

A Polyphonic Study of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and George Orwell's *Burmese Days*

Harith Ismael Turki¹; Dulfqar M. Abdulrazzaq²
 Karabuk University, TURKEY^{1,2}
 e-mail: harith.turki@karabuk.edu.tr¹, dulfqar@gmail.com²

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the multi-voicedness techniques in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and George Orwell's *Burmese Days*, in terms of the narrator's role and the plurality of voices and consciousnesses. This paper used the concept of polyphony which was coined by Bakhtin as a methodology in analyzing and examining the aforesaid novels. The results of this study showed that; First, both novels used the omniscient narrator as a narrative technique, since the voice of the author was evident on more than one occasion. Moreover, there was an influence by the omniscient narrator on the reader, which might be considered significant on more than one occasion, in controlling and manipulating his decisions and views in *A Passage to India*, while the influence was minuscule in *Burmese Days*. Second, this paper proved that the aforesaid novels are polyphonic ones. Finally, both authors gave a considerable margin of freedom for each character to express their ideologies freely.

Keywords: A Passage to India, Burmese Days, Bakhtin, polyphony; postcolonial literature.

INTRODUCTION

Many studies have shed light on post-colonial literature particularly through novels, but despite that, the literary scene still needs more studies that highlight the dark era of European colonial attitudes towards the East. Post-colonial is a term that describes the period, when peoples were able to obtain their freedom from European colonization, in an attempt to obtain a new identity or return to the original one of the countries to which they belong before colonization (Nayar, 2015). However, the process is more like a conflict between the long effects of colonialism on them, and their attempt to preserve as much as possible their own original identity. Therefore, Post-colonialism studies focus on the effects left by colonialism at all levels. The influence is still existing in one way or another, on all those who were under the umbrella of colonialism, especially cultural ones till this day, where "more than three quarters of the people living of the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism" (Ashcroft et al., 2002, p. 1).

However, despite the end of direct colonialism on the colonized countries, many peoples of those former colonies, are still in a state of struggle to gain an independent cultural identity, different from what the colonizer imposed, as these peoples, despite their independence. They are still heavily linked and

greatly influenced by the Western culture, which created a continuous economic and cultural crisis in their countries, as a matter of a fact "all postcolonial societies are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination, and independence has not solved this problem" (Ashcroft et al., 2002, p. 2). The fundamental characteristic of the postcolonial era could be the persistent pursuit of a true independent identity by the peoples of those countries, as well as resistance to all forms of colonialism.

Moreover, *A Passage to India* and *Burmese Days* are regarded as a personal experience and a genuine reflection of a reality lived by the authors, since both novels are more like personal diaries as *A Passage to India* is "crystallize Forster's personal experiences in India, and an arduous exploration of the land and her people spread out over seventeen years" (Ganguly, 1990, p. 30), and *Burmese Days* "reflects [Orwell] personal experience with British colonialism and this experience was extremely negative" (Holler, 2018, p. 213). Therefore, they convey the events as they are without the superiority of one event or character over the others. Therefore, the researchers relied on those two works as a reliable source in evaluating the authors' democratic role in presenting the events. Whereas, some other postcolonial novels often represent the author's point of view, which forces the reader to follow a specified ideology. However, the researchers

chose to study these novels in this time, because of the current events that India, Burma or Myanmar witnessing, as the remnants of British colonial policies caused all the events that India is currently struggle with, such as riots and conflict between different religious communities and economic instability, where Britain was pursuing a policy of divide and rule to control India in all its broad parts. For instance, the continuous coups in Burma or Myanmar and the imminent civil war. Consequently, all of the aforesaid reasons have made the researchers think there is a need to highlight these novels from a different new point of view.

RESEARCH METHOD

Mikhail Bakhtin is one of the most important Western scholars who was interested in the multi-Voicedness in novels or what he called the Polyphonic Novel and dedicated his time and efforts to create a series of literary and critical studies that deal with polyphony, including his important books *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* and *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Polyphony meant multiple voices in a narrative text. It was essentially a musical term that “borrowed from the realm of music, where it referred to the superposing of various independent but harmonically related melodies” (Zylko, 2002, p. 292). However, it was used later in the field of literature and criticism by the theoretician Bakhtin as a term. Whereby, it is worth pointing out that “The idea of the polyphonic structure of culture was developed first of all by Dostoyevsky, then by the outstanding Russian specialist in literature Mikhail M. Bakhtin” (Tymieniecka, 1997, p. 63).

Bakhtin believed that the Polyphonic Novel is free from the absolute authority of the narrator, his/her monologue, language, and style. In this multi-voiced and perspective novel, the hero's relative freedom and personal independence are spoken of in the expression of its attitudes freely and openly and in the same time, this “relative freedom of a hero does not violate the strict specificity of the construction” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 13) even if these attitudes are in any way contrary to the opinion of the writer. Therefore, each character in Polyphonic Novel recounts the narrative event in its own way, by its own perspective, and from its individual perspective and style. However, the multi-voicedness novel presents its creative extraction and main ideas through multiple voices. This is what makes the informed reader freely choose the appropriate attitude, that satisfies with the ideological perspective that suits him and agrees with it, without being deprived of will or deceived by the narrator or the author who “necessarily plays two roles in the work: he creates a world in which many disparate point of

views enter into dialogue, and, in a quite distinct role, he himself participates in that dialogue” (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 239). The Polyphonic Novel is radically different from the mono-narrator monologue novel, in attitude, language, style, and perspective, with a real dialogue or discourse pluralism at the level of narrative, characters, readers, and ideological attitudes.

The Polyphonic Novel expresses the reality of humans as it depicts the diversity of life and is an honest expression of the complexities of different human social classes and their suffering or “the struggle against a reification of man, of human relations, of all human values under the conditions of capitalism” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 62). This indicates that the author's vision of Polyphonic Novel is a pure representation of humanitarian vision, which categorically rejects the conversion of moral or qualitative values into material and quantitative ones, in the name of the economy, the exchange of goods and trades that created human relations. A multi-Voicedness or Polyphonic Novel is a form of the modern novel in which narrative entirely differs from the monologic novels, where the most prominent characteristic of the Polyphonic Novel is the double-voiced (Malczuzynski, 1984). Consequently, in the Polyphonic Novel the events and ideas of the novel are interpreted according to many overlapping and different points of view at the same time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of the Narrator in *A Passage To India* and *Burmese Days*

There is no novel without a narrator, it is the voice with which we follow the details of the narration. For a long time, it has been widely believed that the narrator is the author and is referred to as one character or entity, which makes the novel attached to external influences based mainly on the circumstances surrounding the author. But with the rise of structuralism and textual analysis, the narration texts were able to build for themselves an independent world, in which they dispensed with the author's authority so that the text will achieve its own existence once it is written. Hence, the text becomes the bearer of its connotation whose features are defined by the reader and abstract text, as a result, the presence of the author does not exceed the name carried by the novel cover, but within the narration text, the authority turns to the word and only word (Matz, 2004). From this standpoint, the narrator became an independent character that the author creates, like the rest of the characters that the author creates in the novel, whether the narrator is an active character with its events or just a neutral narrator who witnesses the events without participating in them. It is the essence

of the Polyphonic Novel's concept, where the narrator and rest of the characters are independent of the author authority "in which a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects, without being placed and judged by an authoritative authorial voice" (Lodge, 1990, p. 86).

In *A Passage to India*, Forster used the traditional style of the nineteenth century to describe and tell the story to the reader, where the narrator's vision covers all events, as if it were a cinema camera set in a higher angle covering all the scenes on the ground. In this type "the narrator knows more than the character, or more exactly, says more than any of the characters knows" (Genette, 1980, p. 189), since there is no secret hidden from him, as the narrator knows what the characters have done, what they do, will do, or what they think about in their mind, this what the critics called the omniscient narrator where the characters cannot hide secrets from the narrator, who reads their thoughts and sees what behind the walls (Olson, 1997, p. 37). Therefore, the story was told through an omniscient narrator, who knows everything and describes the simplest and most accurate details of the characters, even their internal psychological state, and their cultural backgrounds, and what is on their minds. Moreover, the narrator in *A Passage to India* has special characteristics, where Messenger (1999) describes it as follows:

It is that of an omniscient narrator who overviews the action, comments from any angle, and can enter minds as dissimilar as Aziz's or Ronny Heaslop's. This narrator has a distinctive voice. He is humane, cultured, sceptical, and ironic but is also capable of modulating his voice to capture a tone of lyrical aspiration and wistful sadness. (p. 56)

The events of *A Passage to India* are narrated by an unknown or unnamed narrator, where the narrator is not involved in the story that is narrated, which Genette (1980) called the "extradiegetic heterodiegetic ... a narrator in the first degree who tells a story he is absent from" (p. 248).

Despite the fact that the narrator is unspecified but the reader can observe the existence of Forster's voice in his discourses. For instance, when the narrator describes the temple and the Hindu rituals that take place in it, where the narrator describes the prayers of a worshipper in a peculiar way, as the narrator stated that:

They sang not even to the God who confronted them, but to a saint; they did not one thing which

the non-Hindu would feel dramatically correct; this approaching triumph of India was a muddle (as we call it), a frustration of reason and form. Where was the God Himself, in whose honour the congregation had gathered? Indistinguishable in the jumble of His own altar, huddled out of sight amid images of inferior descent. (Forster, 1984, p. 319)

The narrator's description of the Hindu rituals in detail and their way of praying indicates to a narrator who does not fully understand these rituals, nor the Indian nature and sanctity of the temple among the Hindus. Therefore, it is clear that this voice expresses the author himself in some event, Bakhtin describes such attitude as "the consciousness of the creator of a Polyphonic Novel is constantly and everywhere present in the novel, and is active in it to the highest degree" (Bakhtin, 1984, pp. 67–68), as the European touches are evident in the description above, but in some cases, the narrator violates what Bakhtin described as in the Polyphonic Novel, the narrator has to some degree no role in influencing the decisions of the characters nor directing the readers with or against a particular idea, but what can be observed is quite the opposite, since the narrator in *A Passage to India* is "observing, judging and commenting on the action" (Messenger, 1999, p. 57).

The reader continues to feel that the narrator is not neutral and create a sense of unreliability, as the narrator makes the reader in constant confusion and makes him wonder with which character he should sympathize with, since the narrator sometimes makes mocks of the protagonists and directs the reader as he wants, obscures some important details and explains other details, for instance, the narrator did not give the reader the opportunity to enter Miss Adela's mind to learn the truth of what happened inside Marabar caves (Spear, 1986). Another example is the deliberate description of the caves with suspenseful vocabulary that excites the reader to learn more about these caves, which he describes as "there is something unspeakable in these outposts. They are like nothing else in the world, and a glimpse of them makes the breath catch" (Forster, 1984, p. 136).

Moreover, the narrator continues to thrill the reader with a more suspenseful description of the caves, but after a few lines, he provokes a contradiction in the reader's mind, as the narrator state that "nothing, nothing attaches to them, and their reputation—for they have one—does not depend upon human speech" (Forster, 1984, p. 137), he describes the caves in frustrating descriptions without explaining the reasons or mentioning sufficient details and let it to the reader

to determine that, while other events described in clear details, which raise the feeling of the unreliability of the narrator. The many contradictory events and descriptions that the narrator tells to the reader are deliberate and intended to confuse the reader with a particular idea and to control their mind since the narrator “navigates the reader through their own passage to India seeking, but unable to decipher, some of the contradictory messages of India’s hundred voices, unable to decide whether India is a muddle or a mystery” (Messenger, 1999, p. 58).

The narrator plays his role as an omniscient by predicting events before they occur, which may affect the reader’s view of the event and thus affect his position on the current events in the novel, because it is easy to anticipate the intentions of the characters, for instance, when the narrator described the cave and stated that “the crush and stench ... there was also a terrifying echo” (Forster, 1984, p. 162), which in turn affected later events, as that directing of the narrator made Mrs. Moore radically mold her ideas, where she stated that after all “the human race would have become a single person centuries ago if marriage was any use. And all this rubbish about love, love in a church, love in a cave, as if there is the least difference, and I held up from my business over such trifles!” (Forster, 1984, p. 224). All in all, despite the continuous violation of the role of the narrator as a neutral that is explained intensively by Bakhtin, but it can be assumed that the narrator has a good intention by hiding or not clarifying certain details, as well as the complete dimming of what is in Miss Adela’s mind to the reader may be considered a kind of space for the reader to give some freedom to evaluate events and make a specific position away from the influence of the narrator in these limited contexts.

As for *Burmese Days* and through Orwell’s creative style of merging suspense with a narrative where the novel is narrated from the point of view of a third-person narrator, but there is a mixture of the narrative visions, even though the general narrative style of the novel is an omniscient narrator who knows everything and especially about Flory and U Po Kyin and going on in their mind. Therefore, the narrator in *Burmese Days* is an omniscient narrator in most of the novel’s events. For instance, the narrator was alluding to the events that would happen later to Flory when he was narrating to the reader the events that Flory went through as a child.

The narrator repeated more than once that the events that occurred during his school life “It was a formative period” (Orwell, 1974, p. 64). As an indication that the important events that Flory encountered as a child, will be reflected in the subsequent events that will occur as

a young man, which is clear evidence that the narrator knows everything. Also, in Flory’s early days in Burma, when he was immersed in his pleasures and desires, the narrator hints at the inevitable fate of Flory at the end of the novel, by stating that “He was too young to realise what this life was preparing for him” (Orwell, 1974, p. 65). Through allusion to something, without explanation as to the previous quote, it was the style that was known about Orwell, as if he puts a title of an interesting article in a newspaper to attract readers attention to read the content, where the narrative is suspenseful by recounting a simple glimpse about a certain event, to keep the reader in constant anticipation of what will happen next. Perhaps the reason is that he was a journalist, and as is well known, the most important thing in journalism is the headlines to attract the attention of readers, which can be clearly observed in most of his novels.

The narrator is not only aware of all the past, current, and subsequent events of all the characters, but he knows what goes on in the main characters’ minds of the novel, also knows their point of view and their intellectual orientations. For instance, the narrator has the ability to clarify Flory’s point of view every time he pays a visit to Dr. Veraswami’s home to talk about the matters of the Empire and the state of constant controversy between them about it, even the narrator knows the argument before it begins, for example: “Flory sat up in the long chair, partly because his prickly heat had just stabbed him in the back like a thousand needles, partly because his favorite argument with the doctor was about to begin” (Orwell, 1974, p. 39).

On the same level, the narrator moves to what is in Dr. Veraswami’s mind and explains to the reader in detail all his reactions and internal feelings about Flory’s views of as if he is merged with him as one character, where the narrator describes one of his reactions against Flory’s point of view by stating that “Flory’s seditious opinions shocked him, but they also gave him a certain shuddering pleasure, such as a pious believer will take in hearing the Lord’s Prayer repeated backwards” (Orwell, 1974, p. 40). The same situation for the rest of the characters, where the narrator is an omniscient who knows everything, but on the other hand the narrator is least omniscient with some characters and events where he recounts only what the character knows, and often this happens with what is going on in Elizabeth’s mind, where the narrator did not give a clear idea of her views or intentions either with her relationship with Flory that changes and fluctuates all the time or with her relationship with Verrall. Thus, the narrator’s role was limited to what Elizabeth knows without having a vision from behind on her.

However, the narrator in *Burmese Days* adheres to what Bakhtin described as the "freedom and independence from the external environment" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 12), and the author's authority where he became equal to the rest of the novel's characters. "Bakhtin takes the novels of Dostoevsky as his central example of the polyphonic text, as he argues that here character and narrator exist on the same plane, the latter does not take precedence over the former but has equal right to speak" (Vice, 1998, p. 112). Consequently, Bakhtin's belief that all novels characterized as polyphonic should take Dostoevsky's works as an example or a cornerstone on which they should base on.

In *Burmese Days*, still, there is a violation of the Polyphonic Novel design, when the narrator judges and criticizes some of the characters' racist behaviors. As the author's ideological character is clearly shown through the narrator in such events, which can be observed in the narrator's criticism of Ellis's racist behavior towards the natives, as the narrator described him as "at all times he was spiteful and perverse, but his violent fits of rage were soon over and were never apologized for" (Orwell, 1974, p. 25). Thus, the narrator was not committed to impartiality with Ellis in every racist attitude he does towards the natives and continues to criticize and judge him in every racist act.

The Plurality of Independent Voices and Consciousnesses in *A Passage to India* and *Burmese Days*

The characters in the Polyphonic Novel have equal freedom where each character expresses its ideas and ideology, which may be against the author's ideology. In other words, the author must not outweigh a certain character's ideology over another, who may be close to the author's ideological beliefs. Bakhtin explains the democratic relationship between the hero or the main characters and the author on the one hand, and the expression of their ideology and ideas on the other hand by illustrating the following:

The hero becomes relatively free and independent, because everything in the author's design that had defined him and, as it were, sentenced him, everything that had qualified him to be once and for all a completed image of reality, now no longer functions as a form for finalizing him, but as the material of his self-consciousness (Bakhtin, 1984, pp. 51–52).

In *A Passage to India*, it may seem clear through the three sections of the novel, the Mosque, the Caves, and the Temple, that there is a plurality of Consciousnesses and therefore a plurality of independent voices, as each

section has a description of India that represents the point of view of a large segment under those three titles, as it observed that there is equality by the author in presenting the views of different ideologies and ideas. Furthermore, the novel reflects the author's own experience in India, so his focus was on describing and defining India rather than the focus on heroes (Nafi, 2016, p. 15). Thus, the author wants the reader to indulge in a trip to India as a painted landscape, where the reader gets acquainted with the characters through this landscape, in other words, there is no direct focus on the characters as much as the focus is on the plot and the evolution of events through which the reader is fully informed with all characteristics of the characters, and this is one of the modernist elements of the modern novel.

The author gave a margin of freedom for the characters to express their inner thoughts without interference from him or the narrator on more than one occasion, for instance, the conversation between Dr. Aziz and Hamdulla about English women can clarify that, as it shows their point of view that it represents their ideology and could be against the author's views, for its generalization nature, where Hamidullah stated that "all Englishwomen are haughty and venal" (Forster, 1984, p. 9), so it is logically natural to find an objection, comment or criticism on that statement since the author is an Englishman. Moreover, we do not find a serious criticism by the author or narrator against their ideas, which proves that there is freedom of expression granted by the author to his novel's characters, where we find that the views of the author and the characters are presented on one level without observing any marginalization or exclusion of other opinions, Bakhtin describes this relationship between the author and the character's ideologies as "a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 6).

Another example worth mentioning is the way the author presented the beliefs of Islam through Dr. Aziz, as well as the description of the Hindu man, where the narrator described both realistically to reflect the ethnic diversity in India without supporting one on another, for instance, when Dr. Aziz shouted at Mrs. Moore when she entered the mosque without taking off her shoes unintentionally, where Dr. Aziz stated that "Madam, this is a mosque, you have no right here at all; you should have taken off your shoes; this is a holy place for Moslems" (Forster, 1984, pp. 17–18). On the other hand, the narrator conveys integrated images of the Hindu man Professor Godbole with impartiality, by stating that:

He was elderly and wizen with a grey moustache and grey-blue eyes, and his complexion was as fair as a European's. He wore a turban that looked like a purple macaroni, coat, waistcoat, dhoti, socks with clocks ... The ladies were interested in him, and hoped that he would say something about religion. But he only ate – ate and ate, smiling, never letting his eyes catch sight of his hand. (Forster, 1984, pp. 76–77)

Furthermore, despite this description, which some may consider biased, but the narrator remains neutral to convey the real situation of that period in India. In this regard, Bakhtin believes that despite some of the criticisms that the narrator does from time to time about the characters attitudes or the narrator way of describing their personality, that did not affect the course of the events they perform, since there is a “plurality of equally authoritative ideological positions” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 18).

The author portrayed the state of rudeness and racism practiced by British colonialism against the indigenous people on more than one occasion neutrally, where the author conveyed the image without any attempts to beautify the image of the colonizer, and leave the floor to the characters to represent their inner thoughts and true feelings. These hideous practices that made Dr. Aziz, one of the most British-loving characters, change to be the most man who hates the British Raj, where all kinds of insults were practiced against him in prison and court, just because he was an Indian, as he stated that “I have become anti-British, and ought to have done so sooner, it would have saved me numerous misfortunes” (Forster, 1984, p. 279). Through the narrator, the author continues to convey the ugliness of the British Raj experience in India, which made Dr. Aziz wish for a place where an “Englishmen cannot insult me anymore” (Forster, 1984, p. 280).

In the last part of the novel, the Temple, the author beautifully explains the real India, which he was telling as if he is an Indian, where the narrator describes one of the palaces through which he refers to India, as he describes it by stating that “It was of beautiful hard white stucco, but its pillars and vaulting could scarcely be seen behind colored rags, iridescent balls, chandeliers of opaque pink glass, and murky photographs framed crookedly” (Forster, 1984, p. 318). This quote could be one of the types of evidence that confirms the multiplicity of voices in the novel. Such confirmation was formed by the previous knowledge of author's background by the researcher, where Forster loved India and opposed to the policy of the British Empire and its effects that reflected on Indian people, the narrator was not Indian, though the author made the reader think that as if the one who describes India is

more like the true Indian. Consequently, the author created another voice different from the other voices mentioned earlier. However, the accurate description makes the reader go deep into the mystery of India as if the one who wrote it was Indian because of the style he used described it. This makes the reader convinced that there are several points of view that have been put forward, and they are not limited to one a point of view or a particular ideology that may criticize and present errors and others that embellish reality, but as if there is a large painted landscape and the reader is free to choose the part he likes.

Moreover, in *Burmese Days* Flory is the voice of the author rebelling against the injustice and persecution of the European colonizers against the Burmese. Where all of Orwell's rebellious and anti-colonial ideas and his traumatic experience in Burma as an imperial police officer and his coexistence the persecution suffered by the Burmese at the hands of the colonialists are manifested. Bakhtin describes “the consciousness of the creator of a Polyphonic Novel is constantly and everywhere present in the novel, and is active in it to the highest degree” (Bakhtin, 1984, pp. 67–68), and sometimes his voice merges with a character that expresses his consciousness and ideas as with Flory, but to achieve polyphony, must fulfill a prerequisite which is that “the author's consciousness does not transform others' consciousnesses into objects, and does not give them secondhand and finalizing definitions” (Bakhtin, 1984, pp. 67–68). Therefore, it can be said that the whole idea of *Burmese Days* is summarized in the dialogues that took place between Flory and Dr. Veraswami, who represents the enslaved character who is trying as much as possible to imitate the colonist in all their behaviors, as his greatest wish is to be a member of the European Club.

In one of Flory's visits to Dr. Veraswami's house and his usual enthusiasm for debate with him in the veranda of his house, Flory clearly and explicitly stated the goal of the European colonialism in Burma, in his answering of Dr. Veraswami's question about the lie that the European are living, where he stated that:

The lie that we're here to uplift our poor black brothers instead of to rob them. I suppose it's a natural enough lie. But it corrupts us, it corrupts us in ways you can't imagine. There's an everlasting sense of being a sneak and a liar that torments us and drives us to justify ourselves night and day. It's at the bottom of half our beastliness to the natives. We Anglo-Indians could be almost bearable if we'd only admit that we're thieves and go on thieving without any humbug (Orwell, 1974, p. 39).

This statement is considered a clear manifestation of the author's voice, as Orwell pushes all his indignant ideas on colonialism through the character of Flory, to put the reader in a position that makes him fully aware of injustice and oppression during that period in Burma, and in return gives the reader full freedom to adopt the point of view that suits his perceptions. By presenting the ideologies of other characters at the same level of freedom in putting forward ideas, that are totally opposite to the author and Flory's ideology. This can be observed through the reactions of many characters, including Dr. Veraswami, who "grew agitated, as he always did when Flory criticized the Club members" (Orwell, 1974, p. 38), or the colonial empire that enslaves him. As Bakhtin argued, the hero of the Polyphonic Novel enjoys "extraordinary independence in the structure of the work; it sounds, as it were, alongside the author's word and in a special way combines both with it and with the full and equally valid voices of other characters" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 7), but without giving him any superiority over the rest of the characters in imposing his ideology on them, which was observed in Flory's character throughout the events of the novel, as he didn't try to exploit the author's authority to pass his ideas.

Whereas, Dr. Veraswami has a strong presence and role in the novel's plot, as he represents an important intellectual and ideological dimension created by colonialism, in which he conveying a true image of the flattering Oriental figure to the European. However, Orwell has always contempt such kind of indigenous and thus he tried to present its characteristics as it is, with the utmost independence, as he did not interfere at all in his actions or impose his views on him but he showed him as it is, to leave the reader the freedom or the role to judge him. In addition, such techniques come in line to what Bakhtin brought in defining the characters of the Polyphonic Novel. He emphasized that the "plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices ... rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 6).

Dr. Veraswami continues to attack Flory's ideas and admonish him and remind him of all the favors that the Europeans did for the Burmese, by stating that "Mr. Flory, you must not speak so! Why iss [sic] it that always you are abusing the pukka sahibs, ass [sic] you call them? They are the salt of the earth. Consider the great things they have done — consider the great administrators who have made British India what it is" (Orwell, 1974, p. 38), and even goes further by describing Flory that his views only bring chaos to his country,

as "an English gentleman of high gifts and character — to be uttering seditious opinions that are worthy of the Burmese Patriot!" (Orwell, 1974, p. 39). Flory repeats his words over and over in anger at Dr. Veraswami's desperate defense of those who colonized him, trying to convince him that "The British Empire is simply a device for giving trade monopolies to the English — or rather to gangs of Jews and Scotchmen" (Orwell, 1974, p. 40). But in spite of these arguments and the attempts to convince the doctor about the reality of the colonizer, Flory could not influence his love for the Europeans.

The doctor was a model for many Indians who considered the Europeans as the saviors who saved them from superstition, diseases, and epidemics, and help in teaching young Burmese culture, trade, modern agriculture, and hunting. But in fact, the only thing that the Europeans did, as Flory explaining is that "we teach the young men to drink whisky and play football, I admit, but precious little else. Look at our schools — factories for cheap clerks. We've never taught a single useful manual trade to the Indians" (Orwell, 1974, pp. 40–41). The character of Dr. Veraswami and even Flory was contrary to the logic where "was a topsyturvy affair, for the Englishman was bitterly anti-English and the Indian fanatically loyal. Dr. Veraswami had a passionate admiration for the English, which a thousand snubs from Englishmen had not shaken" (Orwell, 1974, pp. 39–40). But regardless of all this controversy that illustrates the doctor's fragile obsequious character. The author wanted to make the reader memorable the kindness of the Burmese people and other positive qualities, which Orwell could not hide as despite all these flaws he described the doctor as "notorious for his soft-heartedness, and all the beggars in Kyauktada made him their target" (Orwell, 1974, p. 44), in the sense that positive qualities remained adjacent to the indigenous people, even if among them people like the behaviors Dr. Veraswami.

However, Orwell wanted to highlight the colonial side, racial discrimination against indigenous people, and expose the indigenous people who are submissive and accomplices for the colonization authority. Orwell's focus wasn't on the common Burmese, but rather his focus was on those who are close to the colonialists with influence. Thus, "for such an experience to be manifest in these stories there should be sympathetic portrayals of Burmese and Indian characters, something that is in fact entirely absent, having instead their wholesale denigration" (Melia, 2015, p. 14). All the local characters in the novel represented the bad side of the natives, and the same applies to U Po Kyin, the opportunistic villain, who can do anything for his own good. Where his dream was from the first moment, he

saw the British troops parade in Mandalay is “to fight on the side of the British, to become a parasite upon them, had been his ruling ambition, even as a child” (Orwell, 1974, p. 6). U Po Kyin’s unorthodox character plays an important pivotal role in forming the structure of the novel, in which the author begins to introduce the materialistic colonialism of the British Empire to the reader, through which the reader realizes the identity of the Burmese with high-ranking positions and the influence of colonialism on them (Amir, 2020). Therefore, U Po Kyin’s voice is the main engine of all events of the novel through the cunning intrigues he spun against the other characters and equally important as Flory and the rest of the other main characters.

CONCLUSION

The personal experience was present in *A Passage to India* and *Burmese Days*, where both authors conveyed what they observed in India. However, Forster and Orwell have witnessed the ugliness of imperialist colonial policies on India and their indigenous people, so there was a need to highlight these practices from more than one angle, since “the multileveledness and contradictoriness of social reality were present as an objective fact of the epoch” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 27), which made the necessity to use the style of the Polyphonic Novel present in most modern novels. Therefore, it is important to study the credibility in conveying these events that witnessed a crucial period of the British Raj. Thus, it was interesting to study the plurality of voices in the novel, and the extent of its impact on the reader, and how it manipulated his thoughts and opinions on the issues raised by both novels.

The role of the omniscient narrator was prominent in both novels, since in *A Passage to India*, the narrator commented, criticized, and judged some actions and thoughts of the characters that might limit the freedom of the reader to decide which ideology he or she adopts. In spite of that, there were some actions in which the narrator adheres to the role of neutrality and does not give any judgment on it, where Forster was in line with Bakhtin in many occasions, in the fact that “The character is treated as ideologically authoritative and independent” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 5), when the narrator describing its actions. For instance, when the narrator intentionally blurred what was inside Miss Adela’s mind and didn’t show it to the reader, using a “direct discourse without conventional orthographic cues” (Lothe, 2005, p. 46). In addition to many situations in which the narrator was like the light that illuminates the reader’s way to lead him impartially to learn about the traditions and religions of India and their people closely. While in *Burmese Days* the narrator’s impact on the reader was less than his influence on *A Passage*

to India, where the narrator’s comments, criticism, and judgments were limited to Ellis’s ideology, the anti-indigenous and pro-colonial. Thus, *Burmese Days* is a Polyphonic Novel with more Independent Voices and Consciousnesses than *A Passage to India* in terms of the omniscient narrator.

In a nutshell, *A Passage to India* and *Burmese Days* are multi-voiced or Polyphonic Novels, in which the author gave almost absolute freedom to the characters to put forward their ideas and beliefs even if they contradict the authors’ position, where we can observe the opposing and pro-colonial voice in both novels, in addition to the fact that religious and intellectual beliefs have been presented clearly and explicitly without any distortion, support or attack to a large extent in both novels. Moreover, all the aggressive practices that were imposed on indigenous peoples were fairly highlighted, and the decision was left transparently to the reader to adopt the various ideologies presented in both novels freely without great influence from the authors on the reader to adopt their personal ideologies.

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