

Text Worlds: A Cognitive-Stylistic Analysis of: A Passage to India

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Abstract

This study examines the way a reader can infer meanings from the text by connecting language with the context in which it is produced. The text-world model is thus applied to the selected excerpts from the well-known novel *A Passage to India* by Edward M. Forster (2007), in order to investigate the extent to which discourse worlds, text worlds, and sub-worlds contribute to the development of mental representations. The study employs a qualitative-analytical research design. Moreover, Text World Theory (TWT) by Werth (1999) lends credence to the study. The investigation showed that TWT is the ideal framework for evaluating mental models in novels. The study also revealed that the amalgam of language and context produced a wide variety of social, intellectual, and cultural perspectives. The research will add to the body of knowledge collected through objective and cognitive stylistic analysis.

Keywords: *Context; Discourse; Meanings; Mental Constructs; Text World Theory (TWT)*

Background of the Study

Cognitive stylistics is a useful method that emphasises the act of reading to infer meaning and is on the rise in the 21st century. It has an immense role in the construction of meaning through different theories within the scope of a cognitive-stylistic approach (Tsur, 2002), including Werth's (1999) Text World Theory that combines text and context through the construction of conceptualized spaces known as 'worlds' (Whiteley, 2011). This also offers a way for a reader to identify the text worlds by exploring the characters' inner voices (Parry, 2006). It also helps to recognize the

mental processes; how they are represented in the mind, and how they make possible new readings of the texts (Simpson, 2004)? It also explains what really happens when the reader meets the text (Stockwell, 2002). The cognitive-linguistic paradigm of discourse processing known as TWT, provides a framework for relating the reader to the fictitious world. The model has gained a great deal of attention in the cognitive stylistics approach up till now due to its role in constructing mental representations in literary discourse (Werth, 1999).

Statement of the Problem

The study argues that language processing and text comprehension are human abilities. The aim of this study is to demonstrate explanatory potential of Text World Theory in relation to the reading experience and to demonstrate how TWT can offer understanding of the complex components of the actual reading experience. In doing so, the study examines qualitatively the selected excerpts from the novel; *A Passage to India* (2007). This study further investigates the way that language and the context in which it is produced contribute to the construction of mental representations that, in turn, lead to various implications and meanings when three tiers of TWT are applied to the text of the novel.

Review of Literature

Forster (1879–1970), a British novelist, is regarded as one of the influential authors of the 20th century. His best-known work is the novel, *A Passage to India* (1924). His experience as a transient resident of India was the primary source of inspiration for the novel (Rahman, 1991). It is his masterpiece that conveys his perspective on moderate humanism and malleable story-telling techniques through its contemplative overtones and innovative literary techniques.

In *A Passage to India* (2007), Forster tells his tale in a conventional way. It is the perspective of an omniscient narrator who can watch the action from any angle and comment while also penetrating any character's psyche. The voice of the narrator is peculiar. He is kind, intelligent, skeptical, and sardonic, yet has the ability to modulate his voice to convey lyrical aspiration and melancholy grief. It sounds a lot like Forster's voice, in my opinion. It dramatizes a variety of unique English, Anglo-Indian, and Indian voices, but it is this voice that predominates and prevails (Kiang, 2016).

Forster frequently employs different technique of focalization in the context of the investigation of the characters' narrative in *A Passage to India* (Sundnes, 2006). Focalization, a term coined by Genette (cited in Myk Eff, 2020) and Bal (2017), can be characterised as a selection or restriction of narrative details based on the narrator's experience and knowledge, the characters' experiences and knowledge, or other, more fictitious entities in the story world. It is the presentation of a scene through the subjective perception of a character. The term can refer to the person doing the focalizing (the focalizer) or to the object that is being perceived (the focalized object) (Suleiman, 1980; Lanser, 2018). Genette (cited in Eff, 2020) makes the distinction between internal, exterior, and zero focalization. While external focalization just concentrates on the characters' actions, behaviour, the setting; internal focalization suggests that the narrative focuses on thoughts and feelings. Since the narrator is omniscient in this sense, zero focalization is observed.

What happens in the fictional world when a reader meets the text (Stockwell, 2002) is described to us in the narrator's voice or, on occasion, from the perspective of the main character, who serves as the story's first witness (Shlomith & Rimmon-Kenan, 1983). The voice of the narrative in novels either originates from the characters or from the narrators. The meanings inferred from the characters' mental images are affected in specific ways by the focalizers' narrative in the discourse worlds and sub-worlds (Jahn, 2005). Narrative Discourse introduced focalization — Genette's (cited in Eff, 2020) contribution to narratology — as a means of distinguishing narrative mood from narrative voice.

Burman (2004) identifies in *A Passage to India* (2007) the 'narrative voice' in their novels, which is unaffected by changes in focalization, making it possible for the reader to delve into the character's innermost thoughts, feelings, memories, and perceptions. As in *A Passage to India* (2007), where the focal point shifts from person to person and continuously modifies the text's meanings, the reader sees the various characters' perspectives as the focal point shifts from one to the next. As a result, the mental images in the fictitious worlds give rise to various worldviews (Lanser, 2018).

Harith Turki and Dulfqar Abdulrazzaq (2022) look at the narrator's function as well as the variety of voices and consciousness in Forster's (2007) *A Passage to India* and George Orwell's (2004) *Burmese Days*. This analysis and examination of the

aforementioned novel employed Bakhtin's concept of polyphony as a methodology. First, both novels used the omniscient narrator as a narrative device because the author's voice could be heard more than once, according to the study's findings.

In addition, although the omniscient narrator's influence on the reader in *Burmese Days* was negligible, it was substantial on multiple occasions in *A Passage to India* (2007) in terms of controlling and manipulating the reader's choices and viewpoints. These linguistic choices are shaped as metaphors, which resonate with different points of view.

As for prospects, Hashmi (2022) notes that we saw resonances of that viewpoint in Forster's *A Passage to India* (2007), which was constructed around and around the narrative invisibilization of Muslim women in general and Dr. Aziz's deceased wife in particular, as this study has shown. Through a detailed examination of the novel's photographic and mnemonic trail, the article explored how the dead wife's persona — or lack thereof — emerged as the framework for Aziz's interactions with the English characters.

A Passage to India (2007) has received little attention from feminist and postcolonial scholars, notably from the perspective of TWT. It was revealed while gathering studies of the literature relating to the subject.

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This qualitative and analytical investigation analyses the data to find answers to the research questions. The current study examines language-related events and language usage in *A Passage to India* (2007) in order to assess the application of Werth's text world model and to discover what viewpoints and themes emerge from the analysis within the constraints of TWT. Furthermore, the current study focuses on the actions, behaviour, setting, ideas, and emotions of the characters. Zero focalization is also detected since the narrator is omniscient in this study.

The central tenet of TWT is that people process and comprehend all discourse by constructing mental representations of it in their minds. According to Werth (1999), the model includes three layers, each of which is referred to as a world (Lahey, 2014).

The first is the Discourse World, which possesses a variety of mental and physical abilities as well as the ability to engage in imagination. It argues that their knowledge, convictions, memories, aspirations, and other mental characteristics are essential components of the discourse-world context. Each new idea from the text that is brought up in conversation either already exists or will be added as new information. Participants can agree on the facts necessary for their discourse because they have common ground (Werth, 1999; Gavins, 2007).

The second is the Text World, which offers two different sorts of information that help participants in the discourse world to create and maintain their own text-worlds. The first set of ideas is “world-building” that describes location, inhabitants, and interrelationships among them. Gavins and Steen (2003) state that world-builders are textual cues which exist at the text-world level and are referred to as “actors” (Werth, 1999).

The third is the “Sub-world”, which is used to describe worlds that constitute a perceived departure from the constraints of the matrix universe. The function is advanced within a text. World-builders and function-advancers can also be found in sub-worlds. The text’s modality, negation, hypotheticality, focalization, and spatiotemporal alterations serve as cues for them (Gavins, 2007). When the spatial and/or temporal deictic characteristics defined within the matrix world alter, a world transition occurs. Flashbacks, views of nearby locations, and instances of direct speaking are a few narrative examples (Werth, 1999; Gavins & Steen, 2003).



Werth’s (1999) TWT Model used for data analysis and interpretation

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis is based on the TWT which is applied to the extracts of the novels. The first section analyzes Forster’s (2007) *A Passage to India* which focuses on the mental representations and possible worlds. In the second part of the chapter, new worlds are analyzed so as to see how different interpretations can be made of them.

The very first extract discloses the natives’ intentions in a social gathering at Chandrapore. The discourse world conjures up a world of the natives as that of Mehmood Ali and Hamidullah. The world building elements and the advancing propositions, recovered from the expressions used in the discourse world and the text, inform the reader of the different worlds. In deictic sub-world, there is a direct speech between the Mehmood Ali and Hamidullah manifested in this passage. There is also a detailed description of a place that is bazaar and the broad veranda. When the hookah is mentioned, it is accessible both to the reader and the participants as quoted:

"Mrs. Moore, I am afraid I startled you.... But you walk about yourself". (Forster, 2007, p. 43)

In the discourse world, the reader is introduced to the two ladies' names: Adela and Mr. Moore. Dr. Aziz meets Mrs. Moore at the club. The conversation between Aziz and the old lady informs the reader that she was from London and was married twice. She did not feel any interest in the play because she had seen it there. From the conversation, the reader learns that Cousin Kate is a play.

Furthermore, it declares that there may be bad characters: the beasts and the snakes. Mrs. Moore tells him the reason i.e., she has come to India is to see her son, Ronny Heaslop, who is a city magistrate. Marabar Hills are also mentioned as the abode of animals. This passage brings to light the hopes, fears, and intentions of various characters and the actual situation that prevails in India. Aziz is by profession a doctor and a native of Chandrapore.

The text world can be connected to the reader's world in this extract. The same situation can happen to the reader as well. Strangers can be treated in the same manner. The hills, the leopards, and the snakes can be imagined. This provides information to the reader about the text and context, and the reader can easily perceive the immediate situations of the participants. It also gives the reader knowledge about the know-how of the participants in the discourse.

The text narrates the story in the past tense, like the sentences "they didn't know", "you ought not to walk at night alone", "she had forgotten the snakes", and "they sat down side by side" (p. 43). Dietetically, the centre is Chandrapore, and the event occurred there in the past. The conversation is in the form of narration. The ideas are conveyed through indirect speech. Aziz asserts, 'I am afraid I startled you. "I think you shouldn't walk alone... snakes, too... but you walk alone yourself, I'll tell our community" (p. 43). Mrs. Moore explains, "I have come from the play... in London to visit my son" (p. 43). This conversation creates the text's sub world, which provides information to the reader to deduce deeper meanings from the text. First, personal pronouns have been used in the dialogue that connects the two participants closely.

The sentences in the text that advance the plot of the novel are: "her voice deceived him", "you are newly arrived in India", "I have seen you in London", "they sat down

side by side”, “why do you come to India at this time of the year?” “To visit my son”, “I know him intimately” (p. 43). The words that acquaint the reader with the desire world are “know”, “think”, and “intend” (p. 43), which set the epistemic world that the events may occur in for the reader. Because such a situation is accessible and possible, the description of the event and conversation in the discourse world appears real. The possibility of such an occurrence can be experienced and imagined as the narrator unveils the mindset of the English.

A shapeless discussion occurred, during which Mrs. ... They did not mind how long they stood, or how little happened and when seven o'clock struck, they had to be turned. (Forster, 2007, P. 64)

The immediate perception is that Mr. Bhattacharya intends to invite the ladies to his house, and two ladies are eager to get there as soon as possible, as discussed at the Bridge party. The collector looks happy but inwardly does not like the guests, so he has to move to the English side of the lawn. The information that constitutes a necessary context is that the guests liked the Bridge party and mixing with the officials. The world created in the mind of the reader is that the English and the Indians have gathered at the Summer House, the house where the English families stay.

In this passage, we see most of the characters' advancing elements. We have an insight into the text world of different characters. From the function advancers, we get the knowledge that the English had a separate lawn. The word “shrine” (p. 64) is used as a metonymy for a building reserved for the colonizers. Even a cynical person like Mahmoud Ali thinks to himself sometimes that it is good to be invited by the English. The tense throughout the passage is past, and the text type is narrative and descriptive.

Another departure is when Mahmoud Ali says that shrines are fascinating. He was happily engaged at the Summer House, so he jumped to the shrines. The Summer House and the shrines are two different places. In the former, people dance and chat, while in the latter, people pray as it is a holy place. This departure from the current situation creates a new world in the mind of the reader. The Nawab Bahadur's applauding the host for receiving him is also a shift from the current situation. Instead of praising the party, he thinks of his own importance.

The predicates “believe” and “know” refer to the participants’ belief worlds, whereas the word “wanted” (p. 64) refers to the collector’s intention, that he could harm the reputation of any of his guests if he so desired. The word “believed” (p. 64) refers to the collector’s belief that the party was successful. The desire of the two ladies to visit Bhattacharya is not accessible to the readers because it is just a flashback.

A hypothetical situation is being created to create an epistemic world in the reader’s mind. Because it is just an improbable hypothetical world, Mahmoud Ali’s desire to open the shrines is also flash-forward. It is not accessible to the reader, but is most likely a hypothetical world for the participants. The fictional world of the Bridge party may be inaccessible to the reader, but it is very accessible to the party’s guests and hosts. Similarly, Bhattacharya’s plan, which will really be executed, is neither accessible to the reader nor to the participants.

In the Bridge party, Aziz and Fielding are chatting with one another. The perspective of the current circumstance is that Aziz has arrived at Fielding’s apartment, which is located on the college campus. The former had not anticipated the latter’s welcome. Another interpretation of the circumstances is that Aziz is taken aback by the pristine and lavish living room.

“Although Miss Quested had known Ronny well in England, she felt well advised to visit him before deciding to be his wife. ... He had expert knowledge and she none and that experience would not help her because she could not interpret it”. (Forster, 2007, p. 96)

The narrator is speaking about Miss. Adela and Ronny. The perception of the immediate situation is that Adela intends to see Ronny before marrying him. Ronny is stiff-necked and censorious. The narrator informs the reader that Ronny thinks that he has knowledge and experience, so he can never do wrong. Adela’s expression was conclusive but dry. The narrator further describes that Ronny was the product of a public school in London. The information that gives contextual cues is that the character is brought to light so as to design a preamble for the coming events.

Miss. Adela felt well advised to visit him before deciding to be his wife. Ronny’s “self-complacency, censoriousness, and lack of subtlety” made him “more indifferent than

before”, “more certain that he was right”, and “grew vivid beneath the tropic sky” (p. 96).

The text is descriptive. It is in the past tense. We have a description of Ronny’s character. Deictically, the narrator shifts from Adela to Ronny. Adela’s memories take the reader back to the time when they were in London through flashbacks. It is not accessible to the reader what Adela thinks of the past world that she had with Ronny, and she might not know the hypothetical world that the narrator has told about Ronny. The fictional world is either reachable by the reader or by the author because information is verified by the author, so this hypothetical world is known to the reader. The reader only knows that Ronny is an emotionless person. If he has any emotions, the reader has no access to them.

A discussion between Adela Quested, Mrs. Moor, and Ronny Heaslop establishes the discourse universe. The first impression that readers have is that there is some religious event that is about to take place and that this religious ritual may be the root of strife between the local ethnic groups. Reading Ronny’s opinions on The English as something necessary for upholding order and discipline among the boisterous natives create a different impression in the reader’s mind. And Ronny’s arrogant attitude can be judged by his preference for a busy environment just because it provided him a sense of authority.

“But I must get on with my work. Krishna was the peon who should have brought the files from his office.... Ronny stormed shouted, howled, and carrying hurricane lamps”. (Forster, 2007, p. 127)

The extract establishes the world of Krishna, the peon. A conversation between Mrs. Moor, Adela Quested, and Ronny Heaslop is followed by Ronny’s inquiry about the peon who had to bring the files from his office. An immediate perception is created in the mind of the reader about Ronny’s character being snobbish and rude towards the natives, keeping in mind his attitude later described in the paragraph and his charging him with a fine of eight annas.

The action is further advanced by the phrasal verb “terrific row” and the verb “ensued” (p. 127). World building units such as locative adverbs “stormed” and verbs “shouted and howled”, “stormed” (p. 127). The world-building unit in the form of the noun

phrase “experienced observer” reflects the demeanour of the character Ronny as “not angry” (p. 127).

The narration is omniscient, the text is descriptive, and the text world is established through the character Ronny’s proclamation using the phrasal verb “get on” (p. 127) about his getting on with the work. The function of advancing the proposition in the form of the noun “Krishna”, which functions as a verb here since Ronny is shouting the name or noun “Krishna” (p. 127), is employed to move the action further. Krishna is absent from the scene; his absence serves as a function, advancing the proposition that his job was to bring files from the office but he did not turn up. Here, the function is advanced through the phrasal verbs “should have brought” and “turned up” (p. 127).

Function-advancing propositions are servants who are taking the action further, indicated by adverbial phrases like “quite understanding” and “running slowly” (p. 127). The “Englishman” (p. 127) is the world-building element, and the verb “appeased” (p. 127) advances function. Major Callendar is described as a person who “doesn’t trust anyone, English or Indian; that is his character; you weren’t under him” (p. 127). The function is further advanced by the verb “fined”, by world builders like “Eight annas”, and finally by the phrasal verb “sat down” (p. 127).

The first part of the passage hints at two sub worlds which are reported in direct speech. The description of Aziz’s house by Fielding and Mr. Callendar’s character by Aziz create two sub-worlds in the mind of the reader. This variation does divert the reader’s attention away from the actual situation, which was to attend Aziz.

Further, Aziz also creates an improbable hypothetical world that is not accessible to the reader, though it may be possible for Aziz to experience but not accessible to Fielding. Another variation is deictic, when the third person pronoun is shifted to the first person and to the second person. The deictic center is Fielding in the first part of the passage and Dr. Aziz in the second, through whose eyes the reader learns about Major Callendar (p. 127), as Mr. Fielding’s words are establishing a context in the lines:

“If I may venture to say so, no, said Fielding, also going white, but sticking to his point...The man's manner is perfectly natural; besides, I know him to be incapable of infamy”. (Forster, 2007, p. 173)

Participants in the discourse world are Mr. Fielding, Aziz, and the two ladies. A persuasive narrative establishes the discourse world; an immediate perception is developed in the mind of the reader about Mr. Fielding that he is the man who has the strength of character to say “no” (p. 173) to something he believes is wrong. The phrase “going white but sticking to the point” (p. 173) reflects the firm and steadfast mental state of Mr. Fielding.

The ideologically loaded sentence “I make no reflection on the good faith of the two ladies ... five minutes will clear it up” reflects Mr. Fielding’s reliance on his own discretion, sagacity, and personal judgment rather than the alleged or suspected accusations made by the ladies under unspecified circumstances. Another ideologically loaded sentence “I know him to be incapable of infamy” (p. 173), asserts Mr. Fielding’s mental representation and judgment over the matter rather than believing in rumours against Mr. Aziz.

The text type is persuasive and narrative; the time is present and the location is unspecified. The text world is established by Fielding’s direct statement “If I may venture to say, no”, which also serves as a function advancing the proposition having the verb phrase “venture to say” (p. 173). Further, the action advances with the participle phrase “going white” and a verb phrase “sticking to his point” (p. 173). This propels the action forward and at the same time, gives an insight into Fielding’s mind.

The action progresses with the verb phrase “make no reflection” and adjective clause “good faith of the two ladies”, both of which have world-building elements “good faith”, and nouns that serve as world builders “charges, mistakes, and five minutes” (p. 173). The phrasal verb “clear it up” (p. 173) sets the scene and moves the action further. The adjective phrase “the man’s manner is perfectly natural”, the world-building element “besides”, and an assertive statement having the verb phrases “I know him” and “to be incapable of infamy” (p. 173) propel the action forward, and a clear view of Mr. Fielding’s comprehension of a situation is established.

The paragraph opens with the sentence “If I may venture” (p. 173) which, having a modal verb, directly suggests an epistemic sub-world with the hypothetical probability of a character negating something. An attitudinal sub-world is created with the desire of ‘sticking to his point’ over something that is assumed by the character to be

meaningful, and “make no reflection” (p. 173) suggests another hypothetical sub-world that something is not worth considering.

Another hypothetical sub-world is created by hinting at the belief that the charges against another character, Mr. Aziz “rest upon some mistake. Five minutes will clear it up” and “I know him” (p. 173). Also, the belief sub-world is created through the statement “not capable of infamy” (p. 173). Together, these statements correspond to the meaning that the reader may infer from the extract; according to Mr. Fielding, biased decisions should not be formulated merely on rumours and the truth of the matter should be perceived through one’s own judgment. Adela says that Ronny and she are speaking about Dr. Aziz’s detention and seem to be not on equal footing.

“If Dr. Aziz never did it he ought to be let out ... For every servant, I’ve got a spy”.
(Forster, 2007, p. 208)

The perception of the immediate situation is that Ronny is adamant about punishing Aziz, but Adela is reluctant to say anything against him, which her fiancé does not want. The idea that drives that text is that the Englishman is cynical about every Indian. Further, it also explains Ronny’s condition after listening to Adela’s remarks.

The world builders and plot advancers create various textual worlds in the minds of the readers. Adela’s world, as expressed in temporal and spatial locatives, demonstrates her intentions. Second, her mental state as expressed in the world, advances because she argues in favour of Aziz developing another fictional world.

In the function advancers, Adela’s use of the lexicon as “Dr. Aziz never did it” (p. 208) and “Aziz is good” (p. 209) propel the story. Ronny’s persistent attempt is to convince her to say what he intends. The narrator discloses his intention that “a shiver like impending death passed over Ronny” (p. 208) when he heard her words. The discourse also discloses Ronny’s ideas about the Indians, as he used the word “spies” for them by saying, “For every servant I’ve got is a spy” (p. 209).

This argumentative extract hints at the illusion of Adela, who thought the caves were dark, and in that darkness, someone touched her, and she considered it to be Dr. Aziz, which she is going to correct.

The situational context and textual justification reflect both spatial and temporal characteristics. Being spatial, it holds a mirror to the culture, norms, and traditions of a definite place, India. It also reflects the mental approach of English people toward Indians. Being temporal, it presents the pre-independence era when Pakistan and India were under the subjugation of Britain. It shows how the people of India have been treated mercilessly by the English and how they groan and moan under their regime. Aziz is a clear example in this passage, which shows how he bears the malice of Ronny and McBryde.

The analysis reconnoitered at how human cognition contributed to the formation of mental representations. It incorporates linguistics and cognition, the latter of which regards meaning as a creation of both the text and the reader. It suggests that the reader and the text are given equal weight. A recent framework of cognitive linguistics called TWT is applied to the analysis of the novel's discourses in order to explore the worldviews in the novel. *A Passage to India* (2007) explored various worlds and mental representations that resulted in a number of social, political, and psychological worldviews.

Conclusion

The study shows that the TWT is ideally suited to the development of mental constructs and the identification of meanings since the model looks at the idiosyncratic and linguistic facets of the excerpts from *A Passage to India* (2007). The novel's contextual clues, as well as the discourse events surrounding the characters, were investigated in the first world and the discourse world; whereas the second level i.e., the text world, used world-builders and world-advancing propositions to associate with the mental representation. The third level of the model is the sub-world, which revealed new insights. The three levels of analysis were thus merged together, which gave rise to various viewpoints.

By applying the TWT model to the excerpts from *A Passage to India* (2007), various perspectives were revealed. The study explored elements of confession and atonement as evidenced by Adela's confession of regret for wrongly accusing Aziz in *A Passage to India* (2007). The two facets of Adela's personality are her persona and her shadow. Adela and Mrs. Moore's journey from Britain to India is used as an example of the connection between a master and a slave in the story's colonial themes when Ronny

acted casually towards her wish to see the Indian and Fielding spoke coolly about how to see the genuine Indians, as well as afterwards when the Collector abruptly interrupted. Gender-based marginalisation is also sought in Ronny's casual response to Fielding's request to see the Indian and Fielding's icy counsel on how to see the real Indians, as well as later the Collector's abrupt interruption into the conversation about the old ladies; these are all signs of their perspectives of women. Fear and coercion from the outside world that the protagonists of *A Passage to India* (2007) experience are sensed; either Aziz or the grating noise in the caves is making the characters restless, be they the Indians or the English.

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