

The Origin of Independence and the Temporality of the National Event

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ABSTRACT

I will read the extraordinary enigma at the center of the narrative of *A Passage to India* as an invocation of the origin of Indian independence, while most critics do not consider it related to national independence movement in any significant way. In my reading, the narrative, while never overtly about independence, will be seen as “singularly” situated at the very origin of Indian independence. It is the task of this paper to show how Forster’s novel, wittingly or unwittingly, “represents” and lets us see the impossible genesis of nation and nationalism in alterity, thus revealing the aporia of the narrated events in the novel as coming both after *and* before the origin of independence movement, at the same time. By way of detour, I will discuss Marx’s theory of the “origin” of industrial capitalism, necessarily secreting territorial imperialism, and from Derrida’s reading of “Before the Law,” about the posteriority of the origin of law, for theoretical inspirations. More crucially, the “staging” of the native state at the end of *A Passage to India* will be read as a strange “fact” *and* representation of a curious political entity which appears to be “independent before independence,” in an “independence without independence.”

KEY WORDS: independence, Indian Independence Movement, E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*, native states, nation-building

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For a project on the writing of independence, it may be fruitful to find sparkling hints concerning the questions of nation and independence in a crucial text in culture and society like E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. While it seems that the text has been so heavily explored and commented upon in literary and cultural criticism, especially in the branch of colonial discourse analysis or postcolonial criticism, I believe there may remain something left that can still be meaningfully talked about in terms of the question of independence. However, apparently the question of independence may appear to be but a marginal issue in a novel that deals most forcefully and famously with the dilemma of cross-cultural relationship in the colonial world. One may say that the issue of independence is doubly marginal, because, even when there are some mentions of the question of nation and nationalism, the latter are generally considered of no real importance in the textual construct, let alone the even more abstract status of independence, something not even explicitly named in the text.

Some scholarly efforts can be seen to try to link Forster's British-Indian narrative to historical actuality, at least to a more socio-political account of historical events. In a patient reconstructive attempt to see what Forster saw in India, to see "Forster's India," G. K. Das examines how Forster simply became interested in the land in his first visit to the subcontinent and how he came to see the social turmoil in the land with more concerns, including the Indian Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements. For Das, the link between history and novel is unmistakably there, and this shows that Forster knew India in the relevant phases in colonial history. In the example of Amritsar massacre, "[t]he connections between Forster's story and the actual situation are clear, although Forster seems to have deliberately avoided introducing the sensitive name 'Amritsar'" (Das 47). However, as can be detected in the above quoted sentence, Das still has to rely on literary interpretation to

establish the link, however “apparent” it may be, because even when one has checked thoroughly *The Hill of Devi* and other writings including some collected in *Two Cheers for Democracy*, Forster the liberal novelist did not make many workable explicit statements concerning historical movements. His knowledge of the questions of nation and independence in their actuality can mostly, and more profoundly, be found in his novel; we can say that it is contained and performed in the form of narrativized knowledge.

On the other hand, for other critics, the question of nation and nationalism in *A Passage to India*, besides its textual marginality, contextually in the historical context, is also considered to be unrelated to the general, historical movement of nationalism on the subcontinent; the vague imagination of the nation is nothing but an individual, peculiar, even imaginary attempt on the part of a character created by an author who was in lack of any real historical knowledge of nationalist movement in India. Therefore, according to some readings, represented by one below, the move towards, or the desire for, nation and nationalism as presented in the novel seems no more than an ancillary gesture, if put under a strict historico-political scrutiny. Under such circumstances, one of the critical texts that deal at all with the connection between Forster’s vague gesture implied in the narrative and the actual nationalist movement can find only very circumstantially analogical connections. And the historical relevance of the turn to nation in Forster’s text is downplayed in a pretty typical assertion below, which in a way exemplifies the general position of Forster criticism on this point: “Aziz’s later nationalism is a singular phenomenon, not connected to a wider movement” (Boehmer 151). We will come to grip with this statement in more detail later. At this moment, at the beginning of the paper, let us take note that the emphasis may be placed on the word “singular.” Of course, Aziz’s turn is an isolated event, it is not (yet) part of the historical happening, but in my opinion, it is precisely

because of this that its “singularity” is intriguing and poses questions for us to think about. The condition for cross-cultural togetherness may have to be gained through a detour via nation and nationalism of some kind, but this singular kind may be different from the historical kinds, the kinds actually existing in history (or even those kinds actually promoted or advocated but never realized). This may be Forster’s “singular” take on this.

I will quote the passage in which the sentence is framed:

The dimensions of economic and political change lie beyond the range of *A Passage to India*. Though Indian anger at the time of trial gives the impression that “a new spirit seemed abroad, a rearrangement,” British rule in the novel remains suspended in a continuous present. Aziz’s later nationalism is a singular phenomenon, not connected to a wider movement. Clearly, though his interests in its obliquities is real, Forster could not yet release himself from an explanation of India as much more than an impenetrable “muddle.” (151)

Whether the critical observation is true or just is open to debate, but today the issue at hand may not be a decision to see Forster as firmly historically embedded, or to reveal his limit as a British liberal artist who slightly had a share of the work of orientalizing.

For me, and for my purpose here in this connection, the question is how to interpret this “singular” phenomenon, how to relate a simple singularity (considered dismissively) to a more radical singularity, to the “singular” construction of nationalism in an individual, a paradoxical “singular nationalism,” as it were, thus going beyond the apparent intended meaning of the critical judgment, “Aziz’s later nationalism is a singular phenomenon, not

connected to a wider movement” (151).

It is my intention in this paper to consider this singular “turn” to nation and nationalism of another kind, an *other* kind, yet still arguably not unrelated to the historical movement, perhaps haunting it. This other kind may in turn project a different notion of independence, which is my subject, and which I wish to push, by way of a reading of *A Passage to India*, to reach a more radical version. For me, Forster’s narrative of the “difficulty of nation” (Suleri 148) and the impossibility of fraternity¹ is no less than a “deconstruction” of national togetherness. As will be made clear, my description of Forster’s move as deconstructive does not mean that it is a negation or a critique, at least not a simple one, of nation, nationalism, and national independence, and at the same time, I do not mean that it is an affirmation, again at least not a simple one, of the themes usually associated with the theme of the nation. As I will argue, Forster is, beginning with a liberal universalism, trying to think through the perhaps unfortunate (for some liberals) necessity of the detour of national question, not in the case of an “English nationalism” (a term found incomprehensible to some, according to Eric Hobsbawm)², but rather in the colonial world, in the case of anti-imperialist decolonization. He is trying to come to terms with the difficulty of colonial human relationship by way of a rapport between a certain liberal humanism and “nationalism.”

I

In this paper, I will deal with three related issues which offer, for me,

¹ See Suleri: Aziz’s “realization of how impossible it is to maintain the brotherhood of cross-colonial intimacy” (146).

² Hobsbawm: “English nationalism—a term which in itself sounds odd to many ears” (11). See also Nair, who sees in England too much British Empire and not enough English nation, which would break up Britain (*The Break-up of Britain; Faces of Nationalism*).

angles to re-consider the complexity of national independence: First, the implications of a performative kind of national identity and national independence; Second, the aporetic temporality in the entry into the origin of independence; Third, the political possibility enabled textually by the problematic status of the native states, which were “invented,” sustained, and “given” by the British Empire.

To begin with, then, the question of liberalism and nationalism. How was Forster a liberal? It is well known that in many of his short essays and broadcasts, Forster identifies himself as a liberal individualist who “do[es] not believe in Belief,” and who prefers personal relationships to forms of collectivity centered upon ideas: “I hate the idea of causes, and if I have to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend I hope I should have the guts to betray my country” (Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy* 65-66). And most of us who know something about Forster have come across the following declaration: “I belong to the fag-end of Victorian liberalism, and can look back to an age whose challenges were moderate in their tone, and the cloud on whose horizon was no bigger than a man’s hand” (*Two Cheers* 54). Forster’s is a vague liberalism that depends generally on the idea and identity of the individual/individualist, and from such diverse scholars as Harold Laski (*The Rise of European Liberalism*), Norberto Bobbio (*Liberalism and Democracy*), and Immanuel Wallerstein (*After Liberalism*), we know that liberalism has histories and comes in different brands. Though he may lack sophistication in his simple “liberal” pronouncements, Forster has been included in the line of that tradition, as expressed in his novels, and his minor writings. For Wilfred Stone, Forster’s liberalism has its base in his endorsement of “softness” as resistance to the discipline and oppression of the state, society, and the abstract causes/creeds: Stone calls Forster’s liberal humanism a “subversive individualism,” whose subversiveness lies in being

“soft” and “weak,” for these may be ways to resolve the “hardness” that lies behind every creed, even in the creed in personal relationships. In a sense, according to Stone at least, Forster’s liberal humanist position is nothing other than a “defense of softness,” pitting the softness of personal relationship against the hardness of creeds and the state: “He comes out as the defender of weakness (“the strong are stupid”); of a saving elite (“an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky”); of free speech (“I believe in [Parliament] because it is a Talking Shop”); of something like a deconstruction (“The more highly public life is organized, the lower does its morality sink”); and, of course, of personal relations, the key to the whole creed” (Stone 37).³ (Forster’s advocacy of “softness” and “weakness” reminds us of the similar recent move in a different tradition, a move more than similar in name: Gianni Vattimo’s idea of “weak thought,” drawn from the Heideggerian maneuver of the weakening of ontology in the “Destruktion” of the Western metaphysics of presence. Though Vattimo’s “weak thought” of weak ontology belongs to an anti-humanist line of thinking, it may be fruitful, elsewhere, to relate to Forster’s strategies.) (See Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*; *The Transparent Society*; *The Adventure of Difference*).

This brief excursion into Forster’s liberalism means to establish that at the end of *A Passage to India*, Forster the individualist via Aziz the character finally begins to confront the questions of collectivity and collective actions of some kind (or at least an imagination of the necessity for collective actions). To simplify things a great deal, I would say that for me, it is a shift, in philosophical terms, from a Kantian position to a Hegelian one, from Kantian ethics to Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*,⁴ and in the terms of contemporary debates within

³ For some theory-oriented discussion of related issues around the “decentered” individual, see Heller et al.

⁴ In *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel places the critical discussion of Kantian morality before “ethical life,

liberalism, a shift from liberal universalism to communitarianism (See Rasmussen; Mulhall and Swift; Benhabib). It is illuminating to read Forster along with the trace of the tendential development of liberalism, and liberal theorists have now turned to look at nation and nationalism in a more analytic fashion, to see how individuals sustain themselves in nations, however problematic the latter may be, and to see how liberalism has always lived with nations and even nationalism: it is interesting to note that recently it is time for liberals and liberal theorists to take that into account and to produce an account.

Here and elsewhere, I am not trying to reveal the “nationalists among us all,” or the “nationalists within us,” and much less to expose *das Falsche im Eigenen* (the false element within what is our own), as Habermas calls it (Habermas 119-27), though that kind of critique is both necessary and valuable. My interest here is less a critique than an affirmation. That is to say, my investigation into E. M. Forster’s writings does not aim to reveal the fact that a writing subject betrays himself, being affected unconsciously by a problematic factor which he himself does not believe or endorse, something he even tries to exclude. Rather, I want to read Forster to show that national independence may be a detour which must be traversed if his ideal human relationship in friendship is to appear or become realized, as an affirmative ground he may fail to recognize. So, again, not *das Falsche im Eigenen*, but the unaffirmed ground of affirmation, is what I plan to read, in putting Forster’s narrative

indicating a certain “sublation” of the former in the latter. He criticizes Kantian ethics for its abstraction: “Kant’s formulation, the possibility of visualizing an action as a *universal* maxim, does lead to the more concrete visualization of a situation, but in itself contains no principle beyond abstract identity and the ‘absence of contradiction; already mentioned” (90). On the other hand, his idea of ethical life is embedded in actuality: “But when individuals are simply identified with the actual order, ethical life (*das Sittliche*) appears as their general mode of conducts, i.e. as custom (*Sitte*), while the habitual practice of ethical living appears as a second nature which, put in the place of the initial, purely natural will, is the soul of custom permeating it through and through, the significance and actuality of its existence. It is mind living and present as a world, and the substance of mind thus exists now for the first time as mind” (Hegel, *Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* 108-9). For a brief and useful discussion, see Michael Inwood’s entry on “ethical life and custom,” *A Hegel Dictionary* 91-93.

alongside his expository texts, in letting them rub each other. Let us look, then, at this idea of the nation as the performative production of the individual.

We can read *A Passage* as a narrativized attempt to acknowledge the failure of Forster's, or indeed any others', liberalism to deal with cultural difference in the crucial matter of the dilemma of friendship, and of human relationships in general, in the colonial condition. Sustained by a narrative, rather than by a theoretical exposition, Forster's "reconciliation" between liberalism and nationalism lifts both into the direction of the other. That is, while seeming to move from liberalism to communitarianism, his narrative opens a way to look into the basis upon which the impossible link is made, in the process rendering both liberalism and nationalism untenable, deficient yet necessary to a certain extent, and pointing to an "other" liberalism and nationalism. This "deconstructive" process of neither liberalism nor nationalism, but both of the two in between at the same time, can be seen in the trajectory of the plot in *A Passage to India*: A liberal dream of British-Indian friendship is critically interrupted by the Marabar Caves incident, which propels the plot to reveal the previously hidden national tensions which the major characters tend to disavow but eventually come to deal with, in the curious space of a native state. And the trope performed by the native state as something between nation in nationalism and empire will be discussed in more detail in the last part of the present paper. Forster employs the terms of liberalism and nationalism in a "negative" use, in a "blank" deployment so to speak, as in the notions of person, individual and nation, as well as in the "representation" of all these, in order to make use of and swerve off from the terms to come to a different understanding of human relationship that will have been realized in the decolonized world. It means that Forster comes to understand a certain "independence" as the condition of human relationship in the emerging new world order at the time.

For Forster the liberal individualist, the contact point between the person and the nation can only come in the form of personal relationship, and we therefore come to the crucial question of friendship. Friendship, being a trope for inter-personal relationship in general, serves as Forster's point of engagement into the colonial condition, and indeed this is a question that has attracted a lot of critical attention. The analyses by Sara Suleri ("the absence of a continued friendship within the parameters of colonial exchange"), Jenny Sharpe ("A *Passage to India* holds up for public scrutiny the racialization of colonial relations by generating its narrative desire through the indeterminate status of a rape"), Brenda Silver ("what separates the two men are their positions within the power grid that lock them into the discourse of male bonding and male rivalry, including racial rivalry"), and Joseph Bristow ("The 'last ride' [in the novel] focuses on two related issues that inevitably divide them: nationalism and women") (Suleri 148; Sharpe 118; Silver 128; Bristow 90; see also Martin and Piggford), and other critics, have discussed Forster's inquiry into the difficulty of colonial intimacy, or the possibility of cross-cultural community, to reveal the persistence of the geographical and cultural other in coloniality, and thus the virtual *impossibility* of friendship. *A Passage to India* begins precisely with people musing "whether or no it is possible to be friends with an Englishman," and the answer at this point, as Hamidullah tells Aziz, is that "it is possible in England" and "It is impossible here" (Forster, *A Passage* 31). Later, right before the excursion to the Marabar Caves, Fielding muses: "I shall not really be intimate with this fellow" followed by the "corollary" of "nor with anyone" (119), it is in fact the moment when their friendship begins, cautioning against intimacy at the same time. The plot thus goes from this geographically differentiated impossibility, an emphatic impossibility gained from experience, to Aziz and Fielding's possible friendship, which is in turn interrupted to lead to an other, more

radical impossibility, as we will see later. In this way, his narrative thus amounts to a “deconstruction” of friendship, for he is trying to think through the impossibility of friendship, the dilemma of human relationship in the colonial world in particular, and of friendship in general. In the question of friendship, the text offers two ways to unpack: on the one hand, the impossibility of cross-cultural and colonial homo-erotic friendship, and on the other hand, the impossibility of heterosexual friendship in the colonial world. So the trajectory of the plot can be read as a passage from the impossibility of (heterosexual and homosexual) friendship to a fraternity of national bonding of some kind (the national question to be solved by a national movement), ending up with some glimpse of the imagination of nation and nationalism striving for a certain independence: from friendship to fraternity and then to a new friendship in the future, after decolonization, which proves to be endless, however.

A Passage to India is clearly an investigation of the possibilities of cross-cultural, cross-racial personal relationships under the British colonial rule, in two directions. In its heterosexual mode, there is an attempt at a certain togetherness (between Quested and Aziz) that ends up verging on disaster and confusion, the event of the Marabar Caves and the rape charge, which must be resolved through resort to the Law and eventually via reconciliation (although it is not the Law that makes the decision). We can see that Quested supposedly endorses universal values, trying to neutralize geographical and cultural difference and phrasing this thought in terms of “brotherhood”: “She was only recommending the universal brotherhood he sometimes dreamed of, but as soon as it was put into prose it becomes untrue” (142). Before the Caves, she is a woman who recommends brotherhood, unaware of “Anglo-Indian difficulty” (143). In its homoerotic/homosocial mode, there is an effort for friendship (Fielding and Aziz), which goes

alongside the heterosexual one but which is the key form of the cross-cultural human relationship, a friendship forged *and* hampered from being forged precisely because of coloniality itself and because of the negotiation, if not the total absence, of a cross-nationality that would, as I am going to argue, be the foundation of a coming friendship, or the possibility of a coming community. Cross-cultural and cross-racial, the relationships involved in the text are not yet *cross-national*, for the question of the nation is itself a question to be opened at this juncture, a question in the coming.

It is clear at the end of the novel that there is a friendship and there is not a friendship at the same time. Without any intention to force a connection, I would say that at the ending of the novel the dilemma faced by Fielding and Aziz, when the two are already friends yet say that they “shall be friends” as they “can’t . . . be friends now” (289), looks very much similar to the long tradition in the West, from Aristotle to Montaigne to Nietzsche, investigated by Jacques Derrida in the name of “politics of friendship” (Derrida, “The Politics of Friendship” 637; also *The Politics of Friendship*) expressed in the aporia of the statement: “O my friends, there is no friend.” Friendship, which provides grounds for politics, especially in its virile versions, undermines politics from time to time. For Derrida, the impossibility of friends can be detected in its limits, which, however, make friends possible in certain forms, imposed by the tradition in the West in the form of a “double exclusion of the feminine” (Derrida, “The Politics of Friendship” 642), for the benefit of the figure of the brother. And the impossibility of friends also lies in the ways friendship straddles the oppositions between singular/universal, private/public, familial/political, secret/phenomenal, etc., founding and destabilizing the pairs at the same time. While I cannot pursue the Derridean line in more detail at this moment, I would like to mention another point made by Derrida that may be relevant to Forster’s novel, besides the exclusion of the feminine in

friendship (it is impossible for Quedsted and Aziz to become friends; any overemphasis or overvaluation of their relationship would lead to the infringement of the Law; proximity implicates encroachment, bringing in the rape charge and rape possibility) and the fracture of friendship across boundaries (Fielding and Aziz's friendship is dangerous to social hierarchy under the Raj): "'O my friends, there is no friend' signifies first and last this surpassing of the present by the undeniable future anterior which would be the very movement and time of friendship" (637). It points to friendship in the discourse of prayer, more precisely, in the performative of a prayer. The famous final exchange between Aziz and Fielding in resumed relationship which is *already* and not *yet* a friendship (they were friends in the past while they desire to be friends now) may not be prayers addressed to the wholly other, but the structure of both "now" and "to come" at the same time makes them simulacra, or better still phantasms, of prayer: "you and I shall be friends" with "Why can't we be friends now? . . . It's what I want. It's what you want" (289).

A friendship without friends. Can there be a friendship without friends? There is no friendship for the two friends then; they have to act out, to make friendship, after some detour. Here, Derrida's much expanded book on *Politics of Friendship* may help. In this patient and pain-taking long essay on friendship in the Western history, discussing along a stream of relevant issues on friendship (See Spivak 1723-37), Derrida seems to hold one key idea in the deconstruction of friendship. If I have grasped it correctly, he is saying that friendship is made in the failure, or more precisely, the limit, of fraternization, so that at the "end" of fraternization emerges the friend. Again, according to Derrida, it is never the choice of going beyond politics, or of simply retaining the "old name" of politics: there can be no choice and it is undecidable.

This double gesture would consist in not renouncing the logic of fraternization, *one* fraternization rather than *such and such another*, therefore one politics rather than some other, all the while working to de-naturalize the figure of the brother, his authority, his credit, his phantasm. . . . [D]emocratic fraternization . . . still presupposes this natural fraternity, with all the risks and limits it imposes. To be consistent with this de-naturalization of fraternal authority (or, if you prefer, with its ‘deconstruction’), a first law, must be taken into account: there has never been anything natural in the brother figure on whose features has so often been drawn the face of the friend, or the enemy, the brother enemy. De-naturalization was at work in the very formation of fraternity. (159)

This indicates the “‘originary’ concept of the friend” (159). While the name of the brother and the process of fraternization are retained, the radicalization of the brother is already at work, to allow friendship, and extending it, to allow community and democracy. Thus, fraternization is a process of de-naturalization (diluting the bond of blood, devaluation of consanguinity) (see Lévi-Strauss) that produces not exactly brother (more blood) in the natural sense (not much fraternized) but the friend (less blood) in lieu of the brother. That is why it is “originary” because the figure of the friend is made through and along with a certain performative brotherhood, with his “face.”

To return to Forster’s novel, the future anterior marks the friendship in *A Passage to India*. The last chapter of the novel begins with “Friends again, yet aware that they would meet no more, Aziz and Fielding went for the last ride in the Mau jungles” (285) and ends with the acknowledgement that they “shall be friends” (289), strongly suggesting an aporia that they *are* friends

and they are *not yet* friends, at the same time. Here, rather than looking for ruptures in the “history of friendship” (Derrida 643), we should certainly, supplementing Derrida, look in the direction of the colonial relationship and the then emergent discourse of the nation. In this context, it is the empire that marks the aporia, calling into question the politics of friendship as democracy. Fielding ridicules the Indian dependency on the Empire, whereas Aziz is trying to imagine the possibility of “India a nation,” getting rid of the English and seeking alternative connections. In this attempt at imagination, there is never a concrete picture of Indian nationalism or national independence movement, indeed never anything close to a feasible political solution to the dilemma of colonial cross-cultural friendship. And I don’t think Forster even intended to come up with an answer. Yet, for me, it is interesting to note that Forster the proclaimed liberal would come to think about the detour of the nation, the possibility and necessity of nation, as an condition for friendship in particular and perhaps for personal relationships in general.

The sensible question that follows would be obviously about what kind of nation is envisioned by Forster. And this can be quite frustrating, for any attempt to look for any concrete notion about collectivity in Forster may come to nothing, as I have discussed earlier. However, in “*A Passage to India*, the National Movement, and Independence,” one of the rare critical essays to focus on the novel’s link to independence movement, Frances Singh points out that Aziz’s turn to an Indian nation in Mau goes along with the Gandhi’s concept of Indian independence: “It reveals that *A Passage to India* breathes a Gandhian spirit” (Singh 275). By making the Muslim Aziz come to recognize the importance of a nationalist movement based on Hindus, Forster is said to incorporate Gandhi’s vision of a Hindu-Muslim unity:

It is not only that Forster was partial to Muslims that made him

choose Aziz as his central character. . . . He picked upon a Muslim because he believed that if a Muslim could thrive under the influence of Hindu politics, then India's nationhood could never be belittled. In this way, Forster expresses in fiction what Gandhi has also said, that India was a nation because there were people belonging to different communities living there. . . . Second, showing Aziz secure in the overwhelming Hindu atmosphere of Mau makes him a stronger believer in the new Nationalism championed by Gandhi than were the Muslim politicians active during the Passage years, who were afraid that they would lose power. . . . Third, by bringing Aziz, a resident of British India, to Mau, Forster takes Gandhi's key idea—Hindu-Muslim unity—to a Native State. This may be considered parallel to Gandhi's aim with regard to the Native States in the twenties. (Singh 275-76)

Thus, according to Singh, Aziz's imagination of an Indian nation is historically closer to Gandhi's understanding of Indian independence as "predicated upon communal harmony" (267), rather than the kind upheld by Muslim politicians like the Young Party men at that time (see Ahmed; Wolpert; Jalal). Still, even though we may be happy to find historical connections between the actual struggle for independence and the sentiments for independence as expressed in Forster's novel, I do not insist on such a literal connection, for a metaphorical or textual connection implied in the novel may be more revealing in a semiotic sense. While it is interesting to take note of the historical connection involved in the twenties between fiction and actually existing political movements, as a "reflection" of some kind, it is more productive to see the invocation of the nation and national independence in the last part of *A Passage to India* as

some “figuration” of national independence in alternative forms.

What is more relevant to the present paper, then, is that the narrative of *A Passage to India* tells the story of the “multiple” entries into independence, in each of its “singular” sorties of coming to independence and to nation, just like the way Aziz finally comes to realize the necessity of the detour of the nation for a coming friendship. Even though looking for historical parallelisms between fiction and history, Singh does not fail to notice that for Gandhi independence is more an individual act than a collective one; it is like a performative which has to be renewed repeatedly in each individual, in each narrative or story of the individual’s coming to independence: “By making those who went there shed their Western ways and live in a traditional Indian way, they freed one from one’s previous dependence on the British and brought about personal *swaraj* or self-rule. This idea, that independence exists when and where Indians accept their Indianness, re-Indianize themselves by following their traditional civilization and rejecting modern innovations, is central to *Hind Swaraj*” (273). Despite the problematic simple reversal of the Western and the traditionally Indian which ignores the complicity between the two through history, what I am trying to stress is the idea that independence here is considered a “singular” event, made and remade on each occasion; independence *exists whenever* there is an *act* of renewed self-recognition, an act of re-signification or re-identification. For me, this is a most fruitful point, which I would expound even in more detail, emphasizing the matter of temporality, in the next part. Maintaining that Forster, contented with a “liberal option: an ‘aristocracy of the sensitive’ in the form of homosocial bonding across the colonial divide” (151), cannot reach out for the dimensions of economic and political change, as I have shown, Elleke Boehmer has commented briefly and in passing that in Forster’s novel “Aziz’s later nationalism is a *singular* phenomenon, not connected to a wider movement”

(151; emphasis mine). Now, after our reading of Forster's reconsideration of nation and independence, it is possible to see the ways to lift the meaning of "singular" in Boehmer's sentence to a field elsewhere, in that for both Forster and Gandhi, national independence has to be acted out *singularly*, in each case, differently, in its multiplicity, even though a historically active collective movement for independence is never far from view.

In the next part, I will investigate further into the relationship between the historical movements of Indian independence and singular entries into independence, in terms of the "impossible" temporality and the aporetic origin. At the moment, with the "singular" independence in mind, we can see how Forster, a staunch liberal, comes to harbor a notion of nation and national independence of an-*other* kind. The novelistic strategy lies in inhabiting the space of liberal literary values and at the same time struggling to lift and swerve them into a space that is "not yet" and "not there" (289).

II

By thus directing the critical attention on friendship to my focus in national independence of some kind, I would like to further discuss Forster's narrative as an account of the impossible origin of independence. For I regard that the narrative offers a description of the "singular," again, way in which an individual comes into contact with the question of nation and nationalism, and by implication, the factual base of independence, which is actually impossible in the interdependency of the world/globe but which must be *claimed* or *performed* in any relationship. I would first like to distance myself from the insufficiency of the "constructivism" in some popular theories of nation and nationalism, most notably that of Benedict Anderson, which can only descriptively talk about the *ontic* formation of nations that are already there,

and which is thus unable to look into the miraculous birth of nation-state in the other and in the impossible, because most theories only consider those states which were “fortunate” (involving chance and risk) to accomplish by itself or via others, the “fact” of being independent nations, without pondering those incalculable factors affecting and effecting the historical coming into existence of nations (See Anderson; Gellner).⁵

I would like, therefore, to read how Forster projects an “origin” of independence which would have been the condition of human relationship in the subcontinent. How is this idea of independence the same with or different from the usual goal of national liberation movement? In the age of globalization, can this idea of independence give us some thought about the relation between the nation and the expanding, almost all-encompassing globalization? Besides the question of the globe, we can regard Forster’s attempt as a pre-figuration of the recent liberal efforts to think about nation and nationalism, notably in the case of David Miller and Yael Tamir and others (see also Kymlicka; McKim and McMahan), to inquire why it is necessary for the liberals old and new to look into the vexing question of the nation, a question from which the liberals have been trying to avoid. The historical and socio-political conditions of the early 20th century attempt in Forster and the late 20th century liberal theorists’ formulations are markedly different, and I suggest that it may be advisable to think through Forster’s encounter with this problem in order to come to a better understanding of the recent liberal theoretical positions.⁶ The liberal individualist perspective of

⁵ Ernest Gellner’s theory of nationalism, though without Anderson’s pretension to contemporary theory, is much more interesting, for he at least acknowledges that most communities that may claim or had claimed to be nations fail to become nations, thus paying attention to more than the ontic in the formation of nations.

⁶ See the recent attempt to consider Rorty’s “postmodern” liberalism in relation to Forster’s Victorian liberalism in Brian May.

the nation provides a crucial inroad to approach nation and nationalism in split time frames.

In this part, it is the focus of my reading that Forster's narrative tries to come to terms with the formation of nation and national independence from a hinged perspective, from the inter-implication of the individual and collective viewpoints. While it is true that independence is a condition in history, and that it has a history, a clear historical development implemented by a combination of collective efforts, independence also *appears* as a status, an existential horizon, a factual structure, a textual condition, a linguistic ground, a presupposed event that is still to be posited, lived through *singularly* by each "individual" or "subject," in different undertakings. In this sense, independence, together with any decolonization, is something that has to be activated singularly, in each case, and repeatedly, in re-iterations. It is never simply something out there; rather, it is made and re-made endlessly, in each encounter between the singular and the generally historical.

A Passage to India attempts to narrativize this aporia: that even though the nation definitely pre-existent, if each singularity brings it forth in the performative, the singularity itself is at least philosophically prior. Aziz, a Muslim, liberal and universalist, is singularly, through the incidents in the narrative, inserted into a "nationalist" *movement* toward independence, but he enters into it by way of his singular cut. After the trial, having left Chandrapore, he comes to the state of Mau through Godbole and remains "on his account" (264). What is more, he is given a "lateral" Hindu identity, despite the fact that "the pathos of defeated Islam remained in his blood and could not be expelled by modernities" (265). He is considered less a Muslim because the specific social division here in Mau makes Muslims less visible and less bothered, allowing him opportunities and leeway to adopt a perspective closer to Hindus's to look at the festival of Krishna, among other things to be

observed and felt. “For here the cleavage was between Brahman and non-Brahman; Moslems and English were quite out of the running and sometimes not mentioned for days. Since Godbole was a Brahman, Aziz was one also for purposes of intrigues; they would often joke about it together” (264). After the cut in the forms of a wound, a trauma, in experience, gained from the charge and the trial, he has a certain access to seeing what Hindu see due to some felicitous “purposes of intrigues.” From Aziz, we may be able to see how Forster’s narrative registers a sequence of events that are *both after* the origin of independence *and before* the origin of independence, so to speak. It is about the singular origin or formation of the sense of independence in an “individual” experience as a repetition of the “historical” originary event. An origin as repetition. As many critics have argued, and as I am going to demonstrate in more detail, events in *A Passage to India* are considered crucially linked to the founding event of the Indian national independence, and paradoxically the Raj. Even so, many critics still declare “independence” not to be a chief thematic of Forster’s *A Passage to India*. I will read the extraordinary enigma at the center of the narrative as an invocation of the origin of Indian independence. However, in my reading, the narrative will *also* be seen as singularly situated at the very origin of Indian independence. Indeed, this chapter shows the impossible genesis of nation and nationalism in alterity, to show the aporia of the narrated events in the novel as coming both after *and* before the origin of independence movement, at the same time.

So we are talking about the singularity of Indian nationalism, and how about English nationhood? It is quite interesting to note that Shakespeare also lends a certain insight into the miraculous moment of founding, in an oblique way, of course. Though I cannot launch into a full-scaled inquiry of the origin and development of early modern English nation, I will only very briefly try to connect this double temporality at the moment of founding to Shakespeare’s

second tetralogy, in which Henry V dies and is first invoked as a ghost before he charges as a person and King into France to get married and to found the English nation. We know that *Henry V* is the last of Shakespeare's two tetralogy and, with the exception of the problematic *Henry VIII*, it is the last of Shakespeare's English histories; indeed it is the last of Shakespeare's Lancastrian histories. Perhaps many readers have forgotten that if we take into consideration the sequence of composition and staging as well as the effect upon Shakespeare's contemporary audience, Henry is literally a ghost who returns from the dead. In the *Henry VI* plays, which were composed and staged earlier, Henry is already dead. In *2 Henry VI*, Henry V's name can be invoked by Clifford to dispel the Irish rebel leader Jack Cade and to disband the rabble: "Clif.: Is Cade the son of Henry the Fifth, / That thus you do exclaim you'll go with him?" (4.8.34-35) and "Cade: Was ever feathers so lightly blown to and fro as this multitude? The name of Henry the Fifth hales them to an hundred mischiefs, and makes them leave me desolate" (4.8.55-57). In fact, in *1 Henry VI*, which begins with Henry V's funeral, Henry's spirit is summoned by Bedford: "Henry the Fifth, thy ghost I invoke" (1.1.52). And thus the exchange between Bedford and Gloucester:

Bedford: What say'st thou, man, before dead Henry's corse?
 Speak softly, or the loss of those great towns
 Will make him burst his lead and rise from death.

Gloucester: Is Paris lost? is Rouen yielded up?
 If Henry were recalled to life again
 These news would cause him once more yield the
 ghost.

(*1 Henry VI*: 1.1.62-7)

Exeter's lamentation that "Henry is dead, and never shall revive" (1.118) is both true and not true at the same time: it is true in the context of the first tetralogy, where Henry's spirit haunts the sequence, but in light of *Henry VI*, it is not true. In the last of second tetralogy, the culminating point of Shakespeare's English histories, Henry answers to Bedford's invocation and returns as a ghost in the body of the actor, as the Chorus says, "like himself" (1.Prologue.5). As Christopher Pye points out: "The sequence of the history plays makes Henry V the one king who returns from the grave, and our sense of the nature of regal presence ultimately will depend on what we make of this recurrence" (Pyle 19)⁷. It is interesting to note that Shakespeare's dramatic representation of the founding of the English nation in the Early Modern period also involves a certain "impossible temporality," similar to our examples from Marx and Derrida.

It must be noted that in regarding Forster's narrative as a registration of a paradoxical repetition of an origin, I have learned the strategy of reading from Marx's theory of the "origin" of industrial capitalism, [necessarily secreting territorial imperialism,] and from Derrida's reading of "Before the Law," about the posteriority of the origin of law. The singular is beginning each time, on its own, inventing its own "origins" with the "effects" of coming into being of instances. Each instance of the singular is therefore "originary," rather than original; as an "origin" (*Ursprung*) of some kind, the singular event or experience is "originary" (*das Ursprungliche*) because it is originating. Consider for a moment this understanding of singularity as *politically* originary a celebrating account of originarity in the economic narrative.

In his satiric remarks on the question of so-called "primitive accumulation," generally considered by political economists as the origin or

⁷ The above passage is taken from Shuan-hung Wu 151.

foundation of industrial capitalism, Marx opts for a both theoretical and historical explanation of the pre-structure of capitalism, in which capitalism begins with itself, as it were, with the *relation* of capitalism itself, performatively, instead of as an outcome of a commonsensically linear precedent “basis.” A once hotly debated issue in the Marxist camp, the question of the genesis of industrial capitalism sets scholars in search of the key historical turning point or structural “transition from feudalism to capitalism” (Sweezy-Dobb exchange and others) (See Hilton; Dobb), resulting in a theory of “price revolution” (Wallerstein 53) or the “Brenner debate” (See Brenner). While Marx does have a theory about the condition of the genesis of industrial capitalism, he seems to consider the attempts on the part of the political economists (“bourgeois economists, whose limited mentality is unable to separate the form of appearance from the thing which appears within that form”) (714) to locate it to be wrongly directed, thus expressing his doubts that can be detected in the employment of a rhetoric of ridicule. He is a bit impatient when he uses expressions like “once upon a time,” “long, long time ago,” as he approaches the question: the theory of primitive accumulation as the mere historical condition or origin of industrial capitalism seems for Marx to be a fictional tale, an unreliable narrative. It is likened to an “anecdote,” to a “legend,” or a “nursery tale,” something “idyllic.” The political economists can only “recount” the tale of the glorious beginning of capitalism from the standpoint of the capitalists: The process of turning variable capital into the flow of constant renewal “must have a beginning of some kind. From our present standpoint it therefore seems likely that the capitalist, once upon a time, became possessed of money by some form of primitive accumulation [*ursprungliche Akkumulation*] that took place independently of unpaid labour of other people, and that this was therefore how he was able to frequent the market as a buyer of labour-power” (714).

For Marx, the historical pre-condition in itself may not be worth investigating:

A certain accumulation of capital in the hands of individual producers therefore forms the necessary pre-condition for a specifically capitalist mode of production. We had therefore to presuppose this when dealing the transition from handicrafts to capitalist industry. It may be called primitive accumulation [*ursprungliche Akkumulation*], because it is the historical basis, instead of the historical result, of specifically capitalist production. How it itself originates we need not investigate as yet. It is enough that it forms the starting point. (Marx 775)

In responding to his contemporary discussion on the one hand and to the later attempts on the part of the Marxists to replace his “ideal capitalism” with an understanding of “historical capitalism” (Balibar 89). Marx is saying that the theory of the so-called primitive accumulation is a necessary presupposition, a something that must be there for the coming into being of capitalism to be understandable; it can even be argued that this supposed *pre*-supposition is a projection in reverse order, after the fact: a something that serves the function of a starting point, and that is “enough.” Now unpaid labor which was appropriated and used to produce surplus may be different in each case, but that it is originary is all that matters for him because he needs to generalize. But what is more important in the matter of the genesis of industrial capitalism is the capital-relation itself: it engenders itself, in autogenesis. “If, therefore, a certain degree of accumulation of capital appears as a precondition for the specifically capitalist mode of production, the latter reacts back to cause an accelerated accumulation of capital. With the accumulation

of the capital, therefore, the specifically capitalist mode of production develops, and, with the capitalist mode of production, the accumulation of the capital” (776). Later, confronting the issue head-on, Marx begins by ridiculing the political economists, for it is only by looking at the question of the origin of industrial capitalism from the perspective of the capitalists that the political economist can invent and stick to the fantasy scenario of the so-called primitive accumulation. For Marx, who holds a labor theory of value, the crucial factor lies in labor and labor power. Where the bourgeois economists see an “accumulation” from earlier modes of production, Marx considers the condition of possibility of capitalism to be the release of labor power as the productive forces from their adhesion to land. This is Marx’s unique way of understanding the question of “origin,” taking it not a something that is presupposed in the leftover of anterior material production, but an act of generation of value through labor-power in the capital relations themselves. In the words of Brenner, who correctly grasps the labor theory of value as the key to understanding the issue of so-called primitive accumulation as the supposed “origin” of capitalism: “the historical problem of the origins of capitalist economic development in relation to pre-capitalist modes of production becomes that of the origin of the property/surplus extraction system (class system) of free wage labour—the historical process by which labour power and the means of production become commodities” (33). Taking the cue from Marx’s insights, we will be better equipped to look into Forster’s fictional rendering of the origin of independence.

The political, the economic, and in Derrida’s reading of the inauguration of law, we encounter the juridico-legal. Kafka’s narrative is considered *both* something about the subject’s singular relation to law (the law seems *already there*, and one is thus standing *before* the law, in the *presence* of the law, as it were, but only singularly, as the law is specifically installed for the suppliant

or applicant or subject only), *and* something situated at the origin of law, *before* the law is made. So the subject's relation to law is aporetic, if pursued to its logical limits. It seems that each subject is to re-open the inauguration of law, each time, singularly, an origin as repetition (Derrida, "Before the Law").

Drawing on what I have learned from Marx, Derrida, and Shakespeare, I believe I can show that Forster's narrative, in recognizing the impossibility of facile cosmopolitanism, offers a way to look at the difficult (repeated) origins of nation and independence.

The event at the Marabar Caves that happens *and* does not happens at the same time, the phantom event that disturbs the issues of sexual-gendered relations within the imperial frame, of imperial relations within the heterosexual-homoerotic *partage*, of homosocial bonding and friendship, of religious minority, etc., forces the re-emergence of the Mutiny. As many critics have pointed out, the violence of the Mutiny is invoked in many instances of the novel, and indeed it is the shadow lying behind the sequence of the plot. I will say that it is not merely the ontic violence is invoked in the text; in fact, Forster's text inscribes the ontological founding violence brought together with the event *itself*: the Mutiny as double founding, as the founding event that politicians legitimized the British rule (Raj) and historians hindsighted it as the first war of Indian independence that would found a postcolonial nation-state. I will deal with the ways in which Forster employs fiction to *shake* and disturb the truth of history, about how he manages the spectrality of the historical event of Mutiny: the event comes and is deployed as a ghost. In this sense, the novel is a re-staging, a return of the ghost which is a reiterated founding of the Raj and (nationalist or otherwise) independence, at the same time.

Some historians have considered the Mutiny of 1857 the origin of Indian independence movement, as shown in the essays collected in a representative

collection, *1857 in India: Mutiny or War of Independence?* (Embree). And in the imagination of the Anglo-Indians and the Indians alike, the violence of the Mutiny, which launched the British to territorial colonialism, was always very much in the air. In *A Passage to India*, the charge of rape and the violent events that ensue are closely associated with the imagination and anxiety of the Mutiny. In the words of Patrick Brantlinger,

Awareness of the ultimate result of the Mutiny—perhaps “an eternity of division and mutual hate” or perhaps, as Marx thought, the bonding together of forces that would eventually overthrow British rules—lies at the center of E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India*. Following Miss Quested’s charge of sexual harassment against Dr. Aziz, the Mutiny becomes the touchstone by which several of Forster’s English characters try to comprehend what they see as a new revelation of Indian criminality. (Brantlinger 223)

Though the fictional events are set many years after the Mutiny, its presence is still very much felt in the subcontinent generally, and particularly in the textual space of Forster’s novel. The Mutiny thus exists in the mode of the haunting of a ghost. Reading the prominent historian Edward Thompson, Jenny Sharpe point outs how the Mutiny acts as a spectral event that returns again and again; indeed, in Thompson’s own words, “the Mutiny flits as he talks with an Englishman—an unavenged and *unappeared ghost*” (qtd. in Sharpe 115; emphasis mine), and others. For Sharpe, the interest lies in “the appearance of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in *A Passage to India* not so much as a historical fact but as a *ghostly* presence that guides its plot” (Sharpe 18; emphasis mine). Ian Baucom pays even more attention to what he calls the “ghosts of the

insurrection”: “the ghostly and wounding survivals of the Mutiny in Anglo-Indian memory” (113). For both critics, Forster’s narrative is essentially linked to that traumatic memory, and for Baucom, it is through a negotiation of the difficulties of friendship between Fielding and Aziz that the ghost of violence may be exorcised: “Forster finds himself unable to resist a return to the uncanny, repetitive, and typological temporality of the Mutiny” (133).

While relying on the above observations of the ghostly presence of the Mutiny of 1857 in Indian colonial history and in Forster’s narrative, I am trying to get at another reading, i.e., that precisely because of the phantom presence of the Mutiny in Forster’s text, with the Mutiny considered by some as the origin of Independence movement, the events in the novel come as a consequence of that origin, as an effect, but on the other hand, for a character like Aziz, who can only think about the possibility and nation in the process of the events he experiences, he “discovers” the origin of independence afterwards, here as an effect. The recurrent invocation of the Mutiny thus creates a temporality in which the historical framework of *collective* experience and suffering is there only when a *singular* experience towards independence is activated, each time, differently. An English writer, Forster writes a narrative to register the dilemma of personal relationship, by way of a story of a friendship that must be (and has already been) interrupted by the empire, triggering a recognition of the historical anterior event only in after-effect, divulging the singular temporality of national independence which is always an excessive supplement to the posited historical origin. In “Before the Law,” Kafka allegorizes that the Law is out there *before* an individual, anterior to the individual, but the Law is also at the same time something to be acted out, to be activated, to be performed, with the implication that the Law is not yet made, a time when the Law is not yet made. In Derrida’s word,

Prohibiting nothing, [the doorkeeper] does not guard the doors but the door. And he insists upon the uniqueness of this singular door. The law is neither manifold nor, as some believe, universal generality. It is always an idiom, and this is the sophistication of Kant's thought. Its door concerns only you, *dich, toi*—a door that is unique and specifically destined and determined for you (*nur fur dich bestimmt*). (Derrida, "Before the Law" 210)

So does independence. The performative of the singular relation to national independence, discussed in the previous section can have a more solid ground in the impossible temporality discussed in this section. On this interpretation, each individual is both before and after the origin of independence, for each takes his stand both in the constantly invoked collective historical memory and in the particular personal occasion which ushers the entry into the structure of events around national independence, as illustrated in Aziz's trajectory within Forster's narrative.⁸

III

After the trial, the struggle with and via the Law, the narrative proceeds to the state of Mau, where the last ride of the two men takes place. The location is significant, indicating a certain turn to Hinduism and to the

⁸ Derrida radicalizes Austin's performative but does not, like Judith Butler in her early period, turn it into a power of simply positive formative practice. In fact, Derrida is always attentive to the impossibility involved in any performative act, thus addressing the aporia in founding and formation. Werner Hamacher reads Walter Benjamin on violence to theorize an original "affirmative" act, but one must distinguish Benjamin's (and also Hamacher's) more "destructive" tendency in the "affirmative," which, despite appearance, is "fundamentally" different from Derrida's affirmative (rather than positive) "de-construction" in his twists of speech act performative. See Hamacher; Derrida, "Force of Law."

beginning of an imagination of the nations, as observed by Benita Parry: “When he [Aziz] escapes the English by taking employment with a Hindu rajah in the princely state of Mau, he as before finds Hindus quaint and incomprehensible. . . . Yet while eloquently attesting to India’s divisions, Aziz also speaks of its assimilative power. . . . Aziz become[s] assimilated into India: standing motionless in Mau in the rain he thinks: ‘I am an Indian at last’” (232). The displacement to the native state of Mau clearly marks a coming to terms with the emergent national question, especially after the failure of colonial friendship. For the “Muslin individualist,” if there is such a term, Aziz is now written into a displacement of his ground and position, but what does the native state signify in this context?

Surprisingly, not much has been said about the question of the native states in Forster’s novel, mostly in passing if any. We know that historically the survival of the native states owe a lot to the Mutiny of 1857, and this presents links to my earlier discussion of the impossible temporality. Historians have it that while Dalhousie’s plans of annexation, internal unification, and modernization, attempt to gradually strip the princely “allies” of the East India Company of their lands, the event of the Mutiny reversed the process which had gained in momentum. For fear of worsening the rebellious agitations caused by the Mutiny, the British allowed the native states to stay put, preserving their “independence” of a certain kind as long as they paid tribute to the British crown, as stated in Queen Victoria’s Proclamation of November 1, 1858, concerning a crucial change in governance and policy. I would like to quote from an influential textbook on Indian history:

The first, and in many ways the most important, new policy introduced in the wake of the war was the rejection of Dalhousie’s doctrine of lapse and the wooing of India’s princes,

who were now promised that “all treaties and engagements made with them” would be “scrupulously maintained.” This retrograde policy, which would leave more than 560 enclaves of autocratic princely rule dispersed throughout India during the ensuing ninety years of crown rule, reflected British fears that further annexations might only provoke another mutiny. (Wolpert 240)

The princely states survived under the shadow of the ghost of the Mutiny, as well as the ghost of the possibility of the recurring violence.

The native states are therefore the sites of certain forms of “independence,” representing the limits of the British rule and power even if the latter adopted the policy of territorial imperialism. I would call this a “factual” independence, which is only juridico-political and which is in fact based on a more radical interdependency. Given the trace or difference in both the intersubjective and global inter-connectedness, independence in the strong sense is impossible, thus the factuality of interdependence, related in some way to Forster’s invocative performative of “Only connect.” For the economy of singular and collective, interdependence is always cut and interrupted in historical actuality, even though the interruption can be considered illusory as well as necessary. The factual “independence” of the native states mentioned above marks the negotiated limits of British imperialism. The progression of Forster’s narrative makes clear, the independence of the scattered principalities and native states on the subcontinent, as represented by the state of Mau in the novel, is nothing but the factual independence of individual states, which needs to be re-written into an independence of the *nation*, i.e., national independence, though still only factual and sustained by the constantly interrupted flow of the economy of singularity.

It may be a crux as to why Forster ends *A Passage to India* in the location of a native state, besides the fact that he spent time in the state of Dewas, the time amply remembered and recorded in what later became *The Hill of Devi*. We know that the problematic independent status of the native states cannot be regarded the precedents of Indian independence, because the native states are enclaves designed for strategic, political or economic reasons; they were more creations of the empire rather than forces resisting empire, particular political entities of dubious statehood, to be “sublated” in the process “towards the integration of Indian States” (see Phadnis; Heehs). But we may find help and inspiration from two distinguished scholars on Indian history and society, both of whom do research work on issues related to the native states, with different interpretations. And their different approaches may help to read the figure of the native states in Forster’s novel. Nicholas Dirks’s early work on the native states is titled *The Hollow Crown*, whose last chapter, after a long investigation, summarizes the essence of the objects of investigation as the “theater state.” In the new Preface written many years later, Dirks summarizes again: “[T]he princely states became parodic theaters, stages on which British colonial fantasy could play itself out with neither the checks of precolonial politics nor the repressed—and repressive—restraint of colonial self-consciousness. The farce of indirect rule is exposed in the extraordinary modern history of Pudukkottai . . .” (Dirks xxv). I think this negative attitude towards the invalidity and the sham of the native states is shared by many and cannot be called wrong. However, Partha Chatterjee recently published a historical biography of a figure in the native state, but with the benefits of contemporary theory, tend to focus on the crux of identity in the “princely imposter,” similar to the famous story of Martin Guerre. In other words, Chatterjee is no longer interested in the matter of polity of the native states, rather, if one takes the cue from Dirks to see those supposedly

independent states as farce and theaters, one may want to see how the states themselves, not just the princes, are theatrical fabrication in a more general sense, in political theaters (see Chatterjee). Chatterjee's interpretation of the political persons may not be relevant to our reading of Forster's textual attachments to a native state, but his approach lends us a way, to see the state itself as a performative.

The last part of Forster's novel is heavily invested with the theatrical; the festivals celebrating the birth of Krishna, depicted in some detail, the death of Raja as well as Aziz's staging to disguise the truth of his death, the relationship between the letters (especially the interrupted letters) and the friendship, the "tone" of friendliness or the lack of it in the resumed intercourse between Aziz and Fielding.

Yet, while the move to Mau signifies a significant change of values and prospects, the question of the native states in general is hardly discussed, by Forster himself, by the critics, and by the two male characters: "He [Fielding] began to say something heavy on the subject of the Native States, but the friendliness of Aziz distracted him. The reconciliation was a success, anyhow" (285). A reconciliation without communication; what is important is that it is a success, achieved beyond language, with the "ground" of this very (important) reconciliation left without being commented upon. However, the question of the native states will have been discussed, its independence and its necessary transformation together with the other political units in the subcontinent in the future. For the silence represented by the silence concerning the native states is a short one, to be interrupted by two friends' comments on the question of nationalism. Indeed, their inevitable breakup follows a series of pretty bitter and sarcastic exchange concerning India becoming a nation, plus a jibe at its feminization; "India a nation! What an apotheosis! Last comer to the drab nineteenth century sisterhood! Waddling in at this hour of the world to take

her seat!” (289).

Paradoxically, Indian national independence would mean the end of independence in Mau and in other native states. We may say that this is the shift from independence to Independence, and *A Passage to India* is talking precisely about this, a dialectical “lift” from independence to Independence. In the empire or the postcolonial nation, the native states, a significant component in the subcontinent, remain acting as a chora-like nexus, in obscurity or in disappearance. According to Singh,

Between 1920 and 1927, when Gandhi was at the helm of Congress politics, the stated Congress policy was that the Native States were outside the scope of nationalist activity because they were separate units, not under British control. Consequently, Gandhi did not encourage nationalist agitation being imported into a native State through the Congress organization. On the other hand, he had no objection to the spirit of the Congress entering such a place through individuals acting in their capacity as individual believers in *swaraj*. This is what Aziz does. (276)

That only concerns the “ways” nationalism entered the native states, whose relative factual independence, despite the “fundamental” facticity of interdependence, under the British Raj is finally annulled in the postcolonial nation/state, but Forster’s narrative urges us to think the other ways into national independence, in all its paradox and problematic necessity.

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獨立的起源與國族事件的時間

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摘 要

雖然大部份批評家認為佛斯特的《印度之旅》與印度獨立運動沒有多少關係，本論文試圖解讀小說中謎樣的中心事件，梳理出該事件如何以奇異的方式「召喚」位於「起源」位置的印度獨立之幽靈。但是，那並非簡單的起源，因為佛斯特小說中的事件與獨立運動並非直接有關，而是以「他者」的奇異姿態出現，是不可能的起源。或者說，是不可能被呈現的起源。本文的任務即在指出，從「想像共同體」的角度，並無法解釋國族建構的神祕機制：佛斯特的小說在有意無意間，超越表面上自由主義的主張，試圖以隱密的策略「再現」國族與民族主義在他者性之中的不可能起源，也因此讓我們看到《印度之旅》中的敘述事件同時既在獨立運動的起源之前，又在獨立運動的起源之後。透過理論的繞路，本文從馬克思與德希達得到靈感：馬克思曾討論工業資本主義的神祕起源，以及其必然滋生的土地占領型帝國主義，而德希達閱讀卡夫卡故事〈法律之前〉所呈現法律起源的後設性，兩者都為重新閱讀佛斯特小說中的政治難局，提供路徑。更重要的是，小說裡的事件最後結束於政治地位曖昧的在地王國或土著國度（native state），以強調戲劇展演的手法點出殖民與去殖民之間，存在著「獨立之前的獨立」的政治體，在「沒有獨立的獨立」的怪異狀態之中。

關鍵詞：佛斯特、《印度之旅》、印度獨立運動、國族建構、土著國度、獨立

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