



危机与出路

《印度之行》的生态主义研究

Crisis and Solution

An Ecological Research On A Passage to India

徐翔 刘峰 丁云 著



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Abstract

A Passage to India is Edward Morgan Forster's last novel that enjoys the widest reputation. Among the studies on this book, cultural connection, colonialism and post-colonialism occupy the bulk of the research existent. However, an eco-critical reading of *A Passage to India* is a relatively untapped area. Hence, this book intends to employ the re-evaluative principle to survey *A Passage to India* from the three dimensions, namely man and nature, man and other man, and man and selfhood to delve into the eco-crises in the realm of nature, society and spirit.

The book intends to wield an eco-critical thinking and probe deep into *A Passage to India*. It aims to find out the roots of the eco-crises by the analysis of the eco-crises and the way to resolve the eco-crises. From the viewpoint of the ecocriticism, it focuses on the eco-crises existing in the fictional world. From the viewpoint of humanism, it values more on the establishment of the harmonious ecological relationship in the world of a liberated sense, namely that including society, nature and spiritual world. Also, it points out the applicability of the conclusions drawn from the survey.

The body of the book consists of five parts as

follows:

The introduction deals with a brief review of the related research home and abroad. With the background information retold, the book goes on to the introduction of the theme, namely the eco-crises and the way to resolve it—Only Connect. It tries to deliberate by borrowing the framework put forward by Lu Shuyuan and showcase the eco-crises in three realms.

The first part deals with the social eco-crisis reflected in the struggle between the will of human beings and society. The ideal social ecology should be characterized by the equality between individuals. However, in *A Passage to India*, many kinds of unequal relationship abound. The book mainly deals with three kinds of corrupt ecological relationships, namely the conflict between different classes, genders and races. It is just the eco-crises that lead to the social eco-crises. Besides, it also points out the mechanism by which the social eco-crisis works. The interaction between an individual's behavior and the social climate is a constant battle. And the flow of influence works both ways.

The second part is concerned with the natural eco-crisis. Previously in the literary practice, many researchers identify the humane world, with the exclusion of the natural world. However, the natural world is also an indispensable part in a liberated sense. *A Passage to India*, with its advanced ecological thinking, also touches upon the ecological relationship in the natural realm. The conflict between man and nature leads to the natural eco-crises.

The third part deals with the spiritual eco-

crisis, namely the interaction between a being and the ecological system. This book tries to subdivide it into the influence of an ecological system on the health of human beings and the influence of spiritual factors on ecological system. The spiritual eco-crisis comes into being mainly because of the conflict between the socialized being and the innocent self. In a corrupt social environment, man finds himself increasingly difficult to maintain his innocence without the fear of compromise. One has to constantly struggle between clinging onto the innocence and compromise the moral standards.

The forth part tries to find out the ways to construct an ideal ecology from three levels, namely the relationships of man with nature and objects, with other man, and with one's self. And with the doctrine of "Only Connect" put forward by the author, the eco-crises mentioned could be solved. The social eco-crisis could be resolved by the connection between individuals, between nature and men, and between men's innocent self and socialized self.

The concluding part aims to summarize and point out that *A Passage to India* is a book full of ecological thinking. By interpreting this classic work from the perspective of eco-criticism, a deeper awareness of ecological thinking will be fostered in the public and a more harmonious ecological system will be found in the world.

Key words: E. M. Forster; *A Passage to India*; eco-crises; Only Connect

Introduction

As a famous English novelist of the 20th century, Edward Morgan Forster (1879—1970) relishes equal prestige with Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. Lionel Trilling, a famous American literary critic, once wrote in his critical book *E. M. Forster*, “E. M. Forster is for me the only living novelist who can be read again and again and who, after each reading, gives me what few writers can give us after our first days of novel-reading, the sensation of having learned something”.^① It is not an exaggeration at all why the English critic, John Sayre Martin, shares the same evaluation with Trilling. He wrote that Forster’s novels “express more profound and suggestive meanings than the literal words itself.”^②

Forster’s main literary achievements are a collection of novel theory, *Aspects of Novel* and the five novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, published in 1905, followed by *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1909), and the famous novel *A Passage to India* in 1924. Forster’s works

① Trilling. Lionel. *E.M. Forster*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1982.3

② Martin. John Sayre. *E.M. Forster: The Endless Journey*. Cambridge University Press. 1976.56

show us immense suggestive power by the combination of realism and modernism, which benefited from the subtle character description as well as the arrangement of techniques such as rhythm, image, symbolism and mysticism. Also, it is the use of diverse writing skills that create an immortal fame for his novels and owns a potential of various interpretations for critics. It is acknowledged that the riddling elements in his novels have confused his readers very frequently. Virginia Woolf suggests that Forster's novels are queer and different in a sense,^① especially that his novels include something elusive and recondite.

Forster concerns the values of human beings, and incessantly devotes to reconstructing a harmonious relationship between man and man, between man and self, between human and nature through his works, with personal relationship as the central issue. As for him, the main problem of modern western civilization is that the "undeveloped heart" of the westners has destroyed humanity, making people feel a sense of futility on existence, loss of self and the state of being isolated from surrounding environment. His works often satirize British behaviors in foreign countries, which we can feel clearly in *A Passage to India*.

As a result of his trips to India for twice, in 1912—1913 and in 1921, *A Passage to India* is regarded as a cross-cultural novel. Known as the mighty of Forster's work, *A Passage to India*, ranks as the

①弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫 .E.M 《福斯特的小说》上海：上海外语教育出版社，1992.342

the most great classic of the 20th century and gains international recognition. This novel reveals the racial misunderstandings and prejudices and gives us a full description on the complex relationship between native Indians and English colonials in imperial India. Through the employment of symbolism and mysticism, Forster shows us the diversity of religions and cultures in India where Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity are in coexistence. He is honest enough to point out the complexity and difficulties to channel the western and Indian society in their perceptions.

The responses from critics to *A Passage to India* were somewhat diverse. However, both British and American critics acknowledge the artistic talent Forster displayed in this classic novel. Soon after its publication, L. P. Hartley traced this novel full of cosmic significance. He said that this novel "is much more than a study of racial contrasts and disabilities. It is intensely personal and cosmic."^① Some Indian critics think that this novel presents a true and panoramic view of India to its people. It is also acclaimed to be a powerful, original, and thought-provoking novel by *The Times* magazine published in India and it has great contribution to an understanding of interracial relations in contemporary India. On the contrary, there are some critics complaining that Forster ignores some great issues about politics and ideology. In his *E. M. Forster: The Perils of Humanism*, F. C. Crews indicated that "Lionel Trilling comes

① Messenger, Nigel. *A Passage to India: York Notes Advanced*. Longman York Press, 1999.6

closest to the truth when he says that *A Passage to India*, instead of telling us what is to be done, merely depicts the familiar political and social dilemmas in the light of the total situation". In addition, people who felt their community had been maligned and expressed much of their indignation. Some Indian critics, including M. K. Naik and Nirad Chaudhuri, denounced that the novel gave an unreal and distorted description of India and its people despite the favorable appraisal from some Indian critics.^①

The early critics stressed the social and political aspects of the novel, debating on whether it was fair or not. Burra said it was a book involving the Indian question which no scholar ignores.^② Forster himself declared the novel to be more than a political novel, but to be philosophic and poetic. Then, *A Passage to India* was studied on the focus of liberal humanism. Many critics pay much attention to the pessimistic aspects of this novel, designating its concern to human's frustration and troubles. The major concern of this viewpoint consists in the tracing of the complex and unsatisfactory human relationship on account of misunderstandings and prejudices between the characters in imperial India, which is a new perspective for the interpretation of the novel.

In the 1970s, *A Passage to India* was reevaluated with its focus shifted more directly to social and

① Childs, Peter. *Post-Colonial Theory and English Literature*, Edinburgh University Press, 1999.26

② Burra, Peter. *The Novels of E. M. Forster*. In Bradbury, M. (ed.). *E. M. Forster: A Passage to India*. London: Macmillan, 1934.268

political aspects. The most representative work was Benita Parry's *Delusions and Discoveries: India in the British Imagination*, which applied post-colonial theory, especially Edward Said's *Orientalism*, to analyse this novel. He stated that the world was dominated by western culture and thought, and the oriental societies were marginalized to different degrees. In the mid and late 1980s, post-colonial approach was widely employed to interpret *A Passage to India* as well as many other works. From then on, the interpretations of *A Passage to India* in a post-colonial perspective had been popular because of the wide influence of this literary critical approach in the field of literary criticism^①. Most of the post-colonial readings highlighted the racial discrimination and conflicts embodied in the novel.

Some contemporary studies still concern about the issues of sexual and racial politics by analysing this novel from post-colonial point of view. Jeremy Tambling's *E. M. Forster* provides a diverse perspective for current interpretations of *A Passage to India*. Besides, stylistics is another influential direction on this novel. For example, R. A. Buck, who analyses *A Passage to India* with linguistic theories, particularly politeness theories to emphasize racial conflicts. His theory with stylistics provides us implications and perspectives for further study of this novel.

In the 1980s, *A Passage to India* was adapted to a film and brought in China, which attracted more and

① Zhu Gang. *Twentieth Century Western Critical Theories*. Shanghai: Foreign Language Education Press, 2001.67

more academic interest as well as popular fascination of readers. However, researches on this novel haven't reached a comprehensive and mature level. Many recent studies are carried out based on the viewpoint of cross-culturalism and post-colonialism. In terms of thematic interpretation, some critics highlight the issue of race discrimination, about which love seems to be the only way-out to transcend cultural barriers and guarantee the true communication between different nations. And in the meantime, some people hold the view that Forster intended to show us people's state of isolation and encouraged us to broaden our horizons in spite of the social background of the novel. By analysing this novel from the point of view of post-colonialism, Zhu Gang points out that "post-colonial studies keep its position in the new century" because the relationship problems between cultures has continued whether it is as a result of colonial history or as modern political issues within some controversial African and Asian countries.^① Some critics stress on Forster's collusion with imperialism or patriarchy and reveal a profound anti-female sentiment and a connection between racism and rape in the novel.

After a survey of the related material, a conclusion can be reached that despite the multitude of research conducted from various aspects, there is few in-depth research which is conducted from the perspective of ecocriticism. Hence, there is a necessity for us to

① Ibid.68

conduct an eco-critical reading of the novel. After the survey, a conclusion can be reached that Forster does convey much of his ecological thinking in the novel, which proves to be a good case study for the ecological thinking. With the survey of the previous research fruits of *A Passage to India*, there is also a need for the general presentation of the main thoughts of ecocriticism. In order to have a deeper understanding of the ecocriticism, there is a need to examine some related philosophical thinkings if we want to have a deeper understanding of the crises and solutions to the crises. The relevant theories concerning eco-criticism are too numerous to relate respectively. Consequently, this book will only touch upon a few theories related to the present survey.

Land ethic was a philosophical thinking deeply associated with the present research. It is a deviation from the requirements of the land ethic that leads to the natural eco-crisis and the solution. Hence, it is necessary to examine the land ethic first to pave the way for the present survey.

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed a period of tragedy and catastrophe: It is the side effects of industrialization, urbanization, technological advance, and population explosion who haunted the whole world; the two World Wars brought about great destructiveness and nuclear threat to economy; the widespread environmental deterioration came into being. Having noticed the severe condition, Aldo Leopold published *A Sand County Almanac* with its purpose to take a path on ecological protection and salvation. Although he took a positive attitude towards

science and technology and had a profound meditation on the fatal influence of human behaviors on the earth. He stated that science development and human activities would bring about bad effects on nature. This reflected the tendency of opposition to science, which is regarded by many ecologists as one root cause of the current damage of the ecosystem.

A careful reading of *A Sand County Almanac* provides sufficient clues that this was undoubtedly a typical book of that particular time. For the first time, Leopold accounted for the notion of moral responsibility for the natural environment. He also ushered in a new way to assess the role performed by natural world, that is, "Land Ethic". By "Land Ethic" he meant reconsidering human behavior towards the natural world and suggested that human beings realize that the natural world is not a commodity to possess but rather a community they live in. For "in human history, we have learned (I hope) that the conqueror role is eventually self-defeating."^① In *A Sand County Almanac*, the author presents the readers with a vivid picture where different species depend on each other. However, under the encouragement of "anthropocentrism", human beings are flourishing while land is shrinking. As a result, with the rapid growth of the human population and their increasing demands for resources, the original ecological balance is ruined. Leopold strongly suggests that human beings should be ecologically part of the natural world rather than being dominant like God. Through *A Sand County*

① Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac*. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.67