

Sosyal Bilimlerde Yeni Arařtırmalar-IV



Editörler

Doç. Dr. Emel İSLAMOĞLU
Dr. Elif ALP

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ÖNSÖZ

Sosyal bilimler, sürekli kendini yenileyerek birikimli olarak ilerlemektedir. Bu açıdan, sosyal bilimlerin birçok disiplini içerisinde yapılacak olan çalışmalar ile birlikte kolektif bilginin sağlayacağı birliktelik, sosyal bilimlerin ilerlemesine katkı sağlayacaktır.

Günümüzde yaşanan post-modern dönüşümle genel olarak toplumları ve insan davranışları inceleyen sosyal bilimlerin kapsamı genişlemektedir. Bu bağlamda, post-modern toplumlarda yaşamın her alanının anlaşılması ve araştırılabilmesi açısından sosyal bilimlerin farklı disiplinlerini inceleyen ve değerlendiren eserlerin birlikte ele alınması gerekmektedir. Çünkü sosyal bilimlerde bir olguya ya da olaya birçok etken tesir etmektedir. Bu sebeple, sosyal bilimlerin içerisindeki farklı disiplinlerdeki çalışmalara aynı anda yer vermenin önemi artmaktadır. Böylece, sosyal bilimlerin farklı disiplinlerinde yapılan araştırmalar arasındaki kopukluk da önlenmiş olacaktır.

Ayrıca sosyal bilimlerde, bilim insanlarının farklı alanlarda yaptıkları çalışmalarını ortaya koymak, gelecekteki disiplinler arası çalışmalar için de önemli bir altyapı sağlamaktadır. İşte "Sosyal Bilimlerde Yeni Araştırmalar - 4" kitabı, bu amaçla ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu eser, Kültür, Sanat ve Sosyal Yaşamdan İzler; Sosyal Yaşamda Edebiyat ve Eğitim ve İktisadi Hayat olmak üzere dört ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Kültür, Sanat ve Sosyal Yaşamdan İzler bölümünde 7; Sosyal Yaşamda Edebiyat ve Eğitim bölümünde 15 ve İktisadi Hayat bölümünde 6 olmak üzere 28 yazı bulunmaktadır. Bu eser, sosyal bilimlerde yeni çalışmalar yapmak isteyen bilim insanları için ışık tutacak ve fayda sağlayacak önemli çalışmalardan biridir. Çalışmada yer alan yazarlar, büyük bir emek harcayarak bu eseri bilim dünyasına kazandırmışlardır. Bu vesileyle eseri ortaya çıkaran tüm yazarlara teşekkür ediyor, bilim insanlarına ve bilim camiasına faydalı olmasını ümit ediyoruz.

Daha nice eserlerde buluşmak dileğiyle...

Doç. Dr. Emel İSLAMOĞLU
Dr. Elif ALP

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A DISCOURSE OF 'OTHERING' IN E. M. FORSTER'S *A PASSAGE TO INDIA*¹

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Abstract

Due to industrialization and mechanization in Europe, there was the need to sell overproduction, find new markets and buy larger amounts of raw materials at cheapest price. For these reasons, in terms of colonialism, most developed European countries occupied territories especially in areas with no political and economic structures from the 16th century to the 20th century. In addition to economic and political reasons for Western colonialism, there was the so-called 'civilizing mission' because Western people believed in superiority of their civilization. The Western ideology has produced arbitrary geographic separation through drawing boundaries between itself and 'other', and referred to 'other's land as the 'Orient' and 'the land of barbarians'. In this sense, a discourse of the 'othering' has been produced especially in the colonial period and in literature. In this context, E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) allows readers to analyse how colonialism impacts on gender, class, culture and race. It concerns the relations between the English and the native population of India during the colonial period in which Britain ruled India. In the novel, *A Passage to India*, one of the major characters named Dr Aziz, like many of the other Indians, struggles with the problem of the English in India. On the one hand, he appreciates some of the modernizing influences that the West has brought to India; on the other hand, he feels that the presence of the English degrades and oppresses his people. The British Empire is portrayed as a fundamentally racist institution that excludes and subjugates others. There are racial lines, with the white Europeans on one side, and everyone else on the other. Indians are referred to as the 'Oriental' and 'Other' who are stereotypically considered to be undeveloped, ignorant and wild as opposed to the intellectual, civilized, and progressive Westerner. Indians are considered unable to rule themselves, essentially needing the British Empire to help them toward civilization.

Keywords: The Orient, othering, racism, E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India*.

¹ This book chapter is an extended study of abstract paper titled "The Concept of 'Other' in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*", verbally presented at the 8th International Scientific Research Congress on 22-23 August 2020 in Hattuşa, Çorum, Turkey.

1. Introduction

Each human being is expected to attain the necessary knowledge acquired through reason to overcome inequality of natural differences among people. In this way, social progress is possible when there is an enlightened civilization without superstitions and prejudices. According to Condorcet, increasing harmonization of world culture would lead to progress of history so that human beings would be a truly cosmopolitan whole instead of being divided into many different cultural groups (Outram, 2013:65). When industrialization and mechanization in Europe developed, there was the need to sell overproduction, find new markets and buy larger amounts of raw materials at cheapest price. For this need, most developed European countries occupied territories especially in areas with no political and economic structures from the 16th century to the 20th century in terms of colonialism. In addition to economic and political reasons for Western colonialism, there was the so-called 'civilizing mission' because Western people believed in the superiority of their civilization. The Western ideology has produced arbitrary geographic separation through drawing boundaries between itself and 'other', and referred to 'other's land as the 'Orient' and 'the land of barbarians'. The phenomenon of 'othering' means that a person distances oneself by a system of classification (Bernasconi, 2012:152). The term 'other' refers to category of people who are seen as different from the dominant social group (Murfin and Ray, 2009:359). In this sense, a discourse of the 'othering' has been produced especially in the colonial period and in literature. The term, othering, in terms of colonial studies is employed by Edward W. Said in his work *Orientalism* (1979). Through this discourse, the East is considered as the opposite of the West. The East is also othered to express the superiority of the West's identity. According to this discourse, East Asian, South Asian and Middle Eastern cultures are considered as irrational, static and underdeveloped as the opposite of the Western cultures which are rational, dynamic and developed. Ania Loomba says that Said's thesis of Orientalism is a political vision of reality considering a binary opposition between the familiar Europe as the West and the strange orient as the East (1998:47). In the same way, John McLeod expresses that in Orientalism while the West has a superior rank, the Orient is considered as the 'other' (2000:41). The West's hegemony uses orientalism to show the East as the inferior 'other' of the West in order to reinforce the superior civilization of the West (Moore-Gilbert, 1997:39). Edward W. Said states his main conception of the term, orientalism, as follows:

Although the West uses orientalism as the discipline to learn, discover, and practise the Orient Edward W. Said expresses that he has been using that word as a collection of vocabularies, images and dreams available to everyone who tries to say what lies the east of the dividing line (1979:73).

According to Edward W. Said, the discourse of orientalism is a means of creating the desired reality to recreate the non-Western world: "Western cultural institutions are responsible for the creation of those 'others', the Orientals, whose very difference from the Occident helps establish that binary opposition by which Europe's own identity can be established" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 2001:63). The same idea is supported by Elleke Boehmer who claims that the European is represented in relation to an 'other' (2005:77). In this sense, colonized peoples are described as less civilized, less human, wild man, or headless mass in opposite to the superiority of Europe. Therefore, colonized people have a role in describing European individuality. According to Ania Loomba, the custom of othering the Orient world takes precedence of colonialism because it is based on the inexorable difference between white and black, self and other in terms of being civilized (1998:57). Edward W. Said says that the creation of 'others' is seen in all societies:

Each age and society re-creates its 'others'. Far from a static thing then, identity of self or of 'other' is a much worked-over historical, social, intellectual, and political process that takes place as a contest involving individuals and institutions in all societies (1979:332).

Edward W. Said expresses that defining of identity and the 'other' is grounded on an awareness of difference from one another. In order to establish binary separation between the colonizer and colonized in colonial discourse, the colonized subject is defined as 'other' in terms of the colonizing culture (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1998:169). Thus, in order to achieve the the colonizer's hegemony of over the colonized people, the specification of the two sides of the colonial encounter through discourse is used. Edward W. Said expresses that a single Oriental cannot escape being an Oriental because "an Oriental lives in the Orient, lives a life of Oriental ease, in a state of Oriental despotism and sensuality, imbued with a feeling of Oriental fatalism" (1979:102). John McLeod defines the main stereotypes of the Orient saying that the Orient is timeless (backwards), strange (abnormal), feminine (submissive), and degenerate (untrustworthiness) which opens the way to the following conclusion that the Orient needs the West to become civilized towards the higher moral ideals well-preserved in the West (2000:44-46). The dis-

course of 'other' together with the aforementioned stereotypes has a function in othering the Orient and the Orientals as it seen in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*.

2. A Discourse of 'Othering' in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*

A Passage to India (1924) is one of the most well-known novels of E. M. Forster. It allows readers to analyze how colonialism impacts on gender, class, culture and race in terms of the discourse of 'othering'. It concerns the relations between the English and the native population of India during the colonial period in which Britain ruled India. It is set against the background of the British Raj in India and the independence movement against it during the first quarter of the 20th century. It also depicts the colonial times of India when it was not possible for the English and Indians to make friends in India. *A Passage to India* starts with the journey of two English ladies, Mrs Moore and her friend Adela Quested, to India. Mrs Moore visits her son, Ronny Heaslop, who is a city magistrate in India in order to make Adela and Ronny meet and make their way to marriage. Adela Quested and Mrs Moore meet Cyril Fielding who is an English principal in a local college and Aziz who is a Muslim doctor in India. Dr Aziz's falsely asserted assault on Adela Quested changes the story's progression by destroying the group's attempts to socialize and reinforcing the discourse of 'othering' during the colonial period.

Mrs Moore who is an elderly English woman meets Dr Aziz, a Moslem physician, in a mosque at Chandrapore. When Dr Aziz warns Mrs Moore against wearing shoes in the mosque, he sees that she does not wear any and says that a few ladies take the trouble, especially if thinking no one is there to see. Mrs Moore answers, "That makes no difference. God is here" (Forster, 1979:14). Due to her warm behaviour with her sensitivity, Aziz understands that Mrs Moore has just arrived in India. When Mrs Moore expresses that she would wish to invite him to the Club, Aziz thinks that kindness and friendship may be a solution to the problem of othering. After their arrival when Ronny's mother Mrs Moore's and his fiance Adela want to get to know Indians, Mr Turton who is the governor of Chandrapore offers to arrange a Bridge Party for the ladies to have a chance to meet the Indians. Adela Quested who is fresh from England expresses her wish: "I want to see the *real* India" (Forster, 1979:18). The Indian image in Adela's mind is a romantic one and she looks for exoticism. Since Adela wishes to observe the Indians from a safe distance, she considers herself as the subject othering the Indians as the object.

By going to extremes in othering the Indians, Mrs Callendar who is Major Callendar's wife thinks that the Indians do not deserve even to live and says at the Bridge Party: "Why, the kindest thing one can do to a native is to let him die" (Forster, 1979:20). Mr Turton who is the governor of Chandrapore tells Adela that he and his wife do not have social interactions with the Indians: "Well, we don't come across them socially" (Forster, 1979:21). He also wants to organize a Bridge Party for Adela and Mrs Moore to meet some Indians socially in order to bridge the gulf between East and West. His expression includes the aspect of othering the Indians by defining them as the East. Adela gets excited to see Indians and when she hears that Mrs Moore met an Indian man in a mosque the night before, she says "this sounds very romantic" (Forster, 1979:23). Turton's wife Mrs Turton expresses her hatred of Indians at the Bridge Party and tries to convince the newcomers of this idea: "You're superior to them, anyway. Don't forget that. You're superior to everyone in India" (Forster, 1979:33). Similarly, Ronny who has prejudices against Indians has a stereotype of the cunning Indian in his mind. When his mother, Mrs Moore, brings up Adela's worry that the Anglo-Indians do not behave pleasantly towards the Indians, Ronny brings out this stereotypical image and says, "we're not out here for the purpose of behaving pleasantly! [...] We're out here to do justice and keep the peace" (Forster, 1979:41). Ronny who gains power from his position in the imperial structure justifies his behaviour by otherizing the Indians. The Westerners justify colonization by the idea that backwards, abnormal, submissive and untrustworthiness Orientals need to be ruled, civilized and raised to a higher standard of life. Mrs Moore who expresses being kind and pleasant to the Indians does not assume a superior role over them and says that "God has put us on earth to love our neighbours and to show it, [...] even in India, to see how we are succeeding" (Forster, 1979:42).

Mrs Moore's faith in God and her belief of unity prevents her from othering the Indians. As Mrs Moore and Adela want to meet the Indians, Cyril Fielding, the headmaster of the college in Chandrapore, organizes a Tea Party for them in his place together with his Indian colleague Godbole. Cyril Fielding who does not often go to the Club prefers to come together with Indians mostly because "he is partially immune to the influence of the imperialistic power relationship because he works in education rather than government" (Hawkins, 1979:55). He is described as an exception to the corrupted English people in India. Fielding does not otherize any human beings because of his belief as follows:

The world [...] is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of goodwill plus culture and intelligence. [...] He had no racial feeling [...] because he had matured in a different atmosphere, where the herd-instinct does not flourish (Forster, 1979:52).

Not knowing Dr Aziz personally, Fielding who he has heard a lot about him sends an invitation letter him for the tea party. Fielding was dressing after a bath when Aziz arrives at Fielding's place. Fielding shouts from the bedroom: "Please make yourself at home" (Forster, 1979:53). Seeing that Fielding's collar stud is broken, Aziz gives his own collar stud to him to return Fielding's friendly treatment and they shook hands while smiling. Adela Quested considers Dr Aziz as the representative of all Indians: "In her ignorance, she regarded him as 'India'" (Forster, 1979:60). When Ronny goes to Fielding's house, he finds out that Adela is alone with the Indians. When Aziz tries to explain the situation, Ronny ignores him: "Ronny took no notice [. . .]. The only link he could be conscious of with an Indian was the official [. . .]. As private individuals he forgot them" (Forster, 1979:65). Ronny who has never met any Indians socially ignores and thus otherizes them. Ronny considers Aziz a bounder: "Well . . . I'm the sun-dried bureaucrat, [. . .] I don't like to see an English girl left smoking with two Indians. [. . .] Can't you see that fellow's a bounder?" (Forster, 1979:66). Later on, when Dr Aziz gets ill, Fielding visits him. Their friendship is expressed by the narrator: "They were friends, brothers. [. . .] They trusted one another, affection had triumphed for once in a way" (Forster, 1979:105). It is understood that their relationship is grounded on mutual kindness which prevents othering. Here, the superiority of the English over the Indians is surpassed because Fielding and Dr Aziz calls each other by their first names.

During the journey to Marabar Caves which represents the 'real' India, Adela murmurs that she likes Dr Aziz: "Nice creature he is" (Forster, 1979:122). Even when Adela and Aziz wander around the caves, she thinks about him: "What a handsome little Oriental he was, and no doubt his wife and children were beautiful too [. . .]. Probably this man had several wives - Mohammedans always insist on their full four, according to Mrs Turton" (Forster, 1979:135). Here, Mrs Turton's claim means that all Muslim men insist to have four wives. This view reflects an orientalist mind stereotyping and othering Muslims. Adela, considering Aziz to represent a totalized Muslim man image, thinks that he may have many wives. She does not consider Aziz as an individual who may have his own principles. Adela asks Aziz if he has more than one wife: "Have you one wife or more than one?" (Forster, 1979:136). Aziz who

considered this question as an insult goes into one of the caves in order to come to his sense. Not being aware of othering Aziz, Adela also enters another cave. Due to the dark and mysterious atmosphere, Adela has a psychological breakdown together with a terrible echo. Because of her ideas of Aziz as a handsome man and polygamy, she believes that Aziz has touched her in the darkness of the cave. The dominant ideology reproduces this stereotypical image leading to her false accusation of Aziz of sexual assault. This is another stereotype in Orientalist discourse in which the Oriental is presented as "sexually mysterious and tempting" (McLeod, 2000:45). Adela is possessed with Aziz's charm and her stereotypical perception of the Orientals. Upon this incident, Mr McBryde who is the superintendent of police in Chandrapore expresses his othering view: "All unfortunate natives are criminals at heart, for the simple reason that they live south of latitude 30" (Forster, 1979:148). During Aziz's imprisonment, Fielding who does not believe Adela's charging insists on Aziz's innocence: "I believe Dr Aziz to be innocent" (Forster, 1979:168). When Ronny asks Mrs Moore's opinion of Aziz's assault of Adela, she reveals her opinion: "Of course he is innocent" (Forster, 1979:181). Mrs Moore trusts Aziz and does not otherize him. Due to this unfortunate incidents, Mrs Moore who loses all her enthusiasm about knowing India takes the road to England just before the trial of Aziz, but she dies on her voyage on the boat. Mrs Turton's feelings of superiority, prejudices, humiliation in terms of othering of Indians are revealed when she talks to the Englishmen in the club after Aziz's assault of Adela in the caves:

You're weak, weak, weak. Why, they ought to crawl from here to the caves on their hands and knees whenever an Englishwoman's in sight, they oughtn't to be spoken to, they ought to be spat at, they ought to be ground into the dust (Forster, 1979:192).

Although a specific incident is concerned only with Dr Aziz, Mrs Turton wishes all Indian men to be humiliated. During the trial in order to prove Aziz's assault of Adela, Mr McBryde, the superintendent of police in Chandrapore, asserts that "the darker races are physically attracted by the fairer, but not vice versa – not a matter for bitterness this, not a matter for abuse, but just a fact which any scientific observer will confirm" (Forster, 1979:194). His words serve only as othering the Indians on the grounds of their darker race. After the trial, Adela does not wish to meet other Anglo-Indians. Therefore, Fielding hosts Adela in his place for her safety, but he takes up a position on Aziz's side and says to Adela: "To put it frankly, I belong to the other side in this ghastly

affair" (Forster, 1979:211). Aziz is also aware of Fielding's trust and care for him during this process. After the stressful times of trial, Aziz grows hostile towards the English. Without even listening to what Fielding has to say about the topic of Adela paying compensation money, Aziz who breaks into the conversation says: "The approval of your compatriots no longer interests me, I have become anti-British" (Forster, 1979:222). Since he is otherized and humiliated badly by the Anglo-Indians during the trial, Aziz takes a position against them. After Adela tells the truth in the court, Fielding asks Aziz to let Adela off paying and tries to convince him to appreciate her. These debates lead to the first racial feelings of Fielding against Aziz. When Fielding returns to England to have things to do there, Aziz convinced by the rumour that Fielding and Adela are going to marry there. However, Fielding marries Mrs Moore's daughter Stella. Although Aziz learns the truth that Fielding has married Stella, not Adela, he says "I wish no Englishman or Englishwoman to be my friend" (Forster, 1979:270). When Fielding and Dr Aziz go for their last ride, Fielding realizes the fact that they are not to meet each other anymore:

Socially they had no meeting-place. He had thrown in his lot with Anglo-India by marrying a countrywoman, and he was acquiring some of its limitations [. . .]. Would he today defy all his own people for the sake of a stray Indian? [. . .] They must inevitably part (Forster, 1979:284-285).

After his marriage to an English lady and promotion, Fielding gets a new position in the colonial structure. He is about to transform into the typical Anglo-Indian profile described in the novel. Fielding begins to be corrupted because of his position as a school inspector who becomes associated with the government (Hawkins, 1982:55). Mohammad Shaheen reminds us that Fielding's failure is "a failure within a complex context of politics surrounding him" (2004:109). When Fielding's position changes, he obeys the ideology imposed by the colonial structure, and so, he integrates into the colonial system. After Aziz and Fielding have a long conversation on politics during their ride, Aziz sees Fielding as a part of the British Raj: "Down with the English anyhow. That's certain. [. . .] We shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then, [. . .] you and I shall be friends" (Forster, 1979:287-288). Although Aziz, as a doctor who is considered to be the educated classes, tries to bridge the gap between English and Indian, he is categorised as 'other'. Since Aziz and Fielding cannot refrain from othering in a colonial context, Aziz expresses that a friendship between an Englishman and an Indian man can be possible only when the English are made to leave India.

3. Conclusion

Orientalism provides a discourse of 'othering' in which Eastern culture is considered inferior to Western culture. The people of the East are seen timeless (backwards), strange (abnormal), feminine (submissive), and degenerate (untrustworthiness) which open the way to the following conclusion that the Orient is inferior to the West and needs the West to become civilized towards the higher moral ideals well-preserved in the West. Therefore, the Western people otherize the Eastern people. *A Passage to India* describes the relationships between the English and the Indians during the British Raj which are determined by colonialism. When the relationship between the officials in the city of Chandrapore and the Indians are analysed, the officials and their wives represent the maximum extent of othering in a colonial setting. Their attitudes of othering do not allow any relationship to develop between the English and the Indians. Although Ronny Heaslop is new in India as the British city magistrate in Chandrapore enlarges the gap between himself and the Indians by otherizing them and justifies his attitudes due to his position in the colonial structure. Aziz, as a doctor who is considered to be the educated class, tries to bridge the gap between English and Indian, he is categorised as 'other'. Although Adela shows a positive attitude towards the Indians at first, she becomes affected by the orientalist discourse which imposes the stereotypical images of the Indians. Due to these stereotypical images, she sees Aziz as an 'other' and accuses Aziz of sexual assault. As it is seen during the trial, a discourse of 'othering' prevents meaningful relationships. Although Mrs Moore and Aziz come from different religious backgrounds, their common understanding of spirituality is viewed as a relationship unspoiled by othering. However, she cannot oppose the pressure by the Anglo-Indians and decides to leave India. Aziz and Fielding establish a good friendship at first. However, Fielding transforms into the typical Anglo-Indian profile after his marriage to an English lady and promotion in the colonial structure associated with the government. Since Aziz and Fielding cannot refrain from othering in a colonial context, Aziz expresses that a friendship between an Englishman and an Indian man can be possible only when the English are made to leave India.

A Passage to India poses 'othering' as a hindrance for friendships to develop between the English and the Indians in a colonial context. The only relation is in the way as domination of the English and submission of the Indians in a colonised nation. When Aziz as an Indian doctor tries to bridge relationship between the English and Indians, the discourse of 'othering' is always faced.

Obstacles to friendship are observed when there is officialdom in a society. Therefore, human relationship is reduced to colonial rulers' political and economic interest. Indians are referred to as the 'Oriental' and 'other' who are stereotypically considered to be undeveloped, ignorant and wild as opposed to the intellectual, civilized, and progressive Westerner. Indians are considered unable to rule themselves, essentially needing the British Empire to help them toward civilization.

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