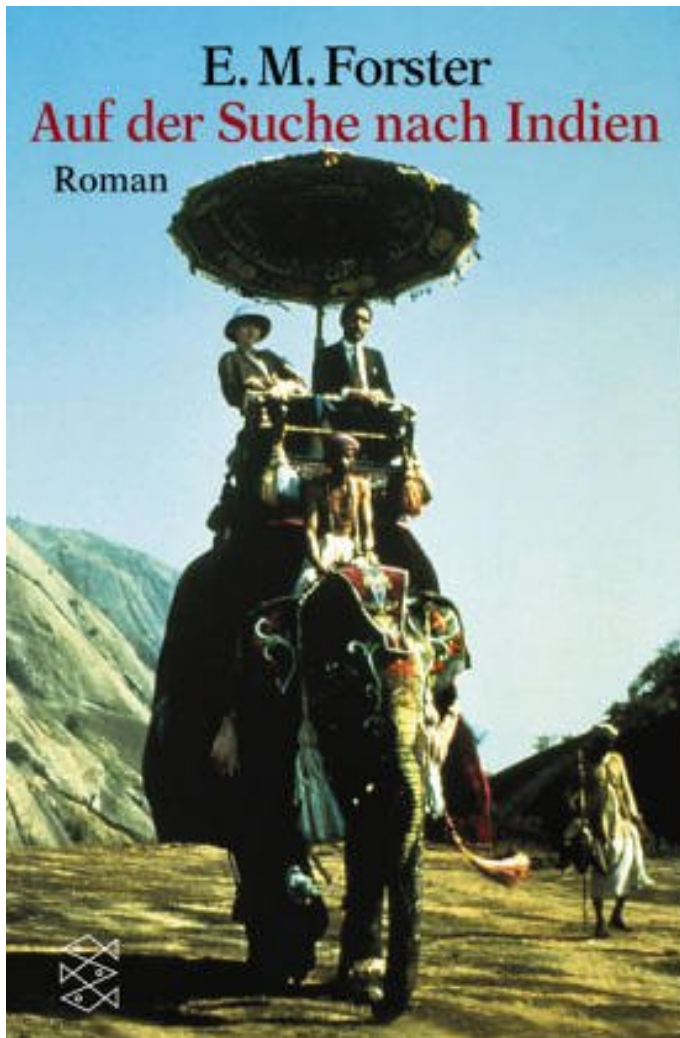

E.M. Forster

Auf der Suche nach Indien



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Description

What really happened to Miss Quested in the Marabar Caves? This tantalising question provides the intense drama of racial tension at the centre of Foster's last & greatest novel.

Insightful reviews

Inderjit Sanghera: 'A Passage to India' is E.M Forster's magnum opus, the novel which combined his febrile artistic vision and fascination with India. Some of Forster's depictions of India are wonderful and he is able to capture the humidity, the maleficent mugginess of the Indian atmosphere to outsiders;

"She watched the moon, whose radiance stained with primrose the purple of the surrounding sky. In England the moon had seemed dead and alien; here she was caught in the shawl of the night together with the earth and all the other surrounding stars."

Just as the shawl of the night envelops the Indian skyline, coalescing the shimmering stars and incandescent moon into a scene of baleful beauty, so the shawl of India, with its myriad of strange customs, languages, religions, people, buildings, attitudes and wildlife enveloped the heart of Forster, who was endlessly fascinated with the seemingly boundless beauty of India. Indeed few non-Indian writers have ever dealt with India so sensitively and sympathetically, have ever painted India in the opalescent colours which Forster's broad brushstrokes are able to achieve. The blush of the moon and the blue tint of a cloud form a central part of Forster's homage to India, to its phosphorescence and its vastness and to the indescribable potency which lay at the heart of India, slumbering beneath the behemoth of the British Raj;

"The heat had drawn back a little before its next advance, the journey was not unpleasant. As she left Chandrapore, the moon, full again, shone over the Ganges and touched the shrinking channels into threads of silver, then veered and looked into her window. The swift and comfortable mail-train slid with her through the night, and all the next day she was rushing through Central India, through landscapes that were baked and bleached but had not the hopeless melancholy of the plain."

The crux of the plot, an incidental sexual liaison within a network of eternally echoing caves, is not the major theme of the novel, which explores the relationship and gulfs between the British and their Indian subjects. Forster brilliantly captures the arrogance and priggishness of the colonialists, their ignorance and racism and the ignoble position of the native Indians in a society which was so keen to deny them their humanity, instead burdening them with the insurmountable weight of colonialism. Most of the Indian characters are reduced to the bumbling caricatures which the British had turned them into, lickspittles licking the mud-filled boots of ignorant bores, yet there is something lacking in Forster's characterisations, which too often descent into caricaturisations; the bellicose general, the frigid English lady, the sensitive poet and the sensitive sympathiser, many of the characters revert to type, and although types do exist, having them form the majority of a novel's cast is inartistic. The two main protagonists, the doctor Aziz and the sensitive lecturer Fielding are both well fleshed out, as is Mrs Moore, who is

probably the most “positive” character in the novel, yet even then Forster is unable to coax either of the main characters from the cocoon of clichés which engulf them; Aziz with his naïveté and juvenile emotional capacities and Fielding with his sensitive yet condescending love of Indian culture and people, the characters perhaps lack the half a dimension which allows them to become fully fleshed out human beings, which is made worse by the fact that Forster was a writer who aimed for psychological and social realism. But perhaps that is Forster’s point, that in a country with as many social imbalances as British India, it is impossible for us the British to view their subjects as human beings and vice versa as people are unable to overcome the barriers of empire.

One of the main preoccupations of Forster’s novel is whether Indians and the British can ever achieve true friendship, and the answer is ambiguous as the only way Indians are able to ingratiate themselves with the British is to speak their language and echo and parrot their customs and culture and disregard their own. Perhaps Forster’s point is that the differences in power and culture between the two people made the possibility of true friendship nearly impossible, as even the closest friendship in the novel, between Aziz and Fielding, is fraught with a myriad of misunderstandings which are a product of their cultural differences

“he grappled beneath the shifting tides of emotion which alone can bear the voyager to the anchorage, but may also carry him to the rocks. He was safe really-as safe as the shore dweller who can only understand stability and supposes that every ship must be wrecked, and had sensations the shore-dweller cannot know. Indeed, he was sensitive rather than responsive. In every remark he found a meaning, but not always the true meaning, and his life, though vivid, was largely a dream.”

Although the novel sometimes reeks of the fetid smell of Forster’s fetishisation of India, it still serves as a landmark in exploring colonial India in a way that sympathised more with Indian culture and its people than was normal at the time is wonderfully written, with some passages of great beauty and profundity.

Diletta: Cerchiamo di mantenere la calma.

Premetto una cosa.

Quando ho preso in mano per la prima volta questo libro, io e lui ci eravamo chiariti per benino. Della serie *“tu non piaci a me, io non piaccio a te, cerchiamo di concludere il nostro rapporto nel modo più indolore possibile e col minor spargimento di sangue.”*

Pensavo che lui avesse capito il patto, e accettato. Infatti la prima parte scorre abbastanza bene, parlava di cose di cui non me ne fregava nulla, ok, ma pace, me ne ero fatta una ragione. Poi le cose cambiano, qualcosa si rompe (e non è solo il patto) e ti ritrovi non so bene perché ad invocare la morte, magari schiacciata sotto la zampa di un simpatico elefante. Sono arrivata boccheggiando alla fine, ma sono viva per raccontare l'esperienza.

Passaggio in India è un libro che mi ha lasciata del tutto indifferente. Non per la storia, che presentava qui e là qualche spunto quasi interessante, ma per Forster, il modo in cui scrive, il modo in cui mette frasi a caso, appiccicate lì quando non sapeva come riempire il capitolo, pensando magari di apparire come un illuminato.

Ci troviamo a Chandrapore, città-tipo dell'India britannica, teatro del perenne scontro tra coloni inglesi e abitanti indiani, che non si stanno proprio simpatici, e poi fra musulmani e indù, che anche loro davanti sono tutti carini e quando uno gira il sedere si fanno le boccacce.

In questo non proprio ideale posto per una vacanza, Mrs. Moore e Miss Quested decidono di infilarsi a forza per complicare le cose, stressando ogni cristiano (ops, musulmano) che capita loro a tiro perché vogliono vedere la *vera India*, quella tutta carina dei libri, con gli elefanti, le mucche e tutto il resto.

Poi quando Aziz, il paladino del fronte indiano, si erge a baluardo dell'ospitalità, offrendosi di accompagnare le due signore a visitare delle grotte che sono l'ultimo grido, la signorina Quested impazzisce non-si-sa-bene-perché e accusa il poveraccio di tentata violenza.

Però al processo dice che forse si è sbagliata, che non ne era poi così tanto sicura.

Fine della fiera.

Ah no, c'è anche la magnifica storia d'amicizia tra Aziz e il signor Fielding, un indiano e un inglese, così bella e toccante che me l'ero dimenticata.

Mi dispiace essere così insensibile, davvero. Ma non capisco perché questo libro venga considerato un capolavoro, un'opera di impressionante valore letterario, non lo capisco proprio. Forster è interessato solo alla sua simbolica storia d'amore tra un indiano e un inglese che va al di là dei pregiudizi e blablabla. Aziz si rende conto che non tutti gli inglesi sono degli snob il cui massimo divertimento è andare al circolo del tennis, e il signor Fielding capisce che non tutti gli indiani sono kebabbari. Meraviglioso.

E' per questo che non ci dice nulla del motivo per cui Miss Quested ha inscenato un tentato stupro, il lettore deve accettarlo come dato di fatto, tanto alla fine ammette *di essersi sbagliata* (non di aver inventato tutto, attenzione).

Forster voleva mostrare la spiritualità dell'India, ma non ci è riuscito tanto bene. I suoi capitoli dedicati ai rituali indù sono delle vere e proprie torture, perché ogni frase sembra sforzarsi di risultare mistica, interessante, profondamente rivelatrice, e invece provoca soltanto conati di sbadigli.

Per fortuna, è un libro che si fa leggere in fretta. Basta andare avanti per inerzia e non lasciarsi distrarre dalle doppie punte.

Monique: One of the most complicated, difficult books I've ever had the ~~misfortune~~ opportunity to read. The only redeeming factor of this book was..... I fail to think of any. Well, it's a classic. I guess that's it.

The book was badly, awfully written. Most of the time I couldn't follow the dialogue, and I had to turn back a few pages to reread, because I'd realize I zoned off and didn't *get* a word that was written. The plot, likewise, wasn't so engaging. It felt like E.M. Forster had a one-time sojourn to India, saw the sights, and decided to write a book about it, creating a fictional plot that, sadly, miserably failed to hold up.

The characters had major problems, too. Dr. Aziz was a weak character for someone who's supposedly the main protagonist; I observed that he did not comport himself in a manner that befits his stature (or at least what one would expect from an educated person). Adela Quested

was a presumptuous, crazy hag woman, but I found her the most complicated character of all. I didn't know what to make of her actions: if she had been cunning enough to stage everything, or if she was just plain crazy. Cyril Fielding was a good man, a loyal friend, and was my favorite character in the book, except for the part where he continued to help Adela during a low part in her life. But then again, Fielding would turn out to be the most understanding and forgiving person in the novel, until the very end.

But the good parts of the book couldn't compensate for the bad writing. (It really is.) If I hadn't been buddy-reading this with my TFG friend Angus, I would have been very tempted to discontinue reading. But I really don't like leaving books unfinished, so I suck it up and read until the end. I don't regret the apparent waste of time that I spent reading this book, but I rue the fact that, despite having given it a chance, it still disappointed me.

Chiara Pagliochini: « Abbasso gli inglesi, advert ogni modo. Questo è certo. Sgombrate, gente, e alla svelta, vi dico. Noi possiamo odiarci l'un l'altro, ma odiamo di più voi. [...] Ci volessero anche centocinquantacinque anni, ci libereremo di voi, sì, butteremo a mare ogni maledetto inglese, e allora, » galoppò furiosamente contro Fielding, « e allora, » continuò, quasi baciandolo, « voi ed io saremo amici. » « Perché non possiamo esserlo subito? » disse l'altro, stringendolo con affetto. « È quello che voglio. È quello che voi volete. » Ma i cavalli non volevano: scartarono di fianco; non voleva los angeles terra, che balzava su in massi tra cui i cavalieri dovevano parare l'uno dietro l'altro; i templi, il lago, los angeles prigionie, il palazzo, gli uccelli, le carogne, l. a. Foresteria, che apparvero alla visi quando loro uscirono dalla gola e scorsero Mau ai loro piedi: non volevano, dissero con le loro cento voci: «No, non ancora», e il cielo disse: «No, non qui». Non so precisamente cosa sia andato storto. So solo che tra me e Forster il rapporto non ha funzionato. Non ci capiamo. Ci guardiamo aggrottando l. a. fronte. Il mio professore di letteratura inglese diceva una volta a lezione che scrivere questo libro costò al suo autori anni e anni di lavoro, anni e anni di sofferenza. E questo è chiaro, questo si capisce. Se l. a. sofferenza è l. a. stessa che ho provato io mentre lo leggevo, tutto si spiega. l. a. sofferenza di pensare che nell'altra stanza, in un grande armadio, ci sono tanti altri libri da leggere, tanti altri libri che trillano con le loro vocette di sirene. Leggimi prima di lui! Leggimi prima di lui! Qualche carognetta è persino riuscita a farla franca: tra l'inizio e los angeles advantageous di Passaggio in India ho infilato altri tre libri. Questo non significa che Passaggio in India sia un brutto libro. Anzi, temo sia un libro maestoso. Solo, los angeles sua maestosità non è del tipo che interessa a me. Siamo a Chandrapore, piccola e dispersa città indiana, dove due colonie e due scuole di pensiero si scontrano giorno dopo giorno. Da una parte ci sono i coloni inglesi, molto snob e molto inglesi. Dall'altra parte ci sono gli indiani benpensanti, gli indiani della classe media, quelli educati e con una rispettabile posizione. I due gruppi si disprezzano e non hanno rapporti l'uno con l'altro, se non quelli basati su reciproci pregiudizi. L'India è ancora l. a. perla dell'Impero britannico; di auto-governo ancora non si parla, non c'è abbastanza autocoscienza. In questa situazione spinosa si infilano due turiste non- -per-caso, l'anziana Mrs Moore e los angeles giovane Adela, arrivate dall'Inghilterra con tanta voglia di conoscere los angeles "vera" India, con tanta voglia di conoscere i "veri" indiani. Il loro desiderio è sincero, seppure un po' scolastico; l'inglese Fielding, da lungo pace ben integrato in entrambe le comunità, e l'indiano dottor Aziz si proporranno come loro guide. Ma da quando storia è storia, provate a mettere un gruppo di persone di cultura diversa a stretto contatto e otterrete un patratat. Il patratat, secondo Forster, avviene principalmente perché le donne

sono stupide e non capiscono mai quel che succede, equivocano tutto e hanno un fondo di perversità speciale. Specialmente le donne inglesi. Le donne inglesi sono tremende. Così, se portate una donna inglese come Adela, che brutta è parecchio e intelligente non tanto, se portate una donna come Adela in una grotta buia dove i suoni echeggiano in modo diabolico, può sempre capitare che le venga un'allucinazione, vi accusi di aver tentato di violentarla e finiate sotto processo. E qui, mentre a me sarebbe piaciuto che Forster indagasse sul perché Adela vede cose che non esistono, Forster invece se ne frega abbastanza, ci lascia credere alla sua cretineria e pensa advert altro. Ecco, a me Adela period simpatica. I. a. repressione sessuale che I. a. porta a formulare un'accusa totalmente priva di costrutto period lo spunto più intrigante del libro. Ma a Forster tutto sommato non interessa. A lui interessa il rapporto di amicizia e di amore tra Fielding l'inglese e Aziz l'indiano e su questo rimane a Cianciare consistent with altre a hundred pagine. Se avete I. a. sensibilità giusta consistent with coglierlo, dev'essere davvero un rapporto fantastico. Io ormai l'omosessualità nei libri Los Angeles vedo quasi dovunque e l'ho trovata altrove in forme più intriganti. Se poi vi piace il misticismo, questo romanzo fa in keeping with voi. Cristiani, Indu, Mussulmani, ci sono tutti, tutte le teologie, consistent with tutti i gusti, tutte le teofanie, tutti i tipi di nichilismo. Sono dispiaciuta di comportarmi in modo così isterico con Forster, ma sinceramente sono un po' indignata. I. a. sua biografia entra da tutte le parti. Le sue teorie cosmogoniche non ne parliamo. Gli uomini pensano da donne. Le donne pensano da uomini. Lo sfondo sociale c'è, lo sfondo politico pure, e tutto questo dovrebbe darti un'idea consistent with capire che razza di miscuglio fosse l'India e che miscuglio sia ancora oggi. Io non dico che non lo faccia. Lo fa, certo che lo fa. Purtroppo sono io che non sono interessata ai problemi dell'imperialismo. Mi vengono a noia. E così sto davanti a questo ritratto assolutamente originale e profumato guardandolo con parecchio scetticismo e chiedendomi se piuttosto non è bene cominciare a leggere Pan. Perdonate I. a. recensione al vetriolo. I. a. prossima volta andrà meglio.

Lotz: so much of existence is so boring that there's not anything to be acknowledged approximately it, and the books and speak that may describe it as fascinating are obliged to exaggerate, within the wish of justifying their very own existence. I've spent loads of time considering what the unconventional is, exactly. It's an incredibly versatile and fluid form. the unconventional can accommodate ancient behemoths like conflict and Peace, philosophical routines just like the Brothers Karamazov, wacky experiments like Ulysses, and legendary adventures just like the Lord of the Rings. Or can it? Many works of fiction we name novels for loss of a greater term; yet can the time period surround either faded fireplace and looking for misplaced Time, The Trial and Huckleberry Finn, The Shining and at the Road? Really, what features do these kinds of multifarious works share? That they're fiction? The extra I read, the extra I believe that there are novels, and there are many novelish issues that maybe we ought to not name. Names are just precious in the event that they reliably let us know whatever approximately what they're naming. So what's the novel, natural and simple, with out any hesitations or qualifications? Well, in lieu of any uncomplicated definition, I'd prefer to provide this gem of a ebook as a primary instance of what I mean. A Passage to India is a paragon of the unconventional form. Forster is a fragile craftsman. with none plodding descriptions or visible internal monologues, he manages to show the personalities of his characters. They don't spill out their philosophy of life; rather, they've got ordinary conversations with one another. And out of the cadences of speech and the turns of idea in those banal interactions, we come to grasp the characters intimately—which is a pleasure, as Forster's characters are impressive works of

art. They are, all of them, usual yet interesting; awesome yet imperfect; likable yet limited. In short, they're actual people; but, like several nice fictional characters, also they are greater than actual people—they are entire forms of people. A novelist doesn't easily seize humans he knows; rather, he's taking a attribute here, a high quality there, and suits them jointly like puzzle-pieces. the result's anyone strikingly familiar, but strikingly new. We suppose like we have now met before, yet we're satisfied to fulfill again. In an excellent novel reminiscent of this, the drama doesn't believe synthetic or contrived; in contrast to a few affordable thriller, the thrill isn't the results of unbelievable coincidences or outstanding events. Forster, instead, brings out the drama hidden in daily situations; he brings to gentle tiny tensions, day-by-day anxieties. the result's a penetrating exploration of human society and psychology. Forster indicates how humans either form and are formed by way of their circumstances; and this non-stop interaction of social setting and personality, atmosphere and action, reveals issues by no means buried. Like an excellent still-life, Forster's novel doesn't quite a bit reveal, as remind. an excellent paintings of technological know-how or of philosophy may perhaps make us cry out "How attention-grabbing and insightful!" yet a superb novel, akin to this, makes us cry out "How true! How completely true!" Forster's novel does all of those things. It's either a piece of art, and a superlative instance of the craft of the novel. And, like all strong novel, I can't say to any extent further with out spoiling the plot! You'll simply need to see for yourself.

Robyn: This publication shifts underfoot a lot, clumps of prose i could not penetrate after which a paragraph of such beautiful perception that i used to be torn among getting up and discovering a pen or staying the place i used to be and re-reading it seven or 8 times. In a way, it truly is prose verite: issues are hectic, or dull and you are not convinced who's speaking or what the phrases mean, yet then occasionally you hit a pocket the place anything makes lots experience that it sort of feels like every thing else needs to make feel too after which the instant is gone.

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