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‘Education of the Heart’ in a Passage to India

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Abstract

*Forster’s mode of educating an individual involves the following: recognition of humans as ‘various’; appreciation of the ‘richness and subtlety’ of this world; cultivation of the heart, ‘feeling’, and ‘emotion’; and ‘mental clarity’. At the end of *The Longest Journey*, the Wordsworthian model of growth finds an equivalent expression in the country of Wiltshire. Forster’s exploration is pronounced complete in terms of exposing the gap between ‘substantial knowledge’ and ‘abstract knowledge’. Forster makes use of Rickie’s experience of Cambridge and Sawston as the touchstone on which he tests his characters’ powers against modernity. Wordsworth’s search for continuity and wholeness in *The Prelude* finds an equivalent expression at *Howards End* – situated in the country of Hertfordshire. This paper examines Forster’s *A Passage to India* in the light of Wordsworth’s theory of education as expounded in *The Prelude*. Forster’s discoveries made in *The Longest Journey* and then tested in *Howards End* are contextualized in an altogether different setting – British India. How far does Forster’s central belief in the development of the human heart hold true in a climate of sharp differences between the British and the Indians? Does it give authenticity to his knowledge of India and the peoples of India? He categorizes characters into two distinct types: the characters of a developed or developing heart – the Wordsworthian model of growth – and the characters of the ‘undeveloped heart’ – the institutional mode of education.*

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¹ The British Raj in India lasted from 1858 to 1947.

² See Quentin Bailey, “Heroes and Homosexuals: Education and Empire in E. M. Forster” in *Twentieth Century Literature* 48.3 (Autumn 2002), pp. 324-347.

his knowledge of India and the peoples of India? He categorizes characters into two distinct types: the characters of a developed or developing heart – the Wordsworthian model of growth – and the characters of the 'undeveloped heart' – the institutional mode of education.

There is a large gap of fourteen years between *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*. Forster took enormous pains and a much longer time in writing *A Passage to India*; he expended his creative energies to the point of exhausting them.³ Though he remained active in the other spheres of creative activity, he never tried writing another novel after *A Passage to India*. What led Forster to choose India as the setting of *A Passage to India*? He visited India three times: 1912-13, 1921-22, and 1945. His first visit took place from the late of October 1912 until the beginning of April 1913.⁴ His second visit started from the end of March 1921 to the late of October 1922.⁵ These two visits cover a time span of almost a year. There is clearly an imaginative and emotional link between him and India, and that is provided in the form of his life-long friendship with Syed Ross Masood, an Indian Muslim.⁶ His friendship with Masood led him to investigate India further. He had already met Masood – a seventeen year old boy preparing for Oxford – in Weybridge, Surrey, late in 1906. Forster was his Latin tutor. He fell in love with him. Even though his desire for physical intimacy was repulsed by Masood in 1910 his love for Masood remained the most central in all his love affairs.⁷ For Forster, Masood is that link that binds him with India: "I have always 'loved her', since Masood arrived at Weybridge. And there are links through time that bind us".⁸ His love of India happens through his love of Masood.⁹ Therefore, Forster dedicated *A Passage to India* to him.

Forster began working on *A Passage to India* in 1913. The process of writing was hampered by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. He had the opportunity to go to Alexandria to serve as a Red Cross worker in 1915.¹⁰ Here he began an affair with an Egyptian tram conductor,

³ Frank Kermode declares it to be his best book as he perceives "a decline in imaginative power" in Forster after *A Passage to India*. See Kermode, *Concerning E. M. Forster* (London: Phoenix, 2009), p. 85. P. N. Furbank affirms Kermode's point that Forster "felt dried up as a novelist". See Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, Vol.2 (London: Cardinal, 1991), p. 64.

⁴ Furbank states, "Forster's first visit to India was a carefree affair, and the dark colours of *A Passage to India* were the product of later experience", p. 220. See for details, Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, Vol.1, pp. 220-254.

⁵ See for details, Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, Vol.2, pp. 68-104.

⁶ As Furbank states, "Masood's arrival in his life was a major event for Forster". See Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, Vol.1, p. 143. Masood is the grandson of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) – known as a mediator between the Indian Muslims and the British especially after the Indian Rebellion of 1857. His services in the field of education are also well-known. See Wendy Moffat, *E. M. Forster: A New Life* (London; Berlin; New York: Bloomsbury, 2010), pp. 88-89.

⁷ As Forster acknowledges, "Masood was my greatest Indian friend". See Forster, *The Hill of Devi*, Vol.14, ed. Elizabeth Heine (The Abinger Edition, 1983), p. 38. Also see Moffat, *E. M. Forster: A New Life*, pp. 102-104.

⁸ Forster, *The Hill of Devi*, p. 252.

⁹ See Daniel Ryan Morse, "Only Connecting?: E. M. Forster, Empire Broadcasting and the Ethics of Distance" in *Journal of Modern Literature* 34.3 (Spring 2011), pp. 87-105.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Heine argues that "Forster's second journey to India needs to be placed against the background of his years in Alexandria". See Heine, "Introduction" to *The Hill of Devi*, p. xx.

Also Peter Jeffreys argues that "Forster's Egyptian sojourn allowed him to move beyond his

Mohammad el Adle and fulfilled his homosexual desire.¹¹ His embrace of a colonized British subject removed the barriers of race, class and colour.¹² In his relationship with Mohammad, he was able to study more closely how enormously difficult it was to survive under the oppressive pressures of the British Empire. At about this period, his anger against the British Empire was beginning to express itself more violently.¹³ However, it is paradoxical to say that the most English kind of literary identification – with Wordsworth and Romanticism – enables Forster to reach out to attempt to comprehend the non-English and the non-Western.

As his first visit to India was inspired by his friendship with Masood, his second visit came about in response to the invitation of Sir Tukoji Rao Puar III – Maharajah of Dewas State Senior – to serve as his private secretary. The particular feature of his second visit was his relationship with the Maharajah.¹⁴ His duties as the Maharajah's private secretary gave him ample opportunities to study Hinduism.¹⁵ He was also able to witness the festival of Gokul Ashtami – the eight-day long celebration of Krishna's birth.¹⁶ Forster could see more of Hindus and their way of life in his second visit. His official duties as the Maharajah's private secretary gave him ample opportunities to see more closely Indian social, political and cultural life.¹⁷ He made use of this material in his unfinished novel in order to narrow the gaps in his earlier understanding of India.

It is a critical commonplace to say that the cultural diversity of India makes it incredibly difficult for a foreigner to see the 'real India'. Forster did encounter difficulties in comprehending India and

Occidental frame of reference [Western Hellenism and Orientalism] and prepared him for his Indian experience". See Jeffreys, *Eastern Questions: Hellenism and Orientalism in the Writings of E. M. Forster and C. P. Cavafy* (Greensboro, NC: ELT Press, 2005), p. 87.

¹¹ As Furbank states, "Forster's happiness was now complete, and he determined to be grateful for his good fortune". See Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, Vol.2, p. 40. See for details on the relationship between Forster and Mohammad, Moffat, *E. M. Forster: A New Life*, pp. 151-173. Also see Donald Watt, "Mohammed el Adl and *A Passage to India* in *Journal of Modern Literature* 10.2 (Jun., 1983), pp. 311-326.

¹² As Jeffreys states, "he managed to endure the war's horrors while improving his understanding of the East and also fulfilling his sexual relationship". See Jeffreys, *Eastern Questions: Hellenism and Orientalism in the Writings of E. M. Forster and C. P. Cavafy*, p. 56. Also see Jesse Matz, "Masculinity Amalgamated: Colonialism, Homosexuality, and Forster's Kipling" in *Journal of Modern Literature* 30.3 (Spring 2007), pp. 31-51.

¹³ On the one hand, Forster received the terrible news about the Amritsar massacre which took place in 1919; on the other hand, Mohammad's troubles in Egypt began to mount up as he was arrested under the suspicion of buying firearms. See Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, Vol.2, pp. 60-63.

¹⁴ As Forster describes him in *The Hill of Devi*: "he struck me as a most charming and able young man", p. 7; "he was charming, he was lovable, it was impossible to resist him or India", p. 12; "he was certainly a genius and possibly a saint", p. 27; "he is one of the sweetest characters on Earth", p. 84; "he is one of the sweetest and saintliest men I have ever known", p. 98.

¹⁵ See Michael Spencer, "Hinduism in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*" in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 27.2 (Feb., 1968), pp. 281-295.

¹⁶ See Forster, *The Hill of Devi*, pp. 60-73. Forster presents his experience of Gokul Ashtami in the third section of the novel.

¹⁷ See *Ibid.*, pp. 29-88.

the peoples of India. He acknowledges from time to time the gaps in his understandings: "Everything that happens is said to be one thing and proves to be another, and as it is further said in an unknown tongue I live in a haze".¹⁸ For example, the break-up of the Maharajah's marriage and his response to it is incomprehensible to Forster. He declares in spite of his knowledge of the Maharajah's inexplicable response to his estranged relationship with his wife that "I shall never know the ins and outs, and I doubt whether any Indian grasped them".¹⁹ It is significant to note that it eludes the grasp of Indians themselves. On another occasion, he feels incapacitated by what he sees in and around the Maharajah's palace, "my brain seems as messy as its surroundings, and I cannot realise it at all".²⁰ He confronts almost all characters, whether Indians or Anglo-Indians, in *A Passage to India* with such perceptual difficulties he himself experienced in India. By doing so he exposes the limitation of all points of view in comprehending the whole of India.²¹ Nevertheless, he refuses to believe that his perception of India is that of a tourist's or simply an Englishman's view of India. He asserts that "it is impossible that the ordinary tourist should do all that I have done, and I do feel lucky and grateful".²²

Forster's purpose of writing a novel about India is not political or sociological.²³ In his letter to Forrest Reid written on February 2, 1913, he explains that "I want something beyond the field of action and behaviour".²⁴ Even as late as April 8, 1922, when he began working on the novel again, he notes in his diary: "The philosophical scheme of the fragment still suits me".²⁵ He picked up the title of the novel from Walt Whitman's poem as he explains in 1960: "Furthermore – taking my title from a poem of Walt Whitman's – I tried to indicate the human predicament in a universe which is not, so far, comprehensible to our minds. This aspect of the novel is displayed in its final chapters".²⁶ He acknowledges the fact that the India of his novel is no longer the same in the present time – 1960 – but the human beings represented in it "may not have altered so much".²⁷ Moreover, Forster's central belief in the development of the human heart gives him a sense of authenticity about the knowledge of India and its peoples: "I stand for the heart. To the dogs with the head".²⁸ This aspect of the novel gives it a lasting value.

Soon after the publication of *A Passage to India* in 1924, Forster received a letter from E. A. Horne.²⁹ Horne criticises Forster on the grounds that his depiction of Indians is commendable; whereas, his picture of Anglo-Indians falls short of adequate representation. He acknowledges

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 37.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 41.

²¹ See Wendy Moffat, "A Passage to India and the Limits of Certainty" in *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 20.3 (Fall 1990), pp. 331-341.

²² Forster, *The Hill of Devi*, p. 157.

²³ See Forster, "Prefatory Note" to *A Passage to India* (Everyman Edition, 1957).

²⁴ Forster, *The Hill of Devi*, pp. 192-3. He explains in the same letter that he wants to write something different from *Arctic Summer* and *Howards End*.

²⁵ Cited in Heine's "Introduction" to *The Hill of Devi*, p. viii.

²⁶ See, "Forster's Programme Note to Santha Rama Rau's Dramatized Version in 1960" in *The Hill of Devi*, p. 327.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Forster quotes Herman Melville in *The Hill of Devi*, p. 70.

²⁹ Cited in Furbank's *E. M. Forster: A Life*, p. 128.

Forster's sincere wish of seeing 'the real India' by making friends of Indians but he charges him on the grounds that "He did not go out to India to see Anglo-Indians".³⁰ He attributes it to Forster's lack of knowledge of Anglo-Indians. According to him, Forster developed his view of Anglo-Indians on the basis of what Indians thought of them. He ends his letter on a suggestive note: "Try seeing Anglo-Indians".³¹ Forster responded to the letter with great interest: "Your letter has interested me more than any printed criticism I have read".³² He also acknowledges in his reply, "The novel is full of mistakes in fact".³³ He presumes even if he corrects some of the facts of the novel – which Horne has pointed out – Horne would still be dissatisfied with his depiction of Anglo-Indians because it would not change Horne's 'accents' in which he speaks about Indians. Forster goes on to state his dislike of Anglo-Indians: "I don't like Anglo-Indians as a class".³⁴ He explains his reasons for sympathising with Indians. He supposes that if he had seen Anglo-Indians as an insider, he would have missed out completely the other side of the picture. Horne's criticism is not well-founded.³⁵

The novel is set largely in Chandrapore, a district of British-controlled India, and partly in Mau, a Native Hindu State. The British officials in Chandrapore are the middle-class English people who have been educated at public schools in England. Forster's target of criticism is not simply the British officials in India but the public school system of education. He has already clarified in *The Longest Journey* the kind of outlook public school training inculcates. As discussed in chapter six, Mr Pembroke, the house-master at Sawston public school, envisions the products of that school to be "empire-builders" (TLJ 158). In *A Passage to India*, the public school ethos is put to test in a foreign land. The narrator remarks on the quality of those products serving as the colonial administrators in India: "Their ignorance of the arts was notable, and they lost no opportunity in proclaiming it to one another; it was the public-school attitude, flourishing more vigorously than it can yet hope to do in England" (APTI 36).³⁶ It is evident from this statement that the 'public-school attitude' is the defining feature of the personality of the British officials; it is the public school ethos that determines their inartistic outlook on life. The last part of the above statement indicates that the 'public-school attitude' is prospering even more strongly in India than in England. As discussed in chapter six, Forster brings another charge against the products of the public school, that of a 'diseased imagination' and an 'undeveloped heart'. Out of all the Chandrapore British officials, Forster spotlights Ronny Heaslop, the City Magistrate, in order to expose the limited outlook of the 'public-school attitude'. Forster places Ronny among very experienced officials whom he looks up to as mentors. Mr Turton, the Collector, has spent twenty-five years in India. Mr McBryde, the

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 129.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Much later, Forster wrote a book on his Indian experiences, *The Hill of Devi*, which was published in 1958. He dedicated it to Malcolm Darling, an Anglo-Indian. The book comprises of Forster's letters, diary entries and journals about his three visits to India. It is a sufficient evidence to prove that his knowledge of Anglo-Indians is not simply what he picked up from Indians but is based on his first-hand experience of seeing them at work in India.

³⁶ Forster, *A Passage to India* (London: Penguin, 2005). All subsequent references to *A Passage to India* are from this edition and citations appear with the abbreviation [APTI] in parentheses in the text.

District Superintendent of Police, born in Karachi, is "the most reflective and best educated of the Chandrapore officials" (APTI 156).

Forster places the British officials in a climate of differences with the natives. It is evidenced at the outset in the conversation before dinner at Hamidullah's bungalow. Here are the Muslim middle-class educated professionals: Hamidullah, a middle-aged barrister; Dr Aziz, a young medical doctor; Mahmoud Ali, a young lawyer. They talk about the process which gradually sets in to corrupt British officials in India. They agree on this point that they are gentlemen in the beginning but become otherwise after some time. Hamidullah rounds off his argument by putting together all Anglo-Indians in the same category: "They all become exactly the same – not worse, not better" (APTI 9). Mahmoud Ali adds more bitterness to the conversation by mentioning Ronny's insulting behaviour in court; he speaks of him in derogatory terms as the "red-nosed boy" (APTI 9). Earlier on, Ronny struck him as a gentleman but now he is the least tolerable in his official capacity. Mahmoud Ali, like Hamidullah, reduces it to the level of a general truth by saying: "They come out intending to be gentlemen, and are told it will not do" (APTI 9). The conversation reveals the subtext of their difficulties under the British Raj.³⁷ The question is raised as to whether it is possible for an Indian to be friends with an Englishman.³⁸ Hamidullah does not rule out the possibility of being friends with the English but he argues that it is possible only in England. He supplies evidence from his own experiences with the English. He has been to England for higher studies, and mentions to his friends the warm welcome he received at Cambridge. He describes an English family, the Reverend and Mrs Bannister, who were not only friends with him but also housed him in their rectory during the vacations. He was treated so courteously that they would entrust their children with him. However, his attempts at making friends with the English while in India have not been successful. He recalls his experience with Mr Turton whom he thought agreeable but later they could not get on. Then the conversation drifts off to Mrs Turton's taking bribes from a rajah; Hamidullah and Mahmoud Ali infer from it that the English ladies are as corrupt as Mrs Turton though there might be some exceptions. Hamidullah sees no better future for friendship with the English in India.³⁹

Hamidullah and Mahmoud Ali share the general climate of hatred, distrust and suspicion toward Anglo-Indians which is motivated by the general fear of being governed by a foreign nation.⁴⁰ Being educated according to British standards and supposedly more tolerant than others, Hamidullah and Mahmoud Ali are much better positioned socially than the majority of Indians but their intellectual position is equally fixed by the general climate of hatred, distrust and suspicion. Their stance

³⁷ See Hunt Hawkins, "Forster's Critique of Imperialism in *A Passage to India*" in *South Atlantic Review* 48.1 (Jan., 1983), pp. 54-65.

³⁸ It is one of the central questions raised in the novel; the novel begins and ends with this question.

³⁹ Later in the novel, Mr Turton expresses himself the same way on the subject of friendship as Hamidullah does: "disaster results when English people and Indians attempt to be intimate socially" (APTI 153). Like Hamidullah, Mr Turton, too, speaks from the vantage point of his twenty-five years of experience in India.

⁴⁰ See Meenakshi Sharma, "Postcolonial Responses to England: *A Passage to England* and *Delinquent Chacha*" in *Economic and Political Weekly* 40.11 (Mar., 2005), pp. 1063-1068.

produces friction that authorizes in turn Ronny's hardened position against Indians.⁴¹ The British Empire not only needs the likes of Ronny – who has modelled himself upon his orthodox superiors – to continue to prolong its existence but also the likes of Hamidullah and Mahmoud Ali who constantly supply justification for oppression. Forster explains the nature of this friction in a letter written to Josie Darling on February 4, 1913: "I am so depressed by this hatred between the educated native (barrister type) and the I.C.S...How is it going to end?"⁴²

Forster provides a more subtle view of Ronny's character through the eyes of two freshly arrived English ladies in India, the younger Adela Quested and the elderly Mrs Moore. Their connection with Ronny is deeply personal; Mrs Moore is his mother, and Adela has come to visit him in order to see whether they could arrive at a mutual decision to marry. Both ladies express the desire to "see the real India" but soon after their arrival in India, they begin to feel rather strange about the behaviour of the British officials toward Indians (APTI 21). The third chapter of the first part of the novel explains briefly but vividly the perceptual shock they experience at the representation of Indians in the conversation – soon after the conclusion of an English play, *Cousin Kate* – among the major and the minor British officials at the English Club. Indians are spoken of in derogatory terms, most of all by the wives of those officials. Adela and Mrs Moore sense in them very clearly the air of hostility toward Indians. In response to Adela's remark, "I'm tired of seeing picturesque figures pass before me as a frieze", Mr Turton offers to arrange a Bridge Party which he explains would "bridge the gulf between East and West" (APTI 24). Almost everyone other than Adela and Mrs Moore know beforehand the outcome of a party like this.

The Bridge Party, when it is arranged, in fact, fails to make any significant impact in terms of bridging 'the gulf between East and West'; it rather brings differences into a sharp focus. Adela and Mrs Moore feel further shocked at the behaviour of the British officials toward the Indian ladies and gentlemen. In such an oppressive climate of sharp differences, Adela and Mrs Moore, in spite of their best intentions, could not communicate freely with the natives; those they tried to approach were reluctant to engage with them for the fear of raising doubts in the officials' minds. They with all their courtesy ask Mrs Bhattachariya whether they could visit her. She is not sure what to answer; her husband intervenes and they arrange to meet on the following Thursday. They promise to send their carriage to fetch them to their house. They were actually intending to go to Calcutta that day but they postpone it for the sake of these English ladies. The carriage never arrives on Thursday, the ladies keep waiting, and to top it all they get to know that the Bhattachariyas have gone to Calcutta without leaving any message for them. The whole atmosphere is charged so much with fear, distrust and suspicion that Adela and Mrs Moore find themselves at their wits' end.

Ronny stands out in his talks with his mother as a hardened British official. In response to his mother's exhortations, Ronny tends to reduce the stature of his mother to that of a "globe-trotter" and fails to respect the wisdom she may have gained out of her wanderings (APTI 27). He prefers to imitate the behaviour of his superiors; he speaks in their 'accents' to supply justification of his behaviour. His understanding of the natives is based on hatred, distrust and suspicion as he says to his mother, "whether the native swaggers or cringes there's always something behind every remark he makes" (APTI 29). For example, in her conversation with Ronny about Aziz, she does not require

⁴¹ In one of his rounds of conversation with his mother, Ronny gives justification of the national cause he is serving: "I'm out here to work, mind, to hold this wretched country by force" (APTI 45).

⁴² See Forster, *The Hill of Devi*, p. 193.

her son's fixed-as-frozen categories of judging another character; she trusts her vision of Aziz's character. She feels sympathetic toward him and deplores her son's hardness because she thinks that "the essential life of him had been slain" (APTI 30). Ronny sees from the optics of his official position and hardly challenges its authenticity. When pressed further for answers by his mother, he acknowledges the uncertain nature of his understanding. He perpetuates the general climate of hatred, distrust and suspicion widespread among the British officials about Indians which resulted from the Mutiny.⁴³ Ronny is quick at pronouncing his judgment upon Indians as "seditious at heart" (APTI 36). He says categorically to his mother: 'I'm out here to work, mind, to hold this wretched country by force'. On the other hand, Mrs Moore tends to associate Ronny's hardened behaviour and his justification of what he has become in India with his time at public school: "He reminded her of his public-school days" (APTI 46).⁴⁴ His lack of sympathy and empathy affirms her belief in the cultivation of the heart as she reflects on the possibility of friendship between the British and Indians: "One touch of regret – not the canny substitute but the true regret from the heart – would have made him a different man, and the British Empire a different institution" (APTI 46). She thinks that the British never atoned sufficiently for their unsympathetic actions in India. All that had

⁴³ Ian Baucom places Forster's novel in the background of 1857 Indian Mutiny. He considers it the point in time when mutual hatred, distrust and suspicion between the British and the Indians were pronounced complete. The irreparable damage done to both sides in the Mutiny continue to stand between them as a painful reminder. The British constructed monuments to commemorate the tyranny of the mutineers; these monumental sites were constructed with a view to remind themselves of the wounds they received at the hands of Indians. Baucom quotes the example of John Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma, and Ceylon*, which was published in 1924. It includes these mutiny sites as a necessary part of an English tourist's visit to India. On the cultural side, the British not only constructed the structure of "imagined England" in India so as to be constantly reminding themselves of their essential identity, but also employed those structures as a means of "anglicizing Indians". See Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 77. The late-Victorian Gothic structures were selected as a characteristic architectural style in India. It kept the British in a daily contact with 'imagined England' – the England with her Gothic architecture of medieval times: "With the Gothic blueprint everywhere at hand it was perhaps inevitable that fragments of the sub-continent would be reconstructed as displaced and belated thirteenth-century Englands", *Ibid.*, p. 78. On the other hand, it helped fashion the colonial subject on their footsteps: "The notion that architecture will at once pacify, charm, and Anglicize the colonial subject on an identical mimetic principle and in so doing refines the business of cultural policing – so that the labor of securing imperial hegemony become less a matter of winning the natives' hearts and minds than one of governing their eyes", *Ibid.*, p. 82. The power of knowledge and cultural forms helped cement the British hegemony over the natives' hearts and minds but did not include them. By doing so, the British clung to "a narrative of the impossibility of imperial intimacy", *Ibid.*, p. 108. David Adams stresses the same point that "imperial culture employs its domestic forms and traditions to claim knowledge and thus power over non-Western peoples". See David Adams, *Colonial Odysseys: Empire and Epic in the Modernist Novel* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 15.

⁴⁴ See Praseeda Gopinath, "An Orphaned Manliness: The Pukka Sahib and the End of Empire in *A Passage to India* and *Burmese Days*" in *Studies in the Novel* 41.2 (Summer 2009), pp. 201-223.

happened cannot be undone but 'the true regret from the heart' can at least neutralize the deep wounds Indians received in the Mutiny. She is offering a solution to the problem of India.⁴⁵

Mrs Moore's solution to the problem of India is exemplified in her brief meeting with Aziz. After a slight bit of misunderstanding at the mosque, Mrs Moore and Aziz become friends instantly. The narrator remarks on their suddenly acquired intimacy that "The flame that not even beauty can nourish was springing up" (APTI 20). In their brief conversation, they talk about the basic facts of their lives; both are widows and have three children each. This is the only conversation they have but the implications of their brief meeting resound throughout the text. A sample of magnificent coming together! It exemplifies Forster's central belief, "The secret understanding of the heart!" (APTI 17).⁴⁶ This is Forster's alternative to current existence: the need to transcend the barriers of religion, race, class, gender, language and region.

Mrs Moore is the touchstone of values in the novel. She is a Wordsworthian figure.⁴⁷ She embodies the typical Wordsworthian characteristics of 'the mind's simplicity', 'real feeling', 'just sense', innocence, and spontaneous goodness. She is described as a Christian humanist. She is imaginative as she is endowed with the gift to see beyond apparent facts.⁴⁸ Her relation with the natural world is described as mystical. Soon after her arrival in India, she develops a sense of unity with the stars and the sky: "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" (APTI 26). Her exclamation at seeing the river Ganges reflects that she is capable of seeing the 'terrible' and the 'wonderful': "What a terrible river! What a wonderful river!" (APTI 28).⁴⁹ It is the power of her imagination that reconciles the contradictions of Nature.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Baucom mentions *Edward Thompson's The other Side of the Medal*, which was published in 1925. This book suggests that the British need not only atone for their misdeeds but also exorcise the ghost of troubling memories of the Mutiny. This way it could possibly pave way for them to be friends with Indians. In this context, Forster's novel offers friendship as an alternative to mutual hatred, distrust and suspicion between the British and the Indians. Baucom argues that Forster explores in the novel "an alternative plot of empire, to locate in crisis the beginning moment of a narrative of intimacy". See Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity*, p. 123.

⁴⁶ It is in fact taken from the tomb of a Deccan king.

⁴⁷ Mrs Moore falls into the same category of characters as Mrs Elliot in *The Longest Journey* and Mrs Wilcox in *Howards End* who bear a close resemblance with the depiction of Wordsworth's mother in *The Prelude*.

⁴⁸ Kermode ranks her among those characters that are great by default: "True, some forms of greatness seem not to require a deliberate spiritual and intellectual effort, for it can inhere in individuals, like physical beauty or second sight". See Kermode, *Concerning E. M. Forster*, p. 59.

⁴⁹ Her exclamatory remark reminds us of the Wordsworthian pattern of growth, "I grew up / Fostered alike by beauty and by fear" (TP, I, 301-2).

⁵⁰ For example, "Wordsworth's recognition in the Simplon Pass that the impossible contradictions of the landscape were yet held in unity by the imagination, that 'awful power' which could turn them into 'workings of one mind, the features / Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree'". See John Beer, "A Passage to India, the French New Novel and English Romanticism" in *E. M.*

Ronny, by contrast, suffers from a 'diseased imagination' and an 'undeveloped heart'. His response to Adela's concern over his unjust treatment of Indians rehearses what he has learnt from his superiors: "No one can even begin to think of knowing this country until he has been in it twenty years" (APTI 25). At best, it seems like an official cliché to undermine the inexperienced; he frames his answer in the 'accents' of his superiors because Adela is understandably new to this country. She knew Ronny very well in England. She finds him a changed man now: "His self-complacency, his censoriousness, his lack of subtlety, all grew vivid beneath a tropic sky; he seemed more indifferent than of old to what was passing in the minds of his fellows, more certain that he was right about them or that if he was wrong it didn't matter" (APTI 74). It is apparent from this statement that Ronny has gone beyond self-correction. He feels rather satisfied at what he has become now; he has become very critical of others; he lacks 'subtlety'; he has become more self-assured than ever before; he lacks empathy. He feels greatly annoyed if Adela tries to argue with him; at that she is reminded of her lack of experience in India. She ponders over Ronny's stages of growth: "A public school, London University, a year at a crammer's, a particular sequence of posts in a particular province, a fall from a horse and a touch of fever were presented to her as the only training by which Indians and all who reside in their country can be understood" (APTI 74). She questions the nature of training Ronny and his superiors must have taken before coming to India. She thinks rather mockingly that the experienced campaigners like Callendars and Turtons must have been at great pains in training Ronny in their own footsteps.⁵¹ She recalls an earlier image of him when they were in England: "How decent he was!" (APTI 77). She decides not to marry him because the thing that attracted her toward him was the belief, "like herself, in the sanctity of personal relationships" (APTI 77). The connecting thread is broken. Much later in the text, the narrator remarks in connection with his pathetic outlook on life: "Wherever he entered, mosque, cave or temple, he retained the spiritual outlook of the Fifth Form, and condemned as 'weakening' any attempt to understand them" (APTI 242). It may seem a very harsh judgment on Ronny's character but in the context of what he has become justifies the narrator's remark. He has never grown beyond his public school days. Appreciation of art entails emotional sympathy with the object of art viewed thus but he is trained to curb his emotions; their expression is deemed weakness of personality. His practical acumen may be unsurpassable but his 'spiritual outlook' is profoundly limited. She thinks at a later stage, "She belonged to the callow academic period of his life which he had outgrown – Grasmere, [visited because of its importance for Wordsworth] serious talks and walks, that sort of thing" (APTI 243).⁵² Grasmere is the place where Wordsworth developed as a poet.⁵³ Prior to his degeneration of character in India – as Adela thinks – Ronny had a romantic side to his personality. She finds

Forster: Centenary Revaluations eds., Judith Scherer Herz and Robert K. Martin (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 149.

⁵¹ Ronny and his superiors quite fit into Mr Pembroke's ideals.

⁵² Adela is thinking of their relation with Grasmere and the educative effect of it on the formation of their characters. Her specific reference to Grasmere is significant in the sense of its link to Wordsworth and English Romanticism.

⁵³ Wordsworth moved to Dove Cottage, Grasmere, in the Lake District in 1799 and lived there until 1808. Adela endorses the Wordsworthian view of Nature by making Grasmere as a standard of essential English identity. As Baucom defines place, "Place here is not a mere expanse but something that contains and communicates a certain type of tradition". See Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity*, p. 18.

missing in Ronny the 'walks' in Grasmere and the 'serious talks' about English Romanticism, inner life and personal relationships.

Fig-3: Grasmere village, Grasmere Lake, and Rydal Water (top left). Photo by Simon Ledingham.



As Ronny suffers from 'undeveloped heart' and embodies 'the public school attitude', Forster casts Cyril Fielding in the role of challenging that attitude. Fielding is first mentioned in Hamidullah's conversation with Mahmoud Ali as the next in line to become corrupt very soon as they think it is the case with the British officials in India. Though Hamidullah anticipates the process of corruption soon to set in in Fielding's case, Fielding proves an excellent exception to the general truth of evaluating the British officials in India. The question arises, how does Fielding resist the pressure of being other than himself? He reflects Forster's central belief in the development of the heart. In this sense, he stands antithetically to Ronny. It is Ronny who introduces Fielding to Mrs Moore and Adela at the Club. As Adela insists on seeing 'the real India', Ronny, half-comically, directs her question to Fielding, "How's one to see the real India?" (APTI 23). Fielding replies instinctively, "Try seeing Indians" (APTI 23). His reply provokes unpleasant responses among the English ladies at the Club. The ladies make fun of his reply to Ronny. In his absence, the ladies ask who that person is. Ronny replies in his magisterial fashion: "Our schoolmaster – Government College" (APTI 23). Fielding is in fact "the Principal of the little Government College", but Ronny describes him in lesser terms (APTI 41). It reflects how deeply he has internalised those authoritarian norms which he has learnt from his superiors. This very brief introduction of Fielding sets him apart from his own flock.

Fielding is an unconventional and thoughtful character. He introduces himself to Adela: "I'm rather a hermit" (APTI 41). The narrator remarks, "His career, though, scholastic, was varied, and had included going to the bad and repenting thereafter. By now he was a hard-bitten, good-tempered, intelligent fellow on the verge of middle age, with a belief in education (APTI 56). It is apparent from this statement that his 'belief in education' does not mean the same thing as belief in the institutional mode of education. What kind of education he imparts? He is a university graduate, and has spent years in teaching in Italy. His idea of education is the Wordsworthian model of growth – 'general and humane education'; it is inclusive rather than exclusive. His duties as an educationist

do not require a specific class of students: "He did not mind whom he taught" (APTI 56). He does not have a missionary programme to promote any religious, political, or economic message. He is interested in enabling the human personality to evolve by the exchange of ideas. By virtue of his interest in ideas, he is regarded as "a disruptive force, and rightly, for ideas are fatal to caste, and he used ideas by that most potent method – interchange. Neither a missionary nor a student, he was happiest in the give-and-take of a private conversation" (APTI 57).⁵⁴ The narrator comments on the nature of his character: "he had matured in a different atmosphere, where the herd-instinct does not flourish" (APTI 57). It suggests that he is constituted as an individual who resists the pressure of growing up in accordance with the absolute given of an institution or a society. The 'atmosphere' here referred to is the atmosphere of ideas. Even though Fielding is the product of the institutions of education his experiences have taught him to see life not simply through the optics of what we are taught at educational institutions.

Unlike those adhering to the public school ethos, Fielding believes that there is more to life than what is normally made us to believe in the institutions of education. He recognizes and appreciates the 'diversity' and 'subtlety' of this world. He appreciates poetry, and has read Persian poetry. In comparison with Mrs Moore's thrice 'goodwill' and Aziz's repeated outcry for 'kindness', his is a more rational response to the problem of personal relations: "The world, he believed, is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of goodwill plus culture and intelligence" (APTI 57). At this stage of his growth, he conceives of this world in totality where 'culture' stands for the cultivation of human personality by the 'interchange' of 'general and humane' ideas in a 'private conversation' of 'give-and-take', and 'intelligence' is led by 'goodwill' toward exploring those ideas. The narrator comments further: "Still, the men tolerated him for the sake of his good heart and strong body" (APTI 57). In spite of being 'a disruptive force' and 'fatal to caste', he is tolerated because of his 'good heart', 'strong body' and 'brilliant intellect'. His 'good heart' is the key that connects him with people. At the Bridge Party, Fielding is the only Anglo-Indian who mixes up with Indians; he meets them informally and eats their food. He appreciates Adela and Mrs Moore because they express a genuine desire to be friends with Indians. In order to compensate for the disaster of the Bridge Party, he extends his appreciation to an invitation to a tea party where he agrees to invite Aziz on Adela's express desire.

Fielding's private conversation with Aziz, when he visits him to inquire after his health, is revealing. Aziz asks Fielding why he never married. Fielding's brief reply sums up his story; he liked a woman who did not respond him the same way, and since then he never thought of marrying. Aziz regrets the fact that he would die childless. Fielding replies: "I'd rather leave a thought behind me than a child" (APTI 109). It reveals how significant the world of ideas is to Fielding that he seeks immortality through ideas. Aziz warns him to be careful about expressing his unorthodox views publicly; he warns him against the consequences that might ensue from his speaking so openly on the subject of God and traditional morality. Fielding is a brave heart; he has found himself in trouble many times before and he does not care about losing his job as a consequence of expressing his views. He says of himself to Aziz that "I travel light" (APTI 111). He likes Saddhus and the likes of them because they do not marry and 'travel light'. He describes himself to Aziz that

⁵⁴ Fielding embodies Forster's own method of the exchange of ideas in a private conversation. Fielding privileges private conversations over tightly disciplined academic environment in an educational institution. It, in fact, reflects the continuity of the idea of education which goes back to Wordsworth.

"I'm a holy man minus holiness" (APTI 111). He is a 'holy man' because of the values he upholds but he does not derive his values from any established moral system; that is why he is 'minus holiness'. He is a non-believer. He announces his "manifesto" to Aziz: "I can't be sacked from my job, because my job is Education. I believe in teaching people to be individuals, and to understand other individuals. It's the only thing I believe in" (APTI 111). Fielding's interest in education is intertwined with his interest in cultivating individuality.

Unlike Fielding, Aziz is "rooted in society and Islam" (APTI 111).⁵⁵ He is a widower with three children to look after. He is born and bred as a Muslim in a society which is predominantly Hindu.⁵⁶ Aziz's credentials as an educated man are established by the narrator: "for so young a man he had read largely" (APTI 12). He displays a higher level of competency in his profession as a medical doctor; he is well-read and up-to-date in medical knowledge. In addition to that, he is very well-read in Persian poetry; he tries his hand at composing poems as well.⁵⁷ His favourite themes of poetry are "the decay of Islam and the brevity of love" (APTI 13). He is sentimental and effusive as he is easily moved by pathos. He attributes great value to pathos in the reciting and composing of poetry as the narrator remarks, "he always felt pathos to be profound" (APTI 17). He expresses his regrets from time to time at the lost glory of the Mogul Empire.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ See Amardeep Singh, "Reorienting Forster: Intimacy and Islamic Space" in *Criticism* 49.1 (Winter 2007), pp. 35-54.

⁵⁶ Hinduism is obsessed with caste system, superstitions and rituals. Islam seems to be a more rational approach to life than Hinduism's irrationalities. As the narrator remarks in connection with Aziz's affiliation with it, "Islam, an attitude towards life both exquisite and durable, where his body and his thoughts found their home" (APTI 16). Forster's own statement about Hinduism and Islam is worth mentioning here: "I do like Islam, though I have had to come through Hinduism to discover it". See Forster, *The Hill of Devi*, p. 78.

⁵⁷ He prefers to read Persian poetry rather than poetry written in his own language. The Persian version of Islam – Shia – has always been at loggerheads with the version of Islam he follows – Sunni, the Saudi version of Islam. Aziz is hardly aware of this contradiction within himself.

⁵⁸ Historically speaking, the British took over from Bahadar Shah II (1775-1862) – the last Mogul Emperor – the crown of India in 1857. Out of all the Mogul Emperors, Aziz particularizes Aurangzeb Alamgir (1618-1707) – the sixth Mogul Emperor of India – as a model of moral excellence. By doing so, he shares in common with the popular Muslim view that regards Aurangzeb as a devout ruler. The non-Muslim historians view Aurangzeb as the worst of the Mogul rulers; he was a fundamentalist Sunni Muslim and did all that to widen the gulf between the Muslims and the rest of the peoples of India. It is considered to be the most unhappy and unpleasant times in India because Aurangzeb's rule envisioned division among the peoples of various religions. He being Aziz's ideal does not fit in with the present state of affairs in India. Aziz mentions another Mogul Emperor, Akbar the Great (1542-1605) – the third Mogul Emperor. His ambivalent response toward Akbar is also based on the popular Muslim view that regards Akbar as a renegade Muslim because Akbar not only turned away from the righteous path but also founded a new religion – Din-i-llahi (God's religion). It is a well-known fact that Akbar ruled India not with iron hand but by developing a consensus among the peoples of India. His stance on religion was based on eclecticism. On another occasion in the text, Aziz appreciates Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur (1483-1530) above all other Mogul Emperors. Babur, the most heroic of all, founded the Mogul Empire in 1526. He came from Central Asia

In spite of being educated on Western lines, he tends to believe in the verbal truth of things: "What he had been told by his father or mother or picked up from servants – it was information of that sort that he found useful, and handed on as occasion offered to others" (APTI 94). How much education has done to cast into doubt those truths which bear witness only to the speaker of those home-made truths? Could he keep apart his educated sense from what he believes as a matter of course? He does not seem to challenge their authenticity. Like a Muslim, his home training reigns supreme. His religious training has developed this tendency of finding meaning in every remark addressed to him: "In every remark he found a meaning, but not always the true meaning" (APTI 61). He believes that he lives in an intelligible universe, and the unintelligible lies beyond the reach of human understanding. It is the divine will that reveals it at its own accord; so humans cannot know beyond their prescribed limits. During a time of illness, he longs to go to Calcutta to fulfil his sexual desire with a prostitute. He seeks moral justification in his thinking by assuming that it would not harm society as long as he keeps it as a secret: "There is no harm in deceiving society as long as she does not find you out, because it is only when she finds you out that you have harmed her" (APTI 94).⁵⁹ Does he understand the implied irony in his thinking? Can he really live up to the truth of this statement? His perception appears to be formed by his belief in Islam but his religiosity is more a matter of customary belief rather than becoming fully realized as a concrete reality. Practically, he is much better than his religiously informed thinking. Only in times of crises he slips back to his Muslim identity in order to regain a sense of a stable self. For example, after being insulted by Major Callendar, he seeks consolation in a mosque. He is aware of the fact that as long as the British continue to rule India, he will never be free. He seeks consolation by casting a nostalgic glance at the lost Mogul glory in India; he tries in vain to form his identity on the past glory of the Muslims in India. This identification partially redresses the wrongs done to him from time to time. On the other hand, his personal past does not give him this much consolation.

Aziz has the potential to go beyond his religious beliefs as belief seems alien to his fundamental nature: "his life, though vivid, was largely a dream" (APTI 61). He is not a character of the 'undeveloped heart'. He is kind, affectionate, generous and flexible. His solution to the problem of India is 'kindness': "Kindness, more kindness, and even after that more kindness... We can't build up India except on what we feel" (APTI 107).⁶⁰ He is friends with Hamidullah and Mahmoud Ali; he behaves very cordially with them at the dinner. He befriends Mrs Moore the moment their earlier misunderstanding is cleared up. He befriends Fielding the moment he meets him at his bungalow.⁶¹ Both have already formed good opinion of one another before the actual meeting. As Aziz arrives slightly earlier than the other guests invited to the tea party, he finds Fielding in the bath-room. Nevertheless, the flame of intimacy strikes up during this brief period of time; they exchange a few

with twelve thousand armed men and defeated the Delhi Sultan, Ibrahim Lodi, in the famous battle of Panipat. He was a Shia Muslim and was greatly influenced by Persian culture. Aziz hardly sees the contradiction in his devotion to the Mogul rulers. If the character of Aziz is inspired by Masood, then Aziz should be aware of this contradiction as Masood was a Shia Muslim.

⁵⁹ It affirms that he believes in the Saudi version of Islam which is more fundamentalist in nature.

⁶⁰ It is reminiscent of Mrs Moore's remark to Ronny. The wounds of the Mutiny could be healed if the British, instead of 'governing the natives' eyes with their hegemonic displays of power, win over the natives' hearts'.

⁶¹ It is the meeting of 'goodwill' and 'kindness'.

casual remarks without actually seeing one another. They need not introduce themselves in an elaborate way; the invitation to intimacy is mutually given and accepted.⁶² Aziz extends his generosity by giving his collar stud to Fielding because he has broken his. He pretends to have a spare one, and faces slight embarrassment at Fielding's remark that no one carries a spare collar stud in his pocket. The narrator comments on the impetuosity of their intimacy which reflects their general character: "With so emotional a people it was apt to come at once or never" (APTI 59).

Fielding mentions the names of the two English ladies invited to the tea party; Aziz has already met Mrs Moore at the mosque but does not know Adela. Fielding gives a hint about Adela that she is described as artistic. Aziz asks whether she is a Post-Impressionist. Fielding's indifference to his question puts suspicions in Aziz's mind. It makes him feel that he is "an obscure Indian" who is not supposed to mention Post-Impressionism – "a privilege reserved for the Ruling Race" (APTI 61). Fielding actually does not mean that. Nevertheless, it makes Aziz quite stiff in that moment of betrayed intimacy; he declares to Fielding that Mrs Moore cannot be said his friend because they have met only once, and one meeting is not enough to call someone a friend. Before he could finish his sentence, "the stiffness vanished from it, because he felt Fielding's fundamental goodwill" (APTI 61). The 'secret understanding of the heart' prevails upon in that moment of 'give-and-take' which expresses the magnanimity of their tender and warm natures.

The narrator points out another significant aspect of the tea party: "How fortunate that it was an 'unconventional' party, where formalities are ruled out!" (62). As mentioned above, Fielding and Aziz acquire intimacy by putting aside 'formalities'. When Mrs Moore and Adela arrive at the party, they, too, put aside 'formalities' and start up a conversation with Aziz without any difficulty. Adela appreciates the suddenly acquired intimacy between Aziz and Mrs Moore at the mosque. She says to Aziz about Mrs Moore's desire to see 'the real India': "She learned more about India in those few minutes' talk with you than in the three weeks since we landed" (APTI 62).⁶³ Adela believes uncritically what Aziz says about India. She mistakes Aziz for India knowing not that his is a "limited" viewpoint and "his method inaccurate"; "in fact, no one is India" (APTI 65).

Narayan Godbole's late arrival at the party quells Aziz's excited chatter to some extent. Godbole is Fielding's assistant, and a professor of philosophy at Government College. When Fielding first mentions Godbole to Aziz, he replies in a premeditative tone: "Oho, the Deccani Brahman!" (APTI 61).⁶⁴ Aziz says of him to Fielding that he is a "most sincere chap" (APTI 62). He is described as "polite and enigmatic" (APTI 66). It is the general impression he gives to his fellows. This impression of Godbole is reinforced by the narrator's remark that "his whole appearance suggested harmony" (APTI 66). Like Aziz, he, too, venerates the past, but in his case, he does not choose a

⁶² See Maria M. Davidis, "Forster's Imperial Romance: Chivalry, Motherhood, and Questing in *A Passage to India*" in *Journal of Modern Literature* 23.2 (1999), pp. 259-276.

⁶³ Adela's remark is interesting in the sense that it acknowledges the key feature of the meeting between Aziz and Mrs Moore; 'the secret understanding of the heart'. She herself fails to see 'the real India'. What she sees is only the 'picturesque' India – the British official version of India.

⁶⁴ Brahman is the highest caste in India. Historically speaking, they are known to be the custodian of knowledge and wisdom. Godbole is a Chitpavan Hindu Brahman – the purest caste of Brahmans – from Deccan. Though the Chitpavan Brahmans are usually known for their anti-British sentiment, Godbole does not express any hatred for the British.

specific area of the past; it is the ancient past that fascinates him.⁶⁵ He seems to have an intuitive link with the unknown. He shows little interest in the conversation at the tea party. He appears indifferent and remains busy in eating. On the other hand, the conversation warms Aziz's generosity so much that he extends intimacy by inviting the whole party to Marabar Caves. When asked about the Marabar Caves, Godbole – despite his knowledge of the caves – reveals only insignificant facts about them. It gives Aziz a feeling that Godbole “was keeping back something about the caves” (APTI 69). Suddenly Ronny appears on the scene and he is shocked at finding Adela smoking with Indians. Fielding is away with Mrs Moore to show her the college buildings. Aziz volunteers to bring Fielding back as Ronny wishes to speak to him immediately. In that moment of shock, he thinks of Aziz as “the spoilt westernized” (APTI 70). He asks Fielding to explain why he left his mother and Adela with two Indians. Fielding protests against Ronny's calling Aziz “a bounder” (APTI 71). Ronny's behaviour upsets everyone at the party. While taking their leave, Mrs Moore asks Godbole to sing a song. Godbole chooses a religious song to sing. None understands except the servants. So he explains to them that the song is an invitation to Shri Krishna – Lord of the Universe – to come to him but he does not come.⁶⁶ In contrast to the Bridge Party, the privately arranged tea party proves to be a great success in bridging ‘the gulf between East and West’. The Bridge Party reaffirmed the general climate of differences between the British and the Indians; the tea party affirms ‘goodwill’, ‘kindness’, ‘love’ and ‘sympathy’. However, as we shall see in the next chapter, the relative harmony achieved at this stage of the novel will soon be destroyed by events at the Marabar Caves. Wordsworth records a dream vision in *The Prelude*. While sitting in a melancholic mood beside a cave situated on the sea shore, Wordsworth was reading Don Quixote. He closed the book and occupied himself by thoughts on “poetry and geometric truth” (TP, V, 65). He fell asleep in the midst of these reflections and saw a dream. He finds himself in a desert where he sees an Arab – “an uncouth shape” – riding a dromedary (TP, V, 75). Wordsworth is first pleased at the sight of the Arab that he might guide him through the desert. Soon he notices that the Arab is carrying a stone and an extremely bright shell under his arms. The Arab explains that the stone is *Euclid's Elements*. He asks Wordsworth to take the shell close to his ears and hear. Wordsworth does likewise and hears “A loud prophetic blast of harmony; / An ode, in passion uttered, which foretold / Destruction to the children of the earth / By deluge, now at hand” (TP, V, 95-98). Suddenly, the stone and the shell turn into books on astrology and gods as the Arab wishes to bury the books. Wordsworth does not question himself how the stone and shell metamorphose into books. The Arab departs from the scene as he appears to be in a hurry. Wordsworth follows him and the Arab keeps looking backwards from time to time. Suddenly the Arab changes into Don Quixote but at the same time he remains what he is. At last, Wordsworth sees the gathering waters drive him away. Wordsworth woke up and found himself looking at the sea with the book in his hand. The song Wordsworth hears in his dream bears a significant relation with the song Godbole sings. The god in Godbole's song refuses to come because ‘Destruction to the children of the earth’ is near ‘at hand’.

⁶⁵ He oddly fits into Forster's gallery of characters who derive their strength from the past.

⁶⁶ I will discuss in the next chapter the implications of the divine refusal to come.

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