

Formatting in Forster's *A Passage to India*

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Abstract: This paper highlights the complicated relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in a typical colonial context as manifested in Forster's masterpiece, *A Passage to India*. It also exposes the stereotypes which the Orientals are depicted with and the constant process of 'formatting' or brainwashing by the British. This article pursues Albert Memmi's theory as promoted in his book *The Colonizer and the Colonized* as well as those of other cultural philosophers. The concept of difference in resemblance observed by Homi Bhabha as working in this novel shows how desperately Forster struggles to reconcile the differences between the nomenclature 'English' and the other one, known as, 'Anglicised'. This paper by applying post colonial concept of formatting to *A Passage to India* attempts to study the complex web of human relationships ramified through identity crisis, racial conflict and the complexities of colonial discourse in a hybrid context.

E.M Forster's *A Passage to India* is a complex work of art. One of the complexities of the novel arises out of the novel's multiplicity of themes having multiple levels of interpretations. Forster is determined to be sincere and honest in portraying the relationship between the British community and the Indians in a typical colonial setting. A postcolonial reading of the novel shows the socio-psychological dilemma of the ruling and the ruled groups of people. Forster studies two culturally different races by putting them on the same platform of love, friendship and equality. The novel, therefore, has a binary structure opposing the ruling and the ruled, the exploiters and the exploited, the colonizer and the colonized, or simply the masters and the subordinates. His unequivocal search to bring the two culturally opposite communities together on a single thread of mutually respectable relationship is highly appreciable but a careful reading reveals the gulf that still separates the two races.

The novel depicts colonisation as frustrating any chance for friendship between the English and the Indians. Forster highlights the process of 'formatting', which the newcomers have to go through so that they end up like the other colonial settlers in keeping to their ideologies and practices. Clare Brandabur remarks that *A Passage to India* shows the destructive impact on personal relationships caused by the racist assumptions and psycho-pathology inherent in colonial imperialism" (1993). To Jan Mohamed, *A Passage to India* attempts "to overcome the barriers of racial difference" (Childs 1999: 348). Nirad Chaudhuri, on the other hand,

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criticised it "for its reduction of political history to a liberal's preoccupation with personal relationships" (Childs 347).

Bhupal Singh regards the novel as "a clever picture of Englishmen in India, a subtle portraiture of the Indian (especially the Moslem mind) and a fascinating study of the problems arising out of the contact of India with the West" (Singh 1974:221). To Nihal Singh, however, the novel depicts "how the British in India despise and ostracize Indians, while on their part the Indians mistrust and misjudge the British" (Childs: 347).

Forster wrote in a letter to Syed Masood on the 27th of September 1922:

When I began the book I thought of it as a little bridge of sympathy between East and West, but this conception has had to go, my sense of truth forbids anything so comfortable. I think that most Indians, like most English people, are shits, and I am not interested whether they sympathize with one another or not. (Forster 1985:15)

Forster bases his fiction in Chandrapore, a fictitious city. The British, who are ruling this city, are very arrogant and overriding in their attitude to the native Indians. The colonial atmosphere hardly allows interracial friendship to grow. Still it does, between Mrs Moor and Dr Aziz, which is brief, and between Fielding and Dr Aziz, which is more substantial, and Forster's aim is to show how friendship is threatened in an atmosphere of intolerance, hostility, jealousy and mutual antagonism.

The structure of the novel has a circular pattern. It begins emphatically with Dr Aziz, Mahmoud Ali and Hamidullah discussing "whether or not it is possible to be friends with an Englishman" (33). The three characters agree that it is impossible for this to happen in India. The novel ends with Fielding and Aziz leaving each other because such a friendship is not possible under British occupation. The plot unwinds itself and reaches point zero once again. The English and the Indians can become more intimate, but the problems of cultural differences, stereotyping, and colonisation prevent the possibility of having a real friendship between them.

Memmi, by way of explaining formatting, suggests: "The colonial situation manufactures colonialists, just as it manufactures the colonised" (1974:56-57). The 'experienced' colonists force their own stereotypes of the native upon the newcomers. The colonisers arrive fresh from England "intending to be gentlemen, and are told it will not do" (33). Hence, the newcomers will "all become exactly the same – not worse, not better" (34). Individuality is a problematic in a colony because the people there should all adopt the same ideologies.

The first chapter shows a fairly symbolic contrast of the positioning of the ruling class and the drab and mundane existence of the Indians in the Chandrapore city

in terms of a geographical setting. The city is unadorned and unornamented, neglected and degraded, dirty and somewhat not holy even with the River Ganges flowing beside it. Below the valleys the city looks sordid and the 'Marabar Caves' add a little charm and concealment to the otherwise sordid city. The geographical location of the British Civil Station up the hills symbolically suggests that the ruling class looks down upon the Indians. The Marabar Caves serves as an example of this promise/appeal binary. Fielding sees them from the Club as "beautiful" (197). However, when one sees from near, one registers that "nothing was to be seen on either side but the granite, very dead and quiet" (155). Even the sky there "seemed unhealthy near" (153). The caves appear to be "fists and fingers" (32-33) thus exposing their hostility. Indeed, India makes sure that no coloniser can call it home. Ronny notes that "[t]here's nothing in India but the weather ... it's the alpha and omega of the whole affair" (68). India's hostility to its colonisers is demonstrated in the heat, which becomes so problematic to the English. "[T]he sun [is] crashing on their backs" (158), and they are "pursued by stabs of hot air" (169). Hot weather is also depicted as a "monster" (203). Lady Mellanby, hence, calls India a "frying-pan" (214).

The more the Indians like Dr. Aziz, Godbole, Mahmood Ali, tried to familiarize and socialize themselves with their masters, still keeping in mind their politically subordinate positions, the more they get baffled, insulted, and rebuffed, for their attempt to come in close contact with the Britishers is always suspected as nefarious and their moves as provocation for violence. Moreover, India refuses any attempt at friendship between a native and a coloniser. The arrival of Ronny at Fielding's tea-party ruins the friendly mood: "It was as if irritation exuded from the very soil" (94). The sky also turns "angry orange" to express its objection to the presence of the colonisers (149). In the last chapter of the novel, Aziz informs Fielding that their friendship is only possible once the British leave India. Then Fielding asks:

'Why can't we be friends now?'. 'It's what I want. It's what you want.' But the horses didn't want it – they swerved apart; the earth didn't want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single-file; the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House, that came into view as they issued from the gap and saw Mau beneath: they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, 'No, not yet,' and the sky said, 'No, not there' (315-16).

The Englishmen ruled India thinking that they were fulfilling the task of civilizing the black brown men. But though they came to India with a developed physique, they had an undeveloped heart. This undeveloped heart was responsible for all the arrogance, bigotry and pusillanimity shown by the Anglo-Indians. In spite of the best efforts of Fielding, friendship between the masters

and the servants could not last long. Friendship demanded equality which was absent in this case. So for Dr. Aziz it was horribly difficult to socialize himself with those masters under the supervision and superiority of whom he serves. Each and every time he tries to develop social or personal relationship with either Mr. Fielding or other Englishmen, he is treated with disdain. Regarding friendship with Indians, the Britishers do not forgo their superior social, racial and political standing. They carry their White's flag of racial superiority ahead of them. The thriving educated native circle with their anti-British feeling also can't change their master's pride and air of superiority.

The relationship between the Indians and the Britishers is like intermittent flashes of light with occasional interludes. Forster relates the experiences of the Indians being ruled by the Britishers with reference to a number of historical and political events of the British India. Let's discuss this connection briefly.

Critical scholarship on *A Passage to India* has shown that it's the socio-historical content coupled with political perspective that more than any other aspect of the novel has generated controversy. The distinction of *A Passage to India* lies in the fact that it registers the transitional moment of British India's transformation into a new India with a disenchanting realistic and historical vision. So the characters or individuals largely mingle themselves with the political and historical events in the novel.

Forster's second visit to India in 1921-2 coincided with the momentous period of the Indians non-cooperation movement against the British rule. The movement was launched jointly by the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League and was at its height of success during the months of Forster's stay in India. If princely India seemed to Forster like Alice's wonderland, the situation of British India at the time of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement seemed a period of complete disenchantment. The movement was an expression of India's protest against imperialism. Social apartheid and repression and Forster's accounts of it in the form of reports and the fictional representation through *A Passage to India* show the impact it had made on him. The rejection of the constitutional reforms of 1919, which gave the Indians an increased share of governmental power, the non-cooperation movement claiming complete social equality between the British and the Indians upset the status quo. Gandhi expressed the spirit thus: "We desire to live on terms of friendships with Englishmen, but that friendship must be on terms of equality both in theory and practice" (23).

Gandhi's vision of total equality is identical with Forster's democratic conception of an ideal empire in *A Passage to India*. Protest against the evils of a colonial society is a dominant theme in *A Passage to India*. Hence, the coloniser "admits to a fundamental difference between the colonised and himself" (Memmi, 22-25). "How can one deny that they are under-developed, that their customs are oddly changeable and their culture outdated?" Fielding, for instance, declares his love

for the Indians. "I have never felt more happy and secure out here. I really do get on with Indians, and they do trust me" (261). Yet, he cannot get over his racial superiority complex. He feels the presence of this "fundamental difference."

Fielding deploys tactics and discourses similar to those adopted by colonial powers aimed at making the colonised races lose any hope of independence and freedom. He uses what Ngũgĩ calls "the cultural bomb" which creates "serious doubts about the moral rightness of struggle" and makes the "[p]ossibilities of triumph or victory" appear "as remote, ridiculous dreams" (Ngũgĩ 1986:3).

Further, Fielding tries to convince Aziz that India is not a property of the Indians. He claims that "it's nobody's India" (273). He aims to make Aziz despair and see the chances of independence as impossible. He also tries to convince Aziz of the impossibility of India ever becoming free. He jeers, "Who do you want instead of the English? The Japanese?" (275) He implies that the British are better rulers than any other colonial power since they understand the Indians better. Furthermore, Fielding realizes how hard it is for India to be a nation because of its many different religions and cults. He, therefore, tries hard to undermine any possibility of India ever becoming a nation.

Forster like Gandhi had contemplated an India in which Indians and British might have equal individual social standards. Both of them valued personal relations above politics and criticized imperialist policies of discrimination under which personal relations were vitiated. But while Gandhi had hoped that by launching the non-cooperation movement India might transform British imperialism into a happier institution, Forster believed the movement to have spelt the dissolution of British India altogether and history has proved that his judgment was right.

Forster's full reaction to the situation surrounding the Amritsar massacre is reflected in the dramatization of the actual events in *A Passage to India*. Ideologically in the troubled situation at Chandrapore in *A Passage to India* he telescopically focuses attention on the actual situation surrounding The Amritsar Massacre. The connections between Forster's story and the actual situation are clear although Forster seems to have deliberately avoided the sensitive name Amritsar. The source of the trouble at Chandrapore, the alleged attempt by an Indian to molest an English girl, has a connection with actual events also. Forster's description of the meeting at the club has a close resemblance with an account of Amritsar by 'An Englishwoman' published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in April 1920. The author of the article had arrived in India like Adela Quested, new to the country. She was living in Amritsar at the time of India-wide nationalist demonstrations. She had personally witnessed the disturbances at Lahore, which had made her nervous and now Amritsar was seething with unrest and was unsafe. She describes at great length how the mob had become violent, threatening to take the lives of Europeans, and how in fact a group of people had

brutally assaulted an English girl called F. Marcella Sherwood, who had been living in Amritsar. With the help of some Gurkha sepoy this author and many others who were in panic managed to reach the Fort Shelter. There they found the atmosphere of intense fear, closely resembling Forster's description of the scene at The Chandrapore Club (xx, 187-93) following the alleged assault on Adela Quested in the Marabar Caves and Dr. Aziz's arrest. Forster's portrayal of the scene at Chandrapore Club bears a thinly-fictionalized parallel to the real event of Amritsar.

The novel also refers to many specific atrocities suffered by Indians at Amritsar of which the massacre was the climax. An important clue to the real nature of these tragedies is provided by Forster's reference to General Dyer's 'Crawling order'. When the British community has gathered in Ronny's private room, adjacent to the court, to observe Dr. Aziz's trial, Mrs. Turton the collector's wife, remarks (upon major Callander saying that "nothing's too bad for these people. . .

There's not such a thing as cruelty after a thing like this."): "Exactly and remember it afterwards, you men. You're weak, weak, weak. Why they ought to crawl from here to the caves on their hands and knees whenever an English woman is in sight, they ought to be spat at, they ought to be grounded into the dust" (xxiv 219-20). One might find this detailed list of punishments for Indians suggested by an English District Collector's wife as comical exaggeration, but it will be seen that Forster's details are indeed a reminder of some of the most sordid punishments that had actually been inflicted on the people of Amritsar and those in other parts of the Punjab.

There are many other indirect references of punishments of the native Indians by their British masters happening after the Amritsar massacre in *A Passage to India*. It had been imposed by General Dyer on account of the incident concerning Marcella Sherwood. Dyer had ruled that all Indians passing through Kucha Kaurhianwala Lane, where Miss Sherwood had been attacked must go on all fours. As a punishment the 'crawling order' was issued on 19th April 1919 and was in force until 26 April, and during this period about fifty Indians had been made to crawl through the Lane. This was condemned by some newspapers. In *A Passage to India* Forster subtly underlines the tragedy in its full depth. In addition to the crawling order the novel makes further reference to public flogging as had been carried out at Amritsar in the case of six people who were implicated in the assault on Miss Sherwood. We see the collector of Chandrapore sitting in the smoking room on the day of Dr. Aziz's arrest feeling the impulses 'to avenge Miss Quested'—to flog every native that he saw. Another purely humiliating punishment order used in the Punjab was the "Salaaming Order" a rule by which the Indians would show sufficient respect to the English by saluting them. Fantastic attempts such as this to enforce subjugation on the more independent spirited Indians is exposed in *A Passage to India* in the peculiar

relationship that is shown between Major Callander, the civil surgeon, and his subordinate, Dr. Aziz.

Coming back to the novel, we can discuss the mosque scene. When the mosque brings together the two cultures on mutual affection, the caves destroy this possibility, proving that despite all friendly manners and behaviors shown by the Britishers towards the Indians their shrewd and highhanded treatment of Dr. Aziz spoils all good faith of the Indians, who again become furious and outrageously anti-British.

Ronny adopts the colonisers' role model and defends it ferociously. Memmi explains that "the small coloniser is actually, in most cases, a supporter of colonialists and an obstinate defender of colonial privileges," and how can he not be when "[h]e enjoys the preference and respect of the colonised themselves, who grant him more than those who are the best of their own people" (Memmi 1974:10-13)? Title and prestige make them "assume such inordinate self-confidence that it makes them dizzy" (Memmi 50). The new social status and the privileges make them defend the colony "aggressively" and "end up believing it to be right. In other words, the immigrant has been transformed into a colonialist" (Memmi, pp. 46-47).

The friendship between Mrs. Moore and Aziz is one of the most enduring relationships in the novel. She was all affection and respect for Aziz who discovers in her a totally different human being. She had soft corner for the Indians. She tried to bring Indians and English nearer to each other. But her son Ronny, the district magistrate is highly proud and arrogant. He didn't like her mother's brand of all embracing motherhood and cross-questioned her following her meeting with Aziz in the mosque. Even he decided to report it to Major Callander, the civil surgeon under whom Aziz serves. He even talked in a rather hostile and disrespectful manner with his mother regarding her interest to communicate with the Indians. She was also sent back to England when her friendly approval of the Indians came as a sharp blow to her son's rigid sense of prestige and duty. He was more conscious of his ways and manners as a British ruling or chosen to rule over the Indians than he was conscious and respectful about his mother's love for the native Indians. Ronny accepts his role as a coloniser and enjoys the privileges that accompany it. He would fight anyone who tried to take these privileges away from him. He asks, "What do you [Mrs. Moore] and Adela want me to do? Go against my class, against all the people I respect and admire out here? for doing good in this country, because my behaviour isn't pleasant?" (69). The manner in which Ronny handles the story of Mrs. Moore with Aziz in the mosque clearly demonstrates the extent to which he has accepted his role as a coloniser and his will to do anything to maintain his privileges. That is, how well he has formatted himself. He is surprised from the way Mrs. Moore talks about Aziz. He wonders, "Why hadn't she indicated by the

tone of her voice that she was talking about an Indian?" Aziz himself realises that Mrs. Moore is a newcomer by the way she addresses him (43).

According to Memmi, the coloniser "discovers the existence of the colonizers; he discovers his own privilege." He explains that the coloniser

... finds himself on one side of a scale, the other side of which bears the colonised man. [T]he more freely he breathes, the more the colonised are choked. ... It is impossible for him not to be aware of the constant illegitimacy of his status. (Memmi : 6-9)

Ronny realises the illegitimacy of the British presence in India. Yet, to retain his privileges and to remain an accepted and respected part of the colony, he tries hard to convince himself and others of the legitimacy of the British presence in India. He interrogates his mother:

"Did you gather he [Aziz] was well-disposed?" Ignorant of *the force of this question*, she replied, "Yes, quite, after the first moment." "I meant, generally. Did he seem to tolerate us—the sun-dried bureaucrat, that sort of thing?" (53)

The italicised words reveal Ronny's awareness of the British status as "a brutal conqueror" and his strong desire to protect it from potential threats.

Ronny gets upset because Aziz called out to Mrs. Moore about her shoes. He protests, "it was impudence. It's an old trick. I wish you had had them on." Adela objects to his remark. She asks, "wouldn't you expect a Mohammedan to answer if you asked him to take off his hat in church?" Her logic of equal standings, however, does not work in the ideological framework of the colony. Ronny explains that "[i]t's different, it's different; you don't understand" (52). Adela cannot understand because her moral set of values differs from that of colony settlers. Mrs. Moore is shocked at the metamorphosis of her son. "The traces of Youngman humanitarianism had sloughed off." She thinks that "[o]ne touch of regret ... would have made him a different man, and the British Empire a different institution" (70). She is also shocked to hear her son's adopted ideological stance. She protests, "[y]ou never used to judge people like this at home." Ronny announces that "India isn't home" and relies on "phrases and arguments that he had picked up from older officials, and he did not feel quite sure of himself" to silence his mother and convince her of his adopted new logic (54). Ronny Heaslop is a product of the colonial system of 'formatting' and the above picture is a concrete evidence of his adopting such a superior stance. Césaire observes that colonisation reduced a society to officialdom, and *A Passage to India* depicts this officialdom is the ultimate barrier to forming meaningful human contact: "for where there is officialism every human relationship suffers" (133).

So Aziz's personal relationship with Mrs. Moore sets off a racial and a political coloring. She remains firm and steadfast about her stand for Aziz's innocence which is also criticized by the English as a whole. The horrible incident in the caves in which Aziz was unreasonably and whimsically accused of attempting to rape Adela Quested further dashed the hopes of any compromise. He was put on trial. Mrs. Moore, still in the grip of emptiness and negation, didn't take the trouble to attend the trial or give evidence in favor of her friend. She exercised a greater spiritual and moral influence over Aziz even after her death which though was criticized by many.

No other character than Adela Quested was the cause of the strains and problems impacting the Aziz-Fielding relationship. Aziz and Fielding were put to a severe test due to her. She is the cause for the sufferings of innocent Aziz. She, under tremendous stress, brought charges against Aziz, and the whole British community at Chandrapore stood behind her. Aziz, totally confused and lost, becomes a victim of racial and rude political injustices of the English. Mr. Callendar remarks that Fielding's "shirking" of responsibility, which led to the alleged sexual assault on Adela, "was what is to be expected when a man mixes himself up with natives; always ends in some indignity" (193). The attempts of Adela and Mrs. Moore to be socially intimate with Indians have also disrupted the racist hierarchy of the colony.

"In the light of her son's comment she reconsidered the scene at the mosque Yes, it was all true, but how false a summary of the man; the essential life of him had been slain." (55)

The discourse of the colony is strong, but Mrs. Moore's stronger Christian beliefs, which have not been contaminated by colonisation, make her resist the imposition of this foreign discourse on her mind, although she acknowledges its "truth."

In the tea party arranged by Fielding at his house, Aziz and Adela quested were left to talk to each other by Fielding. She was found by Ronny Heaslop smoking in the presence of Godbole and Aziz. He is engaged to marry Adela. He was markedly very annoyed with Adela and felt deeply embarrassed at such a spectacle of an English having a conversation with an Indian at such a leisurely pace. His prestige was affected and he asked Fielding about it insisting on taking his mother and Adela away. He expressed his indignation with Fielding in the presence of Aziz and Godbole. The imperialistic, overbearing attitude and class consciousness of the British manifest itself always vitiating all possible relationships between the two nations. Again in the trial scene the Britishers do not forget that they are the ruling class and express their covert antagonism to the Indians.

Colonisation dehumanises and demonises the colonised. The colonisers claim that they have the mission of "bringing light to the colonised's ignominious

darkness" (Memmi 1974:74-76). This "mission" legitimises the colonisation and enslavement of other races. Edward Said also notes the depiction of the colonised races as being "naturally subservient to a superior, advanced, developed, and morally mature Europe" (Eagleton et al. 1990:72).

Hence, Ronny announces that "[w]e're out here to do justice and keep the peace" (255).

The British officials are also careless and indifferent to their educated and honorable subordinates. Major Callander also treats Dr. Aziz with contempt and suspicion. Aziz was sent for to meet him at a time he was busy at home, but he accordingly set out riding a bicycle the tire of which punctured on the way. He then reached Major Callander's house riding on a tonga but found no one in the bungalow with the exception of his servant who informed him that Callander left without any message and while departing, he uttered "damn Aziz." This is how the English can be seen treating their subordinates with a sheer matter-of-fact, mechanical, damn care manner. Then came out Mrs. Callander together with Mrs. Lesley from the bungalow and crowned his sorrow and embarrassment by appropriating Aziz's tonga without caring for him in the least. So the rulers pay no attention to their subordinates, to be more precise "servants." Such an inhuman indifference and taciturnity on the part of the British ladies is frequent in the novel. Aziz falls a victim to their conspicuous racial discrimination, eccentricity and idiosyncrasies several times in the novel.

Colonisation always hides its true objectives behind the mask of bringing knowledge and civilisation to the colonised race. "It is here that the astonishing mental attitude called 'paternalistic' comes into play. A paternalist is someone who wants to stretch racism and inequality farther—once admitted" (Memmi 74-76).

The British women are the most dangerous in uttering reprehensible and reproachful remarks towards the Indians. They openly renounce and denounce them with contempt.

Edward Said explains that white men believe that it is their "human prerogative" to "manage" and "own" the nonwhite world (Said 1987:108). It is here where the "stretch" of "racism and inequality" occurs.

Fielding is fought against because he refuses to be 'formatted'. To slink through India unlabelled was his aim. Henceforward he would be called 'anti-British', 'seditious' – terms that bored him, and "diminished his utility" (183). He is worried about the process of "labeling" which affects the way people think of each other (Sarup 1996:14).

Fielding's individualism makes him "a disruptive force, and rightly, for ideas are fatal to caste" (79). His belief that the world "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" was "a creed ill suited to Chandrapore" (80). Hence, he felt that "the gulf between himself and his countrymen ... widened distressingly" (79) because he would not conform to their standards and adopt their ideology. Anglo-Indians try to 'format' him to make him the same as they are, "but he had come out too late to lose" his "creed" (179). Fielding "had no racial feeling... because he had matured in a different atmosphere, where the herd-instinct does not flourish" (80). The "herd-instinct" makes itself felt when Fielding sides with the Indians against the English in Aziz's case. The Collector warns him that "[y]ou can't run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, at least not in this country" (194).

McBryde is also surprised that Fielding "had not rallied to the banner of race" (175), following the alleged rape of Adela. He warns him that "there's no room for - well - personal views. The man who doesn't toe the line is lost" (180). Memmi notes that "humanitarian romanticism is looked upon in the colonies as a serious illness, the worst of all dangers"(20). Consequently, to the other colonisers, a coloniser who has this "illness" "is nothing but a traitor His friends will become surly; his superiors will threaten him; even his wife will join in and cry" (Memmi, 19-22).

To conclude, *A Passage to India* is clearly a novel that defies the premise that friendship can be maintained between the English and the Indians in a coloniser/colonised status quo. Fielding's criticism of the British imperialist colonisers, of their racism and of the fear they base their regime upon is clearly evident in the novel. Based on inequality and racism, colonisation frustrates any attempts towards having a friendship between Aziz and Fielding.

The status quo of coloniser/colonised is the *only* hindrance that stands between the friendship of the English and the Indians. The gulf that separates the two races, and which Fielding and Forster felt, forms a serious barrier that endangers the friendship between them. In effect, even if the English leave India, friendship would still be unattainable because, as Said says, the Orient is "destined to bear the mark of foreignness as a mask of its permanent estrangement from the west" (Childs 321)

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