



Reinterpreting Imperial-Oriental and Liberal Issues in E.M. Forster's A Passage to India: A Marxist Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The current research article highlighted the imperial-oriental and liberal issues included in E. M. Forster's A Passage to India that was considered as one of the colonial discourses. Forster criticizes properly the British imperialism according to the book incidents. To explore the above issues critically, the researcher focused on the concept of hegemony as one of the major arguments of the Marxist approach. This concept was first articulated by the prominent Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci who divided it into two forms namely coercive hegemony and the consent one. In this regard, it is seen that the imperial values were represented by coercive hegemony, while the oriental discussions were represented the consent hegemony. Based on the book events, the British seen themselves as superior while the native Indians are inferior, and this classification comes under the consent hegemony according to the Gramsci's allegations. This research work aimed to reinterpret the imperial-oriental and liberal issues embodied in Forster's book, A Passage to India in the light of the Marxist perspective.

Keywords: Imperialism, orientalism, colonialism, hegemony, liberalism, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Marxist critical approach is considered as one of the major critical theories which has a large influence on the current literary and cultural studies that most of the literary articulations included. Forster as a socio-political well-known writer embodied a lot of the socio-political issues of the English Edwardian era. This period was accompanied with the emergence of most literary schools of thought, one is the Marxism. In this research paper, the researcher investigates the political ideological issues included in Forster's *A Passage to India*. One of the basic arguments of the Marxist approach is hegemony. This term has been evolved by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci and divided according to him into two main forms namely the coercive hegemony and the consent hegemony. According to the novel's incidents, it is observed that the conflict among the story's characters stand for both the east (India), and the west (England). These incidents had taken place in Chandrapore (India) during the colonial period.

In this context, Forster portrayed the Indian situation wholly taking into consideration the social, political, cultural, intellectual, geographical, religious and psychological parameters. The conflict that created among the book's characters indicate the critique of imperial-colonial practices performed by the British rulers of the Indian colony represented by Ronny who applied both hegemonies while Mr. Fielding represents the consent hegemony and this illustrated with his good relationship with Aziz. Ronny ruled India using violent instruments such as trials, persecution, oppression, bigotry, racism, murdering, assassination and physical and psychological torture which are considered as forms of coercive hegemony. On the other hand, Mr. Fielding the moderate English character represents the oriental values that aims to enhance the predominated norms using soft and flexible tools such as culture, language, fashion, demographical changes, and lifestyle which are counted as primary features of the consent hegemony. While Aziz the Indian political figure who adopts the attitudes of resistance revolution, liberty, and opposition represents the values of liberalism against the British imperialism. In brief, the researcher explores the issues of imperialism, colonialism, orientalism, and liberalism in the course of the book's incidents, themes, setting and characters in the light of the Marxist perspective.

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