

Colonial Discourse in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*

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The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the end of colonial domination of a large part of the world by imperial powers. With the change in the geo-political situation the intellectual focus was turned towards the manner in which the cultures of the suppressed nations had been subverted by the colonizers. Around 1960's literature came to be seen as a privileged site for understanding social structures, cultural codes and inter-ethnic understanding and misunderstanding.

In 1978 Edward Said's phenomenally influential work, *Orientalism*, led to a fresh appraisal of the manner in which the developed western countries have historically represented the East in all arts as well as a whole range of scientific and scholarly writings. Said's book analysed how the orient i.e. the East is an object of European writing and politics and how the discipline which developed was an integral part of colonial expansion and rule in the area. It is Said's premise that the West has habitually dominated and controlled the East by making it the 'other' in the sense of alien, non-western and, therefore, inferior. "The orient is not only adjacent to source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the 'other'."¹ The colonizing powers represent the 'other' as mysterious, exotic, erotic, and also barbaric, superstitious and irrational. By this means, consciously or not, Imperial powers justify their occupation and seek to dominate and subdue their colonized or subservient people.

This paper reconsiders E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) as a history of colonial discourse i.e. it tells the story of imperialism in India and through his narrative Forster brings out the cultural differences between the Britishers and the Indians.