ISSN: 2716-9189 Class B E-ISSN: 2676-1750
Journal of Studies in Language, Culture, and Society (JSLCS). (09) 01, 2026. (PP. 143-154)
Received: 14/09/2025 Accepted: 14/02/2026 Published: 30/04/2026

THE FICTIONALIZATION OF THE COLONIAL SETTLEMENT OF FRANTZ FANON IN EDWARD MORGAN FORSTER'S A PASSAGE TO INDIA (1924)

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Abstract: The paper examines Edward Morgan Forster's representation of colonial space in *A passage to India* (1924), with a particular emphasis on the fictional settlement of Chandrapore, the Civil Station and the Marabar Caves. It argues that Forster's spacial descriptions function as narrative structures through which the Manichean logic of British colonial power characterized by rigid binaries, is produced and sustained. Drawing on Frantz Fanon's elaboration of the colonial zone in *Black skin and white masks* (1967) and *The wretched of the earth* (1968), the study reads Forster's literary description of colonial space through postcolonial lens. By establishing a critical dialogue between Forster's narrative form and Fanon's critiques of the colonial zone, the paper demonstrates how spatial organization operates as an ideological and psychological instrument that maintains segregation, hierarchy and exclusion. The analysis reveals that Fanon's conceptualization of the Manichean colonial world is embedded in *A passage to India*, where spatial divisions simultaneously consolidate imperial authority and generate psychological alienation for both the colonizers and the colonized. The paper argues also that these spacial and psychological divisions render human reconciliations and cross-cultural friendships structurally impossible under colonial rule. Ultimately, the study contends that *A passage to India* exposes the colonial settlement not merely as a socio-political system but as a Manichean structure that fragments identity, perpetuates psychic trauma and forecloses the possibility of true human connections within colonial order.

Keywords: Colonialism; colonial space; India; Manichean structure; postcolonial theory

How to cite this article:
Ferhi, S. (2026). The Fictionalization of the Colonial Settlement of Frantz Fanon in Edward Morgan Forster's A Passage to India (1924). *Journal of Studies in Language, Culture, and Society (JSLCS),* 9(1), 143-154.

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1. Introduction

Edward Morgan Forster (1879-1970) is one of the most outstanding British authors, novelists and essayists of the first half of the twentieth century. He is particularly renowned for his modern classic novels such as *A Room with a view* (1908), *Howards end* (1910), and most notably *A passage to India* (1924). The writing of *A passage to India* spanned nearly 14 years, during which Forster is known to have visited the Indian State of Dewas at least twice, according to critics. As a modern classic, this seminal novel, alongside other postcolonial novels such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of darkness* (1899) and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901) have all given a nuanced critique of British imperialism through interpersonal, institutional, and symbolic dimensions of colonial settlement. In general terms, Forster's *A passage to India* offers a complex story of the British colonial rule in India, as it traces the fraught interactions between the local Indians and the British colonizers. Set at the time of the British Raj, the novel revolves around the experiences of characters such as Dr. Aziz, Cyril Fielding, Mrs. Moore, Adela Quested and others in their quests for possible friendships in a time of great cultural and political changes as well as racial tensions.

Throughout the novel, Forster also builds a powerful critique of colonial settlement based not only on social and legal systems but also on geographical and spatial divisions. The physical arrangement and organization of Chandrapore, including its town, hills, caves and other colonial institutions say a great deal about how and why the British Empire had imposed itself on the Indian landscape, and claimed space and power through administrative planning. In other words, these geographical locations uncover important insights into the methods and motivations behind British Empire on the Indian landscapes. Furthermore, the novel shows that space is as much about territorial control as it is about cultural domination with geography becoming a tool for asserting imperial power and enforcing separation between the British colonizers and colonized Indians.

While Forster's *A passage to India* is often read as a humanist critique of imperialism, the novel gains more complexity when approached from the theoretical framework of postcolonialism, as the one of Frantz Fanon, whose writings on Manichean structure, colonial psychology, violence and resistance in settlement colonies offer an interesting interpretation. In this context, this study argues that the way Forster described colonial India in *A passage to India* reflects Fanon's conception of the colonial world as a symbolically and materially divided space, marked by institutionalized racism, rigid social boundaries, and the psychological impossibility of cross-cultural connections.

2. Literature Review

A passage to India has been the subject of extensive debate both at the time of its publication that was highly marked by heated and controversial debates concerning the future of the British Empire in India in the aftermath of World War I (1914-1918), and the rising momentum of the Indian nationalist movement. Later, the novel continued to attract scholarly attention in the context of the growing wave of decolonization and the emergence of postcolonialism as a major field in literary studies. Consequently, many scholars have examined Forster's novel through the lenses of colonialism, history, race, and identity as discussing the effects of British imperial rule over the Indian population that fostered the dividing line between the "superior" British over the "other" Indians.

Among these critics is Mouloud Siber, whose study entitled "Rudyard Kipling, Edward Morgan Forster, William Somerset Maugham and Joseph Conrad: the British imperial tradition and the individual talent (2012) provides a significant reading of *A passage to India*. Siber (2012) argues that Forster had created two opposing settings within the same geographical location of Chandrapore; the first one is the Civil Station, which Siber (2012)

calls “the little England”, a space occupied exclusively by the British colonizers, while the rest of Chandrapore is inhabited by the Indian population. According to Siber (2012), this “Little England” is created by the Anglo-Indians to separate themselves from the natives in terms of race, culture, beliefs, power, and infrastructure. As he explains:

> The Anglo-Indians or the colonizers live in the civil station which is within Chandrapore but not really integrated to it. It is a kind of ‘Little England’ inhabited by the white race within the land of the colonized. In the civil station, the houses are beautifully built in order to give the impression that one is not far from one’s motherland. There are also the necessary infrastructure and buildings for transportation, schooling and medical service, modern amenities in a land considered by the colonizer static in terms of development and technology. The Anglo-Indians create their ‘little England’ to distinguish themselves as superior to the natives who live in the remaining parts of Chandrapore. (p.132)

This passage highlights how British colonial rule in India was deliberately marked by a clear dividing line that separates the supposedly civilized, ordered space of the Civil Station from the marginalized Indian quarters of Chandrapore. Although both exist within the same geographical location, they share nothing except the overarching sky, symbolizing the social, racial, and cultural separation imposed by colonial power.

More recent scholarship of the novel reinforces this reading by emphasizing that Forster’s depiction of colonial settlement functions not merely as political domination but also as a system of geographical organization that mirrors racial hierarchy and cultural division. T. Mogea (2023), in “Colonialism as Reflected in Forster’s *A passage to India,”* argues that the spatial arrangement of Chandrapore reinforces racial stereotyping and social hierarchies. She considers that the town’s topographical stratification reflects both imperial authority and the impossibility of genuine empathy or coexistence between the colonizers and the colonized. Mogea contends that Chandrapore is “a physical space [that] becomes a metaphor for political control; the British reside above, the Indians below” (2023, p. 30). Spaces such as the British Club and the colonial enclave on the hill symbolize exclusivity and imperial dominance, while the Indian town below is portrayed as alien, poor, and threatening. The contrast between the well-planned colonial enclave and the disordered Indian town thus becomes a powerful mechanism for sustaining imperial control.

Similarly, in *“*E. M. Forster’s Use of Symbolism in *A passage to India:* A Postcolonial Reading*,”* N. Q. Suhail (2025) examines how key settings in the novel, such as the bridge, the mosque, and the Marabar Caves, are far from neutral landscapes. Instead, they function as symbolic battlegrounds for colonial ideology. Suhail explains that the bridge at the novel’s conclusion, while ostensibly suggesting reconciliation, ultimately reinforces division because it is founded on imperial engineering rather than mutual understanding (2025, p. 114). Moreover, he identifies the Marabar Caves as the central site of confusion and rupture in the novel. According to Suhail, the caves:

> Symbolize the inscrutable and overwhelming spiritual forces that defy colonial understanding and control. These caves, with their haunting echo of ‘ou-boum,’ represent the void and the collapse of communication between the colonizers and the colonized. They become a site where the fragile bonds of friendship and trusts are shattered, reflecting the impossibility of true cross-cultural dialogue within an imperial context. (Suhail, 2025, pp. 111–112)

From this perspective, Forster’s portrayal of colonial space highlights the empire’s fundamental misunderstandings and the structural impossibility of genuine friendship or social equality under colonial rule. The Marabar Caves, in particular, symbolize the collapse

of meaning, communication and mutual understanding within a system sustained by institutional domination, fear, and hierarchy.

These scholarly readings of *A passage to India*, though they vary in focus, converge on the view that Forster uses space to critique British colonial power. Siber (2012) examined the Civil Station as a materially segregated "Little England," highlighting how colonial authority is spatially enforced through racial and cultural separation. Mogea (2023) extended this argument by viewing Chandrapore's topographical hierarchy as a metaphor for political domination, emphasizing that spatial organization actively reinforces racial stereotypes and renders genuine coexistence impossible. Moving beyond physical space, Suhail (2025) interpreted symbolic sites such as the Marabar Caves as embodying the collapse of meaning and communication under imperialism, exposing the limits of colonial understanding. Taken together, these perspectives reveal that Chandrapore functions as a site of material segregation and ideological hierarchy, underscoring Forster's portrayal of colonialism as a system that structures space, identity, and human relations.

3. Methodology

In what follows, however, I would like to build on the findings of previous postcolonial critics like the ones mentioned above and other scholars by bringing to light a north African reading perspective of the colonial space in Forster's aforementioned work using Frantz Fanon's theory of postcolonialism as articulated in his *Black skin, white masks* (1967) and more notably in his *The wretched of the earth* (1968). In other words, the research paper aims at reading Forster's portrayal of the fictional Indian setting and colonial geography in *A passage to India* through the lens of Frantz Fanon's theory of the colonized/colonizer's zones or settlements with a particular focus on the role of language in the process of describing this colonial space. More specifically, the paper examines the way in which Forster interrogates and simultaneously fictionalizes the colonial world by presenting not merely a historical or geographical reality of colonial India, but a complex and contested site of control, fragmentation, cultural erasure and alienation, structured according to what Fanon describes as a Manichean division of colonial space.

In *A passage to India*, Forster gives a particular importance to the colonial setting, using it as a central narrative device through which the agents of empire are both represented and questioned. From the outset, the main events of the story unfold in the fictional town of Chandrapore, which is located along the bank of the Ganges River, constituting a spatially and symbolically divided colonial world highly marked by persistent political and social tensions between the British colonizers and the native Indians. Its layout reveals what Fanon terms the "Manichean" structure of the colonial environment, a rigid world "cut into two" organizations in which the colonizer and the colonized occupy separate, hierarchically spaces that are mutually oppositional. In such a system, the colonizer's zone embodies civility, order and privilege, while the colonized zone represents chaos, inferiority and moral suspect.

The Manichean structure of Chandrapore is materially divided into two symbolic zones: the native town and the Civil Station. The native town represents a dense, disordered space inhabited by the local Indian population, while the Civil Station represents the British orderly enclave, occupied by colonial administrators and officials. One the one hand, the colonial zone is not merely geographical but deeply political and ideological at the same time, as it organizes mobility, legitimacy and power. On the other hand, the Marabar Caves stand remote, unearthly mysterious sites, unsettling the British and Indian characters alike. Read through a Fanonian lens, the caves signal a rupture within colonial order, revealing the instability that underlies its apparent coherence. The caves disrupt western logic and language, reflecting

what Fanon qualifies as the limit of colonial discourse when confronted with the indigenous reality it cannot fully understand or explain.

To address these issues, this study draws on Fanon's analyses of colonialism, racism and power relations in *The wretched of the earth* (1968) and *Black skin white masks* (1967). So putting side by side the picture Forster and Fanon draw of colonialism, though in different genres, can help to put into relief similarities and differences in the portrait of the colonies and colonized, the conduct of the imperial officials in relation to the natives, as well as the modalities of their socio-political interaction in such colonial setting. In this regard, the paper situates itself within a postcolonial critical tradition that moves beyond historicist readings focused primarily on ideological justifications of empire.

Accordingly, unlike historicist approaches to race and colonialism that emphasize dialectical thought and the primacy of ideas or consciousness in history, Fanonian postcolonial theory foregrounds spatiality, materiality, and embodied power relations. As Said (1999) noted, Fanon insists on "the primacy of geography in history and the primacy of history in consciousness and subjectivity" (p. 208). By adopting this spatial and non-dialectical framework, the present study emphasizes colonial space as a lived, contested, and violent reality, thereby offering a methodologically grounded reading of *A Passage to India* that foregrounds Manichean geography, language, and power relations as central analytical categories.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Colonial Space and the Manichean Structure

Now, I shall move directly to the discussion of the contrastive or Manichean description of the settler colony as described by Fanon in relation, respectively, to colonial French-Algeria. In this context, Fanon argues that colonial society is fundamentally a compartmentalized and divided society split into two antagonist or juxtaposed zones inhabited by two "species". In *The wretched of the earth,* Fanon (1968) wrote the following about the colonial city:

> The zone where the native lives is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. Two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for the two terms, one is superfluous. The settler's town is a strongly built town, all made of stones and steel. It is a brightly lit town; the streets are covered with asphalt. […] the town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame […] It is a world without spaciousness, men live on top of each other, and their huts are built one top of the other. The native town is a hungry, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in time. It is a town of niggers and dirty Arabs. (pp. 38-39).

This passage illustrates that the daily life of the native people in the colonial city which is meticulously conceived by the colonial administration is brutal, restrictive, and coercive. Colonial space is thus not neutral but deeply political: it is a social location where power relations are at their most intense, operating through both bodily discipline and affective control. The colonized envies the colonizer, who, in turn, responds with hostility and fear. These segregated zones therefore, generate conflictual relations and institutionalize forms of exclusions and racism that are spatially inscribed within colonial city itself.

In the same vein, Fanon (1967) maintained that "colonization standardizes relations, for it dichotomizes the colonial society in a marked way" (p. 126). This rigid dichotomy reinforces the binary logic that structures colonial domination and forecloses the possibility of genuine social reciprocity. Turning to *A passage to India*, it becomes evident that the manner in which Forster depicts the colonial city of Chandrapore overlaps in several respects with the spatial logic outlined by Fanon. Chandrapore appears as a town marked by stagnation and decay:

> [it] was never large or beautiful, but two hundred years ago it lay on the main road between Upper India and the sea. The zest for decoration stopped in the eighteenth century. There is no painting and scarcely any carving bazaars. The very wood seems made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving so abased, so monotonous is everything that meets the eye. (Forster, 1924, p. 28)

This description conveys Chandrapore as a physically deteriorated and spiritually stunted place. Moreover, the language that Forster employs produces a sense of monotony and historical stagnation. Consequently, Foster further notes:

> The city of Chandrapore presents nothing of extraordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Gangs, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the *rubbish it deposits* so freely. There are no bathing steps […] the streets *are mean*, the *temples ineffective*" (Forster, 1924, p.28, emphasis added).

Through this imagery, Chandrapore is seen as a degraded and poor urban space, a representation that resonates with Fanon's analysis of the native town as a marginalized, deprived and neglected. However, while Fanon politicizes this spatial degradation as a product of colonial violence and segregation, Forster's depiction remains largely descriptive.

Moreover, the native zone sprawls along the edge of a dirty and polluted section of the river Ganges, where decrepit bazaars dating back to the eighteenth century conceal a rubbish-choked stream. This spatial arrangement encloses both people and dwellings in a state of disorder, as houses and bodies seem to merge with the surrounding mud. In this context, Forster (1924) wrote: "the Ganges comes down it might be expected to wash the excrescence back into soil. Houses do fall, people are drowned and left rotting, but the general outline of the town persists, swelling here, shrinking there, like some low but indestructible form of life" (p. 29). In fact, Forster's description recalls Fanon's depiction of the native town in *The wretched of the earth*, which he describes as "a town on its knees, a town wallowing in time" (Fanon, 1968, pp.38-39).

The separation between the Indian quarters and the British Civil Station is not merely spatial but also ideological and affective. The moral and material deterioration of the native zone mirrors colonial attitudes toward its inhabitants, who are depicted as inseparable from their decaying environment. In stark contrast, the cantonment, which is occupied exclusively by British officials, is depicted as orderly, comfortable, and insulated, reflecting British classical architecture. The British Club, in particular, functions as a sanctuary, "a small, square building, with a veranda and iron railing[…] and within it was a world of easy chair and drink, a little colony of men who lived their lives in a separate *protected bubble* from *the Indian populace*" (Forster, 1924, p. 22, emphasis added). It is a self-contained space of ease and sociability deliberately separated from the surrounding local Indians. Within this Manichean spacial framework, the club epitomizes colonial exclusivity, as being a private conservative space, where "faces stiffened [...] and reminded every member of the club that he or she was a British and in exile" (p.102). Even westernized, educated natives such as Dr. Aziz are excluded: "the English don't want to mix with the natives" (p.145). Likely, Dr. Aziz's oscillation between admiration for and his exclusion from the British mirrors Fanon's

description of the colonial subject in *Black skin and white masks*, who is caught in a "constant effort to run away from his individuality to annihilate his own presence" (Fanon, 1967, p. 60). With respect to this idea, Chuhan (2021) noted that Dr. Aziz "embodies the colonial subject who is torn between loyalty to Indian traditions and the pressure to conform to British-imposed standards" (p.378). In this way, his mimic position or experience reveals a lot about the broader duality of colonial condition, where racial prejudice and systemic injustice shape personal identity and social relations. Hence, at the moment when Dr. Aziz wants to internalize the colonizer's culture through adopting the mannerism and education of the British shifts after the Marabar Caves' incident, which will be discussed later in this paper.

In addition to this spatial division, Forster also highlights a vertical and symbolic distance, noting that the Civil Station stands above the "crouching" bazaars, transforming Chandrapore into a "city of gardens" with bungalows disposed along geometrically planned roads (Forster, 1924, p. 30). This spatial elevation emphasizes not only material superiority but also social and moral distinction, producing order and rationality in contrast to the confined native zone as Forster (1924) said "on the second rise is laid out the little civil station […] a totally different place. It is a city of gardens […] a tropical pleasance washed by a noble river" (p. 30). This vertical and symbolic division resembles to Fanon's settler town in colonial Algeria, where the material, social and moral superiority of the French/European quarters structures daily life, regulates access to resources and enforces hierarchical control, while shaping effective relation between colonizers and colonized.

The affective contrasts between urban zones are equally important in Forster's and Fanon's descriptions of colonial cities. The Civil Station evokes calm, order, and aesthetic pleasure, described as "sensibly planned" and sharing "nothing with the city except the overarching sky" (Forster, 1924, p. 32), whereas the native zone produces confinement, frustration, and envy. Fanon emphasizes that these affective dimensions reinforce the broader architecture of colonial control, as the colonized is constantly aware of the settler's privilege, while the settler cultivates fear, contempt, and desire. A comparison of these two authors, however, reveals convergence and divergence. Both of Forster and Fanon depict colonial cities as sharply divided, with native and settler zones defined by material, social, and affective contrasts. Forster introduces a tentative permeability absent in Fanon: in the second chapter, he focuses on an Indian household, presenting a scene that gestures toward the possibility of interpersonal friendship across racial and cultural boundaries. Fanon, by contrast, presents the colonial city as watertight, describing the native and settler zones as inhabited by "two different species," whose encounters are structured by power, envy, and hostility, leaving little room for meaningful reconciliation (Fanon, 1967, p. 126).

4. 2 The limits of friendship, human reconciliation and liberal humanism

A close reading of Fanon's and Forster's descriptions of the colonial city reveals striking similarities in both vocabulary and tone. Nevertheless, significant differences appear, particularly with regard to the possibility of crossing the boundaries separating the two zones and their ideologically divided populations. While Fanon describes the colonial city as being made of watertight, exclusive compartments inhabited by "two different species" with the indigenous population looking with envy at the settler's town, Forster in the second chapter of his novel narrows his focus to the interior of a native household, making the reader privy to what looks like a Platonic banquet on the possibility of friendship in a colonial context. This difference can be explained by the authors' distinct ideological commitments to change, with Fanon committed to nationalist revolution and Forster to the reform of the British Empire on liberal lines.

At the basis of Forster's belief in the possibility of friendship in the colonial context lies his lofty idea of imperialism, which is close to that of his contemporary Joseph Conrad in his *Heart of darkness***.** Evoking this idea, Conrad (1990) wrote:

> the conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it: not sentimental pretence but an idea: and unselfish beliefs in the idea-something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to" (pp. 31-32).

Forster in the manner of Conrad lays bares the inefficiency and moral contradictions of the imperial project in India. Nevertheless, in considering this inefficiency, he shifts the perspective from political and social justice to power relations, interpersonal dynamics and philosophical concerns such as friendship and human reconciliation. It is precisely these ideas of contact, fellowship and friendship that render *A passage to India* a compelling critique of colonialism. Forster thus uses interpersonal relations like particularly the attempted friendship between British and Indian characters as a lens against the backdrop of British colonial rule in India. In this context, the novel lays the groundwork for a potential bridge or a connection between Dr. Aziz, Mrs. Moore and Mr. Fielding, who initially develop mutual affection despite their religious disparity, cultural distance and divergent social customs. Yet, when these aspirations confront political reality, the limits of such friendship become evident. Therefore, in response to Dr. Aziz's dream of a unified Indian nation, Mr. Fielding reacts with irony: "India a nation! What an apotheosis! Last comer to the drab nineteenth-century sisterhood!" (Forster, 1924, p. 332). This remark reaffirms the racial hierarchies and structural violence inherent in colonialism, thereby undermining the prospect of genuine friendship between the colonizers and colonized. Despite the sincerity of Mr. Fielding's attachment to Dr. Aziz, it remains constrained by systemic inequalities of the colonial system he serves. Accordingly, Fielding admits that "Friendship […] was an absurdity. It was the commons man's dream of escaping the tension" (Forster, 335).

After raising the issue of friendship and the possibility of building bridges across cultures, Forster proceeds to test his idea within the novel. The first attempt takes the form of the so-called "Bridging Part" organized at the Civil Station in the novel's third chapter. Intended to foster goodwill between the British colonizers and the local Indians, the event instead exposes the deep divisions structuring colonial society. The colonized and colonizers, grouped into distinct spheres, meet only to confirm the huge gulf separating them. The failure of the party thus serves as a narrative pretext for Forster to explore the possibility of personal friendship across racial boundaries, most notably through the encounters of Dr Aziz and Mrs. Moore, and later between Dr Aziz and Mr. Fielding. However, these friendships are deeply fragile, if not ultimately impossible, because the colonized subjects are persistently reduced to mere objects within colonial system. In this context, Frantz Fanon assertions in *The wretched of the earth* (1968) are illuminating. Fanon (1968) argued that "the colonized is elevated above national consciousness because he is considered as an 'object' of historical, economic and psychological discourse" (p. 134). Similarly, Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) developed the idea of the rigid dividing line between the colonizers and colonized or the "West" and the "Orient" noting that "one big division, as between the West and the Orient, leads to other smaller ones" (Said, 1978, p. 58). According to Said (1978), such divisions "shape the language, perception, and form the encounter between East and West" (p 78), a process clearly at work in Forster's novel.

In his *Culture and imperialism*, Said (1994) further observed that Forster attributes to the Indian local a sense of backwardness, portraying it as "unapprehendable and too large" (p.228). This perception is particularly revealed in the novel through Forster's depiction of the first colonial encounter between Ronny Heaslop and Adela Quested. Said (1994) states that "the flux of the novel is therefore the sustained encounter between the English colonials-well developed bodies, fairy developed mind, and underdeveloped hearts-India" (p. 229). From this perspective, Forster's *A passage to India* can be considered as belonging to the broader tradition of Western imperial literature that operates within imperialist ideological frameworks designed to legitimize colonial power while also functioning as a "discursive strategy through which Europe constructs knowledge in order to dominate" (Boukemoun & Maoui, 2021, p.46). Therefore, although the novel expresses certain liberal and humanistic impulses, it ultimately does not escape the very roots of the colonial project and the logic of empire. As Said (1994) notes "the novel's helplessness neither goes all the way and condemns (or defends) British colonialism, nor condemns or defends Indian nationalism" (p.230).

The limits of colonial friendships are further tested following the allegations of rape brought against Dr. Aziz by Adela Quested. Rather than elaborating on the pathological dimensions of eroticized colonial relationships; an area extensively elaborated by Fanon and others, attention may instead be directed toward the figure of Mr. Fielding. As the principle of the college and the schoolmaster in Chandrapore, Fielding emerges as someone who defends Dr. Aziz's innocence against his own community in the name of friendship and justice. Symbolically, Mr. Fielding can be regarded as the only man who truly managed to escape from the Marabar Caves, functioning as a counterpart to the prisoner in Plato's allegory of the cave who breaks free from the chaining illusions and prejudices of his race. His rational humanism, his sympathy toward the Indian natives, his skepticism toward the colonial system and his commitment to genuine friendship elevate him to the status of a Platonic ideal. He thus becomes a moral standard against which the narrow-mindedness of the colonizers is measured. This characterization is similar to Fanon's typology of the colonizer in his analysis of the colonizer-colonized relationship. Mr. Fielding may be described as a "reluctant colonizer" to use Fanon's words, standing in sharp opposition to the colonizer who fully accepts and perpetuates colonial domination. His position is outside the hierarchical pyramid of colonial tyranny that extends from senior British officials, such as the tax collector Turton, down to the officials' wives.

However, to say that Mr. Fielding is a reluctant colonizer does not mean that he is not purely a colonial agent; the term "colonial agent" refers to individuals who fully participate in and accept the economic and social privileges of the colonizers. Despite his apparent reluctance, Mr. Fielding occupies the role of principal in colonial India as part of his professional promotion, before the social tragic-comedy unfolds. His ownership of a bungalow and his return from England as a married man to settle in India demonstrate his imperial mindset. His personal friendships, such as those with Dr. Aziz appear dubious, functioning as a means to an imperial end: the preservation of the British imperial rule in India. From a Fanonian perspective, Mr. Fielding's interactions with Dr. Aziz reflect the imposition of a "racial identity" which reduces Dr. Aziz to an "inferior other". Fanon (1967) argued that "the settler is a person who is removed from the native. He is an individual who places himself above the native, and sees his superiority as his mission" (p. 109). In this way, Mr. Fielding, the settler, views himself as inherently superior to the native Dr. Aziz, who consequently becomes a "stranger in his own land", because the "settler has taken his own place, his power, his Home"(p.110,). This perspective underscores how the colonial architecture of India functions as a mechanism of cultural, social and psychological division, by defining colonial structures and the characters' alienations. It also reflects the widening

gap that separates between the colonizers and the native Indians in their attempts to understand one another. This widening gap is reinforced by the idea of the vastness of the Indian mysterious landscape like that of the 'Marabar Caves'. The latter are used as a metaphor for reflecting the colonial tensions, hostilities and misunderstanding among the colonizers and colonized. Their remoteness and complex geographical location developed on the colonizers feelings of fear, mystery and uncertainty.

This divide is symbolically further reflected by India's vast and mysterious landscape, exemplified by the Marabar Caves. Their remoteness and complexity evoke feeling of fear and mystery among the colonizers. They are the only place where the colonizer and colonized might interact and test the limits of their mutual understanding. For example, Adela Quested enters the caves, imagining herself as Englishwoman who can "see the real India". However, her experience leads to a deep sensation of self-loss and insecurity, conducting her to a wrongful accusation of Dr. Aziz and the subsequent political crisis. The Marabar Caves symbolically represent the collapse of the colonial project, since "nothing, nothing attaches to them, and their reputation-for they have- does not depend upon human speeches. Even the elephant hills are far" (Forster, 1924, p. 135). Dr. Aziz's wrongful arrest following Adela's experience exemplifies how colonialism disrupts human connections, social bridges and imposing conflicting identities.

From a Fanonian perspective, this incident illustrates clearly how interpersonal relations are caught in the crossfire of colonial ideology. The arrest not only humiliates Dr. Aziz but also demonstrates how colonialism institutionalizes dehumanization through creating an unbridgeable gulf between the colonizers and colonized. As Nur (2023) argues in her study "Dehumanization, a mechanism of colonialism resulting in an unabridged gulf between the colonizer and colonized: an analysis of E. M. Forster's *A passage to India*" that the British colonization over India functioned "as a mechanism of institutionalized dehumanization, where the legal system is weaponized to assert control and punish imagined threats" (p.104). Yet, this suggests that colonial domination is not only sustained through physical coercion and social humiliation, but also through cultural mechanisms that normalize and beautify oppression (Bekkai & Benkchida, (2025). Aziz's trial, therefore, is not as a pursuit of truth but a reaffirmation of imperial power and superficial beliefs on human friendship. In other words, Aziz's humiliation, his incarceration without a concrete evidence highlight the systemic inequality enforced by colonial structures, reflecting Nur's claim that "the colonizer never wanted to bring the colonized to their same standing" (p. 107).

Ultimately, within the colonial imagination, unmapped spaces such as the Marabar Caves represent both the danger of the unknown and the failure of empire to fully control the landscape. On one hand, the Caves signify the limits of colonial authority, revealing the insufficiency of administrative structures, boundaries and maps. On the other hand, they expose the limits of communication and understanding, as language itself is rendered ineffective: "Marabar cave is […] entirely devoid of distinction. Whatever is said, the same monotonous noise replies, and quivers up and down the walls until it is absorbed into the roof" (Forster, 1924, p. 165). Within this framework, language, which Fanon regards as a vehicle of consciousness and social mediation, becomes inadequate, producing a sense of disorientation and psychological destabilization. This aligns with Mogea's (2023) seminal observation (2023) that "all attempts at meaning and connections are reduced to existential echoes of silence and confusion" (p. 1112). Such echoes render language empty; symbolizing the collapse of human meaning in the face of the unknown, while simultaneously revealing the epistemological and communicative limits imposed by colonial power between the British and the native Indians.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the dialectic pattern of the narrative in *A passage to India,* involving a thesis about friendship in its part "Mosque", the anti-thesis against this idea in the second part "Caves", and the synthesis of attempted reconciliation in the third part "Temple", effectively exposes the Manichean logic of colonialism and the fragile reality of British colonial rule in India. While Forster's statement in *Two cheers for democracy* (1951), that one " should have the guts to betray [one's] country", rather than a friend (p. 24) suggested a liberal-humanist ideal of personal morality and friendship, the narrative of *A passage to India* demonstrates the limits of such ideals under controlled colonial space. Mr. Fielding, like his author, sustains and defends imperial authority, privileging private friendship as a smokescreen, showing that humanist ethics cannot overcome the structural power of colonialism.

In this sense, Frantz Fanon insights of the "divided world" put in *The wretched of the Earth* and *Black skin and white masks*, provide critical framework through which Forster's novel can be re-evaluated. Fanon concepts helped in unveiling the psychological and ideological fractures produced by colonialism and thus persist beneath Forster's liberal-humanism. By exposing the impossibility of mutual understanding and reconciliation under Manichean colonial structure, Fanon helps illuminate the limitations of Forster's vision, particularly, his misunderstanding of the Indian culture and the mysterious vastness of its land. This means that colonial relations in *A passage to India* function not only under the realm of political power and material inequality but also within the psychological and cultural realms of both the colonizers and the colonized. In a nutshell, Forster's portrayal of the Indian colonial space consolidates the fact that the British Empire struggled both to comprehend the complexity of the Indian landscape and the socio-cultural diversity of its people. While the novel is aesthetically compelling, it emphasizes also ambiguity. By bringing to light the conflicted nature of colonial encounter, this study shows that true human reconciliation remain impossible without the dismantling of colonial power and tools of domination. New human relations, as Fanon, argues, can only emerge beyond the Manichean logic of colonial hegemony.

By placing Forster in dialogue with Fanon, the study foregrounds how literature can simultaneously reveal and conceal colonial power. Such an approach draws attention to the importance of combining postcolonial theory into literary analysis in order to explore the psychological, epistemological and cultural dimensions of colonial rule. It further implies that postcolonial reading must remain attentive to the limits of reconciliation narratives, advocating instead for decolonization and structural transformation for reimaging nations beyond imperial paradigms.

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