

Theme: Colonialism in Literature – The British Raj **Text:** Scene from *Passage to India* by E.M.. Forster

Transcript of scene (Br)

Das: I must warn members of the public ... and certain members of the defense that the insulting behaviour and rowdiness which marred yesterday's proceedings will not be tolerated.

Heaslop: Well said, Das, quite right.

5 **Das:** Mr. McBryde ...

McBryde: Thank you. I shall begin, Sir, by reminding you of my contention that prisoner proposed the expedition to the caves with the premeditated intention of making advances to Miss Quested. I've made it my business to visit the Marabar during the last few days – it's an inaccessible barren place entailing, as you have heard, considerable planning and expense to get there. The caves themselves are dark, featureless and without interest, except for a strange echo. A curious place for such an elaborate picnic. The servants were all supplied by prisoner's Indian friends, now with the one exception of the witness Antony. Antony had received explicit instructions from Mr. Heaslop to stay with the ladies at all times. Yet he remained behind. Yesterday you heard him admit that he had accepted money from the prisoner minutes before the departure of the train. And that brought us to Mr. Fielding. We are asked to believe that he was prevented from catching the train because another friend of the prisoner's, Professor Godbole, was saying his prayers prayers. After a most unpleasant altercation I withdrew my hypothesis that similar persuasion had contributed towards this excess of religious zeal

15 **Amritrao:** I object, Sir. Mr. McBryde is quite blatantly using this opportunity to repeat the slander.

Das: Objection sustained.

Mahmoud Ali: Ha!

[Noisy reactions.]

Das: Order! Order! Order!

20 **McBryde:** Prisoner had yet to rid himself of a third impediment. The lady in question suffered from what is known in medical parlance as claustrophobia. Prisoner achieved his objective by entering the first cave with Miss Quested and the guide leaving this elderly lady in the rear where she was crushed and crowded by servants and villagers.

Aziz: Mrs. Moore ... he is speaking of Mrs. Moore ...

Das: Quiet!

25 **Mahmoud Ali:** Are you accusing my client of attempted murder as well as rape? Now who is this lady he is talking about? I don't understand.

Aziz: The lady I met in the mosque, Mrs. Moore.

Mahmoud Ali: Mrs. Moore? You speak of Mrs. Moore?

McBryde: I don't propose to call her.

30 **Mahmoud Ali:** You don't propose to call her because you can't. She was smuggled out of the country because she was on our side. She would have proved his innocence.

Das: You could have called her yourself. Neither side called her, neither may quote her as evidence.

Mahmoud Ali: But she was kept from us. This is English justice, this is your British raj. Just give us back Mrs. Moore for five minutes.

35 **Heaslop:** If the point is of any interest ... my mother shall be reaching Aden at noon today, their time.

Mahmoud Ali: Punished – by you?

Das: Please! Please! This is no way to defend your case.

Mahmoud Ali: I'm not defending a case, and you are not trying one. We are both slaves!

Das: Mr. Mahmoud Ali, unless you sit down I shall have to exercise my authority.

40 **Mahmoud Ali:** Do so, this trial is a farce ... I'm going ... I've ruined my career ...

Aziz: Mrs. Moore, where are you, Mrs Moore?

Mahmoud Ali: We want Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Moore ..

Voices: Mrs. Moore ...

Das: Order!

45 **Mahmoud Ali:** Farewell, my friend ...

Voices: Mrs. Moore

Mahmoud Ali: [Sonno?] ... they have taken Mrs. Moore. Mrs. Moore [kollege?]. Mrs. Moore.

Crowd: Esmiss Esmoor.

Mahmoud Ali: Mrs. Moore.

50 **Crowd:** Esmiss Esmoor.

Mahmoud Ali: Mrs. Moore.

Crowd: Esmiss Esmoor.

[more repetitions]

Miss Quested: Isn't it strange rather wonderful -----

Annotations: 6 contention – claim, statement 7 premeditated – planned in advance 8 entailing – requiring 14 altercation – argument, row 14 zeal – fervour, enthusiasm 15 slander – false statement about someone 16 sustain – affirm validity of, support 20 impediment – obstacle 20 parlance – manner of speaking 35 Gulf of Aden(Yemen) – linking to the Red Sea 50 Esmiss Esmoor – in the novel Forster explains this transformation in the following way: It was revolting [for Mr. Heaslop] to hear his mother's name travestied into Esmiss Esmoor, a Hindu goddess.

Assignments:

- 1) Summarize the circumstances and the statements that give the scene the quality of a climax.
- 2) Analyse the way the director uses camera techniques to underline the dramatic nature of the scene.
- 3) Here you have a choice: a) Make a suggestion for a follow-up scene integrating both content matter and use of camera. (It should become clear how the story continues.) b) Discuss the reasons that have made *Passage to India* a novel that can be found on most college reading lists.