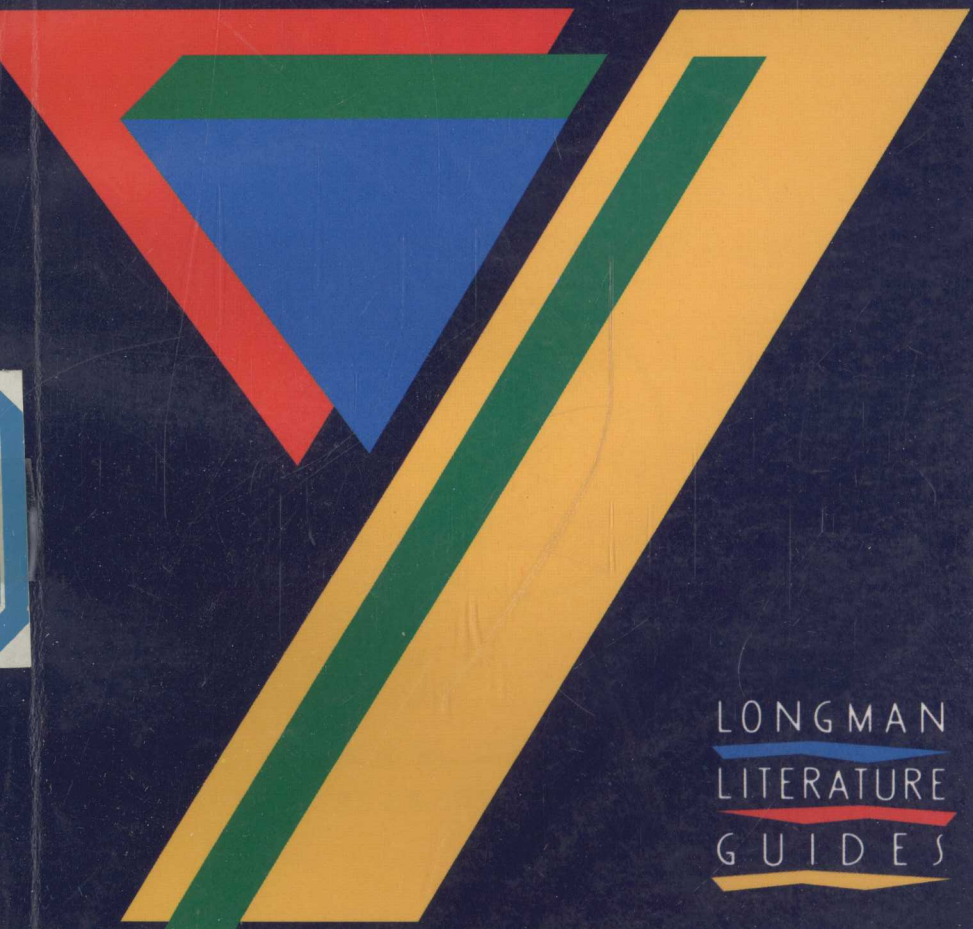


约克文学作品辅导丛书

YORK NOTES ON  
A PASSAGE  
TO INDIA

印度之行

E. M. Forster



LONGMAN  
LITERATURE  
GUIDES

# YORK NOTES

*General Editors: Professor A.N. Jeffares (University of Stirling) & Professor Suheil Bushrui (American University of Beirut)*

E.M. Forster

# A PASSAGE TO INDIA

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## 《约克文学作品辅导丛书》介绍

《约克文学作品辅导丛书》(York Notes)系 Longman 集团有限公司(英国)出版。本丛书覆盖了世界各国历代文学名著,原意是辅导英国中学生准备文学课的高级会考或供英国大学生自学参考。因此,它很适合我国高校英语专业学生研读文学作品时参考。

丛书由 A. N. Jeffares 和 S. Bushrui 两位教授任总编。每册的编写者大都是研究有关作家的专家学者,他们又都有在大学讲授文学的经验,比较了解学生理解上的难点。本丛书自问世以来,始终畅销不衰,被使用者普遍认为是英美出版的同类书中质量较高的一种。

丛书每一册都按统一格式对一部作品进行介绍和分析。每一册都有下列五个部分。

① 导言。主要介绍:作者生平,作品产生的社会、历史背景,有关的文学传统或文艺思潮等。

② 内容提要。一般分为两部分:a. 全书的内容概述;b. 每章的内容提要及难词、难句注释,如方言、典故、圣经或文学作品的引语、有关社会文化习俗等。注释恰到好处,对于读懂原作很有帮助。

③ 评论。结合作品的特点,对结构、人物塑造、叙述角度、语言风格、主题思想等进行分析和评论。论述深入浅出,分析力求客观,意在挖掘作品内涵和展示其艺术性。

④ 学习提示。提出学习要点、重要引语和思考题(附参考答案或答案要点)。

⑤ 进一步研读指导。介绍该作品的最佳版本;版本中是否有重大改动;列出供进一步研读的参考书目(包括作者传记、研究有关作品的专著和评论文章等)。

总之,丛书既提供必要的背景知识,又注意启发学生思考;既重视在吃透作品的基础上进行分析,又对进一步研究提供具体指导;因此是一套理想的英语文学辅导材料。

北京师范大学外文系教授

钱 瑗



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## Part 1

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# Introduction

### The life of E.M. Forster

Edward Morgan Forster was born in London on 1 January, 1879. His name, Edward Morgan, emerged out of a comic confusion recorded by Forster himself. In London the baby was registered as 'Henry Morgan Forster,' and later in March, he was taken to church at Clapham Common for christening. On the way the verger asked the baby's father what the name of the child would be, and he absent-mindedly gave his own name and therefore the baby was christened Edward Morgan. 'I had been registered in one way,' Forster writes, 'and christened another. What on earth was to happen! It turned out after agitated research that the christening had it, so Edward I am!'

Forster's recollections of his childhood are faithfully recorded in the biography of his great aunt, Marianne Thornton, which he wrote in 1956. Marianne called her favourite nephew the 'Important One'. The great aunt, who was in her eighties, began to write letters to Morgan Forster when he was only eighteen months old. This correspondence seemed extraordinary since Morgan at that time 'was probably crawling on the carpet'. He began to write to her later and the letters were exchanged in the same house which was known as Battersea Rise and was in north London; she wrote to 'Morgan Forster, Esq., Upstairs.' The 'Important One' was left a legacy of £8,000 by his great aunt, which not merely facilitated Forster's education at Cambridge, but also helped him to travel to Italy and Greece, and eventually made his 'career as a writer possible'.

Forster was educated at a preparatory school in Eastbourne (1890-2) and as a day-boy at Tonbridge School (1893-7). His school life was unhappy and restrictive; he entered King's College, Cambridge in 1897 and was soon charmed by the openness, freedom and intellectual atmosphere of the university. Forster was a great lover of houses and places such as Rooksrest, a later family house (he later called it 'Howards End' in the novel of the same title), and King's College, of which he was made an Honorary Fellow in 1945. He then resided in his rooms at King's almost till his death in 1970. In his will, he left all his earnings and estate to the college. Forster reacted adversely to the working of the public school system with its emphasis on collective

action, its regimentation and implied disregard for the value of personal relations. Cambridge, on the other hand, seemed to him to stress these very qualities, the charm of personal relationships and free intellectual intercourse, which stemmed from its liberal and humane traditions. It was at King's that Forster formed his life-long friendships with many persons who later became famous. He obtained his Classical and Historical Tripos from King's in 1901. Cambridge became a major source of his creative imagination, as was shown in his novels *The Longest Journey* (1907) and *Maurice* (1971). He writes nostalgically about his ideal, selective Cambridge: 'O spare Cambridge! Is not the city a little one? Is she not unparalleled?'

Forster is a rare and special man. He is rare because he is in part a late Victorian and an Edwardian and in part a modern. Forster's life, then, extends over a very long period (1879 to 1970) marked by rapid social and cultural changes. Yet it is his aesthetic response that makes him a very rare and special writer. Humanism, liberalism, intellectualism, freedom and an acute sensitivity—such are the qualities of the temper of the twentieth century to which Forster has given his allegiance as man and writer.

## *A Passage to India*

Forster's *A Passage to India* has been recognised as a major work of British fiction. Published in June 1924, it is Forster's fifth novel, and probably his greatest. His sixth novel, *Maurice* (1971), was not published until after his death. With the publication of *A Passage to India*, Forster achieved international recognition, and critics and commentators in England and America readily acknowledged the artistic talent he displayed in this classic presentation of a liberal point of view.

However, contemporary critical responses to *A Passage to India* were somewhat mixed. Soon after its publication, L.P. Hartley, a sensitive critic, discovered the novel's cosmic significance. '*A Passage to India*', he wrote, 'is much more than a study of racial contrasts and disabilities. It is intensely personal and (if the phrase may be pardoned) intensely cosmic.'<sup>†</sup> Virginia Woolf praised it as a novel marching triumphantly and sadly 'through the real life and politics of India, the intricacy of personal relations, the story itself, the muddle and mystery of life'.<sup>‡</sup> Contemporary approaches emphasised the elements of social realism and Indo-English relations in *A Passage to India*. Forster's portrayal

\*E.M. Forster, *Two cheers for Democracy*, Edward Arnold, London, 1951, p.357.

†L.P. Hartley, review of *A Passage to India*, *Spectator*, 28 June 1924, pp.1048–50.

‡Virginia Woolf, review of *A Passage to India*, *Nation and Athenaeum*, 24 June 1924, p.234.

of Anglo-Indians caused annoyance to the British bureaucracy in India, and one civil servant, E.A. Horne, explained 'how the book strikes an Anglo-Indian—a task for which I claim to possess qualifications having spent the last fourteen years of my life in Chandrapore (Patna) itself.'\* Horne thought that the Hindus and the Muslims in the novel were 'real enough', but that the Anglo-Indians were very 'unreal': 'What planet do they inhabit?' he asked, 'They are not even good caricatures.' This contemporary controversy in the British press reflected very mixed reactions to *A Passage to India*.

Even as late as 1954 Nirad C. Chaudhuri, an eminent Indian writer, wrote that *A Passage to India* is primarily a political novel with Indo-English racial overtones. He overemphasises its political aspect when he says that *A Passage to India* has possibly had an even greater influence on British imperial politics than on English literature.† It became a popular and powerful weapon in the hands of anti-imperialists in England and also in India. Liberal Englishmen, on their first voyage to India, made a point of reading it with a view to mapping out their own passage to this baffling country. On the other hand, Paul Scott, revaluing the novel, stated that those who saw themselves caricatured as Anglo-Indians 'threw copies overboard from the P. & O. [steamships of the Peninsular and Oriental line] into the Red Sea.'‡ Appreciative critics saw in it a passage to 'more than India,'§ whereas unfavourable commentators called it a 'passage to less than India.'

## Ideas and beliefs

Forster is a creative artist, moralist, and thinker. These three roles are dexterously harmonised in his fictional art. As a thinker he is essentially the product of a liberal and humane culture emanating from an environment deeply influenced by the Evangelical creed, utilitarianism,||

\*E.A. Horne, *The New Statesman and Nation*, 23 August, 1924, p.568.

†Nirad C. Chaudhuri, 'Passage to and from India,' *Encounter*, June 1954, pp.19–24.

‡Paul Scott, 'How Well Have They Worn?' *The Times*, 6 January, 1966, p.15.

§Benita Parry, 'Passage to More Than India', included in *Forster: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury, 1966, p.164.

||Utilitarianism is an ethical concept which holds that all human actions must be judged according to their utility in promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. This idea, enunciated by Jeremy Bentham, gained strength in England in the nineteenth century. The Clapham Sect was a group of very intelligent, wealthy and practical reformers who flourished between 1790 and 1835 in England. It may be described as a brotherhood of Christian social workers devoted to abolition of the slave trade abroad and improved measures of prison and other reforms at home. Bishop Wilberforce was its leader and Henry Thornton, Forster's grandfather, one of its leading members.

political liberalism, and the ideas propounded by the eminent people known as 'apostles'.\* He was also deeply influenced by Greek and Roman literature and culture and the ideas and beliefs associated with the Greek view of life.

Forster came into close contact with the Cambridge Apostles and their intellectual milieu. The circle of his friends was wide and included Lytton Strachey, John Maynard Keynes, Desmond MacCarthy, Clive Bell, Leonard and Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, and Duncan Grant. These people later came to be known as the Bloomsbury Group and claimed adherence to G.E. Moore's ethical concepts and Roger Fry's aesthetic ideas.†

Forster championed the cause of humanism and classicism, yet he remained in the mainstream of the nineteenth century romantic tradition. He himself was essentially a romanticist, a symbolist, almost a poet in prose fiction. Indeed he was a true inheritor of the traditions of the poets: Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley, traditions basically romantic; and he projected a synthesis, an alliance of intellect and intuition, reason and imagination, faith and scepticism.

The growth of the English novel is deeply linked with moral values and the parable form of Forster's early novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), and *The Longest Journey* (1907), demonstrates the moralist in him. Forster, however, was an informal moralist since he reflected the ethical ideas and beliefs of G.E. Moore who valued the enjoyment of personal relationships and the aesthetic appreciation of works of art.

## The liberal idea

Though the central conception of liberalism is political, its literary and aesthetic context seem to govern Forster's mind and values. Liberalism politically implies a system of government in accordance with people's

\*The Apostles were members of a secret discussion society organised at St John's College, Cambridge by George Tomlinson in 1820. It was also called 'the Society'. It later moved to Trinity College and King's College. Forster himself joined the Apostles in 1897.

†G.E. Moore was a well-known Cambridge philosopher whose book *Principia Ethica* (1903) presented, in his own words, 'a scientific Ethics.' He believed that the pleasures of human association and the enjoyment of beauty are valuable experiences. Forster valued friendships and also beautiful objects of art, and therefore his attitudes were similar to those of the Bloomsbury Group who were Moore's admirers. Roger Fry wrote *Vision and Design* (1920) and *Last Lectures* (1939). He wrote on aesthetics. Beauty and art are primary concerns of aesthetics.

will, and this view is linked with the English idea of human progress through the use of science and technology. The liberal idea is also allied with the concepts of tolerance, of dissent and individual freedom. Forster has a commitment to the liberal tradition of progress, freedom and humanitarianism. His novels, therefore, demonstrated the liberal idea in human and social relationships. His fiction was sensitively shaped by his liberal imagination. Yet Forster was not always in tune with this liberal tradition. He was primarily an individualist who believed in the individual citizen's freedom in a society left free from excessive governmental pressure or compulsive policies. Receptive to new ideas of social welfare, he believed that an ideal society must show a combination of new economy and old traditional morality. He was also deeply influenced by the creative aspect of liberalism which is related to the writing of fiction. This creative element in liberalism accepts both good and evil in its sphere.

Forster discovers and delineates liberalism in human relationships, in the coming together of different levels of classes, in middle-class English girls making liberal discoveries in the arms of Italian lovers such as Gino Carella in his novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905)—or seeking union in love with English boys belonging to a lower cultural stratum of English society such as George Emerson in his novel *A Room with a View* (1908). Forster's deep involvement in the processes of liberal imagination gives rise to the novel as social comedy, thereby forging a link between him and the tradition of the English novel shaped and nourished in the nineteenth century by Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and George Meredith. Forster's close association with the Bloomsbury Group is, of course, well known but he was also deeply influenced by persons and ideas outside this group, especially by the fiction of Marcel Proust and Henry James. James used the phrase 'international situation' to indicate the coming together of persons from different countries, specially Americans and Europeans. This resulted in an interaction of two cultures which provided a new subject matter for fiction. Forster's novels also are shaped by this international situation.

## Forster's humanism

Forster was essentially a humanist who believed in education, culture and freedom. Humanism is a school of thought and beliefs which gives prime importance to man in his relationship with nature and society. Forster's ideas seem similar to those of Coleridge who subscribed to a

romantic and organic view of life. Forster is a writer in the Coleridgean tradition, a humanist and symbolist.\*

It must be stated that humanism and humanitarianism in the Victorian age were multifaceted movements which cut across many divisions of social and political thought. They encompassed many diverse elements and beliefs. The literary heritage of humanism gives meaning and substance to Forster's creative work. It is also rooted in his family, the Thorntons, which added to it the authenticity of a personal experience.

Forster was thus a rare combination of creative writer, moralist and humanist. His fiction was marked by the sensitivity of a poet, the discriminating sense of a moralist and the deep concern for culture and freedom of a humanist. He was also a novelist of ideas.

## A note on the text

*A Passage to India* was first published by Edward Arnold, London, 1924 and Harcourt Brace, New York, 1924. All page references in these notes are to the Uniform Edition of the novel, published by Edward Arnold, London, 1971.

The edition published by Dent in the Everyman Series, London, 1942, contains notes by Forster.

\*A symbolist uses symbols as objects which represent something abstract as, for instance, a dove presented as a gesture or symbol of peace. Forster, in writing his novels, seems to move close to poetry. Liberalism and humanism are in this way related to his Romantic heritage and his poetical quality.

## Part 2

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# Summaries

of A PASSAGE TO INDIA

### A general summary

Chandrapore town is partly old and partly new, and except for the Marabar Caves it does not seem extraordinary in any way. Its old Indian part is somewhat unplanned whereas its British civil station is carefully planned and modern. In this town Aziz works as a doctor, an assistant to Major Callendar, in the Government Hospital. He has a close circle of friends: Hamidullah, a barrister; Mahmoud Ali, a lawyer; and others. They discuss Indo-English social and personal relations and the haughtiness of English women. Aziz is sent for by Major Callendar but on arrival finds that the Major has gone out. On his way back, Aziz enters a mosque where he meets an elderly Englishwoman, Mrs Moore. Aziz instinctively likes her and their conversation is extremely friendly. We learn that she is the mother of the City Magistrate, Ronny Heaslop. She is accompanied by a young girl, Adela Quested, who has arrived from England to explore the possibility of marrying Ronny.

Both Mrs Moore and Adela express their wish to see the real India, and Mr Turton, the Collector, arranges a 'Bridge Party' to enable them to meet Indians. This party is not much of a success because the English and the Indians do not get beyond surface civilities or casual conversation. However, they meet Cyril Fielding, the Principal of the local government college, who is a liberal and friendly towards Indians. He invites them to tea at his house where Mrs Moore and Adela meet Aziz and Professor Godbole. At Fielding's tea party, Aziz is in fine spirits. He talks to Adela of Mogul emperors and the glory of that age. He then invites them to visit the Marabar Caves and the ladies accept his invitation. They also talk about the Marabar Caves but Professor Godbole does not explain their significance to the visitors. Ronny Heaslop arrives to take the ladies to a polo match and the cordial atmosphere of the party is dramatically disturbed. Professor Godbole sings a song which describes the milkmaid's love for Shri Krishna, and the tense atmosphere is greatly relieved.

The friendship between Aziz and Fielding grows steadily. Fielding visits Aziz to enquire about his health. They discuss Indo-British relations and also the problems of religious belief and unbelief. Aziz, in a rare gesture of friendship, shows Fielding his dead wife's picture.

Fielding is touched by this. Aziz tells Fielding that what India needs is kindness, kindness and more kindness. Fielding says that he will not marry, and that he is an agnostic. (An agnostic is one who neither believes nor disbelieves in God.) Fielding says he would rather leave a thought behind him than a child. He calls Adela priggish. She seems to him a pathetic product of Western education. She tries to understand India as if it is a part of a lecture. She is, of course, very sincere. Fielding believes in personal friendships, in individuals, in freedom. He speaks to Aziz, informally outlining his set of beliefs.

In Part II the Marabar Caves are described in detail. The Ganges, according to Hindu mythological beliefs, flows from the feet of Vishnu and Siva's hair. Vishnu and Siva are the names of Hindu gods who form, along with Brahma, the Hindu Trinity. The Marabar Hills are situated in north-east India; they contain the famous Marabar Caves which are older than all spirit. Nothing is inside them. One of them is called the Kawa Dol.

Aziz makes elaborate preparations for the Marabar expedition. He stays at the railway station. Mrs Moore and Adela arrive on time to catch the train. But Fielding and Godbole are delayed and left behind. Aziz and the others reach the caves. Mrs Moore enters the first cave; something strikes her and she is greatly affected. She asks Aziz and Adela to go ahead. She sits down as though she has had a physical breakdown. But she has lost her will to live, her desire for personal relations, even her religious beliefs. Everything seems to be reduced to nothingness—'bourn'. She has a vision or a nightmare, and is totally changed by this experience.

Aziz and Adela move on to the other caves in the mountain range. Adela asks Aziz how many wives he has, and he is pained by this question. He moves into another cave to regain his balance, and finds that Adela has gone out of sight. He shouts for her, and slaps the guide, then finds Adela's broken field-glasses. He returns to the place where Mrs Moore is, and is pleased to see Fielding there.

While she is in the cave Adela realises that she doesn't love Ronny after all. She hears an echo, which is a symptom of her inner malady. She climbs down a hill and is pricked by cactuses. She returns to Chandrapore in Miss Derek's car. Fielding, who observes this, is surprised by Adela's unexpected action.

When the others return from the Marabar Caves to Chandrapore, Aziz is arrested on arrival at the station and taken to prison. Fielding is shocked. Aziz is said to have tried to molest Adela in the Caves and is arrested on a charge of attempted rape. The atmosphere in Chandrapore suddenly becomes tense. Mohurram also adds to the tension.



The trial of Aziz creates social and political tensions in Chandrapore. Aziz's friends make preparations for his defence in court and Mr Amritrao, a reputed lawyer, is engaged for the purpose. Fielding forsakes his countrymen, resigns from the Anglo-Indian Club, and openly supports Aziz. Adela, who is staying at the house of the Callendars, says she suffers from an echo. Mrs Moore loses her will to stay in India and decides to go back to England even before the trial. Fielding speaks with Godbole about Aziz and the Marabar episode only to find that the mystic is more involved in philosophical speculations than in the pressing, rigid realities of life. The trial creates distrust between Indian and English people.

At the trial of Aziz, Mr McBryde presents the case for the prosecution. He outlines all the relevant details. But answering the crucial question as to whether the prisoner followed her into the cave, Adela says that she is not quite sure. This most unexpected withdrawal of the charge destroys the case for prosecution. Mr Das, the magistrate, is left with no alternative but to dismiss the case and declare Aziz not guilty.

Adela renounces her own people, and her echo is silenced. Mrs Moore seems to her to have approved of her action. It is the moment of Aziz's triumph. The Anglo-Indians are shocked by this strange turn of events. Fielding escorts Adela to his house where she stays. He joins Aziz in his victory celebrations. Meanwhile the news of Mrs Moore's death on her voyage to England is made known. Aziz, who admired Mrs Moore greatly, is deeply pained. The engagement between Ronny and Adela is broken off. Fielding persuades Aziz to give up his claim for damages from Adela for wrongly implicating him in the case. Chandrapore officials are transferred and a new set of officials takes charge of the administration. Adela leaves Chandrapore for England—a sadder and a wiser woman. She decides to look up Ralph and Stella, the children of Mrs Moore's second marriage.

The scene now shifts from Chandrapore to Mau. Godbole is the Education Minister in this small native state. Aziz, disgusted with British India, has become the personal physician of the Maharajah. Fielding, too, has become an inspector of schools in this area.

Professor Godbole dances on a carpet before the images of the god. It is the time of the Gokul Ashtami festival (the festival of Lord Krishna's birth) which is celebrated with great merriment. People play practical jokes upon each other. Godbole is in a heated state, almost in a trance, in which he perceives Mrs Moore with the wasp. (She had earlier in the novel noticed a wasp on a hat-peg; it is a part of India, of the universe.) This is his mystic vision. He tries to achieve union with God and 'God is Love.' He loves Mrs Moore, the wasp, Aziz,