Conflict and Reconciliation of Ambivalence and Hybridity in A Passage to India and A Passage to England

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Abstract- The ambivalence for the attraction and repulsion shapes the colonizer and colonized’s duality sense for integrating each other’s way of life. It leads to create a hybridity sense, but this hybridity turns to mimicry. Forster’s A Passage to India portrays this sense through the character analysis. This novel exposes the ambivalent attitude of the Indians and the English to adopt the respective culture as the ruler and the ruled in India leading to hybridity sense. The development of events in the novel also shows some distorted sense in the character’s relationship and individual personality that creates a kind of tension. Chaudhuri, in his travelogue with his colonial experience, shapes his ambivalent attitude to integrate into the English traits. But his real experience with the West confirms his previous knowledge and he adopts his proper sense of hybridity by praising almost everything in western life and by showing the limitation of his country’s way of life. But his presentation in the travelogue makes a question of his stereotyped personality. The article initiates to explore reconciliation in this tension, applying the thesis-antithesis-synthesis technique through the comparative analysis of these two books.

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Conflict and Reconciliation of Ambivalence and Hybridity in *A Passage to India* and *A Passage to England*

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**Abstract** The ambivalence for the attraction and repulsion shapes the colonizer and colonized’s duality sense for integrating each other’s way of life. It leads to create a hybridity sense, but this hybridity turns to mimicry. Forster’s *A Passage to India* portrays this sense through the character analysis. This novel exposes the ambivalent attitude of the Indians and the English to adopt the respective culture as the ruler and the ruled in India leading to hybridity sense. The development of events in the novel also shows some distorted sense in the character’s relationship and individual personality that creates a kind of tension. Chaudhuri, in his travelogue with his colonial experience, shapes his ambivalent attitude to integrate into the English traits. But his real experience with the West confirms his previous knowledge and he adopts his proper sense of hybridity by praising almost everything in western life and by showing the limitation of his country’s way of life. But his presentation in the travelogue makes a question of his stereotyped personality. The article initiates to explore reconciliation in this tension, applying the thesis-antithesis-synthesis technique through the comparative analysis of these two books.

**I. Introduction**

The colonial holding creates ambivalence that works against and for the colonizer and the colonized not being in an equal platform exposed in *A Passage to India*. The Anglo-Indians always show the ambivalence to attach with Indians; they live in India but are ambivalent about integrating into native culture. They are divided into treating Indians as ruled, subordinate, and colonized, not as general human inhabitants in God’s universe. So, a conflict arises. The conflict of ambivalence turns to hybridity, as we see in the relationship of Mr. Fielding and Dr. Aziz in *A Passage to India*. The colonial rule creates an ambivalent attitude in the integration of Anglo-Indian and Indians in *A Passage to India*. But as a part of humanity, some characters nourish hybridity sense sometimes fell in a distorted sense of mimicry. On the other hand, in *A Passage to England*, the writer’s ambivalent attitude in accepting the goodness of England and English and finding fault in India and Indians forms a hybridity sense for the attraction of English life. However, this focuses on his split personality leaving his stereotype. This attitude creates tension presented in the process of thesis-antithesis-synthesis. The article tries to find out conflict through thesis and antithesis and explores the reconciliation in this conflict.

**II. Hybridity and Mimicry**

Ambivalence is for the attraction and repulsion in the relationship between colonizers and colonized. This concept works against and for the colonizer and the colonized, not being on an equal platform. The conflict of ambivalence turns to hybridity in postcolonial facet, which is evident in *A Passage to India* and *A Passage to England*. Hybridity in Postcolonial studies denotes the integration of cultural practices from the colonized culture theorized by Homi. K. Bhabha, in his book *The Location of Culture* in 1994. Bhabha is successful in showing postcolonial histories and cultures for our understanding of present cross-cultural relations. Bhabha views that culture is always in flux and is a kind of transformation by mixed attachment or interconnectedness of diverse elements. This condition is called hybridity. To him, this kind of assimilation, adaptation, the cross-fertilization of culture is enriching and dynamic since the culture is not an essence. Moreover, it is a spot for the gathering of disparate elements.

Thus it transforms the cultural identity. Bhabha also places it to remove the view of unchanging features of colonized culture and to mingle the colonizer and the colonized. The image of black skin with white mask shows the ambivalence, but not the trauma of colonizer. Bhabha analyzes hybridity as a problem within a colonial representation that alters the effects of the colonialist disavowal of difference and makes a danger based on its authority. It also shows the workings of colonial influence and its subjects’ resistance. So, he places that culture is not a discrete phenomenon, but an integrated pattern is showing features of hybridity, which leads to hybridization. It bridges the gap between the West and the East-the colonizer and the colonized politically and culturally. However, it synthesizes the cultural difference within the postcolonial situation. No culture is absolute, but hybridity is in all cultures. Conflict arises not for the two different cultures but the effect of discriminatory practices. Culture comes after the hybridizing process. He points out that culture is a part of the ongoing process. Loomba (1998) says that Bhabha tries to say...
that colonial identities are a matter of change and anxiety (148). Culture not as an existing matter comes after hybridization, which is right for the colonized and the colonizer in the colonial relation. Chaudhuri, in his travelogue through this process of hybridization in the borderlines of cultures and in-between cultures, creates a new cultural meaning. In the culture, hybridity happens in a sophisticated manner than any other binary opposition. Following the trend of Bhabha that the minority culture is ignored, mostly is tended to assimilate, Chaudhuri, as a minority, is willing to assimilate with the English culture. So, the third species emerges for the fusion of the colonizer and the colonized in Chaudhuri’s personality. In A Passage to India, the Anglo-Indian always shows the ambivalence to attach with Indians; they live in India but are ambivalent about integrating into native culture. As a result, a kind of conflict arises among them, as we see in the relationship of Mr. Fielding and Dr. Aziz in A Passage to India. So, the article explores whether Chaudhuri’s proper hybrid personality becomes a bridge of reconciliation in the context of A Passage to England. The nature of conflict of ambivalence and hybridity is analyzed and the thesis explores reconciliation of this conflict on the basis of this theory. Moreover, mimicry refers to the colonial imitation of European norms in a distorted way. It is based on Foucault’s term and Kant’s notion. As all the modes of impositions by colonizers on the colonized result in mimicry, Gandhi (1999) explains the term mimicry that “mimicry is also the sly weapon of anti-colonial civility, an ambivalent mixture of deference and disobedience” (149). Bhabha (1994) states that it is a way of subverting the colonial authority and hegemony by removing the gap between the ruler and the ruled. It is not sluggish imitation, but an exaggerated imitation of language, culture, manners, and ideas. So, it is a kind of repetition with a difference, which is not a sign of colonized’s servitude but is a kind of mockery because of its ongoing pretensions of colonization and empire. Since it is a response to stereotypes, the mimicry makes the colonized to be, as Bhabha (1994) says, “almost the same, but not quite … in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excesses, its difference” (86). Selden, Widdowson and Brooker (1997) present that “colonial encounter between the white presence and its black semblance emerges the question of the ambivalence of mimicry with the problematic of colonial subjection” (228). The same encounter is seen in Chaudhuri’s travelogue that mimicry represents an ironic balance between the things of eternally the same and the continual change in them. Since mimicry makes the colonized an image of the colonizer, Chaudhuri loses the identity and difference, only shows the presence that the colonized subject can only presume partially. But he holds an impossible space between cultures, not being English. So, he is in a precarious area between mimicry and mockery that becomes iconic in the execution of colonial authority and its strategic failure. At this stage, the play between equivalence and excess makes colonized people at the same time, similar and terrifying. Thus, mimicry becomes resemblance and menace. But his mimic attitude confirms the partial presence of colonial subjects, which leads to being authentic. In this sense, Bhabha says that “the desire to emerge as authentic through mimicry-through a process of writing and repetition-is the final irony of partial representation” (88). Mimicry, not a fixed, final, and fundamental identity, is an ambivalence phenomenon because colonizers and the colonized have no absolute and real character, but it is the undermining condition of the colonizers’ stable status. At this point, it is a matter of question whether Chaudhuri’s mimicry for being an English smoothes the path of reconciliation. Under the umbrella of mimicry, the article explores reconciliation in the conflict of ambivalence and hybridity.

III. Ambivalence and Hybridity in A Passage to India

The novel, A Passage to India, begins with the ambivalent sense of friendship between Indians and English in India. Indians agree with the impossibility of their intimacy in India, but it is possible in England. They are ambivalent with Englishwomen because of their arrogance and venal attitude though a few ones possess practical sense. Indians like Dr. Aziz are uncertain. This thinking prevents Aziz from entering the bungalow of Civil Surgeon on foot. A note from Civil Surgeon to Aziz of his inability to meet him becomes a sign of Civil Surgeon’s showing power. Aziz always defends himself by showing a positive sense, “we are by nature a most informal people” (85). Adela is ambivalent for disappointing at first for the dullness of India, though she becomes romantic in the voyage to India through the Mediterranean river. But Mrs. Moore feels interested in India.

In another way, the setting of Chandapore shows an example of hybridity, which is a place of the mixture. Fielding and Aziz try to attain a hybrid personality by making friendships between them. Fielding and Dr. Aziz are intimate by “beginning to trust each other” (123). He does not mind his attachment to Indians as he is a man of no racial feeling. But in the next, “he lost his usual sane view of human intercourse, and felt that we exist not in ourselves, but in terms of each other’s mind” (249). Feeling comfortable to match with Indians, he has to give a price for exercising his ideas. Aziz also accepts universal brotherhood by regarding Fielding as a brother “all men are my brothers” (128) because Fielding behaves well even if Aziz does not do that. The repulsion and the attraction of the Indians towards the English and vice-versa lead to hybridity sense.
This hybridity sense out of the harmony between the Indians and the English creates a mimic situation. Aziz’s attempt to make “India in England” (90) has to bear the massive expense and makes it nasty. When Aziz is dressed in the mixed fashion of Indian and English “from tie-pin to spats” (97), it exposes “the fundamental slackness that reveals the race” (97). To Heaslop, all educated Indians are a type, a fabricated westernized. Aziz’s way of being pleasant to others is an offensive matter to him. Nawab Bahadur praises the British’s rule of “reason and orderliness” (108) in British India, which is successful than the Hindu States. Even it is seen that there is a disagreement on (108) in British India, which is successful than the Hindu States. Even it is seen that there is a disagreement on Indians’ spirituality because they cannot coordinate anything. “No Indian gentleman approves chucking out as a proper thing. Here we differ from those other nations. We are so spiritual” (125).

To Aziz, the expedition to Marabar Caves is with friends, not with Indians and the English. It becomes successful to all, but the next morning, Mr. Haq, the Inspector of Police arrests Aziz for insulting Miss Quested in the Marabar Caves, “Miss Quested has been insulted in one of the Marabar Caves” (172). This happening takes all English to blame. The primary blame of irresponsibility goes to Fielding, who misses the early train. The result is “when a man mixes himself up with natives; always ends in some indignity” (193). After the trial, Fielding considers Aziz as foul for having a notion that he is accused by “a woman who had no personal beauty” (242). Aziz’s this type of thinking makes a barrier between him and Fielding. Moreover, Hamidullah’s comment on Mrs. Moore’s death in Aden and taunting to Ronny shocks Mr. Fielding.

After the mental pressure, Aziz feels disgusted with the sense of friendship rounded with “give and take, or give and return” (253). Friendship rotates with materialism, according to Aziz. To Fielding, Aziz’s wrong attitude after the trial is worse than materialism. Even Aziz cannot rely on him, considering him as Aziz’s emotion controls his beliefs, but his ambivalent attitude brings a tragedy in his friendship with the English. The visit of Lieutenant- Governor of the Province gives a decomposition of Marabar. He regrets the racial prejudice and appreciates the outcome of the trial, Fielding’s sensible side. He makes a pave way to rejoin him in the club. Miss Quested accuses herself and takes everything as a punishment for her stupidity. She gets the worst attitude from both worlds. So, she plans to leave India to start a new life in England not creating any harm to England. Mrs. Moore, with her oriental outlook, tries to attach with Aziz, but she feels frustrated not doing anything in the integration of Anglo-Indian and Indian. This conflict of ambivalence and hybridity in A Passage to India faces a new turn in A Passage to England.

IV. Hybridity Leading to Mimicry in A Passage to England

When we observe the origin of the English in A Passage to England, we see that Aryans, a forefather of English, come and are used to the city life, but antipathy prevails in their minds. Similarly, they and Brahmanism feel that aversion in ancient India though Indians think of their civilization as superior to Europeans during the nationalistic movement. The English people bear this dislike in their new culture. “This emotional resistance still lurks” (42) in their language and architecture. But they are successful in handling these inherited elements to make them capable of combining old and new things perfectly. The ambivalence between likings and disliking leads to hybridization.

The interior of the English house shows the cultural life of England for its amalgamating atmosphere and material signs. Their cathedrals are like “lighthouses on land” (51), which signifies the architectural perfection for their exceptional and consistent design showing two sides of the same civilization. The English try to amalgamate nature and urbanization in the country house and cathedral. All these things come together to make a landscape in Europe.

The freedom of the psyche of a particular race from the confined exterior is a challenging work for any travel writer. In the second part of the travelogue titled ‘The English People,’ Chaudhuri tells the sketch of the English people within his short visit would not be fair because it is like “the biography of a man after meeting him at a cocktail party” (69). His limited and formal acquaintance with the English people explicates the superficies of English life for the readers. Though his voice is natural, his description of the English men/women and their eccentricities and habits is free from any bias. His voice sounds moderate and balanced regarding them. The writer admits that he cannot discern their features in London or the country having a difference with other cultures. In India, he can differentiate human beings based on their hereditary mark- an Aryan from a Hun or a Muslim from a Scythian. Even he cannot identify the earliest representatives of the Indian aborigines, “I could never make out a Celt, Roman, Saxon, Dane or Norman in Oxford Street” (69). They hold collective and more generalized characteristics. The writer can discern their differences in appearance and lifestyle. The writer views:

I had been told that the Englishmen belonging to the different social strata and professions were very different not only in speech and behaviour, but also in their appearance, taking it as the sum of their features, figure, expression and, of course, clothes. (71).
The English people consider their setbacks as a defeat; they deal this with confidence. Thinking of it as a muddle, they encounter the present situation with a new outlook because their “contemporary culture is a satellite thrown out by the historic civilization” (220). There are enough society members to hold the original civilization, which creates a new outlook of culture. This historic civilization becomes an excellent resource for their people. But the rising of a democratic culture creates a danger for this civilization because the political power is in action behind this. The writer predicts that a hard fight would happen since there is an active group of people with a culture for retaining the historic civilization bravely. Moreover, England being parted with northern and southern souls, one is dominating at any age. But the writer sees the fusion of all elements having no fixed formulas though he sees only mild oscillation. This process of fusion overcomes “the question of congruity and incongruity in style” (45). This intermingling situation is quite natural in English because everything in England equally belongs to English.

The writer shows an interesting comparison between woman folk of East and West. Indian woman is in the place of mockery for the imitation of beauty in a distorted way as their physical attractiveness is related to fair complexion. There are two types of women, stunning beautiful and pretending beautiful. The woman who pretends to be fashionable appears herself with overdressing. The dark woman decorates them with extra ingredients not to overlook them who are different from English woman with a natural appearance. The writer finds human’s actual physical beauty, which comes from art-from the West, what is “its amazing nude” (78).

People use nature in the East as like as “ruthless colonists who have sacked the countries they have conquered” (30). The writer intermingles that no world is quite natural and artificial either. Only the west does not observe “man’s cruel and endless struggle with Nature” (30), which the East observes. That is the reason for India to adopt “the spirit of English life through the literature” (30) without achieving its purpose. The writer’s reading of English Literature forms knowledge about England. But this reading makes him ashamed at first for the dissimilarity with the text when he visits England. At last, he attaches himself to a class of English men. He dreams of “an imitation of Jeeves, the manservant than of his gentleman master” (16). He regrets his position nowhere in England without the literature. The East and the West never meet, which is natural. But the synthesis is possible between them through “substantial Westernization” (25). The superficiality of this sense to amalgamate them into a single trait will be a revolt against nature that results in a menace, and this hybridization leads to mimicry.

To know about London, one has to live in his lifetime. He can only discover it partly because all places and buildings are replicas of “historical monuments and scattered hybridization” (58). Indian Maharaja’s palace and the country house are replica of English house that is “an aesthetic back-formation without independent value” (49). The writer’s attempt to imitate the Western norms is his mimicry. Since the writer is not habituated to the English social convention, he is worried about behaving naturally without knowing the correct English behavior because it would be “constrained and artificial as a result” (70). His friend from the B.B.C. assures him that his response is quite natural to Englishman if he applies “the general principle of naturalness” (70). He gets happiness in England. His behavior also turns into an English way, and his joy is “flowing out of very much deeper springs” (229). Guha (2009) explores that Chaudhuri is the best embodiment of hybridization for the fusion of some aspects on both sides of the colonial divide. He again says that “hybridized personalities like him were both suppliants and threats, rolled into one, for the project of colonialism.” The writer holds himself between mimicry and mockery, which leads to irony in the sense of losing his own identity.

The writer begins with the cat’s example to show the breadth of the English mentality, which is a mockery for being a mimic attitude. The English cat becomes tame to him quickly, whereas the Delhi cat does not show any encouragement to be a friend as this inclination comes from the writer more. It is a little difficult to apprehend the English psyche; for example, “the fact is that when an Englishman is friendly, he imputes himself and considers all explanations as rudeness” (92). The Englishmen, according to the writer, are “not unaware of their habit of tacitness, which they call understatement” (92). Instead, they are proud of it as a sign of superiority. To the writer, the three-dimensional gardens in England create the sensitivity more than the two-dimensional gardens in India. That’s why, Sharma (2005) says that the book presents England through the eyes of a man who gained knowledge from reading English and European arts and literary and historical texts. She also says that “it introduces to us a mimic English- man whose textually derived ‘idea’ of Englishness and England makes him confident of his real understanding of everything English.”

The explanation of the writer on English’s offensiveness about Indians creates an ambivalent phenomenon and menace. The changelessness of English weather makes the writer pleasant. When anyone can harmonize with it, he will “enjoy its mischief-making and even its downright misbehavior” (100). The Englishman’s complaint about his weather is that “he loves it, and that is why he is always quarreling with it” (100), and it is for misleading the world. To the writer,
this English weather shapes their minds and brains by forming their sensibility. By coping with the changing climate, they can face all kinds of pleasant things and take all cynicism with good humor. It makes them observant and susceptible to real situations. When they come to a hot country, they expose their hardcore of personality by leaving refinement. They become sour and narrow. It is the reason for English people to be offensive in India, forgetting their general kindness and equality within human relationships. They become “raw and crude” (103). That’s why they do not love Indians with their mind called the “human fauna of the country” (104).

Nayar (2010) unearths that “Bhabha’s emphasis on ambivalence suggests that colonial authority was often subverted from the inside, by the colonial (on some occasion) and by the natives” (166). Bhabha places that culture is not a discrete phenomenon, but an integrated pattern shows the features of hybridity, which leads to hybridization. It makes a bridge in the gap between the West and the East-the colonizer and colonized politically and culturally. It synthesizes the cultural difference within the postcolonial situation. No culture is absolute, but hybridity is in all cultures. Conflict arises not for the two different cultures but for the effect of discriminatory practices.

To consider an Indian as an Italian is a fatal error, “it is futile for men to initiate their unity, they do but widen the gulf between them by the attempt (58). Only to see the real India, anyone has to “try seeming Indians” (48). Wasp, rats, birds—natural objects not knowing the English house build a nest in English people’s home. It is the “normal growth of the eternal jungle” (55). They live naturally as other natural things in the eternal jungle. The same way human beings in God’s globe can connect each other and live in any part of the world, thinking only part of humanity. The hybridization does not create a tension of mimicry, but it becomes a regular pattern of life.

Though Chaudhuri falls in the hand of mimicry, he highlights the reality even showing weakness that the English are “living like a nation of gentlemen without the means of gentlemen on the national scale” (194). The writer’s mimic attitude turns into the undermining condition of his stable identity. In England, some intellectuals go against the Welfare State, blaming it for creating discontent, political frustration, and economic anxiety. The worst part of this state is that “it is so drab” (218). The writer even worries about his book falling into the hand of argumentation. He defends himself that “the fault is not wholly mine, a part of it is in the subject” (218). He thinks of himself as “a class of Englishman” (16) for the lack of originality. But Englishmen are resentful of and even sneers this type of Indians, as the writer exposes the innate character of the English through the fictitious character Jone Bull. Though he does not face the notorious stand-offish behavior, as an observant, he espies the subtle presence of this pompous English. Those Indians who suffer this attitude become anti-literary sentiment, and they fail to enjoy the English way of life. To the writer, they are misfits who nurse grievances against the country. Here the writer points to the paradoxical view of Indians who come to England in search of material gaining or training. But the writer wishes to be manservant of English than to be a master of Indians. This sentiment is regarded as a mimic attitude, but he clarifies this type of mentality because he can do so by feeling ties with England in mind. It is a reality that England is in the heart of all Indians. The writer assumes that those Englishmen who try to break this tie are the loser of the Indian Empire. The Indians who permit the English to do so become the “bored or querulous” (16) visitor of England.

Mimicry, not a fixed, final, and fundamental identity is an ambivalence phenomenon, as Bhabha says. The colonizer and the colonized have no absolute and real character. But it is the undermining condition of the colonizers’ stable status. The writer in the travelogue displays the complex responses and the simple attractions colonized people feel towards the British Empire. The writer depicts himself as an ‘Angophile.’ As a writer, he is overwhelmed with British culture. He negates the theory of defining the orient from the occident’s point of view. So, in the context of the Bengal Renaissance to create a synthesis of East and West, he, in the travelogue, tries to bridge the gap to some extent.

The result of imitation is a menace. In the 19th century, the advanced thinkers of England see the “civilization with soap, as the symbol of cleanliness” (165). But this makes them less confident, which creates “crushing forms of vulgarity” (165). It is a visible symbol of attaching with civilization in England how many shops and people deal with antiques, old books, and second-hand furniture. It is seen in reality that the shops are busy with satisfying all kinds of people for material gain. In the whole book, Fallowell (1991) says that “the book also conveyed the character of its author: affable, lively, a cultural enthusiast, an intellectual, principled, combative, dogmatic, with a streak of fastidious eccentricity, but always immensely interesting.”

Therefore, the English people only deal with the present “here and now” (226). They become thoughtless not only for the future but also for their adverse condition. Their heroic activity involves in their work and amusement without having any feelings for them. To them, “an irritation and moodiness” (226) are significant. The writer’s experience is like Wordsworth’s theory; emotion comes after when we recollect any happening. He is excited about his happiness during his living in England and his behavior also becomes as like English behavior with genuine affection. It shows a kind of joy “flowing out of very much deeper springs” (229). This conflict turns to reconciliation on Chaudhuri’s
travelogue. Guha (2009) thinks of the travelogue, which gives a clear view of Indo-British issues. He also (2009) explores that Chaudhuri is the best example of hybridization for adopting some aspects on both sides of the colonial domain. He again says that “hybridized personalities like him were both suppliants and threats, rolled into one, for the project of colonialism.” Niven (n.d.) admits that the travelogue explores not only the tolerable inheritance of empire but also his broadness of heart.

V. Conclusion

Ambivalence leads to hybridization that is true, but this hybridization forms not only mimicry but diasporic attitude also. Diaspora helps to integrate into a new way of life to make life refined. Though Chaudhuri, in his travelogue, makes his stable identity flexible and shows his mimic attitude somewhat for his anglophiles’ perspective, he shows that adopting real, and good can refine anybody’s life. The proper integration of another culture can erase the limitations of one’s lifestyle. So, Chaudhuri, by showing boundaries of his country’s way of life and by depicting the attractive pattern of the English’s life, paves the way to upgrade himself, not to distort his identity but to attain a diasporic attitude. He again exposes the alarming pattern of English life and the generous behavior and humanity of Indians which confirms his ability to accept reality. Moreover, the relation based on culture, politics becomes a matter of anxiety, turning all relationships into catastrophe, whether it is political and personal, as Forster explores in his novel. But the real feeling and understanding from the heart can pave a way to mitigate this anxiety and catastrophe for harmonious living, as Aziz and Fielding do in this novel.

Références