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**MA Thesis**

**THE ORPHANS OF THE EMPIRE IN FORSTER'S *A PASSAGE TO INDIA*  
AND ORWELL'S *BURMESE DAYS***

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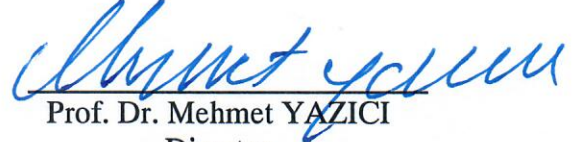
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Sibel ERSAN', written in a cursive style.

## ABSTRACT

### THE ORPHANS OF THE EMPIRE IN FORSTER'S *A PASSAGE TO INDIA* AND ORWELL'S *BURMESE DAYS*

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This thesis aims to scrutinize the psychological impacts of British imperialism on both the colonizer and the colonized by referring to the two major characters, Dr. Aziz and John Flory that are the colonial subjects in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) and George Orwell's *Burmese Days* (1934) respectively. Despite starting as the obedient subjects of their mother country, they become other(s) and end up as displaced figures in their society. In fact, they both go through a process of identity formation that is analogous with Lacan's stages of psychological development. By experiencing the imaginary, the symbolic and the real orders, they attempt to make sense of their true self and endeavor to gain free subjectivity under the restrictive laws of the British Empire. At this point, the study will also benefit from the invaluable insights of the postcolonial critics such as Said and Bhabha, since as a school of criticism, postcolonialism is very much concerned with the identity problem of the colonial subjects. The first chapter of the thesis is devoted to the colonized figure, Dr. Aziz and his story of psychological development. The second chapter, on the other hand, deals with the colonizer figure, John Flory who experiences a similar process of personality formation. Finally, the conclusion of the thesis will demonstrate that both



works lampoon British imperialism and its expansionist policies through these characters and reveal the indispensable and destructive impacts of this economic project on individuals' process of becoming free subjects.

**Keywords:** George Orwell, *Burmese Days*, E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India*, Colonialism, Lacan



## ÖZ

### FORSTER'IN *HİNDİSTAN'A BİR GEÇİT* VE ORWELL'İN *BURMA GÜNLERİ* ADLI ROMANLARINDA İMPARATORLUĞUN ÖKSÜZLERİ

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Bu tez E. M. Forster'ın *Hindistan'a Bir Geçit* (1924) ve George Orwell'ın *Burma Günleri* (1934) adlı romanlarındaki sömürge dönemi bireyleri olan iki ana karaktere, Dr. Aziz ve Flory'ye değinerek, İngiliz emperyalizminin hem sömüren hem de sömürülen üzerindeki psikolojik etkilerini incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Anavatanları İngiliz İmparatorluğunun itaatkâr tebaaları olarak başlamasına rağmen, bu bireylerin hayatları toplumlarında ötekileşip dışlanan insanlar olarak nihayete erer. Aslında, her ikisi de Lakan'ın psikolojik gelişim evreleriyle benzer bir kimlik oluşumu sürecinden geçerler. Sırasıyla imgesel, sembolik ve gerçek evrelerini deneyimleyerek İngiliz İmparatorluğu'nun sınırlayıcı yasaları altında kendi gerçek benliklerini anlamlandırmaya ve özgür bireyselliklerini kazanmaya çalışırlar. Bu bağlamda çalışma, bir edebi eleştiri teorisi olarak, sömürgecilik sonrası eleştiri sömürge dönemi bireylerinin kimlik sorunu ile yakından ilişkili olduğundan, Said ve Bhabha gibi sömürgecilik sonrası eleştirmenlerinin değerli görüşlerinden de faydalanacaktır. Tezin ilk bölümü sömürülen birey Dr. Aziz ve onun psikolojik gelişiminin hikâyesine ithaf

edilmiştir. Öte yandan, ikinci bölüm benzer bir kişilik oluşumu deneyimleyen, sömüren birey John Flory'yi ele alır. Son olarak, tezin sonuç bölümü her iki eserin İngiliz emperyalizmini ve yayılmacı politikalarını hicvettiğini gösterecektir ve bu ekonomi projesinin özgür bireyler olma süreci üzerindeki kaçınılmaz ve yıkıcı etkilerini ortaya çıkaracaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** George Orwell, *Burma Günleri*, E.M. Forster, *Hindistan'a Bir Geçit*, Sömürgecilik, Lakan



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

E.M. Foster's *A Passage to India* (1924) and George Orwell's *Burmese Days* (1934) depict the life in the British colonies of India and Burma respectively. In fact, these works chronicle how British imperialism changed both the colonizers and the natives of these exploited lands. Coming from different cultures, the British people and the natives try to survive under the rules of the colony. However, as time goes by, they confront their racial, social and cultural differences, which provoke tensions between the two parties. Therefore, before concentrating on the characters and their personality development, understanding the time period in which these novels were written will be helpful to comprehend these works as they both focus on the British imperial project which sprang up and grew strong within this timeline.

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution in Britain between the 1760s and 1840s, there emerged a transition to a new economic phase, which triggered a large-scale manufacture. As a result, new social classes came into being (Chapman 24). The rise of the bourgeoisie is part of the emergence and growth of this economic transformation as during this period markets grew dramatically. Contrary to the values of the aristocracy that required the British people to have a noble name and inheritance in order to be wealthy, this new social class valued hard work and proved that it was possible to have a say in the economy of the country by this way (Gill 21). This class possessed the wealth and the capital, which was necessary for the economic expansion of Great Britain. "By exercising authority in a manner that exemplified selfless dedication to duty, these gentlemen were able to justify their continued right to rule, while also defending property and privilege. They were often active in the community and offered leadership" (Cain and Hopkins 33-4). The aristocracy or the landed gentry

used to be placed at the top of the social, financial and cultural life in Britain; however, with this new class structure, the bourgeoisie not only held the power and the wealth but also dominated the social, political, and cultural influences on the country.

The bourgeoisie were generally factory owners, traders, investors and entrepreneurs who initiated and contributed to the outbreak of British colonialism in the overseas countries. As a new stratum of the rising capitalist system, this class set up a distinctive character in the free market economy. The more the economy grew, the more working people and mass material became essential to sustain this expansion. As Great Britain was the pioneering country of this paradigmatic shift, it was also the most affected one by it. The empire dealt with the problem of finding new markets and decided to keep its machines working at all costs. Since the Dutch and the Portuguese were posing a risk for the British settlements in India, the British should have rushed to act (Basset 3). Considering the previously gained market capitulations in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century which let Great Britain trade freely in India during the reign of King James I, the foundation of the East India Company, which is a British overseas trading company in the West Indies, became inevitable (Barber 498). The company not only provided financial profits to the British gentry and landowners who were stockholders and invested in it, but it also started to impose a set of virtues and obedience with an aim to legitimize its rules (Claeys 21). To gain political and financial dominance, the company took the subcontinent under its control in 1757, and this was going to continue for another century until the outbreak of a widespread and great rebellion, which is also called “The Great Mutiny of 1857” (Williams 63).

As soon as the British Empire suppressed the rebellion with violent force, it dissolved the dominance of the Company in India, and started to administer India under the name of British Raj. A new era began for colonial India with the first-hand governance of the “mother country”. After 1857, the Empire commenced a series of reforms in the country. In fact, “the basic plan was to keep the imperial machinery turning to maintain *the status quo*. As a result of British colonial institutions, most importantly schools, churches and government, an educated, indigenous middle class emerged” (Harris 6). This educated class in India assumed the British Empire as a motherland since “notions of racial and ethnic superiority” (4) were successfully imposed on these people. The justification of the British rule in India was the

“superiority” of England as a civilization and “the Empire came to be seen through its own eyes as serving a humanitarian as well as a strategic and economic purpose” (5). The dominance of two-thirds of India continued until the Indian Independence Movement (1947), which stemmed from the annoyances of the Indians about the unfair acts of the British rule mainly in administration, jurisdiction, military, and employment.

Accordingly, in *A Passage to India*, the plot echoes the late periods of the British Raj and the approaching Indian Independence. The protagonist Dr. Aziz experiences the hardships of living in the British India. He and his friends Mahmood Ali, and Hamidullah constantly question their relationships with the British. These Indian men contemplate on the possibility of friendship with an Englishman. They all agree that such a friendship is only possible out of India due to the social and political influences of the imperialist project. Dr. Aziz thinks about the reasons why the British despise his people. In his work *Orientalism*, Said defines the underlying reason of these attitudes as the purposeful undervaluing of the subordinated, which is at the basis of Orientalism. He says:

Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”). This vision in a sense created and then served the two worlds thus conceived. Orientals lived in their world, “we” lived in ours. The vision and material reality propped each other up, kept each other going. A certain freedom of intercourse was always the Westerner’s privilege; because his was the stronger culture, he could penetrate, he could wrestle with, he could give shape and meaning to the great Asiatic mystery (Said 43-4).

Just as Said expresses, the two worlds create their own political and sociocultural dynamics. The West dominates the power relations, and the social life accordingly. At first, such power relations in India do not present any problems for Dr. Aziz. In fact, he likes to be under the sovereignty of the British Empire, and feels as if he is not different from any other British citizen. Until he experiences a cultural clash with the British people after the expedition to the Marabar Caves, he does not realize that he is an *other* in his homeland. In fact, the mother country does not accept him. From a submissive native, he transforms into an outspoken and rebellious hero for his



compatriots. This personal metamorphosis stems from a cultural conflict, which causes him to question his place in his society. The expedition he organizes for the two British ladies, Adela Quested (the fiancée of the British administrator Ronny Heaslop) and Mrs. Moore (Mr. Heaslop's mother) becomes a turning point in his life and triggers his psychological enlightenment. Having been arrested with the allegation of assaulting an English lady at the Caves, he realizes that his testimony does not mean anything as he is not an equal of a British citizen. Being judged by the British court under the title of a "subordinate" also provokes him to question his real self. He comes to understand that the mother country he embraces does not adopt him as an equal citizen within the laws.

*Burmese Days*, in the same way, portrays the unequal relationships between the British residents and the Burmese people in the colony. Burma came into existence as a pagan empire during the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and underwent a lot of changes throughout history. Just like India, it was under the dominance of different principal powers, dynasties and empires until it gained its independence in 1948. The country used to be called "the land of Gold" by the Indians in the 7<sup>th</sup> century since it was rich in resources: oil and gas, copper, tin, silver, tungsten, and other minerals, as well as precious stones, such as sapphires, emeralds, rubies, and jade. Its tropical rain forests had rare timbers such as teak, rosewood, and padauk (O'Brien 117). In the year 1886, it became a province of the British rule, and the monarchy brought about significant changes in the society, religion, and administration there. Burmese people tried to resist the British until 1890; however, the British systematically destroyed the villages, and appointed new officials to stop their weak resistance. With the opening of the Suez Canal, Burmese agriculture became the main source of profit for the British trade. As the Burmese economy grew, Anglo-Burmese people and companies became wealthy and powerful. The local people were mainly excluded from civil and military services, which were mostly employed by the Anglo-Burmese. The Burmese and their land were seen as "an actual British possession," (Said 169) and the executive power had to be in the hands of the superior. Although the country developed, the Burmese were largely impoverished and could not receive their share under the British rule. Apparently, the real motive behind the imperial rule in Burma was to find "free and unrestricted access to interior producing regions without interference by indigenous rulers or rival European powers" (Dumett 14). This meant the Anglo-Burmese

domination in the country, which resulted in strong dissatisfaction among the local people.

In this dissertation, I have chosen one character from each novel and analyzed them through their relations to the colonized and colonizer characters. In the first chapter, I will analyze Dr. Aziz from *A Passage to India* as a colonized figure who initially admires and obeys the British administration, yet develops into an Indian nationalist standing against the British colonialism. The novel presents his self-discovery and reinforcement of his bonds with his Indian roots simultaneously. The conflicts he experiences with the British people in his motherland becomes a turning point in his life and leads to a kind of identity crisis that helps him redefine his subjectivity. He does notice that he feels neither Indian nor British: coming from Indian and Muslim origins and despite having attached himself more to British culture, he is the discarded figure of his mother country, the Great Britain. After his confrontation with the fact that he is the *other* in India, Dr. Aziz assumes a different identity in his society and this process of his self-discovery and subjectivity relates to Lacan's tripartite model of the psyche.

In Lacan's psychic development model, an individual's ego formation starts with the imaginary order. During this stage, the child thinks that he is united with the mother as she meets all his needs. For the child, there is no difference between the subject and the object. There is a perfect wholeness in his imaginary world. Lacan names this stage as "the imaginary stage" since it constitutes "nothing other than the images of the human body, and the hominisation of the world, its perception in terms of images linked to the structuration of the body" (*Book I* 141). The perfect unity, however, is shattered in the "Mirror Stage", which also initiates the infant's ego-formation (*Ecrits* 78). During this stage, the child recognizes that he does not make up a wholeness with the mother, but with his own separate body. His confrontation with his own self-image causes an alienating effect on him. Lacan describes "the infant's identification with his specular image as the most significant model, as well as, the earliest moment, of the fundamentally alienating relationship in which man's being is dialectically constituted" (*Ecrits* 141). While he tries to identify with the new self, he is also challenged to understand the world outside of him. In fact, from now on, he becomes a fragmented self. He will never be able to turn back to the realm of the

imaginary, which gave him integrity. In other words, the child from then on will look for a unified self, “The Ideal I” that he sees in the mirror.

The symbolic order is the second phase in Lacan’s psychological development framework. Lacan calls this stage “the symbolic” since the language is a system of symbols, and the Law is imposed on the subject through this system of symbols. This phase encompasses the child’s facing “the Primordial Law” (*Book 7* 67), which is represented by the father. The child’s desire for the mother is prohibited by the authoritative power of the father. The father positions himself between the child and the mother in order to prohibit incest. This prohibition becomes the initial Law imposed on the human subject. In this respect, “the Father may be regarded as the original representative of the Law’s authority” (*Ecrits* 688). Representing the norms, laws, and the prohibitions of the society, the Name of the Father controls the child’s actions in society where the language predetermines his life, his relationships, and even his aspirations in life. As Lacan states “man thus speaks, but it is because the symbol has made him man” (*Ecrits* 229). In this stage, the child, not possessing the phallus, is a lacking subject. It is significant to scrutinize the phallus as a Lacanian term here. Unlike Freud, “Lacan generally prefers to use the term ‘phallus’ rather than ‘penis’ in order to emphasise the fact that what concerns psychoanalytic theory is not the male genital organ in its biological reality but the role that this organ plays in fantasy” (Dylan 143). This preference applies an abstract feature to the term. Lacan leaves the term phallus out of biological gender and rather than the real phallus, he elaborates on the imaginary and the symbolic phalluses. The imaginary phallus represents the image of the penis which centers upon the desire and lack dualism (*Book 3* 319). While the child wants to fulfill the mother’s desire for the phallus, he realizes that he lacks his father’s penis and will never be able to replace his father’s position. By acknowledging this lack, the child accepts the existence of the father and the castration. The symbolic phallus is the power and authority possessed by the “nom-du-père” (*Book 2* 259): the-Name-of-the-Father. In this regard, father’s name takes on a symbolic meaning. The father’s power, authority and prohibitions become symbolic of any authority in society. The castration will also have a symbolic sense. When the child, or later a subject does not obey the laws, he becomes aware that he is to be castrated through the restrictions of the law and other means of authority. In my analysis, I will mostly refer to this symbolic meaning of the phallus.

The real order is the third phase of Lacan's developmental periods. For Lacan, it is located beyond the symbolic as it is "the domain . . . which subsists outside symbolization" (*Ecrits* 324). It refers to a state of nature from which the Lacanian subject separates by getting involved with the language. Only once being an infant, the individual can be close to this state of nature, in which there is only need. A baby needs and wants to satisfy those needs without the awareness of any separation from the outer world or the world of others and itself. Therefore, Lacan regards this state of nature as a time of fullness or completeness that is later lost through grasping the language. Needs provoke the desire followed by a longing for satisfaction. Not being able to be articulated within the limits of the language and reality, the source of this desire can never be known. Lacan states that "The real, or what is perceived as such, is what resists symbolization absolutely" (*Book I* 66). However, the real shows its influence on both the symbolic and the imaginary in terms of the lack, desire, and satisfaction chain.

Dr. Aziz's personality formation in the colonial India corresponds to these three developmental phases of Lacan. During the imaginary phase, he enjoys being a part of the colonial India, which is loosely bound with the British Empire. This period refers to the time before he recognizes his self constituted as an *other* in his homeland. Although he is looked down on by the British administrators, he thinks that his native country and its people must be grateful to the mother country that provides official services and social improvements to them. He feels united with the Great British Empire. He thinks the British and the Indians can live together in peace. However, with his entrance into the colonial discourse, in this case the big Other, he realizes that he has no control over his life and the constructed reality about him. His expedition to the Marabar Caves in which "one can hear no sound but its own" (Forster 145) acts as a reverse Mirror Stage during which he stays in dark and perceives himself as a separate subject from the Empire for the very first time. His intimacy with Fielding (the schoolmaster of Chandrapore whom Dr. Aziz befriends), Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested (the only British ladies whose friendship Dr. Aziz values) constitutes his attachment to the mother country. However, being left alone with the echo of the Marabar Caves becomes a turning point in his life. Once deferred by them, he loses the so-called unity with his mother country forever.

In the symbolic phase, he is accused of assaulting Adela Quested and finds himself in the British court where he meets the Name of the Father. Not being allowed to express himself with his own words, Dr. Aziz meets the language of the Law which speaks for him instead. Having been silenced in the British court and labeled as a potential assaulter, he realizes that he has no chance of self-representation in such an ethnocentric institution. Not having a voice and therefore autonomy, he is imprisoned in the symbolic order where the reality is shaped within the filter of the colonial discourse and laws. The British administrators, Mr. Turton (the collector) and Mr. McBryde (the police superintendent) try to change the reality by imposing the colony's own reality. They think an Indian is always to blame in any case. This stage operates like an ontological enlightenment for Dr. Aziz. He starts to question his place in the society, and recognizes the prejudgments of the British people about him. However, with the support of his Indian friends, Dr. Aziz resists the authoritative power of the symbolic by taking action as a nationalist calling his compatriots to get away from the bondages of the British Empire. As a result of the disobedience to the empire, he ends up with an exile. This punishment corresponds to the Lacanian castration. Since Dr. Aziz does not possess the symbolic phallus in the colony, he cannot rebel against the authority of the symbolic father. As a subaltern, he is weak in the system. To top it off, he attempts to revolt against the colonial power. However, there is no remedy for the castration. If the subject does not comply with the symbolic father and his authority, he is to be castrated.

Lastly, the real phase of Dr. Aziz refers to the life experiences he has gained after the Marabar Case. His confrontation with the British ethnocentrism -which he was previously unaware of – paves the way for his free subjectivity. In fact, he goes through many obstacles to reach his reality. Aziz's situation is ironical in that as Lacan suggests the real "is always in its place: it carries it glued to its heel, ignorant of what might exile it from there" (*Book II* 49). However, Dr. Aziz suffers for a long time and then can catch only a glimpse of this valuable recognition. The recognition that his real motherland is India and he must find ways to get away from the bondages of the alien symbolic order established by the British people.

Having been absolved in the court, he transforms into another personality. He becomes a more outspoken, stubborn and bold man compared to the previous man who unquestioningly valued the British nation and people. His “great victory” (Forster 217) in the court, becomes his new reality in his life that reshapes his character. Indians call him “our hero” (Forster 251) and Aziz thinks Adela must pay the heaviest bail to compensate for “the injury sustained [to his Indian] character” (Forster 235). She has to suffer, too. It is necessary here to relate the narrator’s evaluation about Dr. Aziz’s insistence on his bail since it is rather ironical. The narrator says, “we exist not in ourselves, but in terms of each other’s minds” (Forster 234). However, the new Aziz does not acknowledge to be signified by the Other in the colony. He wants to be free from the bondages of the empire. About the bail, he tells Fielding:

You think that by letting Miss Quested off easily I shall make a better reputation for myself and Indians generally. No, no. It will be put down to weakness and the attempt to gain promotion officially. I have decided to have nothing more to do with British India, as a matter of fact. I shall seek service in some Moslem state, such as Hyderabad, Bhopal, where Englishmen cannot insult me any more (Forster 237).

Subsequently, Dr. Aziz does not make Adela pay the bail. However, he does not hesitate to call for his revenge as apart from being a simple financial relief to Aziz, the bail is also a national issue for the Indians. He shouts to Fielding, “I want revenge on them. Why should I be insulted and suffer and the contents of my pockets read and my wife’s photograph taken to the police-station? Also I want the money – to educate my little boys” (Forster 246). His blunt remarks after his absolution demonstrate the personal metamorphosis he goes through since “he was good tempered and affectionate” (Forster 239) before his imprisonment. Yet, he becomes “a little formidable [as] imprisonment had made channels for his character, which would never fluctuate as widely now as in the past” (Forster 239).

In the second chapter, the character John Flory in *Burmese Days* will be my focus for the same reason as he is also a sufferer in the British colony. He also goes through similar phases of psychological development. In the imaginary order, he comes to Burma with a high opinion of the British Empire, and he is proud to be

British. He thinks he is favored in the colony as a British citizen of the mother country. When warned by Dr. Veraswami about the plots of U Po Kyin ( a local and corrupt magistrate in Kyauktada), he says “no one would believe anything against *me. Civis Romanus sum*. I’m an Englishman quite above suspicion” (Orwell 48). However, his case is no different from Dr. Aziz’s. His alienation from the mother country coincides with an English lady’s arrival to Burma. Encountering Elizabeth, loosely symbolizing the British Empire, denotes Flory’s mirror stage, causing him to have an introspective look on his identity and existence in the colony.

Lacan defines desire as “the essence of man” (*Book II* 107) and Elizabeth becomes Flory’s ultimate object of desire. By marrying an English lady coming from the mother country, he desires to be complete. “Her presence [changes] the whole orbit of his mind [bringing] him the air of England” (Orwell 156). Yet, having been rejected by her, Flory recognizes his lack in his object of desire, marking his first alienation from the British Empire. Elizabeth becomes his “want-to-be” (*Ecrits* 434) that reminds him of the inadequacy to be the desire of the mother country.

As a colonizer, what he encounters in Burma culturally and politically takes him to the realm of the symbolic. He notices that with its colonial rule, his country is ruining the culture of another country, and he has already become a part of this cultural and material exploitation. This recognition leads him to question his place and purpose in the colony. Not holding the same beliefs as the other British officers and the administrators in Burma, he comes to suffer from an in-betweenness. On the one hand, he acknowledges that he is British and must comply with the rules of the empire in Burma, and on the other hand, he is aware that the Burmese do not deserve to be exploited or mistreated. He personally sees that the truth he was stuck to before coming to Burma, that his country was doing good things in the colonized lands turns out to be a lie. Frustrated with his country, Flory starts to develop a hatred towards his nation. He no longer feels attached to the British Empire, and accordingly the British community in Burma. This sense of displacement that takes place specifically in Burma stimulates him to develop a new personality. He comes up with a surviving strategy that will force him to “live [his] real life in secret” (Orwell 70). By this way, he aims to live without the boundaries of the symbolic order.

Hiding his rebellious thoughts about the British imperialism becomes a burden for him since he cannot speak out the reality behind this project. Being an English citizen does not even suffice to marry the woman he loves, either. In Flory's mindset, not coming from the upper-class, he fails to keep up with "the ideals of English gentlemanliness" (Gopinath 203). As a camp worker in the colony, he recognizes that he is just a slave of the imperialism. This recognition marks his marginal existence in the colony. By constructing his own world with his books and humble life in the jungle, he tries to find a way out to the real order as he cannot stand being a signifier of the British colonialism.

Not being able to handle this identity crisis that he suffers from, he puts an end to his life by shooting himself with a pistol. With his suicide, he aims to place himself to the real order where the symbolic has no control over the subject. In this way, he rejects to be a part of the symbolic order. While he is "missing from the symbolic order, the real 'is always in its place'" (*Seminar 11* 49). In fact, with his death, Flory takes a rebellious stance against imperialism and its impositions on his subjectivity. However, he ends up being the orphan child of the colony.

For all these reasons, by revealing the psychologies of these two major characters, Dr. Aziz and Flory through Lacan's tripartite model of the psyche, the thesis will demonstrate the destructive influences of colonialism on both the colonizer and the colonized, and how these impacts lead to irreversible changes in the psyches of these characters. The thesis will also put emphasis on the underlying reasons for the inequalities in social relations, the racist attitudes of the British and the Indians towards each other, each character's submissiveness under the colonial rule, illustrate why these two characters start to feel like the "other" in the colonial society, and end up as the orphans of their mother country British Empire by breaking their bonds with it. Since their bond with the mother country is my main focus, I will mostly refer to Lacan. While doing so, referring to the post-colonial critics such as Bhabha, Said, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin will also be of great use since both post-colonial studies and psychoanalytic criticism substantially "focus on subjectivity and the agency of unconscious life by creating an opportunity for considering how the human subject is not self-contained, but is permeated by forces that it cannot necessarily understand or control" (Frosh 2).



In the first chapter, Dr. Aziz from *A Passage to India* will be examined through Lacan's the imaginary, the symbolic and the real orders by providing examples of the cultural conflicts that cause him to reform his self and of his experiences in the imperial India. In this chapter, I will also focus on the character's identity formation as a colonized figure, who initially devotes himself to the white man's culture, but upon realizing his otherness, turns back to his Indian roots and becomes a nationalist figure. In fact, colonialism is influential in his self-discovery since this economic project initially uses and later discards people regardless of their positions as colonizer or colonized.

Following these issues, in the second chapter, I will analyze the main character of *Burmese Days*, John Flory, and his life as a white man in colonial Burma. Just like Dr. Aziz in India, Flory also experiences a disillusionment about British imperialism. He is a typical Lacanian subject that tries to resist the Name of the Father, and later realizes that this resistance is futile. Starting as a submissive servant of the empire, he ends up questioning the British existence in Burma. My focus will be his displacement and search for his free subjectivity in the colonial Burma and his questioning of the empire's cultural and material exploitation in Burma as a British citizen, which also paves the way for his nihilism, and finally his suicide.

The conclusion of this dissertation will express that both the colonized, Dr. Aziz, and the colonizer, Flory, desiring to be a free subject, resist the imperial systems in India and Burma respectively. They both go through a psychological metamorphosis through which they become different men. Dr. Aziz develops from a humble native to an anti-British, and Flory starts as an obedient citizen of the British Empire but ends up becoming a hearty anti-imperialist. In the end, they are never the same people as they used to be in the past. They represent the Lacanian subjects that have no control over their life. As they cannot find a position to themselves in the symbolic order, they cannot survive in their societies. I will also mention that both works put a lot of emphasis on these two characters since they reveal the inner-structure of British colonialism and lampoon it through them, and their critical stance against it.

## CHAPTER 2

### FROM SUBORDINATION TO FREEDOM: DR. AZIZ'S STORY OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL METAMORPHOSIS AS THE "OTHER"

Imperialism exploits the riches of underdeveloped countries. However, there is more than that. Bringing its "club life, sports, gardens or bands or amusements, their associated etiquette and patterns of behavior" (Boehmer 66) to the exploited lands, the dominant culture implicitly and explicitly shapes the ideologies and the personalities of the natives in the colony. Similarly, in *A Passage to India*, the British in Chandrapore keep the order of the colony not only by their repressive forces (the military forces and the court) but also by distorting the psychologies of the natives.

The belief that the British people are superior to the Indians in terms of their economy, civilization, culture and political power leads to different psychological effects on both the colonizer and the colonized. For the former, it boosts their ego, and provokes them to act mercilessly. For the latter, it creates the "othering" process that makes them feel subordinated. As the racist characters in the novel such as Ronny Heaslop, Mr. Turton, and Mr. McBryde demonstrate the general attitude of the British towards the Indians at that time, it is significant to analyze their standpoints before dealing with Dr. Aziz's identity formation.

Considering themselves as the representatives of a "superior civilization to non-European peoples" (Thompson 16), these characters do not demonstrate any acceptance of either Indians or their culture, and they act arrogantly most of the time. This idealized self-image that the colonizers try to create help them justify the exploitation of the indigenous land. Karen Horney defines this creation of idealized self-image as a common experience transmitted from the environment to the individual. Horney says,

Each person builds up his personal idealized image from the materials of his own special experiences, his earlier fantasies, his particular needs, and also his given faculties. If it were not for the personal character of the image, he would not attain a feeling of identity and unity. He idealizes, to begin with, his particular "solution" of his basic conflict: compliance becomes goodness, love, saintliness; aggressiveness becomes strength, leadership, heroism, omnipotence; aloofness becomes wisdom, self-sufficiency, independence (22).

Accordingly, the British colonizers in the novel have this idealized image of their empire. By attaching superiority to their nation and empire, they feel united and secure. The racist and ethnocentric ideas of Ronny, the Turtons, the Callendars, and McBryde are all the outcomes of this idealized self-image. When they come together, they boast of their country's accomplishments in India, talk about the cultural inferiority of the Indians and their need for the British administration. However, they are not aware that with these attitudes, they cause the colonized persona to question his sense of belonging and identity under the colonial rule. Dr. Aziz is this colonized who suffers from the labelling of the colonizers and their discriminative attitudes. These people in Chandrapore contribute to Dr. Aziz's psychological transformation in India.

To start with, the city magistrate of Chandrapore, Ronny Heaslop is an example of a British man who has this idealized self-image. He attaches a lot of importance to his nation and does not hesitate to utter his racist thoughts about the natives. He is harsh against them, especially against Dr. Aziz. Hearing that his mother Mrs. Moore had a conversation with an Indian (Dr. Aziz) in a mosque, he loses his temper and says, "You oughtn't to have answered" (Forster 27) his questions. When his mother says that he asked her to remove her shoes in the mosque, he loses his temper, and says, "He called to you over your shoes. Then it was impudence. It's an old trick. I wish you had had them on" (Forster 27). Because of his bias against the natives, he starts to hate Dr. Aziz even before he meets him. During their first conversation, Aziz lightheartedly says that he does not like the Callendars much, and Ronny does want to report this trivial remark to the Major. He tells his mother, "If the Major heard I was disliked by any native subordinate of mine, I should expect him to pass it on to me" (Forster 29). He takes this trivial remark as a threat to their authority in the colony. In fact, this attitude towards the natives is the outcome of the mindset that the British need to stand in their own group, and should never communicate with the Indians. As a government

official in colonial India, he must also stick to this unwritten rule. When his mother Mrs. Moore says, “The English are out here to be pleasant” (Forster 46), he reacts, “We’re not pleasant in India, and we don’t intend to be pleasant. We’ve something more important to do” (Forster 45). For him, even addressing a subordinate in a conversation is unacceptable.

By defending the ideology of imperialism, Ronny tries to legitimize his position in India. In this respect, he represents the typical colonizer, “who accepts his role, tries in vain to adjust his life to [t]his ideology” (Memmi 89). His adoption of the colonial mentality that the locals are their inferiors, and they need the British people to rule themselves causes him to suppress his humane feelings and become a harsh administrator. That he chooses to spend his free time in the Chandrapore Club, where Anglo-Indians come together and do not let the Indians get in is a sign of his preference to stay away from the Indians. He says, “I prefer my smoke at the Club amongst my own sort” (Forster 25).

In his book *Orientalism*, Said refers to this attitude of the colonizers, and says that being a colonizer means “speaking in a certain way, behaving according to a code of regulations, and even feeling certain things and not others” (227). In fact, this code of conduct forces Ronny to discriminate against the Indians. The British people, in his mindset, are the ones to rule the Indians as they do not have the capacity for self-administration. When Mrs. Moore criticizes other government officials’ and his son’s rude manners towards the Indians, Ronny defends himself saying, “India likes gods and Englishmen like posing as gods” (Forster 45). In his mindset, the British people have the ultimate authority like god has and the Indians are to be ruled by them.

As one of the official representatives of the imperial rule in India, the Collector Mr. Turton also holds similar opinions about the Indians. Similar to Ronny’s words about English men, the narrator states that “the Turtons were little gods” (Forster 25) in Chandrapore. Adela Quested’s arrival to Chandrapore as a young British lady imposes him to organize some entertaining activities. By suggesting throwing a Bridge Party, which he considers a “party to bridge the gulf between East and West” (25), he wants to please the new guest and “to give [Adela] good time” (25). However, she does not seem to be pleased. She insists and says, “I only want to meet those Indians whom you come across socially—as your friends” (25). Having laughed at this remark,

Mr. Turton answers, “Well, we don’t come across them socially” (Forster 25). He implies that the British people do not prefer to be in company with the Indians. When Dr. Aziz is arrested for assaulting Adela in the Marabar Caves, he is the one who does not hesitate to blame him even if not having any evidence in his hand. The collector defines the event as “the worst thing in [his] whole career” (Forster 152). To him, the two cultures are not to interact socially since it will bring nothing but trouble. He summarizes the situation as:

. . . and during those twenty-five years I have never known anything but disaster result when English people and Indians attempt to be intimate socially. Intercourse, yes. Courtesy by all means. Intimacy – never, never. The whole weight of my authority is against it. I have been in charge at Chandrapore for six years, and if everything has gone smoothly, if there has been mutual respect and esteem, it is because both peoples kept to this simple rule. Newcomers set our traditions aside, and in an instant what you see happens, the work of years is undone, and the good name of my District ruined for a generation. (Forster 153-4)

To him, an Indian subject of the empire cannot hold personal relations with their superiors. The same rule applies to the British people. They are not to mingle with the natives. Instead, they must stand with their compatriots. In fact, this “communal attitude seems to be what affirms English society among the Indians, since the English see themselves in minority; they continually have to reaffirm their superiority within their group. Due to peculiar situation, a psychological factor has been mixed with physical. This is the root cause of not mixing or interacting with other communities (Indians)” (Yousafzai and Qabil 88). Staying away from the natives becomes the main rule to establish authority in the colony.

Similarly, his wife Mrs. Turton explicitly states his abhorrence of the Indians. During the Bridge Party, she warns Adela Quested of the Indians saying, “You are superior to them, anyway. Don’t forget that. You’re superior to everyone in India except one or two of the ranis, and they’re on an equality” (Forster 38). Mrs. Turton does not show any inclination to speak to them. The narrator relates that she “had learned the lingo, but only to speak to her servants, so she knew none of the politer forms, and of the verbs only the imperative mood” (Forster 38). For her, the Indians

are not even humans “to be spoken to”. Instead, “they ought to be spat at [and] to be ground into the dust” (Forster 204). She makes overgeneralizations about the Indians’ religion, too. She says, “Mohammedans always insist on their full four” (Forster 143), and implies that Dr. Aziz can be considered as a lustful man just because of his faith.

The attitudes of these government officials reflect the colonial ideology and the atmosphere in which Dr. Aziz has to survive. These administrators obey the rules of colonialism, and do not allow the natives to be on equal terms with the colonizers. In his work, *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha (2004) draws upon the mentality of the colonizers and their separatist attitude by stating that

the objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction. Despite the play of power within colonial discourse and the shifting positionalities of its subjects (for example effects of class, gender, ideology, different social formations, varied systems of colonization and so on), I am referring to a form of governmentality that in marking out a “subject nation”, appropriates, directs and dominates its various spheres of activity (101).

As Bhabha states, the colonizers control the colonial society and the social life in it with the help of the colonial discourse that functions as an instrument of power. By creating binary oppositions as regard to the colonized, colonial discourse causes the colonial subject to feel inferior to the colonizer.

Another character full of such prejudice and intolerance towards the natives is the superintendent of the city of Chandrapore, Mr. McBryde. Much as he is a learned and knowledgeable government official, on the Marabar issue, he surprisingly comes to the conclusion that a native is a potential offender just because he is a native. He immediately accuses Dr. Aziz of assaulting Adela Quested. While Dr. Aziz finds himself abandoned and defenseless in the police station and weeping, the narrator accounts the superintendent’s psychological state of mind by presenting his basic theory about the natives. Mr. McBryde talks about a theory that he came up with during his years in the colonies. According to Mr. McBryde “All unfortunate natives are criminals at heart, for the simple reason that they live south latitude 30. They are not

to blame, they have not a dog's chance- we should be like them if we settled here” (Forster 156). To him, an Indian man has always the potential to attack a British lady. The same mentality works for Dr. Aziz. Mr. McBryde cannot think the opposite. Dr. Aziz must have assaulted Adela Quested in the Marabar Caves and must be punished. His thoughts about the natives do not change even though Fielding, a British citizen insists that Dr. Aziz cannot have made such a mistake since he is a trustworthy native with a good reputation in the city. Mr. McBryde, however, links the Marabar Caves experience to the lust of the native man towards a white woman. By exalting the British culture, justifying their presence in India and his official duty and years of experience he has had in the colony, Mr. McBryde disguises his racist attitudes towards the Indians.

In fact, Dr. Aziz's search for his self-identity is triggered by these people's racist attitudes and actions as he is consciously or unconsciously affected by the colonizer. The insults on him and the discriminative remarks he hears every day gradually change his real self-image. The colonial discourse creates another identity for him, and it imposes this new identity on him. As Said states, “the construction of identity . . . involves the construction of opposites and ‘others’ whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from ‘us’. Each age and society recreates its ‘Others’ ” (332). Although this process of othering sounds very natural, it does change the colonial subject both ideologically and psychologically.

Dr. Aziz's story, in this regard, presents a psychological bildungsroman in the text. His story encapsulates the transformation of a very humble and obedient subaltern to a much hearty Indian nationalist. Initially, he is aware of the fact that he is a subaltern, and he has to be submissive towards the colonial rule and its impositions. As time goes by, he experiences an awakening that proves his “otherness” under the rule of the “mother” country. Questioning his real identity and sense of belonging in India, he rejects his obedience to the British rule. Although these processes take a considerable amount of time, they subsequently empower his celebration of his race and nation. He discovers that an unjust case of assaulting a British lady against him can make his own people start an insurrection against the British people. For the very first time since he was arrested, he feels so powerful to ignite the flame of nationalism

in the hearts of his compatriots. The Marabar case, ruining the name and career of Dr. Aziz, in this sense, becomes a national matter and unifies all the subaltern living under the reign of the British Raj. They feel that change is possible, and it is in the hands of the Indians. The unjust actions and prejudiced ideas of the British people can possibly come to a halt. All these thoughts invoking numerous questions in Aziz's mind trigger a search for his real identity. Thinking as an individual for the first time, he aspires to learn who he really is, and which culture he must feel attached to as a subject. The disillusionment he experiences through the Marabar case makes him learn that the British people, whom he once heartily confided in can easily discard him with a false accusation. He also realizes that his testimony as a subaltern has no value in his home country that is ruled by the colonizers. Even an allegation can be enough for them to imprison him. However, from now on, for the British people, he poses a risk against the colonial authority. For the Indians, he becomes a black hero that can change the fate of the subaltern under the British rule. Therefore, he is in between. His psychological transformation starting with this dilemma corresponds to Lacan's imaginary, symbolic and real orders of psychological development.

Just like the baby in Lacan's imaginary stage, Dr. Aziz appears as the happy child of the mother country. His story as the "other" starts with his appreciation and confidence in his mother country. It is essential to define the term "mother country" here. In the colonial discourse, "the mother country" stems from the idea that "all subjects of the Crown [are] equal in its eyes and that it remain[s] the center to which all members of the empire [will] be drawn" (Kumar 320). Feeling attached to his mother country, Aziz does not seem to be discontent with the British presence in India. In their first encounter, when he accompanies Mrs. Moore to the Club, she intends to invite him. He simply says, "Indians are not allowed into the Chandrapore Club even as guests" (Forster 20). He accepts the boundaries that are drawn by the British people. Although he gossips about the British ladies' unkind attitudes, the narrator emphasizes that he is quite happy in India: "He did not expatiate on his wrongs now, being happy. As he strolled downhill beneath the lovely moon, and again saw the lovely mosque, he seemed to own the land as anyone owned it. What did it matter if a few flabby Hindus preceded him there, and a few chilly English succeeded?" (Forster 20).



Aziz accepts the fact that English people dominate his country. However, this does not seem to discomfort him a lot. He enjoys the company of both his Indian and British friends. For the time being, he is indifferent to any nationalistic ideas that can alienate him from the British people. Aziz often recites poems in Persian, Urdu and Arabic, which delights both Aziz and the other Indians in his uncle Hamidullah's house. With the words they hear, they get to feel unified as a nation. In addition, they think that India keeps its wholeness as a country even if it is administered by the British. The narrator expresses that Aziz and his friends are aware of the British existence in their country; however, they believe in the oneness of India:

It never bored them to hear words, words; they breathed them with the cool night air, never stopping to analyse; the name of the poet, Hafiz, Hali, Iqbal, was sufficient guarantee. India –a hundred Indias- whispered outside beneath the indifferent moon, but for the time India seemed one and their own, and they regained their departed greatness by hearing its departure lamented, they felt young again because reminded that youth must fly (Forster 13).

As a subaltern in India, Aziz supposes that India still constitutes its wholeness as a colonized land. He also identifies himself with the British people. However, he is not aware of the fact that this is nothing but an illusion. This rather ironical presumption of Aziz proves to be groundless as time passes. He is content with his current situation until he starts seeing himself from the eyes of the colonizers.

For Lacan, the imaginary order is nothing but an illusion as “on the imaginary level, the objects only ever appear to man within relations which fade. He recognizes his unity in them.” (*Book 2* 169) However, this unity is certain to be broken. This is the initial stage where the individual stands before seeing his real identity. In other words, “the imaginary is the realm where intersubjective structures are covered by mirroring.” (Gallop 59) Aziz lives this imaginary atmosphere before his identity crisis starts. As for Lacan, the way to understand one's self as a separate entity continues in a process, the notion of one's self as a whole is destined to break at some time in this process. Dr. Aziz is no exception. Until he personally confronts with the language and the laws of imperialism, he does not question his identity as a subaltern.

In the imaginary order, as the baby starts to grow, the mirror stage comes in. In this stage, the baby stares at a mirror and sees himself as an independent persona from the mother. He is still in the custody of his mother but gets to know himself as a separate being from her for the first time. Lacan identifies this stage as a bridge from the perfect wholeness to fragmented self:

This jubilant assumption of his peculiar image by the child at *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the I is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject (Ecrits Sel. 3).

Before the child gets in touch with the society in real terms, he sees *the ideal I* in the mirror. Still in need of the mother, he learns that the world is not made up of only the mother, but lots of images and bodies. He gradually starts to identify himself as a subject other than the mother. Lacan asserts that after learning and speaking a language, a set of rules are dictated by the symbolic order, and this sense of wholeness is never experienced again. Once the child starts to realize himself as a separate entity and socialize with the others around him, the bonds between the mother and the baby is broken. The separation from the mother's body stands for the first realization of the self. Since the perfect wholeness of the identity is impossible to reach, Dr. Aziz, in this respect, lives in an illusionary space. As an individual, he gets to know about this separation when he interferes with the British people socially and its impositions on him as a colonial subject. For Dr. Aziz, this sense of separation from the mother country breaks the illusion of a possible social integration with the British people.

The mirror stage for Dr. Aziz coincides with the Marabar caves expedition. Before this expedition, he admires the British people and tries to be in contact with them. When he visits Fielding, the schoolmaster of the government college, in his house for the first time, he acts intimately. He even confesses that he wished Fielding got sick so that he could meet him. During an unofficial conversation, he says, "The fact is I have long wanted to meet you. . . When I was greener here, I'll tell you what: I used to wish you to fall ill so that we could meet that way" (Forster 58). Seeing that Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested wish to learn about India, he immediately wants to show

them the country. He even feels ashamed that the Indian couple promising to show them around did not keep their promise. He says, “We are by nature a most informal people,” (Forster 62) and he himself invites the ladies to see the Marabar Caves. Although “his friends [think] him most unwise to mix himself up with English ladies” (Forster 119), Dr. Aziz feels so happy to organize a trip for them. He assumes both Mrs. Moore and Fielding are his real friends. Therefore, he feels as if he were equal with them on social terms. The narrator relates this intimacy with the feeling of possession: “It was only when Mrs. Moore or Fielding was near him that he saw further, and knew that it is more blessed to receive than to give. These two had strange and beautiful effects on him- they were his friends, his for ever, and he theirs for ever, he loved them so much that giving and receiving became one. He loved them even better than the Hamidullahs. . . .” (Forster 133).

His close friendship with Fielding also proves his strong bond with the British people. Dr. Aziz and Fielding are so intimate that despite being a British *sahib*, Fielding even pays a visit to see Dr. Aziz in person when he gets sick. Dr. Aziz does not hesitate to show Fielding his wife’s photograph, which is against his belief of *pardah*. He says he would even let him see her in person if she were alive. At the end of that day, Dr. Aziz’s feelings about Fielding show his attitude towards the British people. The narrator says,

. . . [T]hey were friends, brothers. That part was settled, their compact had been subscribed by the photograph, they trusted one another, affection had triumphed for once in a way. He dropped off to sleep amid the happier memories of the last two hours- poetry of Ghalib, female grace, good old Hamidullah, good Fielding, his honoured wife and dear boys. He passed into a region where these joys had no enemies but bloomed harmoniously in an eternal garden. . . (Forster 112).

Considering the British people as his friends makes Dr. Aziz feel that a social bond is possible between the two nations. He is optimistic about the future of this relationship, and in his mindset, he is a part of the British Empire and the British people are his fellows from his “mother” country. Just before getting into the Marabar Caves, he expresses his gratitude to Mrs. Moore and Adela. He says “One of the dreams of my life is accomplished in having you both here as my guests. You cannot imagine how

you have honoured me” (Forster 133). However, when he gets into the caves with these ladies, a distinctive change starts in his attitudes towards the British people. He realizes that he is different from them, and he will never be on equal terms with them.

In the first place, his dear friend, Mrs. Moore, who says “You are absolutely unlike the others,” lets him down and does not want to go any further. As she is overwhelmed by the atmosphere in the caves, “She los[es] all interest, even in Aziz, and the affectionate and sincere words that she had spoken to him seem no longer hers but the air’s” (Forster 140). Secondly, Adela’s humiliating question about his marital status startles him. She asks, “Have you one wife or more than one?” (Forster 143). Dr. Aziz gets shocked after hearing such a question. He thinks such a question “challenged a new conviction of his community, and new convictions are more sensitive than old. If she had said, ‘Do you worship one god or several?’ he would not have objected. But to ask an educated Indian Moslem how many wives he has—appalling, hideous!” (Forster 143).

Adela’s indifferent mood while asking this question disturbs Dr. Aziz. She acts as if she had said nothing wrong. Dr. Aziz gets shocked by this racist question. For the first time, he curses the British people out. He thinks “Damn the English even at their best” (Forster 143). He gets conscious that he will never be able to break the lustful and irrational native image in the minds of the British people. Adela, the most liberal thinking British he knows, can ask such an insulting question. In this respect, his experience in the Marabar Caves serve as a reverse mirror stage that help him see his true self. These “dark caves” (Forster 116), only if they are enlightened by striking a match, become “a mirror inlaid with lovely colours [even] dividing the lovers” (Forster 116) Except that condition, they “mirror their own darkness in every direction infinitely” (Forster 117) As Aziz and Adela have first “lit a match, admired its reflection in the polish, and tested the echo” (Forster 141), they try to understand each other. However, when Adela questions his personality, Aziz stays in the dark. With Adela’s departure after her racist questions, he questions his true self. He understands that he is just an “other” who is afraid of losing the sight of his British guest and will be severely punished for it. He also realizes that he will never be able to be on equal terms with the British people. His experience of the caves with Mrs. Moore and Adela

provokes an enlightenment and separates him from the British people and accordingly from his “mother” country.

When he loses the sight of Adela in the cave, the guide tells him that there is no point in screaming or shouting as “a Marabar cave can hear no sound but its own” (Forster 145). Just like the child looking at the mirror, in the cave, he sees himself alone and divided from the mother for the first time. “In sum, this cave-womb, this primal India, is beyond history, beyond morality, beyond comprehension, and cannot be controlled by human means, whether spiritual, moral, or historical. Nor can it act on its own. It ‘is’, but it needs an agent to comprehend and access it” (Sainsbury 65). Dr. Aziz’s expectations from the expedition fall through because of this unsafe setting of his expedition. In fact, his “cross-cultural invitation [to the Marabar Caves] is represented as the most perilous of colonial encounters [and it] comes out most arduous and unmanageable because he has chosen the unyielding space of the Marabar Hills” (Tayeb 51). Therefore, the expedition turning into an introspective trip to his psyche, ends up with a great disappointment of Dr. Aziz. He gets arrested for assaulting Adela.

Being already familiar with the colonial administration, Aziz fears from the consequences of the Marabar Caves expedition. Aziz’s confrontation with the colonial laws firstly as a defendant is parallel to Lacan’s symbolic stage where the child meets the society via the networks of the systems such as language and law. In fact, these systems exist through symbols. Before his arrest, Dr. Aziz identifies himself with the “mother” country. However, the moment he is arrested, he gets “into the lawful social order of regulations and symbolic relationships” (Mitchel and Black 201) in colonial India and meets the Name-of-the-Father. Lacan says, it is the father that controls the symbolic order, and he defines the Name-of-the-Father as a term that “refers not to the real father, nor to the imaginary father (the paternal imago), but to the symbolic father” (*Ecrits Sel.* 13). As the symbolic father has the power in his hand, he is also the law-maker. During the symbolic order, “we learn that our father comes to represent cultural norms and laws. He stands between us and our mother, and he enforces cultural rules by threatening to castrate us if we do not obey” (Bressler 154). Obeying the rules of the colony, Dr. Aziz does not pose a risk to the Name-of-the-Father. However, when he is convicted of a crime, the laws of the colony separate Dr. Aziz from his “mother”

country and makes him learn that he cannot associate himself with the British people again as he is a subaltern.

Getting out of the cave, Dr. Aziz sees Mr. Haq, the Inspector of Police saying “Dr. Aziz, it is my highly painful duty to arrest you” (Forster 151). The first words he utters become “My children and my name!” (Forster 153). These words imply that he is aware of the ordeal that is about to come. He feels that neither will he be able to see his children again nor he will be able to carry on with his career. This is the time of his psychological enlightenment. He is an Indian subject blamed for assaulting a British woman, and he will never be considered as the friend of the British people again. Out of shock, he attempts to escape, and he hears the voice of Mr. Haq as the Name-of-the-Father: “That will compel me to use force” (Forster 153). With this arrest, Aziz passes over to the symbolic order where the individual gets acquainted with the laws of the society. If one does not submit to the Father, he has to bear the consequences.

Feeling that he was left alone by Fielding, Dr. Aziz is sent to prison, and gets very angry with his British friend. When Fielding pays a visit to him in prison, “You deserted me” (Forster 168) becomes his only words. His choice of words show his remorsefulness towards the British people. With these words, the separation from his fellows is justified. His language is a significant phenomenon here as it both reflects his self-discovery as an Indian subject. In his book, *Inventing Our Selves Psychology, Power and Personhood* (1998), Nikolas Rose, a British sociologist, denotes the significance of the relationship between the language and one’s self by defining languages as

a complex of narratives of the self that our culture makes available and that individuals use to account for events in their own lives, to accord themselves an identity within a particular story... Talk about the self, that is to say, is both constitutive of the forms of self-awareness and self-understanding . . . and constitutive of social practices. (175)

The words Dr. Aziz utters also reflect his individual metamorphosis. He is now convinced that he is abandoned by even his most close British friend.

In order to understand Dr. Aziz's experience of the real order, it is essential to look at the transformation in his personality after the Marabar Caves expedition. For Lacan, the Real "resists symbolisation absolutely" (*Book 1* 66) and it is the "domain of whatever subsists outside symbolisation" (*Ecrits* 388). Under the laws of the colonial India, as a subaltern, Dr. Aziz is found guilty. It is the colonial discourse that calls him "an Oriental" (Forster 20), "a native [that must] die" (Forster 24), "the Mohammedan doctor" (Forster 28), "[a man from] a queer nation" (Forster 108), and "[one of] the jackals looking with all their eyes for a gap" (Forster 160). These racist remarks are rather influential in his imprisonment since they create a preconception about the natives. According to the colonizer's mentality, Dr. Aziz is the potential assaulter while Adela Quested is the British female victim that needs to be protected.

It is also notable that Ronny's feelings about the assault come to the front while he is gazing at the Marabar Hills. His interior monologue implies that the whole reality is distorted by the Name of the Father: "What miscreant lurked in them, presently to be detected by the activities of the law? Who was the guide, and had he been found yet? What was the 'echo' of which the girl complained? He did not know, but presently he would know... He experienced nothing himself; it was as if someone had told him there was such a moment, and he was obliged to believe" (Forster 179). He admits to himself that the symbolic order forces his community to believe that Dr. Aziz is to blame. Contemplating on the incident again, Adela tells Ronny, "Have I made a mistake? Ronny, he's innocent; I made an awful mistake" (Forster 190), "He's good; I've been so wrong to accuse him" (Forster 191). She even wants to change the course of the case saying, "Wouldn't it be possible to withdraw the case?" (Forster 193). However, Ronny is certain that there is no turning back from now on since "The case has to come before a magistrate now; it really must, the machinery has started" (Forster 194). Even though the real exists, the imperialist machinery does not let it come to the front.

In the trial, however, Adela does not listen to Ronny's advice, and confesses that nothing evil happened in the cave. She feels the "weight of the real" (*Book 7* 20) and through "the moral law, the moral command,[and] the presence of the moral agency in [her] activity," (*Book 7* 20) "the real is actualized" (*Book 7* 20). For Lacan, morality is a powerful thing that has the ability to invoke the truth. In Adela's

situation, the truth is “a truth that frees, it is a truth that [she] will look for in a hiding place in [her] subject.” (*Book 7 24*). While meditating on Aziz’s innocence, she declares her own moral law in a way. Although the symbolic tries to cover the real and distort it, “what does not come to light in the symbolic appears in the real” (*Ecrits 388*) as “moral action is, in effect, grafted on to the real” (*Book 7 21*).

For Dr. Aziz and other Indians, this means victory. With the latest testimony of Adela Quested in other words the real’s recurrence, Aziz transforms into an outspoken man. His relationship with Fielding is also impaired due to this transformation. After the fury of the events, they come together. When Fielding implies him that he should not make Miss Quested pay the bail, he gets furious and says

Let, oh let Miss Quested off paying, so that the English may say, ‘Here is a native who has actually behaved like a gentleman; if it was not for his black face we would almost allow him to join our Club’. The approval of your compatriots no longer interests me, I have become anti-British, and ought to have done so sooner, it would have saved me numerous misfortunes (*Forster 236*).

From now on, Aziz becomes a different man. He does not try to please the British people any longer. The language he uses speaks himself and his aspirations. He decides to be anti-British, which is a very brave thing to do living under the British administration. He emphasizes that he is not the same Aziz as he was before the Marabar case. When Fielding refers to the past, Aziz points to his own psychological transformation saying “I was a child when you knew me first everyone was my friend then” (*Forster 261*). He acknowledges that he has gone through a transformation in his sense of identity.

For Aziz, trying to unite with the British people has become a bygone dream. He thinks it is high time he embraced his race and his Indian identity. He goes on an exile to a Hindu city Mau where he will be away from the symbolic world of the colonial India. “With his genuine hatred of the English” (*Forster 278*), he says “I am an Indian at last!” (*Forster 279*). Even though he goes under another symbolic world, with his exile from the colonial India, he assumes to be accepted as an Indian in Mau. Then, he decides to turn his back to his so-called friends and work for the independence



of India in a faraway destination. Despite Fielding's attempts of reconciliation, he shouts at him hysterically and says, "India shall be a nation! No foreigners of any sort! Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all shall be one! (Forster 306). In fact, his outcry about being a nation summarises his ideas about the future of his real motherland. All in all, he wants unconditional freedom in his motherland and expects to banish all the strangers from it.



## CHAPTER 3

### JOHN FLORY: “THE WHITE MAN’S BURDEN”

*Take up the White Man’s burden—*

*Send forth the best ye breed—*

*Go send your sons to exile*

*To serve your captives' need*

*To wait in heavy harness*

*On fluttered folk and wild—*

*Your new-caught, sullen peoples,*

*Half devil and half child... (Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden”, 1899)*

*Burmese Days* is the story of a British colonizer who tries to survive in a claustrophobic society which is quite different from the previous society he lived in. John Flory, the major character, comes to Kyauktada with great expectations from the empire. However, his experiences in the colony turn out to be destructive for both his national feelings and selfhood. In this regard, the novel attempts to encompass his disappointments, enjoyments, expectations, dilemmas, aspirations, and distorted psychological state of mind. Orwell’s handling the issue of imperialism also in various dimensions (such as its impact on the subjects’ individualism, selfhood and ideologies) demonstrates not only the economic face of the imperialism but also the destructive influences of it on the psychologies of the characters living under the suppression of this financial project. John Flory, the major character, is the embodiment of this suppression. His situation in the colony implies that imperialism does not favor a specific race, a specific community or a group of people. Instead, it creates victims from both sides: the colonizer and the colonized. His pessimism shows that neither the white nor the black people are pleased to live under this authority. In fact, as a white man (the colonizer), Flory, too, suffers in this system as he is labelled as an *other* by his compatriots. The Club is the only place where his British friends can enjoy themselves and spend “quality” time, as there is a challenging life outside for them.

They have to run their posts in Burma, a foreign country that is far away from their mother country, and among foreigners most of whom consider them as their enemies. Flory's alienation from his compatriots and his distance from the Club increases his suffering. In this sense, he does not lead an easy life in the colony, either.

Just like, Dr. Aziz, Flory goes through a Lacanian psychological transformation. From the imaginary phase to the symbolic, he represents the typical Lacanian subject whose identity is shaped by the impositions of his society and its laws. In fact, he feels under the pressure of colonial discourse which "constructs the colonizing subject as much as the colonized" (Ashcroft, et al. 38). He himself defines the time in which he lives in Burma as a "formative period" (Orwell 65). In this regard, Flory's life in Burma encompasses his process of gaining subjectivity and his efforts to struggle against the rules of British colonialism. His main conflict as a subject lies here. While he tries to keep his bond with the mother country, he suffers from the strict codes of the *sahiblog*, (English people living in the East) (Orwell 70). As he holds rebellious ideas such as the unnecessary of the British existence and degenerating nature of colonialism in Burma, he chooses to hide them from other people. However, this creates a dilemma in terms of his subjectivity. He does not feel free. For this reason, for him, "it's a corrupting thing to live [his] real life in secret" (Orwell 70).

Flory's imaginary phase starts with his bond with the British Empire. As a British citizen, he thinks that he is superior to the Indian subjects in Kyauktada. He uses the pronoun "we" while referring to his Britishness. Even though he criticizes the empire's existence in Burma, he admits that his people have a mission there. While talking to Dr. Veraswami about the economic practices of Great Britain, he says, "we keep the peace in India" (Orwell 40) and "I don't deny that *we* modernize this country in certain ways" (Orwell 40). Unaware of his upcoming experiences with the empire, he feels secure. He is also proud of his Britishness, which can save him from all the misfortunes in his life. When asked to be cautious about the plots of U Po Kyin, he proudly says, "No Englishman ever feels himself in real danger from an Oriental" (Orwell 79). As he is "an Englishman- quite above suspicion," (Orwell 48) he feels he is an untouchable member of the mother country.

Lacan defines this phase as imaginary where the subject considers that he and his mother are united. However, as time goes by, “he ends up by recognizing that this being [united] has never been anything more than his construct in the imaginary and that this construct disappoints all his certainties” (*Ecrits Sel.* 32). The same process works for Flory. Even though he lives in exile, he initially feels a part of the mother country. Although there are some inconveniences (the war and the lack of trained assistants in his firm) that prevent him, he insists on returning to England on several occasions. He fails to leave Burma a few times. In his successful attempt, the narrator relates his strong feelings about England saying,

. . . he was pining for England. The ship rolled westward over wastes of like rough-beaten silver, with the winter trade wind behind her. Flory’s thin blood quickened with the good food and the smell of the sea. And it occurred to him- a thing he had actually forgotten in the stagnant air of Burma- that he was still young enough to begin over again. He would live a year in civilized society, he would find some girl who did not mind his birthmark- a civilized girl, not a pukka memsahib- and he would marry her. . . Then they would retire. . . They would be free for ever of the smell of pukka sahibdom. He would forget Burma, the horrible country that had come near ruining him (Orwell 70-1).

Flory’s dream of uniting with his mother country implies his possible freedom from the colonial society. He thinks he will be able to live happily and freely in England. He is certain that he wants to marry an English lady, “not a pukka memsahib” (Orwell 71). In his dream, England is like a photographic image that encapsulates all the good characteristics of a prosperous life. However, this dream is shattered when he is summoned by his firm back to Burma.

Flory’s first instance of alienation from England corresponds with his encounter with Elizabeth, a young British woman who comes to Kyauktada to find a rich husband and have a better life standard. For Flory, Elizabeth represents England, his mother country. The name also reminds of the two queens of England. Ironically, unlike Flory, who is fond of the natives, Elizabeth is a class-conscious character since he detests the Burmese people and avoids even conversing with them. In fact, her strong class-consciousness is a reference to the British Empire in which the society is

constituted by an established class structure. Unaware of her prejudice against the natives and arrogance, Flory thinks she is the “civilized girl” (Orwell 71) that he would marry. Flory’s persistent attempts to bind up with Elizabeth (in other words, the representative of the mother country) and his ultimate failure, can be explained by Lacan’s mirror stage during which the infant initially assumes an integrity with the mother, yet later realizes his first separation from her. That he does not prefer to marry a *pukka memsahib* but an English woman also indicates that he wants to unite with his mother country. Yet, he will get to understand that such a unification with Elizabeth will not be possible both physically and mentally.

Elizabeth’s coming to Burma causes several changes in Flory’s character. Before her arrival in Burma, Flory avoids “the mirror to examine [himself] and turns away” (Orwell 55) from it because of his “hideous birthmark stretching . . . his left cheek” (Orwell 14). This avoidance implies that he feels that he is different from the other people around him, and is not happy with his birthmark. Since childhood, he even “manoeuvre[s] constantly to keep the birthmark out of sight” (Orwell 14). In the same way, on their first encounter, Flory intentionally “turns his head sharply aside” (Orwell 83) to hide it from Elizabeth, who has an oval face “with delicate, regular features” (Orwell 83). This bodily distinction between them suggests that there is a physical incongruity between the two. Ignoring this, Flory desires to be Elizabeth’s lover. He becomes more self-conscious than ever. He “shaves the second time that day” (Orwell 103) before he meets Elizabeth, and “dress[es] himself carefully and spend[s] nearly a quarter of an hour brushing his hair” (Orwell 103). In fact, for Flory, to be accepted by Elizabeth means to be accepted by his society. He hopes to be a part of his community via a possible marriage with her.

As Lacan talks about the mirror stage, he mentions that the subject becomes self-conscious for the very first time. He says

That whatever in man is loosened up, fragmented, anarchic establishes its relation to his perceptions on a plane with a completely original tension. The image of his body is the principle of every unity he perceives in objects. Now, he only perceives the unity of this specific image from the outside and in an anticipated manner. Because of this double relation which he has with himself, all the objects of his world are

always structured around the wandering shadow of his own ego (*Book 2* 166).

It is significant to note here that Flory's belated self-care is the explanation of his attempt to show the unity between him and Elizabeth, accordingly the mother country. His efforts to look as good as Elizabeth and fix his shabby appearance illustrate his desire to show his Britishness and therefore, being a good match for Elizabeth as a British gentleman.

When Elizabeth and Flory notice that they have many things in common, they "plunge into an enormous and eager conversation, first about books, then about shooting" (Orwell 87). In contrast to his silent and introvert nature, Flory becomes the one "who [does] all the talking" (Orwell 87). They take pleasure from this talk since Flory thinks "he could not stop himself, the joy of chattering was so great" (Orwell 87). Just like the baby's identification with his mother, Flory enjoys his *ideal-I* (*Ecrits* 76) within Elizabeth since she reminds him of his Britishness. Lacan places this sense of I "prior to the social determination" (76) and emphasizes that the individual is unaware of "his discordance with his own reality" (76). In the same way, as time goes by, the harmony between Elizabeth and Flory gets distorted. Flory recognizes the reality about Elizabeth:

Though Flory spent hours in Elizabeth's company, and often they were alone together, he was never for an instant at his ease with her. They talked with the utmost freedom, yet they were distant, like strangers. He felt stiff in her presence, he could not forget his birthmark. . . After ten days they seemed no nearer the relationship he wanted (Orwell 120).

Their different attitudes towards the Burmese people, Flory's "forever praising Burmese customs and the Burmese character" (Orwell 121) and Elizabeth's thinking that "natives [are] natives . . . only a 'subject' people, an inferior people with the black faces" (Orwell 121) imply their upcoming breakup. They both understand that they are a mismatch. However, Elizabeth's learning about Flory's Burmese concubine becomes the breaking point for Flory's self questioning. He understands that there will not be a reunion with Elizabeth. He turns back to his loneliness, but this time with an awareness of his actual state of existence:

For a long time Flory remained standing by the river bank. The moon was up, mirrored in the water like a broad shield of electron. The coolness of the outer air had changed Flory's mood. He had not even the heart to be angry any longer. For he had perceived, with the deadly self-knowledge and self-loathing that come to one at such a time, that what had happened served him perfectly right . . . He had dirtied himself beyond redemption, and this was his punishment (Orwell 203).

This internal feud in Flory's psychology demonstrates that as a British man, he discovers a lacuna in his own being. He comes to the recognition that in Burma he has lost his Britishness and all the virtues and characteristics attached to it. For him, "any sort of close involvement with a Burmese woman is thoroughly unnatural and shameful. He is said to have known many and, when it appears to have spoiled his chances with the attractive English visitor Elizabeth (Melia 22), he realizes his mistake. Now, he feels that he is destined to be separated from her and his own people.

In the symbolic stage, Flory strives against the impositions of the British Empire on his free subjectivity. Lacan defines subjectivity as "the subject's sense of life" (*Écrits* 466) and places it in the symbolic order since it is "where the [subjects] are approved or reprovved, accepted or refused" (*Book I* 179). As a subject, Flory feels himself as a misfit in the presence of other British people in the colony. Not loving to hang out in the European Club, and opposing the British presence in Burma for deteriorating the Burmese culture, he is not approved by the British people. He is even found "a bit too Bolshie" (Orwell 32) by the club members due to his intimacy with the natives and his negative thoughts about the British Raj. Though he rarely goes to the club, on these occasions, he cannot stand their monotonous talks on the superiority of the British race, the future of the British raj, the rude natives, and similar topics. Detaching himself from the club and his own people results in his extreme loneliness in the colony because this separation impairs his position in the symbolic order, and accordingly his intersubjective relations. In fact, he has nobody left in his life to share his ideas. The narrator relates his unhappiness to his solitary existence, saying "Alone, alone, the bitterness of being alone! So often like this, in lonely places in the forest, he would come upon something-bird, flower, tree-beautiful beyond all words, if there had

been a soul with whom to share it. Beauty is meaningless until it is shared. If he had one person, just one, to halve his loneliness!” (Orwell 57).

In fact, he starts to question his sense of belonging: “[Spending] approximately three weeks of every month in [a]camp” (Orwell 48) in the middle of a jungle, abhorring the Club and coming to Kyauktada only for a few days isolate him from the symbolic order and turn his life into a real suffering. Referring to his life in the colony, he says, “It is a stifling, stultifying world in which to live. It is a world in which every word and every thought is censored . . . even friendship can hardly exist when every white man is a cog in the wheels of despotism. Free speech is unthinkable . . . Your opinion on every subject of any conceivable importance is dictated for you by the pukka sahib’s code” (Orwell 69). With these words, he despises his existence in the colony. In this respect, the novel suggests not only “a realistic or biographical [reading] but [also] an allegory of the power relationships among people who live in a totalitarian environment” (Knapp 12). Flory cannot even express himself freely. In fact, he is devoid of “a symbolic exchange [that] links human beings to each other, that is, speech” (*Book I* 142). He finds himself in a claustrophobic atmosphere where even speech is under the control of the Name-of-the-Father. Thus, he develops some defense mechanisms that help him survive in the colony. Repressing his unacceptable thoughts becomes one of these mechanisms that saves him from castration. However, two people in the colony give him hope to get rid of the bondages of the colony and in the company of these people, he expresses himself without restrictions.

Initially, the company of Veraswami becomes an oasis for him in the colony. When he visits Dr. Veraswami in his house, he feels free:

Ah, doctor, what a joy to be here after that bloody Club. When I come to your house, I feel like a Nonconformist minister dodging up to town and going home with a tart. Such a glorious holiday from them- ‘from my beloved fellow Empire-builders. British prestige, the white man’s burden, the pukka sahib *sans peur et sans reproche*- you know. Such a relief to be out of the stink of it for a little while (Orwell 35-6).

The main reason why Flory befriends Dr. Veraswami is that he can stay away from the Club, from the codes of the pukka sahib, in other words, from the sanctions of



imperialism. He expresses his hatred towards the British Raj and complains about his own people as much as he can. Except his “several hundred books, all mildewed by many rainy seasons,” (Orwell 49) this native man is his only friend that he can confide in. He acts and speaks freely supposing that he can emancipate from the impositions and laws of the Name of the Father. In fact, he is unaware that the Father “has already identified his person with the figure of the Law” (*Ecrits Sel.* 50). In the colony, there is no escape from the Law that dictates the subjects to act within. In the same way, as Lacan states, there is no escape from the symbolic order since “in the human order [it is] the complete emergence of a new function, encompassing the whole order in its entirety’ (*Book 2* 29). Accordingly, as Flory is one of the representatives of this order, he cannot free himself from the empire.

Flory’s main conflict on the way to free subjectivity originates from his repressed thoughts about the British imperialism. There appears a dilemma in his self-perception. On the one hand, he has a disgust for imperialism, but on the other hand he does not have the courage to express this hatred among the British people. He expresses his secret thoughts in only Dr. Veraswami’s company. He tells him that he and his people live a lie in Burma. When Dr. Veraswami asks him what lie he is living, he says

. . . the lie that we’re here to uplift our poor black brothers instead of to rob them. I suppose it’s a natural enough lie. But it corrupts us, it corrupts us in many ways you can’t imagine. There’s an everlasting sense of being a sneak and a liar that torments us and drives us to justify ourselves night and day. It’s at the bottom of half our beastliness to the natives. We Anglo-Indians could be almost bearable if we’d only admit that we’re thieves and go on thieving without any humbug (Orwell 37).

Flory also adds that the British existence in Burma poses a danger for the Burmese culture. He expresses his sense of guilt with these words:

I don’t deny . . . that we modernize this country in certain ways. We can’t help doing so. In fact, before we’ve finished we’ll have wrecked the whole Burmese national culture. But we’re not civilizing them, we’re only rubbing our dirt onto them. Where’s it going to lead, this uprush of modern progress, as

you call it? Just to our own dear old swinery of gramophones and billy-cock hats. Sometimes I think that in two hundred years all this . . . will be gone –forests, villages, monasteries, pagodas all vanished. And instead, pink villas fifty yards apart; all over those hills, as far as you can see, villa after villa, with all the gramophones playing the same tune. And all the forests shaved flat . . . (Orwell 40).

It is significant to note here that the opposing force that prevents Flory from confessing his real ideas such as the unwritten laws of British imperialism, which preach him to defend the benefits of the Anglo-Indians at any cost and stand with them. By repressing his radical thoughts, Flory “stick[s] by his job” (Orwell 67) and secures his place in the imperial system.

When the doctor asks him why he does not proclaim his disapproval of the British imperialism in public, he demonstrates his cowardice saying, “Sorry, doctor; I don’t go in for proclaiming from the housetops. I haven’t the guts. I ‘counsel ignoble ease’ like old Belial in *Paradise Lost*. It’s safer” (Orwell 42). Flory’s associating himself with Belial is rather ironic in that Belial is one of the devils dwelling in hell and it is notorious for his laziness and inactivity. Just as Belial, Flory is living in his own hell, Kyauktada, and does nothing to change his fate. He lives in accordance with the social and political impositions of imperialism “learn[ing] to live inwardly, secretly, in books and [with] secret thoughts that could not be uttered” (Orwell 70). Attached to this corrupt system, Flory is now in between his own demands and the demands of imperialism. For this reason, he cannot have a balanced state of mind. However, he knows for sure that he must not reveal his real thoughts as that can tarnish his image as a colonizer both socially and financially.

The moment Dr. Veraswami asks for a favor, the nature of their relationship changes as this favor requires Flory to be courageous and pass into the realm of the symbolic. Dr. Veraswami needs Flory’s help in order to survive an attack on his reputation, for he is accused of writing and publishing a libelous article in a nationalist newspaper. He believes the only solution to overwhelm these attacks is to be chosen as a native member to the European club which is “the real seat of the British power” (Orwell 14) and which “had never admitted an Oriental to membership” before (14).

When Flory receives an anonymous letter dispraising the doctor, he does not take any action to defend his friend. He thinks,

It was safer to keep out of this business altogether. It is so important (perhaps the most important of all the Ten Precepts of the pukka sahib) not to entangle oneself in 'native' quarrels. With Indians there must be no loyalty, no real friendship. Affection, even love-yes. Englishmen do often love Indians. But alliance, partisanship, never! Even to know the rights and wrongs of a 'native' quarrel is a loss of prestige (Orwell 80).

Even though he wants to stay away from the club, his friend causes him to mingle with the symbolic order as “this symbolic world is not limited to the subject [himself], but it establishes its empire over a specific community to which the subject belongs. The super-ego is this schism as it occurs for the subject - but not only for him - in his relations with what we will call the law (*Book I* 199). His super-ego that controls his actions in the colonial society paves the way for his obedience to the law. Hence, seeming rather selfish and coward, his attitude towards this letter is very much related with Lacan's concepts of the “phallus” and “castration”. Staying passive when his friend needs his assistance is the outcome of his compliance with the rules of the British Raj, which preaches the pukka sahibs (white respected men) to stay away from any conflict with the natives as the Law of the Father. In this respect, due to a symbolic fear of castration, Flory cannot be brave enough to get up against the society's standards and norms.

The second person Flory loves to be with is Elizabeth. Just like Dr. Veraswami, Elizabeth becomes a haven for him to get away from the symbolic world. Meeting Elizabeth in the jungle for the first time, Flory feels like he has never spoken to anyone for a very long time. He cannot stop himself from talking: “To talk, simply to talk! It sounds so little, and how much it is! When you have existed to the brink of middle age in bitter loneliness, among people to whom your true opinion on every subject on earth is blasphemy, the need to talk is the greatest of all needs” (Orwell 120).

He feels he has a thirst for talking to someone coming from England, and he can talk on anything with the girl. He even does not avoid the taboo subjects like his admiration for the Burmese culture, the dullness of the Club members, etc. He even

takes her to a *pwe* (a traditional Burmese play); however, she watches “the dance with a mixture of amazement, boredom and something approaching horror,” (Orwell 107) she thinks that she is not supposed to be among them:

She looked round at the sea of dark faces and the lurid glare of the lamps; the strangeness of the scene almost frightened her. What was she doing in this place? Surely it was not right to be sitting among the black people like this, almost touching them, in the scent of their garlic and their sweat? Why was she not back at the Club with the other white people? Why had he brought her here, among this horde of natives, to watch this hideous and savage spectacle? (Orwell 108)

By looking down on the natives, Elizabeth justifies that she is not equal to the Burmese people. She thinks she belongs to a higher social status in Burma. With her hatred of the natives, unlike Flory, Elizabeth wants to be on the side of the colonizers, not of the colonized. She knows that she must side with the whites from the administrative district of Burma in order to have a prosperous life. Therefore, Elizabeth’s dumping Flory for Verrall becomes a breaking point for Flory to recognize his being a lacking subject to fulfill the desire of Elizabeth, in other words, the mother country. For Lacan, desire is very much related with lack. Even though he has the desire to match with Elizabeth, he cannot “articulate [or] bring this desire into existence” (*Book 2* 228) acceding to the class distinction in the colony. He realizes his lack of Britishness. Verrall, a military officer who “represents the Victorian ideal of bodily perfection” (Gopinath 214) with a higher rank in the colonial administration is naturally considered to be a better match than a camp worker for her. This leaves Flory with “a horrible sense of inferiority” (Orwell 192). Verrall’s existence reminds him of his birthmark, which demonstrates his bodily and ideological difference from the other sahibs in the colony. Gopinath explains the significance of his birthmark in his identity formation as

The large birthmark covering half his face that marks him from his compatriots is the visual, bodily manifestation of Flory as a devolving not fully functional, late imperial Englishman. Interestingly, it is during his rare moments of defiance that he becomes more conscious of his birthmark, and attempts to turn it away from his companions’ gaze. Even as he undertakes his ethical duty, he is plagued by fears of rejection and

confrontation, fears that a true gentleman and/or Sahib would have easily transcended (Gopinath 216).

His hatred towards his society and people resulting from this physical sense of inferiority culminates triggering his rebellious act against the colonial administration: proposing a native to the Club. He can boldly say “I propose Dr. Veraswami as a member of this Club” (Orwell 244); however, the consequences of this remark will result in a great disappointment for him. Due to this proposition, he will end up as a marginalized figure among his own people.

Prior to his real order, Flory attempts to break his connection with the symbolic world, which transforms him into a more courageous man. In fact, this courage stems from a deindividuation. With his detachment from his society, he thinks he will be hidden or not be identified and keep holding his rebellious thoughts about the empire. Yet, this notion leaves him with a big lacuna in his identity (“deindividuation”). Accordingly, he cannot accomplish himself as an individual.

Flory has the misrecognition that if he is able to emancipate himself from the discourse of the colony, he will be reaching his *jouissance*. He rarely goes to the club, and evaluates his current state of mind as “happy, happy, happy” (Orwell 156). He supposes that “there is salvation and life can begin anew” (Orwell 156). In fact, “all [his] life that so short a time ago had been drenched in ennui and homesickness [becomes] new, significant, beautiful inexhaustibly” (Orwell 157). However, this enjoyment does not last very long, and leaves itself to a disillusionment.

Staying away from the club and Elizabeth does not help his desperate situation. On his last encounter with her, he says “Haven’t I told you something of the life we live here? The sort of horrible death-in-life! The decay, the loneliness, the self-pity?” (Orwell 289) By holding and speaking out rebellious thoughts against the empire and proposing a Burmese member to the club, Flory disturbs the Law of the colonial administration, and loses his chances of reaching happiness in his life. As for Lacan, *jouissance* “is forbidden to [the subject] who speaks” (*Ecrits Sel.* 243) in the symbolic order, and whoever transgresses this prohibition ends up as a sufferer in society and gets inclined “to disguise, to displace, to deny and to divide [himself]” (*Ecrits Sel.* 12).

Soon, he acknowledges that he has no control over his life in Burma. That every time he tries to live in accordance with the value judgments of imperialism turns out to be a failure. Even trying to deceive himself by repressing his rebellious thoughts about the empire, and acting as if he loved his nation do not work. Not being able to live in contrast to his thoughts, he commits suicide by “pulling the trigger of [his revolver] with his thumb” (Orwell 293). With this radical act, he stops being under the control of the empire that once he wanted to be a part of, and that did not let him live his own life freely. His death marks his transgression to the Lacanian real, a dimension breaking his bonds with the symbolic (*Book I* 66). His words explaining his life in Burma at the beginning of the novel are noteworthy. He says, “It is a corrupting thing to live one’s real life in secret. One should live with the stream of life, not against it” (Orwell 70). Trying to live his real life in secret and in vain all through his life becomes the main reason to put an end to it. Despite mocking “the white man’s burden” (Orwell 36) talks of the club members in Burma, Flory becomes the ironic embodiment of this phenomenon by living a miserable life there and putting an end to it in desperation.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to examine how the components of the Lacanian developmental phases, the imaginary, the symbolic and the real orders illustrate the personality formation of the decentred members of British colonialism by discussing the colonial works of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and Orwell's *Burmese Days*. In fact, in terms of their nature, both psychoanalytical and post-colonial criticism problematize the psychic natures of the individuals. As Bhabha asserts, the colonial subject suffers from an "in-between designation of identity" (4), which originates from the colonial society and leads him toward a self-questioning. In the same way, Lacan denotes that the identity consciousness coincides with the subject's entrance into the society (Lemaire 53). For this reason, while focusing on the characters' psychological transformation, referring to the society in which they live and scrutinizing the impacts of this society on them has been compulsory.

Firstly, I dealt with Dr. Aziz's psychological transformation in *A Passage to India*, as a subaltern in the colonial India by referring to the hardships he has encountered in the colonial society through the ethnocentric characters in the novel. I scrutinized his self-questioning that has become his starting point in the endeavor of gaining his free subjectivity with regard to Lacan's concepts of the mother, the father, mirror stage, alienation, the phallus, and the castration complex. Taking *the mother country* concept one step further, I wanted to show how "the colonial experience annihilates the colonised's sense of self, [and] seals him into a 'crushing objecthood' (Loomba 143). Dr. Aziz has created an imaginary atmosphere in the imperial India where, to his own mindset, the British people and the natives can have a chance to intermingle on a cultural basis. Thinking that the "superior" culture of the British is not a hindrance to the establishment of social relations between the two nations paves the way for his disillusionment. With the imaginary, symbolic and the real stages respectively, he acknowledges that such a cultural compromise is out of question since

he is “a castrated [subject], in the sense of deprived of the phallus, in the first instance” (*Ecrits Sel.* 216) by his mother country. This recognition is constituted by his victimization of racism, ethnocentrism, and misunderstanding and can only be overcome with the independence of India from the empire. Therefore, he starts as a subject whose identity is shaped by the dominance of his society and laws, and then tries to reshape it with his own cultural values.

In the second chapter, Flory from *Burmese Days* has been my focus, as a colonizer figure of his society. Not complying with the rules of the colony, he ends up as a sufferer among his own people. Along with Lacan’s tripartite model of the psyche respectively, he feels united with the mother country, experiences conflicts with the empire, and finally comes up with his own solution to get rid of the impositions of his society. As a Lacanian subject, he cannot feel integrated with the symbolic order that reminds him of nothing but being a lacking subject. Under the pressure of the colonial administration, he cannot feel free to express his personal desires and real thoughts about the imperial project. In addition, he is incapable of fulfilling his *jouissance* in this atmosphere. Consequently, he cannot be a free subject that has the freedom of speech since for Lacan the speech is the essence that makes the man a subject (*Ecrits Sel.* 49).

Contrary to the established order of the British colonial society, Flory becomes a marginal character as a colonizer. His intentional avoidance of the European Club and the company of his compatriots leaves him with extreme loneliness. Constituting a questioning look on the empire and its existence in Burma, he criticizes the impossibility of mutualism between the colonizer and the colonized. For Flory, British colonies are redundant systems of administrations where racism, social injustice, economic exploitation dominate the lives of both the colonizer and the colonized. In fact, the colonial system “distorts relationships, destroys or petrifies institutions, and corrupts men” (Memmi 195) and he does not want to be part of this corrupt system. Much as these distinctive thoughts of him pave the way for his psychological awakening, he becomes displaced in the end since for Lacan, “to ignore this symbolic order is to condemn the discovery to oblivion, and the experience to ruin” (*Ecrits Sel.* 48). He ends up as the orphan child of the empire.



To conclude, irrespective of their races and cultural backgrounds, Dr. Aziz and Flory have become the victimized embodiments of British colonialism which reshapes their identities by the colonial laws and its dominant code of conduct. As they cannot find a secure position to themselves in the colonial discourse, they search for an alternative solution. The aftermaths of these two main characters show that not only the natives but also the white men suffer from the outcomes of British imperialism. While Dr. Aziz loses his license as a doctor and is sent to an exile, Flory commits suicide. Both strive against the bondages of the empire, and as a payoff, they end up as the orphans of the empire.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

### CURRICULUM VITAE

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

**Surname, Name** : ERSAN, Sibel  
**Nationality** : Turkish (TC)  
**Date and Place of Birth** : April 8, 1987, Giresun  
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#### EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	Çankaya University, Department of English Literature and Cultural Studies	2019
BA	Ege University, Department of English Language and Literature	2009
ELT Certificate	Ege University, Faculty of Educational Sciences, ELT Certificate Programme	2009
High School	Giresun Hamdi Bozbağ Anatolian High School	2005

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2012- Present	Çankaya University	English Instructor
2011-2012	TOBB University of Economics and Technology	English Instructor

2009-2011	Karaca Language School	English Instructor
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### **FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Advanced English, Elementary German

### **AREAS OF INTEREST**

20th Century British Novel, Modern British and American Short Fiction, The Romantic Period, Short Stories, Listening and Pronunciation, and Oral Communication Skills.

