute meaning that the Human species longs for. The darkness, and the mysterious echo that robs every word of its linguistic meaning cause the complete destruction of Mrs. Moore and Miss. Quested's conceptions of morality and clarity. They symbolize the link between the earth and the unreachable transcendental reality which religious imagination strives to define, and Rationalism that does not admit of the unknown, to deny.

The link between the colonial theme and the denunciation of Anthropocentrism in Western thought is the attitude of Force. The real human civilization in Forster's view, consists in every human endeavor that escapes "force". Rejection of the "political" force can be too easy to reject. That is why he made his characters face their unconscious power over the rest of the universe. This unconscious power is embedded in the English characters' obliviousness to a view of the universe that does not include order and reason.

*A Passage to India* is crucially important to consider today, as progress is raising debates about the health of our planet, particularly due to the destruction of ecosystems, and

global warming. The rest of nature cannot be objectified if life is to be sustained, and for this to happen, Forster's masterpiece, *A Passage to India*, suggests an awakening to the physical aspect that every living organism shares.

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