



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

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Abstract: Kim is found to be unique among all the writings of Kipling in the sense that at least here Kipling has shown his genuine love for India by the side of his almost instinctive faith in the benevolent British Empire and his philosophic vision by the side of his open-mouthed advocacy for action. Thus Kim does not only present a realistic picture of contemporary India but also illustrates, to a considerable extent the deep-seated and the free mysticism of the East.

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Introduction:

In the foregoing chapters an attempt has been made to examine the treatment of India by both Kipling and Forster. Which helps to establish similarities in attitude, and it also focuses on post-colonial trends. There is only one important aspect that seems to be common between Kim and A Passage to India which can be dubbed as the theme of social identity. In Kim, Kipling achieves his purpose through the promise that the only way to bridge the divide between nations and races is through the intermingling of social and culture values while Forster seems to highlight the social and cultural difference that prevented the Formation of friendship between the British officers and the Indian. The study has been limited only to one novel by each of the two i.e. Kim and A Passage to India. It has been attempted to see that both of them have tried to explore India – its people, geography, politics, society and its religions specially Buddhism and Hinduism in these novels.

Let it be pointed out here that a kind of nightmarish experience was a characteristic aspect of European life in the Colonies, and its presence has been examined in these two novels. It has been seen how racial fear was only a part of their experience; the cultural fear of the alien and the invader's fear of their subjects was more important causes.

It is natural that this aspect of colonial life should have occupied the mind of both Kipling and Forster. For example, in A Passage to India, Forster deals with a subject of colonial neurosis. The visit to the Marabar caves by Adela Quested and Mrs. Moore

and their nightmarish experience during and after it are an important part of the novel's significance. Adela imagines that Aziz had tried to rape her in a cave. Forster suggests that Aziz didn't do so but he leaves vague what actually happened to Adela.

Kim is found to be unique among all the writings of Kipling in the sense that at least here Kipling has shown his genuine love for India by the side of his almost instinctive faith in the benevolent British Empire and his philosophic vision by the side of his open-mouthed advocacy for action. Thus Kim does not only present a realistic picture of contemporary India but also illustrates, to a considerable extent the deep-seated and the free mysticism of the East.

When he wrote A Passage to India, Forster had Kipling behind him. The novel is rooted in the colonial context, though its significance is not limited to it. The racial and social connections of characters, whether British or India, matter in his or her affairs within or outside his or her group, these connections matter in the conversation, actions, thoughts and feelings of everyone. The theme of race-relations looks more than the philosophical consideration and the latter forms an integral part of it. Forster doesn't rate philosophical matters as intrinsically more important than racial matters. In an imperial situation the importance of the 'ruling race' greatly exceeds their number. Thus Forster is right to present it as such. The titles Kim and A Passage to India suggest that the latter should present a wide range of experience

representative of the subcontinent and at the same time the view is that of birds of passage.

Kipling is not blind to Indian ways, but he does not go deep into them: even the Lama in *Kim* is a rather idealized priest. To render the speech of an alien people is not an easy problem. But the selected writers solve it, though Kipling is even at best a little crude. It is a most difficult when the focus is on the westernized section among those people and the westernized are portrayed in situation in which they speak varied form of English. Then the standard technique is for the writer to apprehend these varieties: for example, Indian English in the case of Forster's *Aziz*.

Kipling and Forster were themselves members of the race which ruled India they present. Thus they wrote from privileged position. Their position must have affected their art. Kipling is said to suffer most from weaknesses to which writers in his kind of position are prone partly, because he is the least talented; he is at times imperial-minded and, at best, a liberal imperialist. No wonder, then that he has been dubbed as the most political'. But it may be pointed out here that when one forgets his other works and compares only *Kim* with *A Passage to India*, it is Forster rather than Kipling who becomes political. One must, however, also not close eyes to the openness with which Forster describes the Hindu festivities in the last part of *A Passage to India*.

Kipling, though a confirmed Imperialist, had seen India very closely and above all during the most impressionable period of his life. This gave him an insight into the Indian way of existence and he tries to grasp the moorings of Indian life through Lama. He approaches his subject with a conditioned mind but before soon his entire gamut of prejudices vanishes and he stands literally unmoored. Lama enters here to help him understand the real India and him with a perspective so diametrically opposed to his earlier writings. This perspective enabled Kipling to present external India elaborately but not without the descriptions of internal spirit attending on it. Kipling succeed because he takes India in entirety. Forster, though less inclined to the vice of imperialism than Kipling, approaches Indian way of life with characteristic Western attitude which of course is softened by his humanistic roots. He describes India, the Indian style of living and thinking, the racial conflicts between rulers and ruled, but when it comes to delving deep into the inner realities, or to understanding intrinsic meaning behind the external trapping, no body like Lama is there to make him grasp, the fact that 'mountains' are more 'illusion' and the ultimate reality constitutes in deeper vision. The Marabar caves give a sense of horror to the involved characters because no justifiable interpretation of the

episode is possible in the absence of an interpreter like Lama. Both, Kipling and Forster have tried to capture India but with varying degree of success which depends upon such diverse attributes like mental approach so uniquely one's own and social instruments, though the creation of human mind get with an identity of their own. Kipling has not. But what matters in the ultimate analysis is that India fascinated them and this fascination has given the world two master pieces of all times.

Thus both these writers, travelled extensively in India. They were primarily interested in India socio-cultural tradition, different religions and politics. And no doubt, *Kim* is one of the best works belonging to Pre-independent India which has touched the soul of India. On the other hand Forster's *A Passage to India* is a masterpiece of modern British fiction. And one can logically capsule that both these writers reflect the varied aspects, like the socio-economic problems, political issues, different religions and above all Indian culture in its totality.

BIOGRAPHICAL RUDYARD KIPLING

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) an English writer and poet, he was born in India at Bombay. His ethos was one of unquestioning belief in the ideals of the British Empire and loyalty of king Nobel Prize for literature in 1907, his reputation has fluctuated of the decades, especially with the advent of the experimentalism of modernism continuing criticism of his apparent celebration of imperial supremacy.¹ His father named Lockwood Kipling was a knowledgeable, sensitive and illustriously versatile personality. Kipling's father John Lockwood Kipling who throughout acted as his mentor and guide, was a typical Anglo Indian, and in his autobiography Kipling remembers his father thus:

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

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

EDWARD MORGAN FORSTER

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

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

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

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

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPE

It is up among the hills on the edge of Tibet that the later episodes have their setting, and Kipling transmits the very sensation of those colossal depths and heights. When the Ao-chung man throws the empty whisky bottle out of the window-

No need to listen for the fall. This is the world's end, he said, and swing off. The Lama looked forth, a hand on either sill, with eyes that shone like yellow opals. From the enormous pit before him and white peaks lifted themselves yearning in the moonlight. The rest was as the darkness of inter-stellar space. (Kim. Pg.334).

In the village clinging to Shamleigh hill it was 'like sitting in a Swallow's nest under the eaves of the roof of the world.'

Idiomatically, the power that India exerts over Kim and, indeed, over most of the characters – differs little from that which it exerts over Fielding in Forster's *A Passage To India*: it is the power which destroys values, reduces sustaining categories to

meaninglessness and sends Fielding back to the world of definitions, and distinctions, back to the other Peninsula 'smaller and more exquisitely' shaped; back to the form and beauty just as it sends Kim back to the secret service.

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