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The Depiction of Cities in English Novels: A Postcolonial Perspective on E.M. Forster's A Passage to India

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Statement of the authorship

Statement of the authorship

I, karima AMROUCHE, hereby declare that the present dissertation entitled “The Depiction of Cities in English Novels: A Postcolonial Perspective on E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India*” is my own original work, carried out under the supervision of Dr. Assia KADECHE. All sources and references used throughout the research have been properly acknowledged and cited. I affirm that this dissertation has been composed solely by myself and has not been submitted, either partially or fully, for any other degree or qualification at any institution. I bear full responsibility for the content, findings, and conclusions presented in this work.

Dedication

Dedication

To the One who inspired me with patience and granted me success, Allah, the Almighty. All praise and thanks be to Him until praise reaches its fullest meaning. He is the source of hope and achievement; by His grace, I have reached where I am today. He illuminated my path with His light, granted me strength in moments of weakness, and patience in times of hardship. To Him, I raise my deepest gratitude for every blessing.

To those who were my shelter and support, my father and mother, the source of love and endless prayers, and the souls that silently embraced and uplifted me throughout my life. To my brothers and sister, who were always behind the scenes, encouraging me in their own unique way ‘thank you for the trust, support, and love you gave me.

To those who were my strength and safety ‘my true friends who were a light in the darkness of exhaustion, a laugh amidst the chaos, and comfort when the road felt too heavy.

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Abstract

The present dissertation examines how cities can represent as a character in the English novels from a postcolonial perspective, with a particular focus on E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924). In addition, the novel describes both colonial and native spaces in a way that reflects the cultural, social, and political tensions of the British Raj or the British India. By focusing on places like Chandrapore, Forster highlights the separation between colonisers and the colonised. Additionally, Forster explores how identity in these urban areas can be complex and constantly changing. This research uses a postcolonial literary analysis, relying on textual analysis to examine how Forster's depiction of cities questions the power of imperialism. The study explores how urban spaces reflect themes such as cultural hybridity, alienation, and resistance, and how they contribute to the novel's broader postcolonial discourse. Additionally, By looking at these cities as spaces where postcolonial issues are negotiated, the study aims to show how urban settings contribute to the larger discussions in colonial and postcolonial literature, and the role of cities in a deep understanding to the context of the novel. Future research could explore how cinematic adaptations of colonial literature, including *A Passage to India*, have visually represented urban spaces and whether these portrayals reinforce or challenge the novel's postcolonial themes.

Key-words: depiction of cities, postcolonial literature, personification, identity, thematic lexemes

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General introduction

General introduction

Literary novels are among the most sophisticated means of expressing the reality of societies, especially in light of the colonial relations that arose between colonising powers and the peoples of their colonies. In this context, the English novel emerged as an artistic and cultural tool that reflected the dynamics of domination and representation, particularly during the period of British colonialism in India. A number of English writers addressed this complex relationship between coloniser and colonised by depicting places and spaces that witnessed political, cultural, and social conflicts. Edward Morgan Forster's novel *A Passage to India* is one of the most prominent literary works that addressed these tensions. In it, space, whether urban or non-urban, assumed a semantic dimension that transcended its geographical function and became a symbol of conflict and cultural difference.

In the novel, space appears as an active element in shaping concepts of power and control, rather than merely a neutral backdrop for events. By depicting cities, neighbourhoods, and social spaces such as the British Club or the Indian neighbourhoods, Forster was able to highlight the racial, social, and political disparities between British and Indian societies, highlighting the limited understanding between the two parties under the strict colonial structure. Thus, the spaces depicted in the novel acquire symbolic dimensions that reflect the unequal relations between coloniser and colonised, demonstrating how cities can be sites of social division and cultural hegemony.

Based on this insight, this study seeks to analyse representations of cities in English novels from a postcolonial perspective, with a particular focus on *A Passage to India*. This analysis is based on the idea that cities in colonial literature not only embody social reality but

also play a pivotal role in colonial discourse, contributing to shaping the reader's political and cultural consciousness. Through a critical approach grounded in postcolonial theories, the study aims to provide an in-depth reading of the novel's urban spaces as representational tools of colonial power and sites of interaction and conflict between British colonisers and the Indian people.

Thus, cities in the British colonial context were not merely residential or economic centres; they were transformed into spaces where power was exercised and class and racial differences were produced. In British India, cities were an arena for social divisions, with colonial policies reflected in the distribution of space and its division between the "white city" of the British and the "black city" inhabited by Indians. Through this spatial distribution, colonial discourse was translated into a tangible material reality, reinforcing the cultural and political hegemony exercised by the British Empire.

This study begins with a central question regarding how cities are represented as sites of confrontation and distinction between coloniser and colonised in English novels. For the novel under analysis *A Passage to India*, the challenge lies in how to analyse these places, which are not merely narrative backdrops but also embody the cultural and social tensions between the British and Indians. The question this study poses is: How do cities in the novel contribute to shaping the image of relations between the two sides? Are these places used as critical tools for the colonial space?

This study aims to achieve a set of main objectives, namely:

Analysing the representation of urban spaces in *A Passage to India* and the interaction between space and cultural identity.

Examining the impact of space on political identity: how space reflects or resists colonial domination.

Using spatial symbolism to understand how relations between coloniser and colonised are represented in colonial literature.

Employing postcolonial theory to understand how these spaces influence intercultural interaction and identity creation.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do city spaces in *A Passage to India* function as sites of both cultural encounters and alienation between British and Indian characters?
2. What role do non-urban spaces, such as the Marabar Caves, play in challenging colonial urban order in the novel?
3. To what extent does Forster critique colonial urbanism, and what are the limitations of his critique from a postcolonial perspective?

With those research hypotheses:

1. The study assumes that the spatial structures in *A Passage to India* are used to reinforce colonial dominance and the cultural divide between the British and Indians. The spatial symbolism also reveals tensions and conflicts between coloniser and colonised.
2. Non-urban spaces such as the Marabar Caves challenge the colonial urban order by symbolising spaces that are mysterious, uncontrollable, and resistant to colonial logic.

3. *A Passage to India* critiques colonial urbanism by revealing spatial and racial divisions, but Forster's Western perspective limits the depth of this critic from a postcolonial point of view.

The study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, analysing literary texts and interpreting spatial symbolism in the novel using a postcolonial framework. Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, Homi Bhabha's theories on identity and place, and Frantz Fanon's concept of alienation will be combined to understand how places are portrayed in the novel as spaces of discrimination or resistance. The study aims to offer a critical reading that combines literary criticism and social analysis of space.

This dissertation is divided into a general introduction, four chapters, and a general conclusion, as follows:

General Introduction: Addresses the general context of the study, its background, its problematic, its objectives, its research questions, its hypotheses, its methodology, and its dissertation organisation.

Chapter One that revolves around Colonial Urbanism in British India, provides a historical and theoretical background on colonial urban planning, and some analyses how cities and spaces are represented in the novel *A Passage to India*, along with presenting key postcolonial thinkers.

Chapter Two, which deals with city spaces as sites of cultural encounters and alienation, focuses on how spaces such as the British Club, Indian Quarters, and the court were used to express social and cultural tensions between coloniser and colonised.

Chapter Three which in turn discussed Non-Urban Spaces and the Challenge to Colonial Order, explores the role of natural spaces, such as the Marabar Caves and the countryside, in destabilizing the colonial order and highlighting existential and cultural complexity.

Chapter Four which concluded with Forster's critique of Colonial Urbanism, analyses Forster's position on colonial urban policies and explores the limits of his critique through the perspectives of postcolonial critics.

Finally, the general conclusion summarizes the main findings, reassesses the role of space in the novel, and discusses its relevance to postcolonial urban studies.

Chapter 1: Colonial urbanism in British India

Chapter 1: Colonial urbanism in British India

Introduction

1.1 Historical and theoretical background on colonial urban planning

1.1.1 Historical background

1.1.1.2 Early colonial cities: Trade and strategic settlements

1.1.1.3 Segregation and dual cities

1.1.1.3 Industrialisation and Urban Growth

1.1.1.4 Postcolonial Legacies

1.1.2 Theoretical perspectives on colonial urbanism

Critical frameworks that analyse how colonial power shaped urban spaces and spatial relations.

1.1.2.1 Postcolonial theory and the colonial city

1.1.2.2 Henri Lefebvre and the production of space

1.1.2.3 Foucault and bio politics in colonial cities

1.1.2.4 Hybrid urbanism and Homi Bhabha's third space

1.1.2.5 Decolonial urbanism

1.1.3 The role of cities in the British Raj: segregation, order, and power dynamics

1.1.3.1 Segregation: The divided colonial city

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1.1.3.3 Power dynamics: Economic and social hierarchies

1.1.4 Overview of city spaces in A Passage to India (Chandrapore, British Club, Indian quarters)

1.1.4.1 Chandrapore: A divided colonial city

1.1.4.2 The British club: A space of exclusivity

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1.1.5 Key postcolonial theories and thinkers

1.1.5.1 Edward W. Said

1.1.5.2 Homi K. Bhabha

1.1.5.3 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

1.1.4.4 Frantz Fanon

Conclusion

Chapter 1: Colonial urbanism in British India

Introduction

Colonial urban planning in British India was more than an administrative process, it was a tool of power. The British used spatial design to enforce racial and social hierarchies, creating segregated neighbourhoods and limiting native access to institutions. As Gregory notes, colonial space served as a means of control over movement and social life.

E. M. Forster's *a Passage to India* explores these dynamics through the city of Chandrapore, where spaces reflect inequality, the British club represents privilege, Indian areas signify marginalization, and the court embodies colonial authority. Through this urban setting, Forster critiques segregation and control.

This chapter applies postcolonial theories to analyse space in the novel. Key thinkers include: Edward Said, who explains how colonial discourse framed the Orient as chaotic, reflecting the contrast between British and Indian spaces.

Homi Bhabha, who sees colonial space as a site of cultural negotiation through his idea of the “third space”.

Gayatri Spivak, who highlights how colonial institutions silence native voices.

Frantz Fanon, who shows how space reinforces psychological and material domination.

This chapter includes:

1. Historical and theoretical background of colonial urban planning.
2. Urban roles under the British Raj: segregation, order, and power.

3. Spatial analysis in *a passage to India*.
4. Key postcolonial frameworks and thinkers.

This chapter argues that space in Forster's novel is not passive, but central to colonial power, revealing tensions between domination, identity, and resistance.

1.1 Historical and theoretical background on colonial urban planning

In many different studies Urban planning has been widely discussed, with scholars approaching it from many different perspectives, including social, cultural, political, economic, physical, and environmental aspects (Jacobs; Lynch; Mumford; McHarg; Wheeler and Timothy). A major role of Urban planning is in shaping cities by managing land use, infrastructure, and public services in ways that promote economic development, higher living standards, and sustainable resource management (Wheeler and Timothy).

In more specific way to urban planning, urban planning involves designing, evaluating, and organising city spaces to ensure proper coordination and efficiency. and This includes:

1. The built environment (such as buildings, streets, neighbourhoods, parks, and commercial areas).
2. Urban infrastructure (including transport systems, water supply, and communication networks).
3. Environmental services (such as energy supply, air and water quality, and food distribution).
4. Public services (like healthcare, education, and cultural facilities).

5. Governance and administration (which covers policy-making, service delivery, and urban regulations).

Creating cities that are sustainable, liveable, and well-organised is the main goal of urban planning. As a field of study, it focuses on research, strategic development, transportation and land-use planning, architecture, policy recommendations, and urban sustainability (McHarg). However, under the colonial rule, urban planning was a mechanism for exerting power and control over indigenous populations more than a tool for organising spaces. The colonial administration in British India imposed a structured urban landscape that reflected racial and social hierarchies, with clear distinctions between European and native quarters.

Scholars, such as King, argue that colonial cities were deliberately designed to maintain segregation, ensuring that the ruling elite remained physically and symbolically separate from the colonised subjects. Similarly, Metcalf highlights how British urban policies sought to impose "order" by restructuring Indian cities to serve administrative and military functions, rather than addressing the needs of local inhabitants.

By examining the historical and theoretical foundations of colonial urban planning, it becomes evident that these spatial strategies were deeply intertwined with the ideological frameworks of imperial rule. To a deep understanding of this political aspect of urban planning, it is required to look into the historical and theoretical background of colonial city planning. and highlighting Forster's novel *A Passage to India* and the relationship between the British rule and the indigenous people.

1.1.1 Historical background

An overview of key events and contexts that shaped colonial urban development is required for this dissertation analysis.

1.1.1.2 Early colonial cities: Trade and strategic settlements

The beginning of colonial urbanisation was by the establishment of trading posts and military forts, which later expanded into full-fledged cities. Britain, France, Spain, and the Netherlands, those European colonial powers, strategically located these settlements near coasts and major waterways to facilitate trade and resource extraction (King). like Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) was founded by the British East India Company in 1690 as a trading hub, while Cape Town was established by the Dutch East India Company in 1652 as a supply station for ships travelling to Asia.

1.1.1.3 Segregation and dual cities

The spatial segregation of European settlers and indigenous populations was One of the defining characteristics of colonial cities. This division was reinforced through legal and infrastructural measures, creating what scholars refer to as ‘dual cities’ (Home). European quarters were planned with wide streets, sanitation systems, and monumental architecture, while indigenous populations were often confined to overcrowded, marginalised areas. For example, the cantonment system in British India placed European military and administrative personnel in separate zones, away from the local population (Glover). Similarly, French colonial cities in Africa, such as Dakar and Algiers, had distinct ‘native quarters’ with limited access to urban services.

1.1.1.3 Industrialisation and Urban Growth

Colonial cities expanded due to industrialisation and infrastructure projects. By the 19th and early 20th centuries, railways, ports, and factories were constructed to facilitate economic exploitation, leading to increased migration from rural areas. In this period, the emergence of large working-class districts, often in poor living conditions, was observed. Cities such as Bombay (now Mumbai) and Nairobi experienced rapid urbanisation, with slums forming around industrial centres (Chattopadhyay).

1.1.1.4 Postcolonial Legacies

After independence, spatial inequality, informal settlements, and inadequate infrastructure all of that faced many former colonial cities. There was a debate about urban planning and heritage conservation because of the colonial street grids, zoning laws, and racial divisions that continued to shape postcolonial urban development, (Njoh).

1.1.2 Theoretical perspectives on colonial urbanism

Critical frameworks that analyse how colonial power shaped urban spaces and spatial relations.

1.1.2.1 Postcolonial theory and the colonial city

Colonial urban spaces were examined by postcolonial scholars in terms of the way it functioned as instruments of control and segregation. The description of Fanon to the colonial city as a 'compartmentalised world,' where the well-maintained, brightly spaces, is for the settlers, while the overcrowded and the neglected areas are confined for the indigenous population. Fanon's analysis highlights how urban planning was used to maintain power hierarchies.

1.1.2.2 Henri Lefebvre and the production of space

In analysing colonial urbanism, Lefebvre's concept of the production of space is very useful, as it shows how space is shaped by social and political forces. The imposed of colonial authorities European planning models, while the indigenous spatial practices were disregarding. This led to cities that reflected colonial power rather than local needs.

1.1.2.3 Foucault and bio politics in colonial cities

The notion of bio politics of Foucault's helps explain how colonial administrations controlled urban populations through spatial regulations, hygiene policies, and surveillance. Roles such as quarantine zones, restricted movement laws, and forced relocations were common strategies in cities like Hanoi and Johannesburg.

1.1.2.4 Hybrid urbanism and Homi Bhabha's third space

The concept of Bhabha's of the third space suggests that colonial urbanism was not purely European in form, but it was constantly reinterpreted by indigenous populations. The local adaptations of colonial architecture and planning principles led to the emergence of hybrid urban forms-like. In Lagos, colonial-era streets and buildings were repurposed in ways that blended Western and African influences (Mabogunje).

1.1.2.5 Decolonial urbanism

The urban studies have recently focused on decolonising colonial-era cities by addressing spatial injustices and integrating indigenous planning knowledge. Roy argues for a shift towards inclusive urban policies that recognise informal economies, grassroots movements, and community-led development.

Imperial interests, racial segregation, and economic priorities, shaped the colonial urban spaces. postcolonial studies, urban sociology, and spatial theory from theoretical perspective provide insights into how these cities were structured and how their legacies persist. Understanding the historical and theoretical dimensions of colonial urbanism is helping for rethinking urban development in postcolonial societies.

1.1.3 The role of cities in the British Raj: segregation, order, and power dynamics

The period of direct British rule by the British raj (1858 _1947) marked over the Indian subcontinent, followed the dissolution of the British East India Company's control. The direct governance was triggered by the Indian Rebellion of 1857, and it widespread uprising rooted in growing dissatisfaction with colonial policies. the British government response by assumed control over India, implementing a system that, while ostensibly designed to increase Indian participation in governance, ultimately reinforced British dominance. that lead to the inability of Indians to influence their political future without British consent fuelled nationalist resistance, culminating in the struggle for independence (Britannica).

With this colonial framework, the crucial role that cities played is in maintaining imperial authority. in the British Raj the urban planning was not merely an administrative necessity but a strategic tool to enforce racial segregation, regulate colonial order, and assert British power. The broader racial hierarchies of empire appeared in the physically divided for into European and Indian quarters. physical infrastructure, influencing social interactions, governance, and economic structures, they all extended by these urban divisions.

A literary exploration in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* provides of these colonial urban dynamics through its depiction of the fictional city of Chandrapore. The urban space was used to enforce segregation and hierarchy, that the novel detailed it with the British residing in privileged enclaves while Indians were confined to less developed areas. What reinforced the imbalance of power was the formation of instruments of control through institutions such as the colonial club, the legal system, and the municipal administration. By looking and analysing the spatial and social structures of Chandrapore, this paper examines how mechanisms of imperial authority, shaping interactions between British officials and the Indian population, functioned by the colonial cities

1.1.3.1 Segregation: The divided colonial city

A. Chandrapore's Spatial Divisions

the typical colonial urban structure that divided into distinct British and Indian areas reflects by Forster's description of Chandrapore(1924) :

The city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely. A few fine houses exist among the bazaars, but they belong to the municipality, or to the railways, or to wealthy Indians who have retired from trade and seen better days. (Forster 5)

In the above extract, Forster compares the neglected and chaotic side of Indian, with the British colonial side, which is located on higher, cleaner and more orderly ground. the reflection of This physical separation is the racial and social segregation characteristic of colonial cities such as

Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, where British quarters were meticulously planned and well maintained, while Indian areas were left underdeveloped.

B. The civil station: A "Little England" in India

In the novel, The British officials live in the civil station, an isolated, privileged space that mirrors the "White Town" districts of real colonial cities. as stated in the novel(1924): "The British Raj is at Chandrapore chiefly represented by the Chandrapore Club, an oasis where the European can be sure of meeting his own kind and drinking his own drinks." (Forster 34)

This mirrors real life British clubs, such as Calcutta's Bengal Club and Bombay's Byculla Club, which excluded Indians and served as exclusive social hubs for colonial elites. The club becomes a metaphor for racial exclusivity, where Indians, even those of high social status like Dr Aziz, are unwelcome.

C. The bridge party: A failed attempt at integration

The organization of The Bridge Party by Mr Turton is meant to bridge the racial divided between Indians and the British, but the event reinforces only segregation, as the British remain on one side of the lawn while the Indians are left on the other(1924): "The scene was singularly dull. The Englishmen had intended to be polite, and they were; but their politeness only emphasized the distance between East and West." (Forster 41)

In This scene, it becomes clear how the colonial cities functioned as spaces of racial exclusion, where even attempts at interaction were shaped by hierarchy and condescension.

1.1.3.2 Order: Colonial governance and surveillance

A. British authority and the legal system

Bureaucratic control was present in colonial cities, where British officials exerted power through law and administration. This is evident in the novel when Dr Aziz is falsely accused of assaulting Adela Quested. His arrest and trial demonstrate the prejudiced colonial legal system, which assumes his guilt based on race rather than evidence(1924): "Even when they spoke of a 'fair trial' they meant a trial in which the British would have the final say." (Forster)

The trial takes place in a court built by the British, symbolising how colonial justice was designed to maintain imperial control rather than provide fairness. Similarly, in real British India, courts and police stations were central to enforcing colonial order, often prioritising British interests over Indian rights.

B. The role of the police and the collector

British administrators like Ronny Heaslop, the city magistrate, enforce strict control over the population throughout the novel. His condescending attitude towards Indians reflects the general colonial mindset(1924): "We're out here to do justice and keep the peace. Them's my sentiments. India isn't a drawing-room." (Forster 58)

His statement underscores the colonial logic of "law and order," where British rule was justified as a civilising mission. In reality, this often meant suppressing Indian voices and maintaining British superiority through policing, surveillance, and legal manipulation.

1.1.3.3 Power dynamics: Economic and social hierarchies

A. The British as rulers, the Indians as subjects

How power in colonial cities was concentrated in the hands of the British was highlighted repeatedly by Forster. And this is evident in the way British officials, such as Turton, Callendar, and McBryde, treat Indians with patronising disdain, seeing them as either servants or potential threats. For instance, when Dr Aziz is arrested, Major Callendar, the Civil Surgeon, does not hesitate to insult him (1924): "These people are always guilty." (Forster 172)

This reflects the broader colonial mindset that viewed Indians as inherently inferior and untrustworthy. Similar attitudes were widespread in British-ruled cities, where educated Indians were often excluded from positions of power despite their qualifications.

Forster provides a powerful critique of colonial urbanism, in *A Passage to India*, illustrating how cities were spaces of segregation, control, and unequal power dynamics under the British Raj. The fictional city of Chandrapore mirrors real colonial cities, where racial divisions, policing, and economic exploitation maintained British dominance. Through characters like Dr Aziz and Ronny Heaslop, Forster exposes the fragility of colonial rule, foreshadowing its eventual collapse. The novel remains a valuable text for understanding how urban space was central to the workings of empire and how these historical dynamics continue to shape postcolonial societies today.

1.1.4 Overview of city spaces in *A Passage to India* (Chandrapore, British Club, Indian quarters)

E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* presents a vivid depiction of the colonial city of Chandrapore, a fictional yet realistic representation of British controlled Indian cities during the Raj. Forster illustrates the rigid social and racial divisions imposed by colonial rule through its urban spaces Chandrapore as a whole, the British Club, and the Indian quarters. These spaces symbolise the power dynamics, segregation, and tensions between the British colonisers and the Indian population, reinforcing the themes of alienation, misunderstanding, and failed attempts at integration.

1.1.4.1 Chandrapore: A divided colonial city

The primary setting of the novel is Chandrapore, that functioning as a microcosm of colonial India. While the city itself is unremarkable, its spatial structure reflects the racial and social segregation characteristic of British colonial rule. Forster(1924) introduces Chandrapore as follows: "The city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely." (Forster 5)

This description immediately conveys a sense of neglect and decay, particularly in the Indian sections of the city. However, Forster(1924) also notes the presence of a well-maintained British enclave situated on higher ground: "Away from the river, where the land rises, the British have built their little civil station, with bungalows and gardens and the streets that are named after victorious generals and intersect at right angles." (Forster 6)

This contrast between the low lying, chaotic Indian quarters and the orderly, elevated British section symbolises the social hierarchy imposed by colonial urban planning. Similar patterns were observed in real-life colonial cities such as Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, where British officials resided in exclusive areas that were separated from the Indian population by roads, railways, or natural barriers (King).

1.1.4.2 The British club: A space of exclusivity

In *A Passage to India*, the British Club represents the heart of colonial society and serves as a physical manifestation of British superiority and exclusivity. Within its walls, the British officials and their families engage in social gatherings, shielded from the realities of Indian life. The Club is portrayed as a sanctuary for the British, reinforcing their separation from the local population(1924): "The British Raj is at Chandrapore chiefly represented by the Chandrapore Club, an oasis where the European can be sure of meeting his own kind and drinking his own drinks" (Forster 34)

This setting mirrors historical British clubs in colonial India, such as the Bengal Club in Calcutta and the Byculla Club in Bombay, which barred Indians from entry regardless of their status or education (Kennedy). The Club symbolises the rigid racial divide that governs social interactions in Chandrapore. Even well-meaning British characters like Cyril Fielding are pressured to conform to this exclusivity, highlighting the extent to which colonial institutions reinforced segregation.

The Bridge Party, a crucial scene that illustrates this division organised by Mr. Turton to encourage interaction between Indians and the British. However, the event only emphasises the

entrenched racial boundaries, as the British remain aloof, unwilling to truly engage with their Indian guests: "The scene was singularly dull. The Englishmen had intended to be polite, and they were; but their politeness only emphasized the distance between East and West" (Forster 41). This failed attempt at integration demonstrates the limitations of colonial social structures, where superficial gestures of inclusion fail to bridge the deep cultural and political divides.

1.1.4.3 The Indian quarters: Marginalisation and exclusion

The Indian quarters of Chandrapore are depicted as overcrowded, underdeveloped, and chaotic, in contrast to the orderly British section. This description reflects the broader colonial practice of neglecting Indian urban spaces while prioritising British settlements. The city's lower-lying Indian areas are subject to poor sanitation and infrastructure, symbolising the marginalisation of the Indian population under colonial rule (Legg).

The Indian quarters are also spaces of community and resistance despite these conditions. The novel's central Indian character, Dr. Aziz, navigates these spaces with ease, unlike the British, who rarely venture beyond their designated enclaves. Aziz's home and the locations he frequents, such as the local mosque, contrast sharply with the British controlled spaces, offering a glimpse into Indian social life outside the colonial gaze. A significant moment occurs when Mrs. Moore and Dr. Aziz meet at the mosque. Unlike the British Club, where hierarchy and exclusion dominate, the mosque represents a rare space of genuine human connection (1924): "You understand me, you know what others feel. Oh, if others resembled you!" (Forster 22).

This scene contrasts with later events in the novel, particularly Aziz's wrongful arrest, which underscores the power imbalance between the British and the Indians. The Indian

quarters, though marginalised, become a site of defiance against colonial rule, particularly as Aziz and other Indian characters increasingly reject British authority by the novel's conclusion.

In *A Passage to India* the urban spaces Chandrapore, the British Club, and the Indian quarters serve as symbolic representations of colonial power, segregation, and the failure of meaningful cross-cultural interaction. While the British enclave and Club reinforce exclusion and superiority, the Indian quarters highlight the inequalities and tensions inherent in colonial rule. Through these spaces, Forster critiques the rigid structures of the British Raj, illustrating how colonial cities were designed to maintain British dominance while alienating and marginalising the local population. The novel ultimately suggests that genuine relationships and understanding remain impossible within such a divided urban landscape, reflecting the broader fractures that would eventually lead to the dissolution of British rule in India.

1.1.5 Key postcolonial theories and thinkers

Like any theory, postcolonial theory has many theories and thinkers. and the Key thinkers in this field have developed various ideas to understand and challenge the power dynamics created by colonial rule. Their theories have become central in understanding the complexities of postcolonial societies and the on-going effects of colonial practices. The major figures of postcolonial theory are: Edward Said with his famous book *Orientalism*, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and Frantz Fanon.

1.1.5.1 Edward W. Said

One of Edward Said's most profound quotes "*Representation is an act of power*". In his seminal work *Orientalism*, Said argues that the way the West represents the East is not

neutral but a means of exerting control. In this context, knowledge is intertwined with power, shaping how cultures are perceived and treated. His critique remains crucial in postcolonial studies, highlighting the lasting impact of narratives created by dominant powers.

Twenty years have passed since the Arab world lost one of the greatest intellectual minds of our generation, Edward Said. The Palestinian-American academic, literary critic, and champion of the Palestinian cause played a pivotal role in bringing the marginalized Arab voice to the forefront before his death at the age of 67 after a long battle with leukaemia on September 25, 2003 in New York. He was a true revolutionary and his passing leaves a huge gap in the contemporary world.

Edward Wadie Said (1935-2003) has challenged the difference between East and West. He is considered to be one of the most influential thinkers of the second half of the twentieth century. He was born in Jerusalem during the British mandate over Palestine, he was a Palestinian American scholar, writer, and one of the most influential intellectuals of the 20th century. He grew up in a vibrant, multicultural environment, split between Cairo and Jerusalem before moving to the United States for his education. He studied at Princeton University, later earning his PhD from Harvard, and then became a professor at Columbia University, where he would spend much of his career teaching English and Comparative Literature. In 1975-1976, Said was a fellow at the Centre for advanced Study and Stanford that he wrote his best-known book *Orientalism*, which represents an opposition between different parts of the world, between the whites and the blacks and between the coloniser and the colonised, and this book would become one of the foundations of what we now call postcolonial studies, inspiring generations of scholars to rethink how history and cultures are represented. (Dexheimer). After all, Edward has

many great works that have remained even after his death, works that have carved his name in gold. Some of his most important works include:

1.Orientalism: This is his most famous book, where he discusses how the West has historically portrayed the East in a way that justifies colonialism. Said argues that these Western representations are not objective but are shaped by power and dominance. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin the significance of orientalism is: That as a mode of knowing the other it was a supreme example of the construction of the other, a form of authority. The Orient is not an inert fact of nature, but a phenomenon constructed by generations of intellectuals, artists, commentators, writers, politicians, and, more importantly, constructed by the naturalizing of a wide range of Orientalist assumptions and stereotypes (153)

2.Culture and imperialism: In this book, Said extends his arguments from Orientalism, exploring the connection between culture and colonialism. He examines how Western literature and culture supported imperialism by portraying non-Western societies in a negative light.

3.The question of Palestine: In this work, Said addresses the history of the Palestinian issue and how it has been perceived by the West. He discusses the political struggles of Palestinians and critiques international approaches to the conflict.

4.The politics of dispossession: The struggle for Palestinian self-determination: This book examines the Palestinian issue from a political, historical, cultural, and humanitarian perspective, it focus on how Palestinians were dispossessed, not only of their land, but also of their right to represent themselves and tell their story to the world.

5. The new orientalism: Published as an article in the 1990s, it discussed how forms of orientalism evolved, particularly with the emergence of media figures and academics who justified western interventions in the name of ‘human rights’ or ‘spreading democracy’.

Edward Said was a powerful thinker who changed the way we understand history, culture, and politics. He used his position as a scholar to speak up for the Palestinian cause and fight for justice, even when his views were controversial. Said’s ideas still influence many fields today, and his legacy continues to inspire people to challenge unfair power structures and think critically about the world. Even though he passed away in 2003, his contributions remain vital to understanding global issues.

1.1.5.2 Homi K. Bhabha

One of the most insightful quotes by Bhabha, *"The colonial space is a space of enunciation, where the tension between centre and periphery is constantly negotiated."*

Homi Bhabha’s work has been highly influential in postcolonial studies, particularly in understanding how colonial power operates within spatial and cultural contexts. In his book *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha argues that colonial spaces are not just physical locations but also sites of discourse where power dynamics between the coloniser and the colonised are continuously reshaped. Unlike traditional views that present colonial rule as a one-sided imposition of power, Bhabha suggests that these spaces allow for negotiation and resistance.

One of his key ideas is the concept of the third space, which refers to a liminal zone where identities and meanings are redefined through interaction between colonial authority and indigenous agency (Bhabha). This idea challenges fixed notions of cultural dominance and highlights the hybridity that emerges in colonial settings. Bhabha’s critique remains significant

in postcolonial studies, as it provides a framework for analysing how spatial relations reflect and reinforce power structures in both colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Homi K. Bhabha is a prominent figure in postcolonial studies and cultural theory. Born in 1949 in Mumbai, India, he pursued his undergraduate studies at the University of Mumbai and later completed his master's and doctoral degrees at Christ Church, University of Oxford (Wikipedia). Bhabha has held academic positions at several prestigious institutions, including the University of Sussex, Princeton University, and Harvard University, where he currently serves as the Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities (Wikipedia).

One of Bhabha's most significant contributions is the concept of hybridity, which explores how colonised cultures adapt and transform elements of the coloniser's culture, leading to new, mixed cultural forms (Bhabha). He also introduced the idea of mimicry, describing how colonised subjects may imitate the coloniser's behaviour and language, often leading to a subtle form of resistance (Bhabha). Another key concept is the third space, an in-between area where cultural meanings and identities are negotiated, challenging fixed notions of identity and culture (Bhabha).

Bhabha's work has been instrumental in reshaping our understanding of colonial and postcolonial identities, highlighting the complexities and ambivalences inherent in cultural interactions. His theories continue to influence a wide range of disciplines, including literature, cultural studies, and anthropology.

Through his ground-breaking work, Bhabha has reshaped postcolonial discourse, providing new frameworks for analysing power dynamics, identity, and cultural exchange. His ideas remain essential in literature, cultural studies, and beyond.

Key Works

1. The location of culture: This is his most renowned work, where he elaborates on the key concepts of hybridity, mimicry, and the third space. Bhabha argues that colonial discourse is inherently unstable, as the coloniser's authority is constantly undermined by the very strategies used to assert dominance.

2. Nation and narration: In this edited collection, Bhabha examines how narratives construct national identities, emphasising the role of literature in shaping political and cultural belonging.

Homi K. Bhabha is a profound thinker who has transformed the way we understand identity, culture, and power in postcolonial studies. He used his position as a scholar to challenge dominant narratives and highlight the complexities of cultural hybridity and colonial discourse. Bhabha's concepts, such as hybridity, mimicry, and the third space, continue to shape various fields today, influencing scholars, writers, and critics in their exploration of identity and representation (Bhabha). His legacy remains crucial in analysing how cultures interact and evolve, encouraging new perspectives on power structures and global inequalities. Even today, his contributions provide essential insights into understanding the dynamics of postcolonial societies.

1.1.5.3 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

one of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's most influential questions, "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" that challenges the power structures that shape who gets to speak and be heard (Spivak). In her seminal essay, Spivak critiques Western intellectual traditions for marginalising subaltern voices, particularly those of women in postcolonial societies. She argues that

knowledge production is deeply tied to power and that dominant discourses often silence the most oppressed.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (born February 24, 1942) is one of the most influential figures in postcolonial studies, literary criticism, and feminist theory. She is best known for her work on subaltern studies and her critical engagement with deconstruction. Spivak has significantly shaped postcolonial discourse, particularly through her application of Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist methods to colonial and neo-colonial contexts (Morton).

She was born in Kolkata, India, Spivak studied English literature at the University of Calcutta before pursuing her graduate studies in the United States. She earned her PhD from Cornell University, where she worked under the supervision of Paul de Man. Over the years, she has held teaching positions at several prestigious institutions, including Columbia University, where she continues to contribute to postcolonial and feminist thought (Spivak).

Her seminal essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* remains one of the most cited works in postcolonial studies. In this essay, Spivak argues that the voices of the colonised and marginalised are often co-opted or silenced by dominant discourses, preventing them from truly articulating their agency. She critiques Western intellectuals for speaking on behalf of the subaltern instead of enabling them to represent themselves (Spivak). This idea has had a lasting impact on discussions about representation, power, and knowledge production.

Beyond academia, Spivak has been actively involved in grassroots education projects in rural India, advocating for literacy and empowerment among marginalised communities (Morton). Her contributions to postcolonial thought continue to inspire scholars to challenge dominant narratives and rethink the role of intellectuals in shaping discourse.

Key Works

1. Can the subaltern speak?: This seminal essay is one of Spivak's most widely cited works. She argues that marginalised groups, particularly women in postcolonial societies, are often denied a voice within dominant discourses. Spivak critiques Western intellectuals who claim to "speak for" the subaltern rather than allowing them to represent themselves (Spivak).

2. A Critique of postcolonial reason: Toward a history of the vanishing present: In this book, Spivak examines how postcolonial subjects are absorbed into Western intellectual frameworks, questioning the ability of dominant theoretical traditions to truly account for subaltern perspectives. She engages with figures such as Kant, Hegel, and Marx to highlight how Western philosophy has historically marginalised the voices of the colonised (Spivak).

3. Deconstruction and the possibility of justice: This work explores the relationship between justice and deconstruction, particularly in postcolonial contexts. Spivak builds on Jacques Derrida's theories to argue that justice cannot be entirely captured within legal or philosophical structures, as power dynamics always influence interpretation (Spivak et al).

4. Death of a discipline: Spivak critiques the field of comparative literature, arguing that it needs to expand beyond its Eurocentric roots. She advocates for an interdisciplinary approach that includes voices from the Global South, particularly those historically excluded from academic discourse (Spivak).

5. Translation of *Of Grammatology*: Spivak's English translation of Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* introduced deconstructionist thought to a wider audience. Its detailed introduction remains one of the most influential analyses of Derrida's work (Derrida; Spivak).

6. Other Asias: In this book, Spivak critiques the homogenisation of Asian identities in Western scholarship. She highlights the internal differences within Asia and argues against essentialist representations of non-Western cultures (Spivak).

Spivak's works continue to shape postcolonial studies, feminist theory, and deconstruction. Her scholarship challenges the way knowledge is produced and encourages a more inclusive, critical engagement with history and power. As one of the most prominent postcolonial theorists, her influence remains significant in contemporary academia.

1.1.4.4 Frantz Fanon

One of Frantz Fanon's most famous quotes "*The oppressed will always believe the worst about themselves.*" (Black Skin, White Masks). that encapsulates his analysis of how colonialism and systemic racism shape the psychology of the colonised, leading them to internalise feelings of inferiority.

Sixty-three years have passed since the world lost one of the greatest intellectual minds of the decolonisation era, Frantz Fanon. The Martiniquais psychiatrist, philosopher, and revolutionary played a pivotal role in analysing the psychological effects of colonialism and advocating for the liberation of oppressed peoples. His influential works, such as Black Skin, White Masks and The Wretched of the Earth, provided critical insights into the dehumanising impact of colonial rule and the necessity of resistance (Gordon).

Fanon's ideas significantly influenced postcolonial studies and liberation movements worldwide. He died at the age of 36 after battling leukaemia on 6 December 1961 in Bethesda, Maryland, USA. His revolutionary spirit and intellectual contributions remain vital in understanding colonial oppression and resistance in the contemporary world (Macey).

He was born in Fort-de-France, Martinique, then a French colony, Fanon experienced racial discrimination from an early age. During the Second World War, he joined the Free French Forces and later pursued medical studies in France, specialising in psychiatry (Macey). His time in Algeria, where he worked as a psychiatrist during the war for independence, profoundly influenced his critique of colonialism. Fanon's most notable works, *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, examine the psychological effects of colonisation and advocate for armed resistance as a means of liberation (Fanon).

Key Works

1. **Black skin, white masks:** A psychological and philosophical exploration of racism, identity, and the effects of colonialism on the colonised mind (Fanon).
2. **A Dying colonialism:** An analysis of the Algerian War of Independence, focusing on how resistance transformed colonial society (Fanon).
3. **The wretched of the earth:** Fanon's most influential work, advocating for violent resistance as a necessary step towards decolonisation and discussing the psychological impact of oppression (Fanon).
4. **Toward the African revolution:** A posthumous collection of essays expanding on his thoughts on liberation, Pan-Africanism, and revolutionary action (Fanon).

These works continue to shape contemporary discussions on colonialism, race, and liberation.

Frantz Fanon's contributions to postcolonial thought remain profoundly influential in contemporary discourse on colonialism, race, and liberation. His works, particularly *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*, provide critical insights into the

psychological and structural violence of colonialism. Fanon's advocacy for revolutionary resistance and decolonisation continues to shape academic and political discussions, particularly in contexts of systemic oppression and struggles for national sovereignty. His legacy endures, inspiring movements for social justice and anti-colonial resistance across the world.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered a foundational overview of colonial urban planning in British India, situating it within historical and theoretical contexts. It showed how the British used spatial organization to enforce segregation and maintain control, turning cities into tools of imperial power.

A close reading of *a passage to India* revealed how urban divisions like those in Chandrapore, the British club, and the Indian quarters, reflect colonial hierarchies. These spaces expose tensions within the empire and illustrate how colonisers and colonised experienced urban life differently.

The chapter also drew on key postcolonial thinkers Said, Bhabha, Spivak, and Fanon to frame the spatial analysis. Their ideas helped clarify how space relates to discourse, identity, and resistance under colonial rule.

By blending historical insight with literary and theoretical analysis, this chapter sets the stage for the next, which explores how space in the novel becomes a site of cultural conflict, alienation, and potential resistance.

Chapter 2: City spaces as sites of cultural encounters and alienation

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Introduction

2.1 The British club: A symbol of exclusivity and cultural separation

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Chapter 2: City spaces as sites of cultural encounters and alienation

Introduction

Building on the previous chapter's exploration of colonial urban planning as a tool of control and exclusion, this chapter shifts to the narrative representation of urban spaces in *a passage to India*. It explores how these spaces move beyond physical settings to become symbols rich with cultural and political meaning.

The novel presents city spaces as dynamic arenas where relationships between the British and Indians unfold sometimes as encounters, other times as alienation. Space reflects and reinforces divisions, but also plays a role in shaping them. It both mirrors and constructs the boundaries between identities and powers.

This chapter examines urban spaces in the novel as sites of both cultural interaction and exclusion. It focuses on four key spaces: The British club, a closed space representing colonial superiority and social separation. The Indian neighbourhoods, liminal zones marked by marginalisation but also potential resistance. The courtroom, where colonial justice acts as a mechanism of power, not fairness. The bridge party, a failed symbolic gesture toward reconciliation, revealing the depth of division.

By analysing these spaces through postcolonial theory, this chapter shows how Forster uses space to shape character relationships, expose power dynamics, and reflect on going tension between hegemony and resistance, self and other, identity and alienation.

2.1 The British club: A symbol of exclusivity and cultural separation

The British Club in *A Passage to India* is not merely a social space; it is a pivotal place that reflects the cultural segregation in colonial society. It appears in the novel as a closed space reserved exclusively for the British, serving as a fortress isolating them from interaction with Indians. This segregation is not only physical but also cultural, contributing to the notion of British superiority over Indians, which is clearly evident in the characters' interactions within the club.

2.1.1 Space and its impact on social relations:

The club in the novel is an example of how colonial space is used to maintain dominant cultural identities. The British in the club do not view Indians as part of their social life, but rather treat them as 'others,' meaning completely different from them culturally and socially. For example, when Dr. Aziz attempts to enter the club, the British characters' rejection of him demonstrates the extent of racism and discrimination prevalent in colonial society, where those who are allowed to enter this exclusive space and those who are excluded are determined based on race or identity.

2.1.2 Explaining dominance through space:

The club is not merely a place of entertainment; it is part of a complex system that reinforces British cultural superiority and perpetuates social segregation. As Edward Said explains in his book *Orientalism*, these enclosed spaces are part of a colonial strategy aimed at preventing any kind of cultural or social interaction between the colonisers and the colonised. These spaces become a tool for perpetuating "otherness," with Indians viewed as outside the

British social circle. This reflects the colonial system that imposes invisible divisions between different classes.

2.1.3 The relationship between space and power:

Michel Foucault, in his book *Discipline and Punish*, argues that space can function as an instrument of power, as the spaces themselves are used to regulate social life. In the case of the British club, who can enter and who is excluded is determined by cultural and social identities. Thus, the club is not only a place to relax; it is also a place used to perpetuate colonial dominance through cultural and racial segregation.

The British club on a trip to India is more than just a physical space. It represents a symbol of the social and cultural segregation imposed by colonial domination. Through the club, the author demonstrates how space is used as a tool to reinforce racial and cultural differences between colonisers and colonised. Thus, this space becomes an embodiment of the racial discrimination practiced by colonial powers during that period.

2.2 The Indian quarters: Liminal spaces of interaction and resistance

In *A Passage to India*, Indian quarters represent marginalized or "transitional" spaces located far from the direct control of colonial authorities but still witnessing complex interactions between different cultures. These quarters were not only places to live away from British surveillance, but also spaces that could serve as a place for cultural interaction and resistance. Despite the difficult conditions in which Indians lived in these quarters, they sometimes demonstrated the potential for communication and struggle against colonial domination.

2.2.1 Transitional spaces and cultural interaction:

Indian quarters are considered "transitional spaces" because they exist between two worlds: the world of the British on the one hand, and the world of the Indians on the other. Although these quarters often remained subject to poverty and surveillance, they simultaneously became centres of interaction among Indians, and sometimes between Indians and the British. This interaction, although limited, can be considered a form of resistance against the colonial system, which sought to maintain social and racial boundaries between colonisers and colonised.

2.2.2 Social interaction and new opportunities:

Within the Indian quarters, a kind of social interaction takes place between Indians of different classes and religions, and sometimes even between some of the British people they interact with. For example, in the novel, Dr. Aziz interacts with other Indian characters within these quarters, and these interactions appear more honest and freer than those occurring in the closed British spaces. These moments of interaction outside the colonial framework provide opportunities for a deeper understanding of Indian culture, although these opportunities are always limited by colonial domination.

In one important scene, Dr. Aziz appears in an Indian quarter and begins to engage with Indians about social and religious issues. This interaction reveals how life within these quarters can be more open than that experienced by the British in closed spaces such as the British Club. At the same time, however, tensions remain between the British and Indian characters due to social and cultural differences.

2.2.3 Resistance within the Indian ghettos:

Despite the harsh conditions experienced by Indians in these quarters, they also become sites of resistance against the colonial regime. As Frantz Fanon demonstrates in his book *The Wretched of the Earth*, marginalized spaces can be centres of anti-colonial struggle, where people confront colonial domination through cultural and social unity. In *A Passage to India*, the Indian quarters can be seen as sites of cultural resistance, as Indians attempt to preserve their cultural identity under British control.

The Indian quarters appear in *A Passage to India* as places of interaction and resistance, despite the marginalization of their inhabitants. These spaces are not merely spaces of isolation; they are also meeting points for different cultures trying to find ways to interact and coexist, free from colonial control. Through these neighbourhoods, the author reveals the possibility of cultural exchange and social resistance, despite the colonial system's attempts to control these spaces.

2.3 The courtroom scene: Power structures and colonial justice

In the novel, *A Passage to India*, the courtroom is one of the most prominent spaces that directly displays colonial domination. The courtroom is not only a place for the application of law, but also a place that reflects how colonialism used justice as a tool of control. In this scene, it is shown how colonial law is used not to achieve justice for all parties, but rather to consolidate British dominance over Indians. The novel's portrayal of justice in court demonstrates how power is unfairly used to benefit the colonisers, reflecting the colonial reality in its legal dimensions.

2.3.1 Colonial justice: A tool of domination:

The novel shows how the courtroom is ultimately a tool in the hands of the colonial authority to assert British supremacy. The courtroom is used not to achieve justice in its true sense, but rather to achieve colonial goals aimed at keeping Indians in a position of inferiority. In the courtroom scene dealing with Dr. Aziz's case, it is clear how the law is distorted to serve British interests, with Indians always portrayed as victims of cultural or intellectual wrongdoing, while the British are acquitted despite their oppressive practices. Through this, Forster shows how colonial justice does not seek fairness, but rather supports the domination of the colonisers.

2.3.2 The contrast between real justice and colonial justice:

In the novel, we can see the contrast between the 'real' justice sought by Dr. Aziz and the colonial justice represented by the court. Although Dr. Aziz attempts to demonstrate his innocence, the colonial system ensures that he has no real chance of achieving justice. This idea is clearly demonstrated in the courtroom scene, where Aziz is found guilty despite the lack of clear evidence against him, based solely on his background as an Indian doctor. Although some British characters show some mercy toward Aziz, the colonial legal system ultimately remains in their favour.

2.3.3 Justice as the exercise of power:

The novel shows that colonial justice is not simply the application of the law, but rather part of a larger process of consolidating the powers of power. Michel Foucault points out in his book *Discipline and Punish* that institutions such as courts are used to regulate individuals and reinforce social and authoritarian structures. In the case of the courtroom in *A Passage to India*,

the novel demonstrates how courts are not seen as places of equal justice, but rather as tools for oppression and the enforcement of the colonial system.

In the courtroom scene, Dr. Aziz is shown being tried for alleged harassment, a charge fabricated by Miss Adele. Although Aziz demonstrates his innocence by recounting the events as they occurred, the court does not take his testimony seriously due to his status as an Indian doctor under the colonial system. Ultimately, the judiciary is used as a tool to strengthen British hegemony and perpetuate racial differences between Indians and British.

Through the courtroom scene in *A Passage to India*, the author reveals how colonial institutions, such as courts, are used as tools of domination and control. The court in the novel does not function as a venue for justice, but rather as an institution that reaffirms the social and racial distinctions imposed by colonialism. Through the case of Dr. Aziz, Forster shows how colonial justice contributes to the consolidation of power and the reinforcement of British cultural superiority over Indians.

2.4 The failed cultural bridge: How city spaces reinforce racial and social hierarchies

In *A Passage to India*, the ‘cultural bridge,’ organized as part of an attempt to build bridges between different cultures, embodies the failure to build authentic communication between the British and Indians. This event demonstrates how social interactions in colonial spaces are often governed by the racial and class structures imposed by the colonial system. Despite apparent attempts to build a cultural bridge, these spaces ultimately reinforce racial and social divisions rather than address them.

2.4.1 Space as a stage of cultural tensions:

The cultural festival organized in the novel initially appears to be an opportunity to bridge cultural gaps, but ultimately demonstrates how colonial spaces do not allow for authentic and equal interactions. At the party, the British and Indians attempt to interact with each other, but cultural and racial tensions are clearly present. For example, the British treat the Indians with caution and isolation, and the Indians feel excluded or marginalized in these spaces. This ceremony demonstrates how colonial spaces do not provide a genuine environment for cross-cultural interaction, but rather remain committed to British cultural hegemony.

2.4.2 An immature attempt at cultural rapprochement:

Although the ceremony demonstrates some apparent attempts at cultural rapprochement, it reveals a lack of a deep understanding of Indian culture among the British. These attempts at reconciliation appear superficial and insincere, leading to the initiative's failure. This demonstrates how the British, despite their attempts to engage with Indians, are unable to shake off their racist attitudes and sense of inferiority. Ultimately, these initiatives become part of re-establishing the colonial order rather than breaking its boundaries.

2.4.3 Social segregation in public spaces:

Despite the ceremony's attempts at 'rapprochement,' the novel demonstrates how public spaces retain their ability to re-establish class and racial differences. In this context, the cultural ceremony can be linked to Bhabha's concept in his book *The Site of Culture*, which suggests that cultural identities cannot simply overlap across shared spaces but are governed by power struggles and history. At the party, we find that intercultural interaction occurs across tense spaces, making it difficult to bridge deep cultural gaps.

During the party, the British attempt to present themselves as open and willing to interact with the Indians, but this attempt reveals the true divide between the two parties. The Indians feel invited to an event that is not truly part of their culture, while the British attempt to impose their own cultural norms on this space, eliminating any kind of equal interaction. Ultimately, these cultural initiatives clearly fail, as there is no understanding or cooperation between the two sides.

Through the failed cultural rituals in *A Passage to India*, Forster shows how colonial spaces, despite their apparent attempts at cultural rapprochement, remain subject to social and ethnic structures that hinder genuine interaction. Colonial spaces do not provide a genuine environment for understanding between Indians and British; rather, they perpetuate ethnic and social divisions, rendering any attempt at cultural rapprochement doomed to failure.

Conclusion

The analysis of urban spaces in *a passage to India* reveals that they are not just physical settings but symbolic arenas reflecting colonial tensions. From the exclusive British club to the marginal Indian neighbourhoods, the courtroom, and the failed bridge party, each space illustrates cultural division, power, and alienation.

The British club reinforces racial boundaries and colonial superiority, while the Indian quarters through marginalized offer space for resistance and community beyond colonial reach. The courtroom represents the use of law as a tool of domination rather than justice, emphasising inequality between coloniser and colonised. Finally, the bridge party exposes the failure of superficial attempts at cultural understanding within a system rooted in hierarchy.

These spaces embody more than geography, they reflect the struggle between identity and power, interaction and exclusion. The novel shows how urban spaces under colonialism reproduce social divisions, despite efforts at connection. In doing so, it highlights the deep entrenchment of cultural and racial barriers within the colonial order.

Chapter 3: Non-urban paces and the challenge to colonial order

Chapter 3: Non-urban spaces and the challenge to colonial order

Introduction

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Chapter 3: Non-urban spaces and the challenge to colonial order

Introduction

While the previous chapter focused on urban spaces as tools of division and colonial control, this chapter turns to non-urban spaces in *a passage to India*, examining how they challenge the structures of empire. These spaces especially the Marabar caves, the countryside, and the train journey, exist beyond colonial regulation and disrupt the spatial logic imposed by the British.

Unlike the organised, divided cities, non-urban spaces embody ambiguity and disorder. They resist categorisation, revealing forces that the colonial system cannot contain. The Marabar caves stand as a mysterious realm where colonial meaning collapses. The countryside blurs identities and fosters more fluid interactions between coloniser and colonised. The train journey, as a space in transition, reflects the instability of colonial boundaries and identities.

This chapter argues that these spaces function as sites of resistance, crisis, and transformation. They expose the limits of British control and suggest that the colonial order, though seemingly rigid, is deeply unstable. Through these ambiguous and uncontrolled environments, Forster critiques imperial authority and opens space for alternative understandings of power, identity, and experience.

3.1 The Marabar caves as a space beyond colonial logic

The Marabar Caves in *A Passage to India* are among the most prominent non-urban spaces that challenge the colonial order. Located in a remote area, far from British colonial authority, these caves represent a space beyond colonial logic. A mysterious and

incomprehensible place, these caves represent a constant challenge to the colonial vision that attempts to impose its control over every aspect of life in India. In the novel, the caves are not merely a natural or geographical site; they are a symbolic place that reflects the tensions between the coloniser and the colonised, demonstrating how spaces beyond colonial control are more complex and ambiguous than those that can be controlled.

3.1.1 The mystery of the caves as a symbol of defiance and refusal

From the moment the characters enter the Marabar Caves, they encounter an uncomfortable and inexplicable experience. The disturbing sound emanating from the caves, one of the most prominent mysterious elements in the novel, becomes a symbol of the mystery and psychological turmoil the characters experience. At first, some characters, like Adele and Velda, believe the sound is just an ordinary echo. However, over time, it becomes clear that the sound has a deeper impact, causing existential disintegration. This sound is not merely a natural phenomenon; it is a sign of uncontrollable tensions, symbolising that India, as a colonial space, cannot be understood or controlled by the British colonial authority.

3.1.2 The caves as a place for breaking colonial boundaries

The Marabar Caves represent a transgression of the spatial boundaries imposed by colonialism, treating India as a territory that can be controlled and regulated. Unlike urban spaces, which are organized according to colonial logic, the caves are not subject to any rules or regulations that the British could impose. This unknown natural space clearly highlights the colonialists' inability to understand the depth of Indian nature. Often, India was viewed by the British as an exotic land filled with inexplicable mysteries, an image that the Marabar Caves reflect. The caves do not carry any fixed or static meaning; rather, they are a continuous

landscape of confusion and ambiguity, challenging colonial interpretations that view India as merely a place to be regulated and controlled.

3.1.3 The Indian presence in the caves: A crisis of identity and communication

During their visit to the Marabar Caves, the characters experience an existential crisis regarding their identity and their understanding of the world around them. For example, Dr. Aziz, considered a figure representing colonial rationality, experiences a state of inner chaos after entering the caves, as his thoughts begin to fragment and his previous certainties crumble. Likewise, Adele, who comes from a British background, finds herself confronted with a world she cannot easily explain. The caves do not provide any clear answers; rather, they leave the characters in a state of existential confusion, reflecting that India is not simply a place that can be understood according to Western standards, but rather a theatre of mysteries that defy colonial understanding.

3.1.4 Caves as a symbol of nothingness and emptiness

The echoes emanating from the caves represent more than just noise; they are a symbol of the nothingness and existential emptiness experienced by individuals trying to define their identity within the context of colonialism. In colonial culture, India was viewed as a land incomprehensible and unexplainable, and the caves clearly represent this idea. Whenever a person enters the caves, they encounter an unsettling void that cannot be filled in any way. This void embodies the true challenge to colonial logic, which always seeks to impose norms and rules on the cultures and lands it controls. The caves refuse to be part of this colonial system and thus become a symbol of on-going resistance to it.

3.1.5 Caves: A space that reveals the fragility of the colonial system

Through the Marabar Caves, Forster reveals the fragility of the colonial system. In the novel, the caves are a place where the limits of colonial power are tested, where people cannot find any stability or clear answers after entering. These mysterious spaces suggest that India, as portrayed in the novel, is a land of mystery and complexity that colonialism cannot control or understand. The caves also demonstrate how India transcends notions of British control, and that there is always something greater than the interpretation or understanding that empire attempts to impose.

The Marabar Caves in *A Passage to India* are more than just a natural or geographical space; they represent a mysterious place that defies the logic and control of colonialism. Through the ambiguity of these caves, Forster reveals the fundamental tensions faced by colonisers in their attempts to control India. The sounds emanating from the caves, and the existential emptiness experienced by the people who enter them, reflect how India cannot be controlled or understood by the West. The caves, ultimately, represent spaces that reflect colonialism's inability to interpret and deal with Indian nature according to Western standards.

3.2 Symbolism of the caves: The echo and existential crisis

The Marabar Caves in *A Passage to India* are one of the most powerful and ambiguous symbols in the novel, carrying multiple meanings beyond their mere physical setting. These caves are not merely a geographical space far removed from the world of British colonialism; they are a moral space reflecting a profound internal conflict within the human self, expressing an identity crisis and psychological disintegration inseparable from the colonial conflict occurring in the novel. Through the voice heard in the caves, which is more than just an echo,

Forster is able to highlight the existential aspects experienced by the novel's characters, especially those belonging to the British colonial class. This makes the caves a place that transcends physical and geographical boundaries, becoming a mirror reflecting the psychological and existential struggles of these characters.

3.2.1 Echo as a symbol of existential ambiguity and inner void

The sound or echo emanating from within the Marabar Caves is one of the main symbols used in the novel by Forster to express inner conflict and existential crisis. When the characters enter the caves, they encounter a strange acoustic phenomenon. Their voices are no longer the same, but rather a distorted echo, devoid of any consistent meaning. This sound is not merely a nuisance or a natural effect; it is a symbol of the ambiguity and emptiness experienced by individuals under colonialism. The echo indicates a state of loss and disruption in communication between individuals, where it becomes impossible for the characters to properly communicate or understand what is happening within themselves and their surroundings. This experience reveals the fragility of the values and ideas prevalent in colonial society and demonstrates that the world the British were trying to impose on India is nothing but an empty echo, incapable of providing a true or consistent explanation of reality.

3.2.2 The existential crisis and the characters' psychological disintegration

A visit to the Marabar Caves is not just an external event; it is a profound experience during which the characters' identities and their ideas about themselves and the world around them are tested. For British characters like Adele and Velda, the experience in the caves is a major turning point, as they experience psychological confusion and disorientation. These characters, who have lived within rigid colonial frameworks, find themselves confronted with a

state of internal instability and disintegration. The sound heard in the caves reflects this confusion, rendering the characters unable to understand the experience or establish stable meanings for what is happening. This echo becomes an expression of the existential crisis they are experiencing, as they feel they are living in a world filled with emptiness and uncertainty, eroding their identity.

3.2.3 The cultural symbolism of the echo: The distortion of colonial ideologies

In addition to the echo distorting sounds and making communication impossible, this sound also represents a disturbing discordance with the colonial ideologies promoted by the British Empire. For the British in the novel, India represents a world that can be analysed and understood according to European cultural standards. However, the Marabar Caves, through this sonic phenomenon, demonstrates that this colonial epistemological system cannot adequately accommodate or deal with Indian reality. India is not simply a space that can be categorized or organized according to Western standards. The caves represent a land that refuses to be part of the colonial epistemological system, demonstrating that the sound emanating from within them is an empty echo that subverts colonial ideologies and exposes colonialism's inability to interpret Indian reality.

3.2.4 The echo as a means of shattering colonial standards

The echo in the caves can be seen as a symbol of an Indian reality that rejects colonial interpretation. This echo is not merely a natural detail in the novel; it is an expression of deep contradictions related to colonial power and Indian identities. In the novel, Forster shows that the British characters cannot understand India because it does not conform to the Western standards imposed by empire. The sound that shatters within the caves indicates the fragility of these

colonial standards and demonstrates how any attempt to understand India within these parameters will always be truncated. The caves thus become a site for reflection on the relationship between colonialism and the Other, as the chaotic voice affirms India's refusal to be reduced to colonial imaginings.

3.2.5 Nature as a symbol of spiritual crisis and internal disintegration

The presence of the Marabar Caves within India's landscape reinforces the symbolism of this space in the novel. Nature in *A Passage to India* is not merely a backdrop or aesthetic landscape; it is a fundamental element in shaping the characters' existential experience. India, as depicted in the novel, is a land of mystery and contradiction, a fact clearly embodied in the caves. The nature surrounding the caves becomes a place that defies all rational understanding, leaving the British characters feeling helpless in interpreting this unknown environment. The caves, as part of this mysterious landscape, also bring the characters directly into confrontation with the existential emptiness that is an essential part of the Indian experience, one that cannot be colonised or controlled.

The Marabar Caves in *A Passage to India* are more than just a natural or geographical space; they are a symbol of the existential crisis and psychological disintegration experienced by the characters in the context of colonialism. Through the echoes emanating from within, Forster reveals the fragility of the colonial system and its inability to truly understand India. By distorting sound and presenting an experience of incomprehension, the caves demonstrate how India transcends any attempts to categorize or control it by colonialism. In this sense, these caves represent a challenge to colonial norms and reaffirm that India is a land of ambiguity and contradictions that are difficult to contain.

3.3 The countryside as a space of blurred identities and ungovernable interactions

The countryside in *A Passage to India* is an undefined and fluid space, a stage for interactions between different cultures and identities that shape the on-going tensions in the novel. The countryside in the novel differs from urban spaces, which are more regulated and dominated by colonial powers. Its mysterious and wild nature allows for a sense of freedom, but it also entails a state of turmoil and tension. The countryside poses a challenge to the colonial concept of organizing India according to Western standards, as colonialism cannot impose absolute control over these vast natural areas. Through the countryside, we can see how Indian nature threatens colonial logic and how this space intersects with Indian identity through the experiences individuals undergo in this context.

3.3.1 The countryside as an undefined space of identity

The countryside in the novel embodies an undefined and shifting space, where individuals meet in a shared landscape of chaos and the fusion of different identities. Indian and British characters in the countryside face constant overlaps of cultures and identities, leading to a state of confusion and lack of clarity in defining personal identity. Characters like Adele, for example, find themselves confronted with cultures and ideologies that are different from those they were accustomed to in Britain. In the countryside, identities become fluid, threatened by constant turmoil and change. These undefined spaces pose a constant threat to colonial identity, which seeks to define everything and impose its own standards on the colonies. In the countryside, these clear boundaries and identities are shattered, leading to an identity crisis for characters who are unsure how to deal with this contradictory reality.

3.3.2 Intercultural interactions in the countryside

The countryside is not just a natural space; it is also a site of cultural and social interaction between British and Indian people. These interactions are often beyond the control of colonialism, as they cannot be controlled or regulated in the same way as in urban areas. Indians in the countryside act more freely and live away from the constant surveillance imposed by colonial authorities in cities. However, this freedom is not without tensions, as the countryside remains a place for interaction between different identities in an unpredictable environment.

In the countryside, British and Indians meet in informal settings that transcend colonial regulations, leading to interactions that can be fraught with challenges and cultural conflict. These interactions suggest that communication between different cultures in India is neither easy nor organized, but rather fraught with challenges that lead to on-going tensions. These interactions in the countryside represent an open space for critique and resistance against colonial domination, where new dynamics emerge among the characters living within it.

3.3.3 The countryside as a place of escape from colonial control

One of the characteristics that distinguishes the countryside in *A Passage to India* is that it is a place where it is possible to escape the confines of colonial control. In cities, there is strict regulation and a monopoly of power by the British, but in the countryside, the same control is not exercised. This open natural space, far from the scrutiny of colonial authorities, allows Indians greater scope to live freely, albeit under harsh conditions. While British colonialism attempts to impose unchallenged authority in the cities, the countryside demonstrates how Indian nature remains transcendent to this kind of control.

Characters residing in the countryside, such as Dr. Aziz, face constant challenges in interacting with the Indian environment. The countryside is a place of spiritual and existential testing for them, as they face a cultural and existential crisis related to their relationship to place and identity. There is a kind of liberation in the countryside, but it also reflects that India cannot be reduced or regulated within the framework of colonialism. The countryside, in this sense, is a place that cannot be completely controlled by colonial authority, demonstrating how Indian nature is always in flux, difficult to subdue under the colonial system.

3.3.4 The countryside as a space of resistance to colonial occupation

The countryside in *A Passage to India* demonstrates an implicit resistance to colonial presence, as India is able to retain part of its identity through these natural spaces. Nature in rural India resists attempts at colonial domination through its cohesion and the cultural appeal of the people who inhabit it. This countryside serves as a refuge for many Indian characters, offering them a chance to live free from colonial interference. The countryside, with its open and unregulated nature, represents a place that cannot be controlled or framed by the British, making it a symbol of on-going resistance against colonial domination.

In *A Passage to India*, the countryside represents a space that reflects the on-going struggle between different cultural identities under colonialism. Through the countryside, Forster shows how India cannot simply be a space that can be controlled or regulated according to colonial norms. The countryside is a site of complex interactions between the British and the Indian, where identity, resistance, and freedom intertwine within an open natural context. The countryside also shows how Indian nature always remains uncontrollable, making it a symbol of on-going resistance against colonial domination.

3.4 The train journey: Transitioning between urban and non-urban realms

The train journey in *A Passage to India* is a powerful symbol of transitioning between different worlds, particularly between urban spaces dominated by colonial authority and rural worlds that maintain a sense of freedom and rebellion against this authority. The train in the novel is not merely a physical means of transportation; it is also a symbolic means of transitioning between conflicting identities, cultures, and ideologies. Through this journey, Forster exposes the tensions and conflicts that arise when individuals attempt to cross the boundaries between these contrasting worlds, as well as how these transitions affect the characters and their role in shaping their awareness of self and the world around them.

3.4.1 The train as a symbol of transitioning between worlds

The train journey in the novel is a transitional journey par excellence, as the characters cross from urban to rural spaces, and from colonial civilization to local cultures. The train in the novel, as in colonial literature in general, is a means of transportation that not only represents a change of location, but also represents a transition between worlds with different social and cultural values and resources. When the characters board the train, they not only move across geographical distances but also cross invisible lines between different social and political systems.

In the novel, the train serves as a means of separating the different worlds inhabited by the British and the Indians. While the British enjoy exceptional protection on their trains, the Indians remain subject to discrimination and marginalization. In this way, the train becomes a symbol of the colonial social structure that imposes the separation of classes and nationalities and affirms British sovereignty over India.

3.4.2 The train as a means of isolation and division

Although at first it appears to be a means of movement between worlds, it ultimately demonstrates the ability to highlight the profound differences between these worlds. For the Indian characters, the train is not merely a means of transportation but also a marker of class and racial discrimination. In the novel, the train scenes appear as places where characters are isolated according to their social and ethnic identities, reflecting the depth of the divisions imposed by the colonial context.

The separation of British and Indian passengers on the train represents how British colonialism worked to construct and affirm the separate and independent identities of each group, according to criteria of power and dominance. Through these separations, Forster demonstrates that the train does not connect different worlds but rather reinforces their division, with each world remaining closed in on itself.

3.4.3 The train as a symbol of change and transformation

Although the train represents separations and boundaries, it is also a symbol of change and transformation. When the characters board the train, they enter a moving space, symbolizing the social and political transformations taking place in India under the influence of colonialism. The train moves quickly, and as individuals move within it, they encounter the chaos and stresses of rapid movement from one place to another. Through this journey, Forster suggests that India was in a constant state of transition, intersecting between old and new, East and West, traditional and modern.

3.4.4 Cultural tensions and contrasting identities on the journey

The train journey in the novel embodies the cultural and social conflict between Indian and British cultures. When the British and Indians board the same train together, they face a wide cultural gap built on colonialism and contrasting identities. This gap is evident in the way the characters interact with each other during the journey, as moments within the train reveal the on-going tensions and cultural condescension that the British exercise over Indians.

However, despite these tensions, the train also provides a space for interaction between the characters, including moments of mutual understanding or even temporary alliances. These interactions within the train demonstrate the internal struggles that individuals experience in this complex context, as they are forced to interact with those who are culturally and socially different from them, but ultimately find themselves trapped within a space that defines their place and limits their ability to transcend these differences.

The train journey in *A Passage to India* represents more than just a means of geographical transportation; it is also a symbol of the conflict between the different cultural and social worlds of British colonial India. Through the train, the class and racial distinctions that distinguish Indians from the British are exposed, and the deep divisions caused by the colonial system are emphasized. However, at the same time, the train also reflects the process of constant transformation and the contradictory identities that the characters face in the context of India's colonial history.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has shown that both urban and non-urban spaces in *a passage to India* reflect the deep cultural and political tensions of colonial rule. While urban settings like the British club and the court reinforce segregation and control, non-urban spaces such as the Marabar caves and the countryside disrupt colonial boundaries and reveal cracks in the imperial system.

The train, as a space in motion, highlights both the physical and psychological transitions shaped by colonialism. It symbolises not just movement, but the shifting and often unstable identities of characters caught between cultures.

Through these spaces, Forster presents a powerful critique of colonialism, showing how spatial divisions mirror deeper social conflicts. The novel suggests that while colonial spaces impose division, they also hold the potential for resistance and transformation.

In the end, *a passage to India* portrays space not a neutral backdrop, but as an active force in shaping identity, conflict, and resistance under empire.

Chapter 4: Forster's critique of colonial urbanism

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Introduction

4.1 Analysis of Forster's portrayal of colonial cities as sites of repression

4.2 The limitations of British liberalism in addressing colonial inequalities

4.3 Orientalist tendencies in Forster's depiction of Indian spaces and characters

4.4 Perspectives from postcolonial critics: How far does Forster's critique go?

Conclusion

Chapter 4: Forster's critique of colonial urbanism

Introduction

This chapter explores how Forster in *a passage to India* portrays colonial cities as symbols of British control and inequality. These spaces serve British comfort while deepening social and racial divisions.

Though some British characters appear liberal, Forster shows their failure to face colonial injustice. His view of India also reflects subtle Western biases, despite efforts to avoid stereotypes.

Finally, postcolonial critics question whether Forster truly challenges colonialism or, through sympathetic British figures reflects it. This chapter analyses these tensions and how urban spaces reveal the power dynamics of empire.

4.1 Analysis of Forster's portrayal of colonial cities as sites of repression

In his novel *A Passage to India*, E.M. Forster presents a nuanced and complex portrayal of colonial cities in India. These cities represent not just geographical locations but also symbols of the social and political oppression perpetuated by British colonialism. While colonial cities may on the surface be places of British social and commercial life, at their core, they embody the class and racial segregation that perpetuated British dominance in India. By depicting these spaces, Forster shows how colonial cities were used as tools to reproduce social inequalities and deepen the economic and cultural oppression imposed by the colonial system.

One of the most striking examples of this segregation between British and Indians is the British Club, which appears in the novel as an exclusive space that Indians are not allowed to join, even if they are of high social class or of prominent status in society. The club is portrayed as a site where the British exercised their social and economic dominance, reflecting the deep racial discrimination that existed during that era. This space, representing the British elite, becomes a symbol of colonial power that enforces cultural segregation and obstructs any kind of equal interaction between British and Indians (Forster).

On the other hand, colonial cities such as Kolaba and Ajmer appear as centres where these oppressive patterns are embodied. In these cities, social life is organized in a way that reinforces racial and class segregation, with upscale areas reserved for British residents only, while Indians remain in marginal or suburban locations. Through this distribution, colonial dominance is reproduced in everyday contexts, where freedom of movement and cross-cultural interaction are restricted. These urban spaces demonstrate how the segregation between British and Indian residents was not limited to private spaces but extended to public spaces that were supposed to be open to all (Loomba).

These oppressive dynamics are also evident in the psychological and social dimensions of life in these cities. Although Indians live in these spaces, they are denied any real influence or control over these spaces, which are often closed to them. Characters like Aziz and Hamidullah, both middle-class Indians, are presented in a state of isolation, as the novel highlights how these characters are forced to coexist in spaces that reflect the profound inequalities between the British and Indians. Although these characters seek to participate in social life, they are constantly confronted by the racist barriers placed in their path by colonialism (Said).

In terms of the social aspect, the cities in *A Passage to India* become spaces where oppression is embodied not only through overt political practices, but also through the indirect ways in which everyday life is organized. In these spaces, cultural segregation persists in various aspects of daily life, with Indians forced to live in isolated areas or in inferior locations, reinforcing inequality and disparity between races (Ashcroft et al.). This distribution of spaces is not accidental; rather, it is part of a colonial strategy aimed at maintaining British cultural and political hegemony.

Even attempts that may appear in the novel to transcend these tensions, such as the bridge party organized by the British, ultimately fail. Despite the British efforts to bridge cultural gaps, these initiatives ultimately fail, as cultural identities remain restricted within the framework of colonial inequalities. This failure of these attempts at rapprochement reflects the profound and intractable nature of the social and racial segregation imposed by colonialism (Ashcroft et al.).

By analysing Forster's depiction of colonial cities in *A Passage to India*, we see how these spaces represent not only geographical locations, but also vivid symbols of the oppression and racial discrimination that prevailed in colonial society. The novel presents a picture of how colonialism used cities as tools to reproduce the social structures that reinforced British dominance over India. Cities became places where cultures were separated, and these boundaries persisted even in attempts at cultural rapprochement, reflecting the profound challenges facing India under colonialism.

Through this perspective, Forster sharply critiques the colonial system and reveals the limits of British liberal thought in dealing with racial and social issues in India. Despite the attempts of some British characters to bridge these gaps, the novel demonstrates how the colonial

system was too complex to be resolved through superficial initiatives; rather, it required radical transformations in the social and political structure governing colonial India.

4.2 The limitations of British liberalism in addressing colonial inequalities

Liberalism is one of the fundamental pillars of British political and cultural identity during the colonial era. It is based on the principles of freedom, rationality, and the rule of law. However, in his novel *A Passage to India*, Forster highlights the profound contradiction between these theoretical principles and their practical application in the colonial context. The novel reveals the failure of British liberalism to treat Indians fairly and equitably, exposing its limitations when tested in an environment based on discrimination and racial supremacy.

One of the most prominent characters who embodies this problem is Mr. Fielding, the college principal, who is initially portrayed as a cultured, tolerant, and open-minded man toward Indians. Fielding, in a sense, represents the voice of moderate British liberalism, attempting to build bridges of communication with the Other. Despite his good intentions, Forster cleverly shows that Fielding, ultimately, cannot transcend the colonial structure to which he belongs. As events escalate around the case of Aziz, the wrongfully accused Indian doctor, Fielding's support for him puts him in a difficult position vis-à-vis the rest of the British public and exposes the isolation of true liberals within a system that prioritizes racial loyalty over moral principles.

In one of Forster's famous lines, one of the characters says: "It is impossible here to be friends. The whole of India is against it." (Forster 287) This quote accurately summarizes the structural obstacles that prevent the possibility of friendship or justice between the two parties. Liberalism alone is not sufficient to bridge the colonial divide because the system itself is based on irreparable discrimination from within.

In this context, Edward Said suggests that colonial liberal thought carried an Orientalist vision that reproduced the hierarchical relationship between the "civilized West" and the "backward East," even while claiming tolerance and openness (Said). This is evident in the situation of Mrs. Moore, who represents the Western moral conscience at the beginning of the novel. However, she collapses in the face of the horror of the Marabar Caves, unable to understand the complexity of India or justify what is happening around her, becoming a victim of her own culture shock.

Through these characters, Forster demonstrates that liberalism, despite its endeavour to understand the "other," remains limited when confronted with the harsh reality of colonial power. The British liberal is always torn between his loyalty to his individual values and his allegiance to a colonial structure that practices exclusion and discrimination. For this reason, real change cannot come from "individual understanding" alone, but rather from a radical critique of the system itself.

Furthermore, Homi Bhabha argues, within the framework of postcolonial theory, that colonial liberalism was merely a "cosmetic tool" for domination, and that it sought not real equality but rather the subtle and acceptable reproduction of power (Bhabha, 1994). In this context, Forster does not merely condemn colonialism, but rather shows how even the most "progressive" characters were unable to shake the logic of power.

Ultimately, *A Passage to India* demonstrates that British liberalism, despite its ostensible humanitarian discourse, failed to address the structural injustices of the colonial system. The characters who attempted to reconcile liberal values with imperial affiliation fell into their own contradictions. In this way, Forster offers a penetrating critical vision that exposes the limits of

liberal thought in the face of a colonial reality of exclusion, and invites the reader to question the 'neutrality' of this discourse, which conceals a legacy of domination and superiority.

4.3 Orientalist tendencies in Forster's depiction of Indian spaces and characters

Although *A Passage to India* is often categorised as a liberal text critical of colonialism, a closer analysis reveals the persistence of certain Orientalist concepts in Forster's discourse, both in the representation of spaces and in the construction of Indian characters. Although the novel appears on the surface to be an attempt to bring cultures together, it is at its core built on a European vision of India, one that tends toward generalization and alienation. This renders it, in many instances, captive to the logic of Orientalism, as described by Edward Said (Said, 1978).

4.3.1 Indian spaces as sites of ambiguity and chaos

One of the most prominent manifestations of Orientalism in the novel is the depiction of India as a mysterious and incomprehensible space, characterised by chaos and irrationality. This perception is most blatant in the description of the Marabar Caves, which lack any specific features or clear significance. Instead, the place is presented as a source of anxiety and psychological collapse. The cave doesn't speak, but rather emits an endless echo of sounds ("boum...boum...") that reflects the absurdity of existence, as seen in the collapse of Mrs. Moore's character. This type of description aligns with what Said calls "the Orient as a mirror of chaos and irrationality," where non-Western space is transformed into a symbol of confusion and mental turmoil (Said).

In the novel, India is not only different, but also incomprehensible. Orientalism is evident here, as India is portrayed as a radically "other" place, inherently mysterious and unfathomable to the European mind. Even characters who have attempted to understand it, such as Mrs. Moore and Fielding, end up either withdrawing or being let down.

4.3.2 Portraying Indian characters as emotional and unstable beings

On the level of characterisation, the novel often projects stereotypical traits onto Indians, making them appear emotional, moody, and mentally unstable. Dr. Aziz, despite the reader's sympathy, is portrayed as a volatile character, quickly shifting from admiration for the British to hatred, from trust to isolation. This trait portrays Indians as incapable of controlling their emotions, a discourse consistent with the colonialist perception that portrayed Indians as politically and intellectually immature. In contrast, Fielding appears as a model of rationality and balance, even when criticized. This contrast between "Western reason" and "Eastern emotion" reflects a deep Orientalist construct, which presents the West as the bearer of logic and order, while relegating the East to the realm of emotion and mystery (Bhabha, 1994).

4.3.3 Reducing Indian culture to rituals and myths

The novel also tends to portray Indian culture as closed off to mystical rituals and beliefs. Religion, in particular, is depicted in an irrational, festive manner, as in the Ganpati festival scene at the end of the novel. Forster presents Hinduism as an experience steeped in chaos and disorder, devoid of any organization or rational thought. Some critics, such as Gayatri Spivak, have argued that this depiction empties Eastern religions of their philosophical dimension, turning them into a folkloric scene for Western consumption (Spivak).

4.3.4 Language and literary representation as tools of orientalism

The novel is written in English and is told through the perspective of an omniscient narrator who is able to interpret the "Indian world" for a European reader. This poses the problem that Forster, despite his sympathy, does not fully grant the Indian characters the right to represent themselves. Indian characters often speak in simplified English or are subjected to implicit ridicule when they attempt to use literary or formal language, reflecting the unequal relationship between speaker and addressee, and between the represented and the interpreter (Loomba).

4.3.5 Postcolonial criticism

Postcolonial critics such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak have offered nuanced readings of the novel, which do not reject it outright, but rather reveal its underlying contradictions. Forster does not defend colonialism; rather, he clearly criticises it, but he unconsciously reproduces Western perceptions of the East. Thus, the novel lies in a middle ground, between serious political critique and unintentional adherence to stereotypes (Bhabha).

Despite the progressive nature usually attributed to *A Passage to India*, an analysis of the novel from an Orientalist perspective reveals the persistence of certain stereotypes about the East, and India in particular. Whether in the representation of space or in the construction of characters, a discourse is reproduced that renders India a mysterious and incomprehensible land, and depicts its inhabitants as emotional beings difficult to rationalize. This does not negate the novel's importance in exposing the practices of colonialism, but it does prompt us to reflect on the limits of liberal discourse when it engages with the Other. Thus, the novel becomes a complex text that requires a double reading: one that acknowledges its critical merit, and another

that does not overlook its Orientalist structure, which makes "difference" a subject of contemplation, not equality.

4.4 Perspectives from postcolonial critics: How far does Forster's critique go?

In the final chapter of the analysis, a central question must be addressed: Is *A Passage to India* truly an anti-colonial novel, or does it remain captive to the colonial perspective it seeks to critique? This question has preoccupied many postcolonial critics, who have debated Forster's classification: is he an 'ally of the oppressed' or merely a 'sympathetic observer' unable to transcend his cultural boundaries? This section seeks to explore diverse critical perspectives on the limits of critical discourse in the novel, through an analysis of the narrative structure, political stances, and representation of the other.

4.4.1 Forster's position on the colonial system

It is clear that Forster does not adopt an imperialist stance. On the contrary, he clearly condemns the practices of injustice and arrogance perpetrated by the British in India, and exposes the fragility of the discourse of "civilization" when stripped of moral values. This is evident in several scenes, most notably the trial against Dr. Aziz, which turns into a spectacle in which justice is undermined in favour of race and affiliation. Characters like Turanbam and Mrs. Turathon also represent a closed colonial mentality that refuses even to accept the idea of equality with the Indian 'other.'

However, this critique does not go beyond the boundaries of an individual moral vision. The novel, as Edward Said points out, offers a critique of practices, not structures; that is, it criticizes 'the behaviour of the coloniser' without radically dismantling the economic and

political structure upon which the empire is based (Said). In this sense, the novel remains within the framework of 'moral liberalism,' not 'political radicalism.'

4.4.2 The novel as an attempt at mediation, not resistance

According to Homi Bhabha's reading, Forster does not present himself as a fighter against colonialism, but rather as an intellectual attempting to mediate between the two worlds: the Western and the Eastern. However, Bhabha warns of the danger of this seemingly neutral mediating position, which in reality reproduces cultural hegemony by conceiving the relationship between East and West as one of communication deficit rather than a struggle for power (Bhabha). Therefore, the novel's open ending when Aziz and Fielding part ways and are unable to continue their friendship is not an expression of inevitability, but rather the limits of a liberal vision that cannot transcend the system.

4.4.3 Friendship as a limited political alternative

Despite Forster's attempts to present friendship as a humane alternative to the colonial system, this friendship remains governed by the logic of power. The friendship between Fielding and Aziz, though genuine, does not have enough power to change reality. Forster himself acknowledges that "India will not accept the West" under the current circumstances, as evidenced in the concluding passage(2005) in which the narrator says: "Not yet... No, not there." (Forster 362)

This ending expresses the failure of Forster's humane project, but at the same time represents a moment of awareness that the colonial system cannot be reformed from within and requires comprehensive dismantling. Here, the novel intersects with the critical postcolonial vision, although it does not fully belong to this school.

4.4.4 Spivak's critique and the limits of representation

Gayatri Spivak, in her famous essay *Can the Subaltern Speak*, points out that discourses that attempt to represent the Other often fall into the trap of silencing the Subaltern by speaking on their behalf. In this context, Forster's novel, despite its sympathy, can be viewed as failing to give the Indian characters the full capacity to represent themselves. The omniscient narrator remains the one who directs meaning, interprets, and provides the final formulation of reality. This gives the novel a subtle Orientalist character, even if it appears anti-colonial on the surface.

4.4.5 Can Forster be considered a true critic of colonialism?

In light of all these analyses, it can be said that Forster represents a problematic case in postcolonial literature. He is not a voice dedicated to colonialism, but he also has not fully liberated himself from the Western epistemological framework that produces the East as the different, mysterious, and incomprehensible other. His critique of colonialism is moral, not revolutionary. However, the novel's importance lies in its ability to open discussions about colonialism, not in offering definitive solutions to it.

Analysing *A Passage to India* in light of postcolonial criticism reveals a complex interplay between empathy and critique, between representation and bias, between the desire for communication and the structural boundaries that prevent it. Forster does not offer easy answers; rather, he poses radical questions about the nature of the relationship between West and East, confronting the reader with the contradictions that plague every attempt at understanding within a colonial context. Herein lies both the novel's strength and its weakness: it is bold in its proposition, yet reluctant to cross the threshold of hegemonic discourse.

Conclusion

A passage to India is not just a novel about colonialism, but a deep reflection on power and identity. Forster criticises the British system, though his view stays within Western limits.

The cities in the novel show injustice and the failure of colonial rule. While Forster questions stereotypes, he doesn't fully escape them.

Fielding represents liberal hope, but he cannot change the system. The novel sits between colonial and postcolonial writing, showing both critique and contradiction.

Its strength is in asking hard questions about East and West, power and resistance which is why it still matters today.

General conclusion

General conclusion

Upon reaching the end of this research, which examined and analysed the narrative representations of urban and non-urban spaces in the novel *A Passage to India* by British author Edward Morgan Forster, we see the outlines of a comprehensive literary critical project that attempts to deconstruct the discursive structure underlying the text, drawing on postcolonial theoretical concepts and a critical approach based on analysing the relationship between space, power, and identity. The primary objective of this research was to explore how spaces whether urban or natural are used as narrative and symbolic elements to highlight the imbalances of the colonial system and how they contribute to revealing the depth of the existential and moral crisis that accompanied the colonial experience.

The first chapter begins with the theoretical and historical framework necessary for understanding the relationship between urban planning and imperial hegemony. It addresses the nature of colonial cities in British India, particularly how their spatial and symbolic organization served the logic of racial segregation and the cultural superiority of the coloniser. These real-life data are linked to the imaginative structure of Forster's novel, providing a preliminary overview of the most prominent spaces addressed in the novel. This is followed by contributions from prominent postcolonial thinkers such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and Frantz Fanon, who provided analytical tools for understanding the unequal relations between the centre and the periphery, and between the Western self and the colonised other.

The second chapter is devoted to analysing urban spaces, such as the British Club, the Indian neighbourhoods, and the courthouse, as spaces saturated with social and cultural tensions. These spaces demonstrate how domination is reproduced through everyday details, and how the

colonial city is not merely a political or economic tool, but a symbolic device that re-establishes images of superiority and discrimination. Particular attention is paid to the failure of the "bridge party," a symbol of the failure of all attempts at rapprochement between the two cultures, reflecting the fact that the colonial system does not provide real opportunities for coexistence but rather constantly reproduces division.

The third chapter then shifts the focus by moving to non-urban spaces, most notably the Marabar Caves, one of the novel's most complex and ambiguous symbolic elements. These caves are analysed as a place beyond Western rational understanding, exposing the fragility of colonial norms and triggering an identity crisis among the British characters. The countryside and the train are also discussed as spaces that allow human relations to escape colonial control, albeit temporarily, opening up a horizon for considering other possibilities for existence and interaction outside the logic of control.

The fourth chapter is devoted to assessing Forster's own position on colonialism, through a twofold critical analysis: on the one hand, his liberal leanings and his tendency to critique colonial practices from a moral and humane perspective are highlighted. On the other hand, the limits of this critique are questioned, particularly in terms of its lack of radical alternatives or truly emancipatory visions. Remnants of Orientalism are also revealed in his representation of India and its characters, despite his clear attempt at empathy with the Other. It has been shown that the novel remains, ultimately, a text that expresses a transitional moment in Western thought, a text that oscillates between critiquing and engaging with hegemony at the same time.

As a final conclusion, we can conclude that *A Passage to India* is not only a novel about the clash of cultures, but rather a literary text that harbours profound philosophical and ethical

questions about the other, difference, and the possibility of true communication within a colonial structure based on inequality and superiority. Through his intensive and precise use of space, Forster succeeded in making the city, the caves, the countryside, and the train into independent narrative characters, performing roles that transcend the traditional functions of space in literature.

This research also demonstrated that the use of postcolonial critical tools allowed for a more in-depth and complex reading of the novel, by revealing the tensions underlying the language, imagery, and relationships between the characters. The study demonstrated how space in the novel becomes a mirror that reveals the cracks in the colonial project and even raises questions that the colonial system cannot answer.

Thus, the cognitive value of this research lies not only in its literary analysis of the novel, but also in its contribution to the development of critical approaches that rethink the relationship between texts, space, and historical context. This opens the door to subsequent research that may continue this path, whether by comparing *A Passage to India* with other orientalist texts or by studying postcolonial spaces in contemporary world literature.

In this research, we have observed that spaces in *A Passage to India* are not merely places where events take place, but rather are fundamental elements that significantly influence relations between the British and Indians. Places such as the British Club and the Indian neighbourhoods represent a clear separation between cultures and affirm the dominance of the coloniser. In contrast, other places such as the Marabar Caves represent resistance to this separation and the emergence of a possibility to challenge the colonial order. Therefore, we see

that space in the novel plays a significant role in understanding how colonialism affects societies and individuals.

A Passage to India remains very important in postcolonial urban studies because it shows us how colonialism affected cities and societies. We see how organized spaces in India contributed to the separation between the British and Indians, reflecting colonial supremacy. However, the novel also shows how there were attempts to resist and transcend these social divides. Therefore, the novel serves as a starting point for understanding the impact of colonialism on urban life.

Ultimately, space in *A Passage to India* is closely linked to power and resistance. Places like the British Club represent colonial authority and the separation of people, while places like the Marabar Caves present opportunities for defiance and resistance. The novel shows how colonialism not only affects politics but also extends to how people understand their cultures and identities. Despite attempts at cross-cultural rapprochement, the colonial system remains powerful and difficult to overcome.

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Résumé

Cette thèse examine la représentation des villes comme personnages dans les romans anglais d'un point de vue postcolonial, en s'intéressant plus particulièrement à *A Passage to India* (1924) d' E. M. Forster. Ce roman décrit les espaces coloniaux et autochtones d'une manière qui reflète les tensions culturelles, sociales et politiques du Raj britannique ou de l'Inde britannique. En se concentrant sur des lieux comme Chandrapore, Forster met en lumière la séparation entre colonisateurs et colonisés. Il explore également la complexité et l'évolution constante de l'identité dans ces zones urbaines. Cette recherche s'appuie sur une analyse littéraire postcoloniale, s'appuyant sur une analyse textuelle, pour examiner comment la représentation des villes par Forster questionne le pouvoir de l'impérialisme. L'étude explore la manière dont les espaces urbains reflètent des thèmes tels que l'hybridité culturelle, l'aliénation et la résistance, et comment ils contribuent au discours postcolonial plus large du roman. De plus, en considérant ces villes comme des espaces de négociation des enjeux postcoloniaux, l'étude vise à montrer comment les milieux urbains contribuent aux discussions plus larges sur la littérature coloniale et postcoloniale, ainsi que le rôle des villes dans une compréhension approfondie du contexte du roman. Des recherches futures pourraient explorer la manière dont les adaptations cinématographiques de la littérature coloniale, notamment « Un Passage en Inde », ont représenté visuellement les espaces urbains et si ces représentations renforcent ou remettent en question les thèmes postcoloniaux du roman.

Mots-clés : représentation des villes, littérature postcoloniale, personnification, identité, lexèmes thématiques.

المخلص

تبحث هذه المذكرة في كيفية تمثيل المدن كشخصية في الروايات الإنجليزية من منظور ما بعد الاستعمار، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على رواية إي. إم. فورستر "رحلة إلى الهند" (1924). بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تصف الرواية كلاً من المساحات الاستعمارية والسكان الأصليين بطريقة تعكس التوترات الثقافية والاجتماعية والسياسية للراج البريطاني أو الهند البريطانية. من خلال التركيز على أماكن مثل تشاندرابور، يُسلط فورستر الضوء على الفصل بين المستعمرين والمستعمرين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يستكشف فورستر كيف يمكن للهوية في هذه المناطق الحضرية أن تكون معقدة ومتغيرة باستمرار. يستخدم هذا البحث تحليلاً أدبياً لما بعد الاستعمار، معتمداً على تحليل النصوص لدراسة كيف يُشكل تصوير فورستر للمدن في قوة الإمبريالية. تستكشف الدراسة كيف تعكس المساحات الحضرية مواضيع مثل التهجين الثقافي والاعترا ب والمقاومة، وكيف تُسهم في خطاب ما بعد الاستعمار الأوسع في الرواية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، من خلال النظر إلى هذه المدن كمساحات تُناقش فيها قضايا ما بعد الاستعمار، تهدف الدراسة إلى توضيح كيفية مساهمة البيئات الحضرية في النقاشات الأوسع في الأدب الاستعماري وما بعد الاستعماري، ودور المدن في فهم سياق الرواية فهماً عميقاً. يمكن للبحوث المستقبلية استكشاف كيفية تمثيل الأفلام السينمائية المُقتبسة من الأدب الاستعماري، بما في ذلك رواية "رحلة إلى الهند"، للمساحات الحضرية بصرياً، وما إذا كانت هذه التصويرات تُعزز أو تُعارض موضوعات ما بعد الاستعمار في الرواية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تصوير المدن، أدب ما بعد الاستعمار، التجسيد، الهوية، المفردات الموضوعية.