

Chapter One: Anita Desai and Postcolonial Discourses

Rationale/Context

This research entitled “Ambivalent Identity in Anita Desai’s *Voices in the City*” explicitly deals with protagonist’s ambivalent position caused by the remnants of colonization and impact of cultural imperialism in the transitional phase of India’s changing social norms. Nirode as the protagonist an Indian origin is interwoven within that of colonial and imperialist cultural hegemony and ideologies that keeps his identity ambivalent. Through history, the British East India Company ruled over the Indian territories for long decades during which they succeeded to rule culturally. Though Indian people became independent in 1947, they could not disassociate themselves from the remains of colonial and imperial practices. It shows that they only left the administrative power but there still exists other cultural, political and technology form of colonial and imperial dominance that we can see vividly in the metropolitans of India. Such kinds of tendencies have made people’s position ambivalent that we can observe through the protagonist Nirode and his family in Desai’s *Voices in the City*.

Desai’s *Voices in the City* (1964) tries to depict city life of the middle class family set in Calcutta. It narrates of the story of Bohemian brother- Nirode and his two sisters who are highly caught in the transitional phase of India’s changing socio-cultural norms. The novel’s major concerns are to focus mainly on the cause and effect relations of city life and the impacts of colonial and imperial dominant practices upon an Indian middle family. Along with their own Indian Hindu traditional society and its norms they have to practice. On the other hand, colonial and imperial tendencies to practice are deep rooted in the mind of Indian city dwellers that they experience such tendencies as victims and resistance. Such tendencies remain as the common phenomenon even after the Indians

got independence. We can measure this transitional phases of Indian history through the middle class people like Nirode and his family who struggle with ambivalent identity due to the remains of the colonization and impact of imperialism.

Moreover, the protagonist wants to escape from encroaching double cultural practices that he comes across in the novel. They appear as the riddle and unpleasant realities of the past and present that also shows the reflection of ambivalent identity within the city lives of distinguished people. The purposed title wants to explore the underlying facts behind the protagonist's wish to escape and experience is the causal effects of the remains of colonization and impact of imperialism that gives the ambivalent identity to the main character and his family. So this research is more contextual and significant to understand the life of the city dwellers and their voices to know about their ambivalent identity.

In the present context, we cannot see the presence of colonization and imperialism that they were pervasively covered most of the lands in the world. They came in different masks. But in underlying structure, they have reached in remote village of different places in the form of globalization, free market to do business, education. The means of technologies have made their journey easier. For instance, British ruler came in different parts of Indian States targeting to lead their business. Later, they established themselves as colonizers and imperialist dominantly exercised their cultural practices. They are still rooted in the India as remains of colonization and impact of cultural imperialism can be taken as the post colonial hegemony which randomly covers the major cities have become the sources of ambivalent identify. We can freely observe such scene and setting in the Desai's *Voices in the City*.

In other ways, when we go to other places hopping to get appropriate opportunities, we go along with the cultures. So is the case in other's life while going for

an opportunity. In this situation, neither we can totally avoid own cultures nor can we accept other cultures. We partially share and are culturally ambivalent. In this reference, the writer from Indian society has shown the ambivalent identity of the modern individual and groups by presenting fictional characters with fictional story in the novel. Further, Desai presents the ambivalent character with ambivalent identity to depict the real situation of the Indian society how there still exists remains of the colonization and impact of cultural imperialism in the mind of Indian citizen that resembles with the themes of ambivalent identity. Thus, Desai in her novel *Voices in the City* deals with the issues ambivalent identity through the struggle of the main character Nirode.

As we come across the novel, we can see some of the features and facts of post-colonial tendencies in Desai's writing. The setting of the Calcutta city is one of the examples that give the clear picture of means of colonial and imperial dominance. It is difficult for the marginalized middle class family to identify in such complex city. here, the protagonist tends to escape from the city experience that keeps him dominated and worrisome that is as a result of remains of colonial and impact of cultural imperialism that later continues as the post-colonial practices of indirect extension of the power, production, and distribution. They easily appear in city and impact to the city dwellers. to be victims and to resist are the consequences for the modern people as the writer has shown similar features through the protagonist in the novel. Thus, the means of resistance is another evidence of post-colonial practice. The dominated and colonized individual and groups want to resist from those trends such as education, culture, technology and business as an attempt and struggle to survive with their own cultural practice. As Hans Bretons says:

They agree in their focus “on colonial (neo-colonial) oppression, on resistance to colonization, on the respective identities of colonizer and

colonized, on patterns of interacting between those identities, on postcolonial migration, on the ensuing hybridity of both cultures, and so on and so forth” (200).

In accordance with such cases, they come to do business, exercise and practice culture, education and technology. She wisely depicts the scene of the city of Calcutta in which we cannot observe the presence of colonizer and emperor administratively after the independence movement. In contrary, there is the impact of colonial and imperial dominance which can be clearly seen throughout the novel in which the protagonist want to protest but he finds difficult to struggle.

These are the issues that can be seen with evidences in Desai’s writing.

Ambivalent identity is also the result of the cultural ambivalence that joyfully deals with postcolonial tendencies in which the individual and communities remain in duality, complexicity and dilemma. Such qualities are highly shown through the protagonist in the researched novel. Postcolonial practices also relate the multicultural issues. In the novel, the characters and the city Calcutta represents multiple voices. This kind of trends can be observed in Desai’s writings which support her to say as postcolonial discourses come into practices. Thus, the intended thesis research “Ambivalent Identity in Anita Desai’s *Voices in the City*” is appropriate and covers the new area for this thesis research.

Anita Desai as a Creative Writer in English

It is throughout her biography that shows her ability to coin her own personality in the field of literature and literary criticisms. In spite she is from Indian origin, she contributes to write in English language is also the product of remains of colonization and impact of imperialism. Such kind of her writing in English, extraordinary craftsmanship to depict the characters from minorities voices such as women, middle class family and

other socially disadvantaged draws her multi facet positionalities that goes across the global communities.

In addition, as we view her purpose of writing in English and positing herself in global literature are the output of colonization and imperial practices. During the British rule in the Indian people, they successfully colonized and exercised their own cultures. Language as a major entity of culture as Indian practiced learned and implemented in various fields of their achievements are the vivid evidences even in this present context. Such kind of influence can be seen in the form of writing literature in English may be the result of victimization and resistance whatsoever comes in the forms of writing fictional and non-fictional writings in Desai's creativity and criticisms. Then, Desai follows the same practice and establishes as Indian writer writing in English by drawing the picture of influence and impact of colonization and cultural imperialism to reflect the positions of Indian citizens through her writing practices ultimately deals with the issues of ambivalent identity as a whole.

Desai as a Novelist and her Style, Theme and Characterization

It is Desai's great attempt and enormous contribution in the field of literature and criticisms as a woman who progressed and achieved a lot of things through the professional writings. She had to build up new space amongst the Indian English novelists. It was in fact despite being challenging tasks, she is able to acquire such tremendous qualities, features and skills to develop her fictional career. As Melissa Denes quotes Desai in an interview with *The Guardian*, "My older sister both careers one as a doctor, the other as a civil servant but I felt really there were few choices" (7). She came along with individual tragedy her characters that are resulted out of social norms of the society where she lived. Thus, Desai is able to shape her position in the impression of

Indian English novelists with her convincing characterization especially females as marginalized, isolated, troubled and dominated communities.

Desai composes style from seriously handling of the subject matter with a smart perception of human relationship mainly of husband and wife. Her treatments of Indian themes and subject matter have made her celebrated writer among the young Indian English novelists. Melissa and Cuross praise, “Desai’s work is part of a new style to come out of India which is not nearly as conservative as Indian writing has been in the past” (5). Desai’s craftsmanship of exploring the inner world of her characters in their suffering and alienation are another features. In Desai’s words, writing is a natural process of unraveling truth and style she looks for intuitively. She focuses on the unity of language that creates a rhythm in the midst of contradictory imagery and symbolism that tries to discover the underlying meaning of the separation, isolation, alienation and dispute through her characters.

As Bruce Kings quotes Anita Desai as contemporary novelists, “I search for a style that will bring to vivid, surging life, story, action and drama . . . born of their dream and will. One most fine a way to unite the inner and outer rhythms, to obtain certain integrity and to impose order to chaos” (25). She tries to depict such style to represent the reality of the modern women and other minorities. The dream and will of the characters symbolically stand for integrity out of the chaotic situation. her most desirous attempt and struggle are the search for inner and outer positions of the characters through rhythms, imaginary and symbolism. They really give charms in writing and shaping her as outstanding figure in the world literature. In her many works, she has redefined the traditional style of writings that have tone and from of polarities, irreconcilables and opposites that also recognizes her as famous writer. She emphasizes on justice with purpose of bringing order out of disorder in our existing society.

Desai exploits the climatic and anticlimactic moments to structure in her text in order to search for solace meaning of the society and social norms. According to George Landow, “like many romantic and post – romantic works, Desai, in parts, derives her structure from a series of climatic and anticlimactic perfect moments, instants of vision, and epiphanies, which provide solace and meaning”(7). She is familiar to for the sensitive portrayal of the inner life of her female characters and her biased patriarchal social construction. Several of her novels explore tension between family members and their sense of alienation of the middle class society.

In other cases, some of the Indian critics have harshly criticized her for adopting westernized characters in Indian setting. She confesses that she feels about Indian as an Indian but she thinks about it as outsiders did not help the cause. Asnani says in book, *Critical Response to Indian English Fiction* themes “the existential predicament of an individual which is projected through incompatible couples, - acutely sensitive wives and dismal, callous, un-understanding, ill-chosen husbands” (144). The lines reveal her writings and uses of the characters from her surroundings primarily focus on the women and their unsupportive husbands.

Characterization is one of the strengths of Desai’s novel. Sufferings of middle class Indian women have occupied enough spaces in her works. Being a woman, she has made a conscious effort to campaign for the cause of all the alienated and suffering females. They have often been victims at the hand of their husbands. Their strictness and refusal to accept what their husbands enforce turns into their tragedy. In Indian context, she is one of the foremost novelists to choose female’s quest for selfhood as her recurring themes. She writes women as simplification, producing an identity that silently screams out against their oppressed positioning in Indian society. The neatness and fair judgment in her characterization is the key aspect of the mass appeal to enlighten and empower the

women in their society that constructs the meaning, norms and exercise them. A simple incident and reality in the public is to emphasize the prevailing social norms of Indian society that they exercise over the women as practiced by male has been presented through her characterization. Gyan Marwah also believes, “One thread in myself sees interest in characters who don’t represent the mundane” (8). It actually focuses on the characters and their representation of extraordinary life to compete in male dominated society. They are unlike the very kind of social phenomenon through which they have to carry out their life. These become other kinds of themes in writing and characterization.

Cultural conflict arises due to her character’s inability to locate in the changed social values and systems are recurring theme in Desai’s latter novels. or they provide the ambivalent identity due to her character’s inability to locate the social norms and systems of Indian middle class society. She has juxtaposed Eastern and Western cultures in her novels and Indian characters are forced to lead an outside life being unable to cope up with distinctness in social norms due to its setting in West. Western characters are exploited in some Eastern social background. In this researched text *Voices in the City* equally shares similar themes of eastern and western characters who freely undergo the ambivalent identity.

In an effort to find a common point between two parallel lines of diverse cultures, conflict arises in contradictory social setting. Desai’s fascination with the cultural changes goes back to her childhood days when she spent most of her school life with culturally diverse white children. This trend of schooling foreign language in their country represents the interest over the other cultures that produced the ambivalent identity. This becomes more applicable in the life of women as Desai mentions because they are always in the dual position of mother house and husband home. Or there is her own culture inborn and the influence of other culture gives her ambivalent identity. Gyan

Marwah further comments, “As a young girl, I had known people like that. They were strangely eccentric, obviously foreigners, not belonging to Indian society” (10). Marwah criticizes that she is from outside countries because of her writing in English and depicting English cultures as well.

In response to the thesis research in novel *Voices in the City*, she has presented the lives of the city people how they are interwoven city cultures as result of which they share ambivalent identity. The city Calcutta has become the place of multiple voices in which they even have to encounter with remains of colonial and imperial cultural norms. The main character experiences ambivalent identity that we can see in the novel.

Review of Literature in Desai’s *Voices in the City*

Desai’s *Voices in the City* has been analyzed from various perspectives such as feminist, New Historicist, Marxist, Existentialism and many others. Some critics have given their voices to the novel is the autobiographical experience of writers. Gadendra kumar comments, the novel is in fact a tragic exploration of personal suffering, which arises out of the feverish sensibility of young intellectual who has lost in way in contemporary India. It delves into the inner climate of youthful despair and is permeated by declares, “It brings about self-recognition and self-restoration in the protagonist” (123). It reveals that this is the actualization of the protagonist in his due course of life.

Another critic K. R. S. Lyenger has underlined the problem of meaningless existence of modern man in a modern world through Desai novel. It also raises the issues of impact of alienation and a kind of generation gap. It draws the clear picture of her existing society:

Desai’s forte is the exploration of sensibility the particular kind of modern India. Sensibility that is ill at ease in a sterile set up. The modern man is doomed to suffer corrosive impact of alienation, which manifests itself

variously in the form of generation gap, the compartmentalization of life, the stunting of personal development and conspicuous absence of sense of meaningfulness of life. (58)

It explores the way of the modern man who is forced to get in touch with different form of isolation and alienation. As the city develops in a rapid way, people get its congestion each and every corner of the city. The protagonist faces similar kinds of experiences throughout the novel. We could hardly see single houses. They are narrowed into the compartmentalization as the modern concept that we can vividly see in the city of Calcutta. They are bound to lose personal development of life. They have to face some problems along with the absence of sense of meaningfulness of life. However, he fails to understand the reality and underlying meaning of the text that is the remains of colonization and impact of cultural imperialism has caused the protagonist to possess the ambivalent identity.

Likewise, D.K. Pabby comments on the ideas that her presentation of the issues and ideas in relation to Laurence. Her writing in a broader sense covers not only the heroic struggles of the individuals, community and humanity:

Like Laurence, Anita Desai too arrives at the same conclusion that a comprehensive meaning and understanding of life mean the genuine attempts and heroic struggles of the individual to establish human relationship with other individuals and through them with community and humanity. (57)

Desai shares her ideas and feeling that match with the ideas of Laurence. Comprehensive meaning and understanding of life has the link with that of their struggles of individual and their relation with that of other individual community and humanity. She is able to narrate the changing values of modern Indian society from society to individuality. They

give priority towards the individual freedom where we can see generation gap on various arguments regarding the social issues.

J. P. Tripathy states the protagonist's position of transformation into self-actualization. He regards this attempt as positive growth of the protagonist. The novels of Anita Desai are an exploration of individuals, their passion, and emotions. Desai probes into the inner recess of her characters. In dealing with the growth of the protagonist from alienation to self-actualization, J.P. Tripathy says, "A pattern of positive growth." (57)

In this regards, the novel needs clear departure though it has been analyzed through various perspectives. They are the common issues as they present through the novel. So, there exists a strong need to carry out research on this novel from a new perspective. Without a proper study on this issue, the meaning will remain incomplete. However, cultural ambivalence and cultural imperialism has not been applied yet. Having taken this fact into consideration, the present research proposes to study from cultural ambivalence and imperialism which falls under the heading of postcolonial approaches.

Introduction to Cultural Ambivalence and Imperialism

Postcolonial studies refer to the position of knowledge, democratic practices and historical interests of varied disciplines. It covers postcolonial literature and postcolonial theory along with other disciplines of social sciences. It seems to be more influencing and dominant to raise the Eastern issues. Along with its various facets of terminologies, the cultural ambivalence and cultural imperialism appear as the most important theoretical implication to support the textual analysis of the thesis.

Cultural ambivalence is the situation of people remaining culturally in dilemma among the group, community, or individual. The feelings and expression of the individual or groups of people are in two minds that they frequently clash within the individual. Such tendencies emerge when one cultural individual contacts with other

cultural group. In major colonial countries, British colonial and imperial domination came and practiced their socio-political, cultural and economic dominance. Most of the Indian people remained highly influence and impact among them. Neither they could totally stay separate from that of imperial culture nor accept their own original cultures. There were some other charms to attract imperial cultures due to which they were able to rule over Indian people. In this stance, they were culturally ambivalent. This situation can be taken as the cultural ambivalence. In the study of Desai's *Voices in the City*, we can see sufficient issues of cultural ambivalence and character's ambivalent identity.

Cultural imperialism possesses the qualities of controlling and imposing power towards other culturally. The British imperialist showed their power where they not only imposed administration rather their culture become one of the dominant sources in the Indian society. Such remains of colonization and impact of cultural imperialism posits the life of individual as culturally ambivalent. We can see this kind of situation throughout the life of character Nirode and his colleagues. There are several voices in which they mingle into a single metropolitan city. That keeps them ambivalent those results out of the cultural imperialism. So, *Voices in the City* explicitly deals with the condition and problem from the impact of cultural imperialism will be one of the new areas of study.

General Survey of the Thesis

This research paper has methodologically been divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the general introduction of the dissertation as Anita Desai and postcolonial discourse and Desai as postcolonial writer writing in English. It also clearly deals with the context of the research title. It also shapes Anita Desai as a novelist, her style and characterization, themes in her works. It also includes brief introduction of the theoretical modality on cultural ambivalence and imperialism which come under the

rubric of postcolonial studies. Thus, this chapter tries to critically observe, analyze, and present actual shape of introduction of thesis as complete findings of chapter one.

The second chapter discusses the methodological aspects of the researched paper in support to observe the thesis from cultural ambivalence and cultural imperialism. Firstly, it, in brief, raises the issues of cultural ambivalence. It also conceptualizes the ideas critically how cultural ambivalence focuses on the nature of the characters and the people remained in the dual cultural position that they appear in the global context now a days. It also presents along with its ingredients, emerges, and motives of the critical perspectives of different critics. Further, it gives my own understanding on those contexts and in my own context, how it differs and resembles. Thirdly, it shapes the meaning and importance of cultural ambivalence in relation to cultural imperialism to observe the issues of history and culture or fact and fiction in the context of Indian society, in the life of character Nirode and others. Finally, the issues and concepts of cultural ambivalence as theory and practice and discussions on its relations with the theories and practices that fall under the rubric of post-colonial will be concretized as the interrelated new theoretical practices to know the depth meaning of the novel *Voices in the City*.

Based on the theoretical modality developed in the chapter two, third chapter studies Anita Dalai's work in relation to the character's ambivalent position around the transitional phase of India's changing social values how that is manifested through the remains of colonization and impact of cultural imperialism.

Finally, the fourth chapter concludes this research paper based on the textual analysis of chapter three and the theoretical modality of chapter two. Indeed, the conclusion part appears as summing ups of the observations and analysis based on chapter three that prove Desai's *Voices in the City* as "Ambivalent Identity" which ultimately concretizes the shape of researched work as the finding of the thesis book.

Chapter Two: Initiating Dialogues on Postcolonial Discourses

Critical Opinions on Postcolonial Issues

Post-colonial studies posit its legitimacy as an interesting discipline and even contextualize relevant issues in distinct academic institutions of euro-American and non-western countries. Postcolonial studies both as theory and method try to cover the significance and drawback of globalization covering some ideas as how human from different geographical location are extremely connected with various literary, socio-political, socio-economical, socio-cultural, geographical and historical background.

They are the true post-colonial issues under which we can see different critical opinions. They are found as new concept, criticism and comments in several academic journals, essays, and articles on postcolonial literary text and postcolonial theory. They also appear as the academic practices and process of learning activities after the successful meetings among the multicultural individual and communities based on their experiences on distinct field of knowledge and practice. In reference to the introductory notes on an establishment of post-colonial theory, Bill Ashcroft and others mention; “Once colonized peoples had cause to reflect on and express the tension which ensued from this problematic and contested, but eventually vibrant and powerful mixture of imperial language and local experience post-colonial theory came into being” (1). It reveals the fact how the post-colonial theory emerges and comes into existence.

When people once remain in touch with colonized, they come across the cultural, political, economic, and technological interests of the colonizers. More about, the post-colonial is related to the implication of distinct cultural experiences that they communicate each other. They come along with ambiguities and complexities of distinct cultural experiences. The given line also says, “All the ambiguities and complexities of the many different cultural experiences it implicates” (2). Here, post-colonialism is a kind

of practices and continuous process of resistance, adaptation, and reconstruction of the human issues along with their distinct cultural possession and impact of other cultural standards that signify the ambiguities and complexities of distinct cultural experiences.

Another way of judging postcolonial studies is that it deals with the process and belongings to the cultural displacements and dislocations out of the marginalized voices and their upcoming circumstances. Moreover, it, in this response, recognize such displacements and dislocations in the forms of the contact zone, cultural ambivalence, hybridity and multicultural forms as globalizing tendencies in a greater sense have gone together with great changes and progress in the field of various academic courses as postcolonial discourses. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha informs:

Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the context for political and social authority within the modern world order. Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of the third world countries and the discourses of minorities within the geopolitical division of East and West, North and South. [. . .] They formulate their critical revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the ‘rationalizations’ of modernity. (171)

For Bhabha, postcolonial perspectives emerge as a attempt and struggle to resist and respond on tendencies of the West in order to disclose their hegemony and ideologies towards the East. It also reveals the antagonistic and ambivalent moments regarding the socio-cultural, socio-political, and socio-economic issues within the Eurocentric and American rationalization of modernity through the eyes of the non-western communities. It highly reflects the representation of the unequal nature of the discourses of third world

and underestimation of minorities within the geographical division of East and West, North and South poles can be viewed through the postcolonial discourses.

Postcolonial studies embody an umbrella sphere below which the issues like colonialism, neo-colonialism post colonialism, nation, nationalism, imperialism, ethnicity, race, gender, globalization and hybridity, contact zone and multiculturalism. Ashcroft, et al further state:

Post-colonial theory involves discussion about experiences of various kinds, migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential master discourses [colonial discourse] of imperial Europe such as history philosophy and linguistics and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being. (2)

Post colonialism refer to purposeful and result oriented consequences caused by the mixture of cultural, economic and political, technological power deliberately imposed to the colonized by the imperial practices. Post-colonial theory is introduced as the counter-attractions to the colonizer countries to defend their societies and cultures. Thus, Post colonialism as theory and method is used to reflect continuing process of imperial suppressions and exchanges throughout such diverse social plurality in their institutions and their discursive practices that the imperial process exist upon individuals and societies in positive as well as negative aspects.

As it reveal the fact that it encompasses on the socio-cultural, socio-economic, and geo-political background of the Non-Western societies how Western and American understood the rest of the world and its societies. Further, Padmini Mongia defines postcolonial theory in a broader domain of knowledge that targets to deconstruct distinct literary and socio-cultural disciplines, and its practices of European and American

thoughts. She writes, “Postcolonial theory is an umbrella term that covers different critical approaches which deconstruct European thoughts in areas as wide-ranging as philosophy, history, literary studies, anthropology, sociology, and political science” (2).

Bill Ashcroft, et al in *the Post Colonial Studies Reader* says about the British imperialism is a process of export of British English language and literature as part of civilizing mission. It involved the suppression of a vast wealth of native cultures by the support of imperial control. Such domination of native culture through the imported culture is characterized by the term ambivalence in the colonized and colonizer that they learn ambivalent identity. So Ashcroft, et al say, “while its use has tended to focus on the cultural production of such communities, it is becoming widely used in historical, political, sociological and economic analysis, as these disciplines continue to engage with the impact of European imperialism upon world societies” (187). They focus on the emergence of various disciplines in the form of the meaningful study of postcolonial discourses that emphasize onwards the cultural production of communities in order to engage with other world and its societies.

Post colonialism is as project that deals with the effects and influences of colonialism or is caused by the colonialism is the result of cultural ambivalence. Here, Leela Gandhi tries to make it clear, “rarely did the onslaught of colonialism entirely obliterate colonized societies. But also, far from being exclusively oppositional, the encounter with colonial power occurred along a variety of ambivalent registers” (124). The people having distinct cultural characteristics come across with colonial power are often seen in the colonized societies in oppositional direction out of which they share the theme of varieties of cultural ambivalence within the colonized individual and communities. Further, Gandhi quotes Harish Trivedi's version to emphasize on the notion of post colonialism. She adds, “it may be useful to look at the whole phenomenon [of

post-colonialism] as a transaction, as an interactive, dialogic , two-way process rather than a simple active-passive one; as a process involving complex negotiation and exchange” (125). Here, what Harish Trivedi means to whole phenomenon of post-colonialism appears as dialogic and two ways process that encourages people to interact each other in order to share each other’s cultural possessions. She focuses on the process of negotiation and exchange. However, when two or more than two cultural people contact each other, they form ambivalent identity.

Moreover, while truly speaking on the scholarly works of Edward W. Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Mary Louise Pratt, V.Y. Mudimbe, Benedict Anderson, Hans Bertens, Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, Roland Robertson, Samuel P. Huntington, Partha Chatterjee, and others belong to different parts of the world, have contributed to expand the relevance and scope of the postcolonial studies. they are Non-western writers, intellectual, critics and other positionalities remain close to their views, write-ups, interpretation, analysis, and criticism on the very Western, later American fashioned discourses of so-called savage, uneducated, uncivilized, and absurd are slightly introduced being critical are presented aspects are taken into account while reading Desai’s *Voices in the City* in the coming paragraphs in details.

So far as we are going to reveal our precise interests to represent how Anita Desai’s *Voices in the City* (1964) is noteworthy work for postcolonial studies is the result of frequent meaning of ambivalence or cultural ambivalence and cultural imperialism. It highly influences in the context of Kathmandu, London, New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, United States of America, and other major cities of the world since its publication that touches to writer, reader, and critics. The frequent shift of distinct people and their ambivalence identity is observed through the main character and his family lead to the situation of cultural intersections as an output of cultural ambivalence that take

place in the Indian city of Calcutta due to the remains of colonization and impact of imperialism will be researched throughout the novel *Voices in the City*. Therefore, the developments of the ideas of cultural ambivalence are as mentioned below with critical notes and views of critics in details are as follows.

Theorizing Cultural Ambivalence

Ambivalence deals with the situation of remaining in dilemma or dual nature among the community or individual. It is really rooted in culture. When we come across the word, ambivalence, it significantly means to the cultural ambivalence. It is the condition of diverse cultural communities that they are highly caught in dual cultural position. It results out of cultural shift or transition when one cultural people contact with other. Ambivalence as the term posits the situation of person, group, and community whereas cultural ambivalence centers widespread area of studies such as psychological analysis, culture, colonial subject, history, hybridity, and mimicry.

The term ambivalence as concept developed in psychoanalysis to deal with a continual flux between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It also posits oppositional reaction of attraction and repulsion from an object, person, or action. In psychological expression, ambivalence refers to a state of mind in which contradictory tendencies, attitudes or feelings exist in the relationship to a single object, especially, the existence of love and hate, good and bad, colonizer and colonized. Psychoanalyst says, “The positive and negative components of the emotional attitude are simultaneously in evidence and inseparable” (10). Thus, psychoanalyst examines ambivalence as a psychic condition of a person or psychic state of mind of the individual, comes at a once in the mind of the person in the form of inseparable coincidence.

The term was introduced in 1911 by Eugen Bleuler to describe one of the four symptoms he considered primarily to schizophrenia. This vividly deals with the situation of being negative and positive emotional attitudes of the individual. Bleuler analyzes it:

By ambivalence is to be understood the specific schizophrenic characteristic, to accompany identical ideas or concepts at the same time with positive as well as negative feeling (affective ambivalence), to will or not to will at the same time the identical actions (ambivalence of will), and to think the same thoughts at once negatively and positively (intellectual ambivalence). (80)

Here, in Bleuler's term, it is the situation of opposing drives, desires, emotions, action and reaction towards the same person, object or goal; they come along with the oppositional reaction. They appear in different form as the negative and positive, negative of affective ambivalence, ambivalence of will, and intellectual ambivalence. That means they are the two kinds drives of same person present in distinct positions.

In *The Dictionary of Behavioral Science*, compiled and edited by Benjamin B. Wolman, defines the term 'ambivalence' in terms of the mixed kinds of reaction of the individual and emotional attitudes of opponent groups or communities. He says:

ambivalence as the co-existence of opposing emotions, attitudes or traits in the same individual, as the rapid alternation of emotional attitudes towards another and as the state of being able to view two or more aspects of an issue or to view a person in terms of more than one dimension or value. (14)

There are two kinds of human nature co-exist in paradoxes, binaries and contradictions. It is the situation of the individual that they are accustomed to have similar experience in their day-to-day life appear in several dimensions within the individual and groups.

As we observe ambivalence from a historical point of view, it is highly formed by the dynamic of an epoch of transition that drives human being into continuous situation of oppositional reaction. In transitional epoch, the traditional beliefs in which an individual is accustomed to having two phases of time framework such as dead and the new beliefs are in the process of birth. In this circumstance, an individual is interwoven between at least two cultures at the same time- one is traditional and another is the new, which does not have any perfect form. P.K. Rajan describes:

Ambivalence as a pattern of behavior is a characteristic expression of great ages of transition. The individual caught between a transitional ethos, which has become part of his blood and a new ethos which perplexes him toward which he aspires, finds himself in an inescapable predicament, and he is seen wandering between two worlds, one dead and other powerless to born. (10)

In this response, an individual is torn between the two worlds. He possesses both the dreams of an uncertain future and the anxieties and unpleasant past and present. He defines the character's expression of great ages of transition out of which they could not escape. We can see these kinds of scene in Desai' *Voices in the City*.

In another context, P. K. Rajan further brings the clear pictures of the transitional phase of the Indian society which the post independent citizen were heavily caught in the ambivalent identity. It is shown through the main character Nirode and his family. the below mentioned lines say, "the European Renaissance of the 15th and 17th centuries and the Indian Renaissance of the latter half of the 19th century and post-independence decades of the 20th century are instances of such transitional periods during which ambivalence emerges as a pronounced tendency" (10). In this explanation, Rajan wants to illustrate Indian transitional phase by bringing the example of European renaissance.

During Indian pre and post-independence eras of India reflect transitional phases in which ambivalence or character' ambivalent identity had become the manifest tendency.

In addition, such ambivalent identity in of the great age of Indian Renaissance has the direct influence and impact of Renaissance England's characteristic feature basically of English education system that passes through many great Indian minds. In such case, he contextualizes the situation of ambivalence with that of Indian awakening has the inseparable relation with that of English renaissance.

The people of Indian Renaissance cannot escape from the same fate that they are partially occupied with ambivalent identity- because they come across both Eastern and Western conventions and beliefs. Or even though the people living in India under the colonial domination got independence, found difficult to adjust in the new ethos, since they had been habitual in colonial domination. Therefore, in such transitional ages, dualism, dilemma, and confusion, above all, ambivalence come into existence and affect the behavior of the people of different communities that they are culturally intertwined. So far as, it is concerned with the intended thesis in Desai's *Voices in the City* assume that there are sufficient examples and features of cultural ambivalence in it and the protagonist and his family posit ambivalent identity.

Each individual or community has their own cultural traits out of which they shape their identity. In the present age of frequent transformation and transition, they easily encounter with other cultures. Both cultural experiences survive in the mind of individual and community despite having distinct position in his/her society that leads to the ambivalent position. cultural studies, in its practice, emphasizes on the individual and community around the world in their social, cultural, political, technological, geographical, historical and economical relations from the marginalized point of view also goes along with distinct ways of living of them such as ideologies, desires, pleasures,

reactions, interests and emotions. In this response, as we see the historical development of cultural practices, the whole history of British colonialism and imperialism and other forms of American neo-colonialism have carried the meaning of cultural ambivalence is deep rooted. Out of cultural encroachment, distinct cultural dwellers have experienced loss of cultural trauma that can also be perceived as cultural ambivalence. This process of ambivalent identity is highly caused when one cultural individual or community remains in the gap of two cultures i.e. that of own culture and foreign one and is totally unable to identify where they are. Thus, they share ambivalent identity.

So far as cultural ambivalence or ambivalent identity is deep rooted in remnants of colonization and impact of imperialism that raises the issues of colonial encounters such as British form of colonial expansion and new form of colonial hegemony mainly followed by America ideology, religion, politics, socio-economic practices. They draw the attention to the colonies through far reaching cultural, political, economic, academic, media and religious practices. It also provides ambivalent meaning to the colonized and colonizers due to which colonized were ill-treated in the course of imperial expansion.

In this response, cultural ambivalence comes up with two distinct positions. The one emerges of a foreign culture in other cultural locations. The other is the reaction of other cultural individual and community that they resist to the outside cultures. They remain in-between two cultures that are the situation of being duality, dilemma and confusion is the state of ambivalence. As Bhaba says, “ambivalence describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion, which characterizes the relationship between colonized and colonizers. The relation is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer” (12). Therefore, this kind of colonial mentality stands as state of ambivalence and give rise to ambivalent identity.

Colonial mentalities have the tendencies to dominate the colonized. Jenny Sharpe draws the clear picture of the colonized Indian psychology or mentality that signifies the acceptance or temptation of British culture. It appears as other segment of adaptation of other cultures out of which the colonized could not be away. Sharpe points out:

Colonial fantasies about Indian center on a pseudo-aristocratic world the Anglo Indians created with their sprawling bungalows, country clubs, and polite parties or 'frolics.' Accompanying a public display of civilized life are images that show the natives being freed from despotic rule, rose from their ignorance, and saved from cruel and barbarous practices. These vignettes tell of the civilizing mission, which is primarily a story about the colonizing culture as an emissary of light. (100)

Here, Sharpe mentions the Indian history that is full of colonial fantasies in which upper-class people were in the country's major position which made colonial mentality easier to rule the Indian states and the citizens. They showed cruel and barbaric practices towards innocent citizens in the name of civilization. Sharpe views it as the colonizing cultures of colonizers highly raise the issues of cultural ambivalence because they purposively did for double gains and colonized community gained double pains as a result of which they achieved ambivalent identity.

This dissertation in the next chapter revolves around the discussed tool based on the targeted text in dealing with a typical Indian character Nirode, the protagonist of *Voices in the City* is imposed by the ambivalence, which is caused by remains of colonization and impact of imperialism come across in the city of Calcutta. It stands for as one of the most crowded cities of Indian upon which the protagonist Nirode observes from journalistic point of view. He narrates the complicated and complex cultures that

highly get familiarity with cultural ambivalence. Both cultures are overlapping one another in different stages in the fiction. It has produced contradictions, paradoxes and duality in the cultural level that captures the theme of the sense of identity loss or other aspects of cultures and uncertainty in a way all appear in a form of the cultural ambivalence or ambivalent identity in the characters. It proves that Nirode's condition in the novel is apparently ambivalent resulted by the mimicry as well as rejection of British and Indian metropolitan cultures are equally responsible.

Cultural Imperialism

Cultural imperialism is imposition and controlling mechanism on the cultural issues of dominated cultural individual or community. The cultural imperialists impose their cultures towards others through new forms of technologies. It is the relationship between dominated and dominant cultures in which the colonized people lose their cultures after emerging of the imperial culture in certain geographical location. In the context of India, British ruled Indian citizens along with their own cultures. Their cultures were highly dominating in both technologically and politically in which all the colonized people were culturally colonized through the eyes of imperialism. Thus, cultural imperialism is the cultural imposition and dominance forced towards dominated cultures in order to show their imperial dominance.

Besides, imperialism is the situation of controlling others physically. Colonized people become marginalized and deprived from their rights to practice and use overall possessions that they have. Critic Timothy Brennan defines imperialism, "Imperialism entails the subjugation of one people by another" (165). Then, imperialism is the strategy to show power and control over someone or something. He defines subjugation as a forcible, often violent control over others by imperialists. It is process of forming empire, has continued from one period of history to others in which one nation has experienced

domination. Edward Said speaks on behalf of the word imperialism, “The practice, theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling distant territory” (8). Said’s imperialism is as practice and process of metropolitan center to rule over other innocent groups or distinct territories. Thus, it is the process or practice of the power countries to have supremacy or domination over other nations and its people.

It is through the frequent contacts among the distinct dominant and dominated cultural communities create a kind of problem out of which cultural ambivalence emerge as a result of the effect of cultural imperialism. Such kinds of cultural suppressions and exchanges can be seen in social, religious, economic, and cultural levels of human interactions that there comes the juxtaposition of dominant and dominated cultures without any certain fixity. In this case, Helen Tiffin says, “Over three quarters of the contemporary world has been directly and profoundly affected by imperialism and colonialism” (95). He states that there is the one-third space has been occupied by that kind of mentality of imperializing to the citizens. There is the cultural ambivalence or ambivalent identity due to certain vested interest of the imperialists.

Imperialists stepped into their empires with their strong ideological passion howsoever they claimed as civilized, advanced and educated. As a project of civilizing mission, they appeared along with Bible, business and education as their strongest weapons to civilize other cultures which had a tremendous impact upon the colonized practiced by the colonizer. In this background, it is momentous to converse how British colonizer introduced English education in British India and how the long-lasting reactions remained among the Indian citizens. It highlights upon the reader as the essence of the dominant culture that extends its meaning in the dual position. Gramsci reveals:

This domination by consent is achieved through what is taught to the colonized, how it is taught, and the subsequent emplacement of the

educated subject as a part of the continuing imperial apparatus knowledge of English literature, for instance, was required for entry into the civil service and the legal profession. (425)

Education system appears to the colonialist as a controlling mechanism. Literary education had special power in which brutality of colonial workers has been used with literary texts are in education, both converted to and justified by the inherent and open claims to superiority of civilization embodied through the excessive use of English book.

It clarifies:

Education becomes a technology of colonialist subjectification in two other important and intrinsically interwoven ways. It establishes the locally English or British as normative through critical claims to 'universality' of the values embodies in English literary text and it represents the colonized to themselves as inherently inferior beings- 'wild' 'barbarous' 'uncivilized'. (426)

English literary education exists in British India as cultural ideologies through which they extended their all means of exercises to produce and reproduce their own cultures. It highlights, "Humanistic functions traditionally associated with the study of literature-for example the shaping of [desired] character or the disciplines of ethical thinking are also essential to the process of socio-political control" (431). They found education as successful and safe landing to appear in other geographical space in order to exercise their hegemony in association with literary and non-literary disciplines. How had the British imperialists surpassed the Indian subjects appear more transparent from Thomas Macaulay's statements. As he says that they showed their 'civilizing mission in India to control the socio-cultural and political, geographical issues. Macaulay writes:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between the millions and us whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialect of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the western nomenclature and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. (430)

In these lines, this indicates that the Indian subjects and the other colonized one were circulated consciously and unconsciously by the colonial education. They taught English language and English literature that signifies English culture. It was based on the cultural imperialism through which they practiced their own cultural values and practices. On the other hand, they are originally brought up in their indigenous culture that cannot be reduced simply by the will. In expressions of Macaulay, they are Indian in blood and color. In this notion, they are fundamentally Indian. Now, there emerges in-betweenness condition. They are spiritually and materialistically divided into the parts of cultural dislocation. These kinds of circumstance are characterized by cultural ambivalence. This comes as feedback resulted out of cultural imperialism. Though they left India, they are culturally able to plant their cultural imperialism.

In a similar case, they have coined the textual and political issues or established of counter-discourses are impact of the colonial imperialism. Texts are taken as social and political product, are the most noteworthy indicator of colonial power and post colonial confrontation. As “Imperial relations may have been established initially by guns, guile and disease, but they were maintained in their interpolative phase by textuality” (142). In this sense, the post colonial theory talks about the imperial relations and unfold colonial discourses. They present their hegemonic power in the text through which they want to

exercise their colonial expansion intellectually. Therefore, the text and textuality have become one of the reliable resources to dominate other culture and teach their own cultural values and practices are the task of the cultural imperialism.

The oppositional relations of colonizer and colonized are the products of cultural imperialism are widely discussed several ways to include analysis of European territorial conquests, distinct institutions of colonialisms, the discursive operation of empire in colonial discourses and resistance of such subjects and contemporary colonial legacy in complex social structure of nations and communities. Ashcroft et al share:

While its use has tended to focus on the cultural production of such communities, it is becoming widely used in historical, political, sociological, and economic analysis, as these disciplines continue to engage with the impact of European imperialism upon world societies.

(187)

they focuses on the various disciplines come as the purposeful study of the postcolonial debates, which tends to emphasize on the cultural production of communities and formation of the new space culture based on European imperialism and later American neo-colonialism come as dominant factor in the field of various disciplines. Thus, they institute the disciplines to continually engage with others. Such aspects are considered into an account while reading *Voices in the City* through cultural imperialism.

In the following chapter, the research attempts to read Anita Desai's *Voices in the City* from the perspective of ambivalence, cultural ambivalence and cultural imperialism. How the characters remain in problematic situation and has ambivalent identity possibly that happens because of complex remains of colonization and impact of imperialism is vividly observed in the light of cultural ambivalence and cultural imperialism in order to support the title of the research work.

Chapter Three: Ambivalent Identity in Anita Desai's *Voices in the City*

Background to the Analysis of the Text

This novel vividly observes the transitional phase of Indian socio-cultural and political issues. After the Second World War, though the British colonial and imperial practices left from India, they were able to establish cultural, educational and political system. Even after the arrival of independent in India, we can see the remains of colonization and impact of imperialism that remained during the transitional phase of Indian society. Education, health, cultural and political practices expanded directly or indirectly through different means of exercises that we can still see major metropolitan cities of Indian society. In this case, the colonial and imperial practices helped them to engage to the colonial citizen by doing different activities. So we can see such kinds of tendencies are mentioned in Desai's *Voices in the City* fruitfully provide the background to the analysis of the text.

The whole novel centers on the family issues especially the protagonist's dual experiences of former British cultural practices and his Indian metropolitan city cultures. The setting of the novel rounds around the city of Calcutta in which they find difficulties, complex and composition of different individuals, groups and communities. They and their real pains and problems are described through the protagonist, Nirode and his family are interpreted and judged by supporting the lines in Desai's *Voices in the City*.

Nirode shares his ambivalent experiences with that of other characters. The protagonist Nirode basically wishes to escape from the burdens of social and cultural tasks but in the course of his alienation to self-actualization, he is in tension between the riddle and unpleasant realities of past and present. The past and the present remains as the great challenges to the protagonist through which he is engaged and at the end, come to the realization that is the colonial consequences and aftermaths of imperialism. Thus,

Nirode is caught in the remnants of colonization and the impact of imperialism that can be observed as phenomenon of cultural ambivalence that gives rise to ambivalent identity. In this link, the idea of R.K Rajan's ambivalence really helps to provide the meaning who describes about the relevance of ambivalence in the context of India. The writer of the text is also from Indian. So in the text, we can see the clear meaning of ambivalent identity within the characters.

In the novel, there emerge the vivid examples of more than two cultural practices. They are mainly the British imperial cultures and the Indian metropolitan cultural practices. They move together in the major city of Calcutta. As we draw the lines of the linear history of the development of the city of Calcutta, the British culture is more dominant. There is impact in overall areas and scopes that they have highly covered to root in the mind of the people and family which are shown through the protagonist, his family and friends. Due to the results of his involvement in the mixed cultures, he really traps in cultural ambivalence. Thus, Desai's *Voices in the City* vividly shows the protagonist Nirode's ambivalent identity due to the remnants of colonization and the impact of imperialism during the transitional phase of India's changing socio-cultural values and practices.

Dialogues on Cultural Ambivalence and Imperialism

In the novel, surrounding of the city of Calcutta, the protagonist experiences difficulties in its adjustment. It describes the environment of Calcutta full of the plural voices that create problems within him. There are different things which have made the life of the people really unfair and polluted. Due to the industrialization, commerce and compartmentalization, the life of the people is more difficult and complex. The protagonist Nirode finds the future of Arun as an undimming bright. Arun along with his game of cricket really gets familiar and compared with bright future still survives with

the dual cultural trends and Calcutta is more synonymous to that of British dominant and cultural imperialism. The establishment of cricket culture is the impact of British colonial and empire in India because the whole setting of the novel contains India's the major city of Calcutta. The lines show the ambivalent identity:

Striding off the bridge into the coagulated blaze of light and sound and odour that was the city of Calcutta, Nirode cried unfair life is unfair how faint and senseless it sounded in all that tumult of traffic and commerce about him. In the darkness of that unfairness he saw Arun's future as an undimming brightness, to have watched Arun play a game of cricket as a boy was to have been made aware of this ineffable brightness. (9)

Here, colonial exercises take place in the city areas and another imperial impact can be seen the establishment of cricket. Such colonial and imperial practices come across the city of Calcutta which kept characters disturbed and puzzled. Colonial power's interests emerge in play education and business. They fix such kinds of tendencies to engage the people in order to do their business. Along with such trends, the local find difficult to locate themselves in complex city of Calcutta where they are forced to suffer from both imperial and complex metropolitan practices. So, protagonist undergoes along with these experiences out of which he is ambivalent identity.

It also gives several instances of how British established their regime and ruled over Indian citizens. In this regards, the author observes his experiences through the imaginative characters and plot that they embody the ambivalent cultural identity. The way the city developed as the complex, the protagonist found it more problematic and unclear to see outside environment that was literarily grounded with British cultural imperialism in the major city of India. The people engage in the city could do hardly anything due to the British cultures as a result of which they destroyed their own cultures

and natural beauties. So, the city of Calcutta is no more the city of local cultures and natural beauty. It is the transitional phase of the Indian changing society which could not escape from out of the reality- the means of real independence. But they simply get suffering and tensions rather they learn the cultural ambivalence. The lines also show:

At the window, Nirode felt it upon his neck, warm and bovine and sickly sweet. Half-closing his eyes against the smoke that burnt them, he counted gravestones in the night. The founders of the British Empire lay buried in the sleazy Bengal ooze where they had first founded their colonial power. . . . Young English roses seized once by glorious ambition and then, finally by dysentery – and so a career of balls and crinolines and harsh voyages ended. (18-19)

The above mentioned line reveals the grounded reality of the British Empire and their establishment of power as East India Company. They came in the form of merchants, generals, vagabonds and adventurers and were able to rule India and Indian people and at the end they lose power. But in underlying structure, there are the remains of the cultural and other form of colonialism which still dominates the people and occupies their major cities. Therefore, the intended title and hypothesis of the novel really raises the issues of cultural ambivalence in the minds of the people are shown through the characters whose identity is in a greater sense ambivalent.

Through the novel, we can experience the life of main character Nirode and his involvement with family members and friends give a kind of dilemma through which he struggle to survive. When we observe the life and his experience with that of other characters really provide the glimpse of the ambivalent identity. He tends to experience with that of the natural beauty out of the loneliness. His watchful moment outside the window exemplify to know about the natural beauty vanished around the busy city

Calcutta. Instead, he has finds the materialization of so many cultural practices which could not keep him stable and constant. The given lines help us to know how he experiences city of Calcutta:

Nirode turned aside to the window so no one saw him flush; no one saw the fury with which he struck a match. . . . Was a man for whom aloneness alone was the sole natural condition, aloneness alone the treasure worth treasuring? But he had already gone too far in his confidences, he found himself incapable of retracting. (26)

Nirode struggles to find the proper way to adjust with the cultural practices, had in the past were the natural beauty and his pure cultural practices. Literarily, both of them have vanished and the British cultural practices have highly dominated such trends and natural beauty as a result of which protagonist remains in tension Indian changing norms of the transitional phase of Indian society.

This dialogue also helps us to understand how the system of education rapidly spread in Indian. The overall system of education in Indian schools, colleges and universities is highly dominant, suppressive and self-centered that can be found through David's voices. The metropolitan Calcutta is depicted as new dimensions with full of contradiction, problems and troubles through which the characters really undergo. It rather giving any significant meaning creates monotonous, loneliness to the characters mainly in case of the protagonist. In the beginning of the novel, Nirode could find his problem that was the root cause of the British imperial practice. So Calcutta really assumes the cultural ambivalence out of the impact of British cultural practice. The aforementioned lines try to reveal the facts:

Nirode pushed back his chair. 'Come let's get out, he said and Jit rose and followed. David, watching, was hurt, for David enjoyed nothing so much

as discussing Nirode the westernization of the Educated Indian, the cult of Tagore worship in Bengal, the system of education in Indian universities . . . rather, he enjoyed listening to Nirode expound, while he wandered about the city with him. Calcutta assumed new dimensions of meaning as he listened to Nirode repeat and contradict himself, theorize and laugh and muse all in one breath. (34)

We can see Desai's novel as the true reveal of the history that really portrays the true picture of the Indian transitional society of her time. It also shows the colonial and imperial continuation of British history. In this regards, there remains two cultural practices- one is the Indian metropolitans and other is former British culture that gives him ambivalent identity. So this results out of cultural ambivalence.

As British cultural practices established, so many changes took place in history of Indian society. The city of Calcutta represents the contact zone to city dwellers from which they learn such kinds of experiences in which the marriage, bodies, touch and torture also become one of the parts of the Indian culture filled with imperial cultural practices. The given lines try to reveal the facts about the changing scene of the city of Calcutta are also full of dirt and smell:

Nirode had nothing to say. . . . He's dumb,' she complained petulantly: her voice as much warm-flesh and cool-silk as her body. Out on the pillared porch, Nirode spat into an oleander, for he felt as though he had swallowed a mouthful of Sarla's sweet perfume. Marriage, bodies, touch and torture . . . he shuddered and walking swiftly, was almost afraid of the dark of Calcutta, its warmth that clung to one with a moist, perspiring embrace, rich with odours of open gutters and tuberose garlands. (35)

Here, it depicts the changing environment of the cultures of the city Calcutta. We can see cultural composition in metropolitan Calcutta which has highly dominated other cultures of remote countryside migrated people. As a result, we see certain changes in the social system and caused environmental pollution. Those changes that occur in all social institutions are symptoms of British Empire and their way of engagement in Indian society. Thus, the text is more contextual and historical in its nature and content to express the meaning of character's ambivalent identity.

English language is also the result of colonial and impact of imperialism. Mother has written a letter in Bengali which becomes strange to her children. She remembers that it was her childhood language. It shows her past in which she sang a song flew a kite and sound whistles. The lines say, "She had written in Bengali which was unusual. Bengali had been the childhood tongue in their house, the tongue in which she had sung songs to them and they had begged for kites and whistles" (36). It indicates the changing scene of the Indian society in which there is the conflict within the family members. They are the consequences of colonization and impact of imperialism that even occur in the changing history of transitional Indian society and its cultures.

Consequently, the Indian families have favored to speak in English. This is due to the encroachment of British culture in India. This has appeared as the practice which can be seen even in education, health and living standard. The successful policy can be seen in the form of education through which they are able to rule and occupy the places of most of the school, colleges and universities in Indian cities even in these recent days. The family members such as brothers, sisters and mother speak in English that is also the influence of British cultures. The protagonist finds the tone of the language very much touching which was unexpected to him. The mentioned lines also reveal:

They had outgrown it and brothers, sisters and mother now conversed and corresponded almost exclusively in English. It touched him. He did not want to but the softly rounded; chirping sounds of his childhood language touched him. She wrote in a quick, minute, frightened hand, betraying reserves and uncertainties of which as son could never know. (36)

In this reference, it shows that there is generation gap in which the new generations are more motivated towards the English culture. It has caused dilemma in their life. In contrary, there are some people who want to enjoy with Indian cultural practices. But there is no place for such people to have such and so desire and interests. The city of Calcutta carries distinct features that give unique experiences to all the people. After several attempt, the protagonist being exhausted and annoyed, intentionally, wishes to leave the city. He wants to pack all the belongings to leave the city. He is fade up the voices of the city to what he wants to say good-bye:

Three men were having a late dip in the lake, with quiet infrequent splashes and low recitations of Sanskrit hymns. Nirode and David walked away, up the lake where only lovers went and then rarely: there were not many lovers in Calcutta. A little suburban train went shrilling by, hoot-hoot-hooting a long and melancholy. Whistle that made arch his neck and raise his arms above his head and cry, 'God that makes me want to get away! Pack up and clear out as far as I can get from here! There's nothing but good-bye, good-bye in that sound. (39)

This shows the alternative to the protagonist who could not find any solution by living in Calcutta. That means he tries to search the proper adjustment. In the way to reach the place and his destination, he involves with other characters. They are from his own and British cultures but finds hard difficult to locate himself there. This might be the cause

behind his escape from the city of Calcutta. This is the remains of the colonization and impact of imperialism that has created the problem within the life of the protagonist.

Again and again, the text tends to explore the common nature of Calcutta city. There are different kinds of experiences that they meet in certain places of Calcutta that is able to heat the pulses of him. There are the mixed of different things which creates the city complex and difficult. They are able to act, react on different issues but find no solutions to come out of the difficulties. The composition of distinct communities tries to adjust but find difficulties to locate them. It is resulted as an arrival of British Empire in the past that still continue in the present as an unpleasant riddle and realities remain in the transitional phase of the Indian society of the present as well:

On all sides the city pressed down, alight, aglow and stirring with its own marsh-bred, monster life that, like an orange, kept one eye open through sleep and waking. Calcutta, Calcutta-like the rattle of the reckless train: Calcutta, Calcutta – the very pulsebeat in its people’s veined wrists. Streets where slaughtered sheep hung beside bright tinsel tassels to adorn oiled black braids and a syphilitic beggar and his entire syphilitic family came rolling down on barrows, like the survivors of an atomic blast, then paused to let a procession of beautifully launched Bengalis in white carry their marigold-decked Durga – or Lakshmi or Saroshati, or Kali – on their shoulders down to the Ganges, amidst drums and fevered chanting. (42)

In these cases, the city of Calcutta shows the land of Indian cultures and the impact of imperialism. There are the festivals in which we can observe the beauty of Durga, Laksmi, Saroshoti and Kali. They represent the orient cultures that exist in the city of Calcutta. The protagonist really learns these experiences at the same spots of Eastern and Western cultural values and practices. There are different models of the cars and other

uses such as cinemas, slaughter-houses and *pan* booths are around the city of Calcutta become the examples of both cultural meets that had made the protagonist very complicated and exhausted. He sees only the victims and suffers in it from which he wants to be away:

Trams and borrows rolled by, klaxon horns honked. Odours of naphtha, gasoline and rotting mangoes, cinders and frangipani, open gutters and temple marigold mingled together. Calcutta, Calcutta, prayed its victims and Calcutta stirred as though in answer, as though it were a living spirit. Calcutta was not merely the bazaars ringed by cinemas, slaughter- houses and pan booths, but also the history of those old Georgian houses that still lines gas lit streets, their sweeping marble staircases and deep pillared verandas. (42)

The protagonist in this reflection seems to be conscious about the composition and difficulty of the city Calcutta. This City has become the city of jumble of everything that they gather which gives less solution to the characters. The way the city moves is highly dominant as a result of remains of colonization and impact of the imperialism. In this case, ambivalence reflects as the human consciousness that Nirode possesses. David also enjoys with the famous original book *Gitanjali*. It says:

The train was slowing. Soon it would be at Shantiniketan David returned to his book, the *Gitanjali*, which he was reading proudly in the original. Before he begins, however, he said a silent prayer to the small boy. Jump, he urged him voicelessly, jump higher and higher! Oh boy, never come down. (44)

It highlights the involvement of English culture, the people and their engagement with Indian culture. It has become possible after the foundation of British imperialism in India

which rooted with different means of dominance even after the independent which provides the ambivalent identity to the characters.

There are other characters that show also negative towards the achievement and the success. There is the same cultural tendencies have rooted in the minds of the Indian people who are unable to cope with the changing transitional Indian society. Despite great changes that took places in India, there remain the British cultures. The system of education is very much similar to what imperial powers have planted in their mind:

‘Jit is considering leaving his firm – through he has not told me so in so many words – and joining up. He is waiting to see if voice will be a success. Of course I tell him it will never be a success, it can’t be, and it was not planned as one. . . . He feels one can educate people and make them read it. He won’t believe me, though he says he does. But education’s all rot and the instinct is missing. Jit is wrong, Jit is fatal, if he touches my voice, and he will kill it. (49)

As the lines of the novel progresses, we can observe the clear scene of the characters’ dissatisfaction. Unlike others, Dhurba also likes to leave the city of Calcutta in which he finds the city more messy and troublesome. This city life keeps the character more boredom and troublesome in which they see increasing cases of British cultures which keeps the local one more decreasing. These kinds of nature of not being constant are also the result of the remains of colonization and impact of imperialism that keeps the characters culturally ambivalent is the main motif of the research can be found through the voices and scene of the research text. Thus, their identity is also ambivalent:

It seemed to him that, like the blunt head of a caterpillar, he was nosing about the paradox of Dharma – Dharma who had made that dramatic exit from the city to come to the still remoteness of this walled garden and the

massed green life within it, but had never cut the fine and golden relationships that still strung him to the life of city and so often felt his way to them, held on to and questioned them. (51)

Moreover, it is the example of the cultural ambivalence in which the situation emerges as form of dilemma, pain and riddle. This results as the absence of the local cultures. If it happens so, it is in margin. They do these kinds of cultural practices which appear in Indian city of Calcutta as the writer chooses to draw the painful experiences of transitional Indian people through the imaginative characters. So Dharma comments about the city of Calcutta as dead city. The below lines add, “That is because there are none in your own heart, young Nirode I heard them long ago and obediently lay down and died – as far as Calcutta was concerned. I don’t think she noticed me creep away to live on elsewhere. As far as she is concerned I am dead and I return the compliment to her” (53). It encourages us to learn from the nature of the characters as unstable and complex. They share both cultural patterns when they contact around the city of Calcutta.

The city Calcutta lacks the natural beauty which has simply remained in imagination in relation to past and present experiences. He gives the detail description of Calcutta as his birth place. He describes the beauty of the Calcutta which is famous in different things. These all memories remain inseparable from the mind of the protagonist about which he is unable to be careless and transplant. So he is in the same spirit of the Calcutta of earth and airs are the roots which have poisoned them. In opposition, he is so much rooted in his own cultural roots. While he also encounters with others especially British cultural impacts which have kept his identity ambivalent:

“Ah, how can her? He was born in Calcutta. His house is one of the oldest in Bow Bazaar; it is next to the most fabulous sweet shop in Bengal. He will never be able to tear up his roots and transplant them. He needs the

Calcutta earth, the Calcutta air.’ But he says these are the very things that poisoned him, nearby killed him.” (58).

It reveals the facts that the protagonist wants to escape from the remains of the colonization and impact of imperialism by knowing as the main causes of the loss of his cultural roots and environmental pollution. It awakes him in his own cultural identity but that remains ambivalent him as well as to other characters.

The city of Calcutta has become the city of distinct institutions and social and non-social organizations in which the protagonist involves and remains as the viewers, observers and critic to them. It also creates complication to the characters. He is surrounded by those issues and things such as dancers, drunkards, sailors and prostitutes. These all appear as the wild celebration which ultimately destroys the native cultural traits out of which neither the protagonist can escape nor he accepts other cultural practices. At the end, he remains ambivalent culturally. His sister Monisha also appear in the same city of Calcutta in which she happens to share similar experiences and share ambivalent identity are clearly exposed through the lines of the novel.

The city of Calcutta provides different kinds of difficulties and opportunities in which they can equally share and learn freely. Monish enjoys from such kinds of experiences of reading oriental as well as occidental books which amuses her. The lines also reveal such kinds of experiences:

I see that of course she cannot know that there is nothing to laugh at in Kafka or Hopkins or Dostoyevsky or my Russian or French or Sanskrit dictionaries. But I wish they would leave me alone, sometimes, to read. Or that Nirode would come again and take me away to sit under a tree with him. He has not come. (116)

She is fond of reading different book materials rather than going outside. Within her, the influence of imperial cultural practices capture her rather than outside environment.

Therefore, there is conflict between brother and sister that is grounded by the means of colonial and imperial remains and impact gives the cultural ambivalence.

In other cases, she also studies the Indian women especially Bengali who appears in the pose of typical *saris*. She criticizes them of being baggy and dull. She enjoys with great epic of eastern cultures such as *Bhagvad-Gita* and *Ramayan*. It shows that she is also not constant and stable in her nature and the way of life. The way she acts really exposes the ambivalent identity. These kinds of Eastern and Western cultural practices come together within the characters about which they have to accept or resist clearly come under the attempt of theorizing cultural ambivalence in post colonial discourses. All the characters share similar experiences. It also happens in the case of Nirode's younger sister Amla.

Furthermore, Amla seems to be very happy and enjoys the life of her freedom. She is described as the happy and lucky girls to have such kinds of life also predict in the future, the possibilities and endless traps. They are in the elms of cultural changes out of which she gets relaxed and satisfied one. The cultural changes might have struck in the minds of young generation in which they find more interested and engaged themselves.

The lines convey:

Amla, absolutely free and in the centre of such an exciting world. You do have fun and how right you are to make the most of it – . . . she saw something – the future, the possibilities, the endless traps – that troubled her and she talked on in her large, intense way, drawing all the fire to her, give away as s precious gift. 'you belong to such a uniquely free generation – and that is something very new in our country. (144)

As we further turn the pages of the text, it provides us about the city of Calcutta in which we can see the difficulties and complexities. It brings equally dominant cultural practices out which along with the protagonist come across and wants to escape. It is only new experiences that they find enjoyment and pleasure. However, the old conventional groups find more difficult to cope with such events and incidents. They do not have dreams and seems to be unrealistic. In case of protagonist Nirode could not locate him in the proper direction and remains unable to identify that means he is ambivalent in nature and action. The beautiful line says, “But the young don’t do that anymore. How sad to be so realistic, so cynical, so without dreams’ (145). Thus, it reveals that this is the clear example of generation gap that deals with the problems of family.

The protagonist moves along with that of crisis of mental and physical. His means of alienation and unusual appearance as his mother remains watchful and constrain comes as the true knowledge to search for his identity that remains to be ambivalent. Beyond, similar cases occurs in the life of Monisha and other women. They are presented in a conventional way which reflects the orient cultural practices. This Calcutta city has emerged as the city of different voices. They come differently. They show the worrisome and exhausted life. They have choices to select which have created more problems to the characters in which they coin common theme of cultural ambivalence is highly found:

Obviously, he had pulled himself through a crisis, both mental and physical, and it had clothed him with this prisky, unsightly, but very safe armour. If she worried about him it was because of his wasted appearance and his alienation from their yearning mother. Monisha . . . and the women hanging long *dhoti* and *saris* to dry on the wooden rails, the voice of the child monotonously reciting his lessons . . . all these she knew and recognized from Monisha actually living in its midst. (157-158)

The way freedom has shown and conceived also comes as the paradox. It is regarded as strange and exhausted to the common people. It is taken as old as the mother is in similar ages because she experiences the past and even the present. There is bridge between the past and the present which come along with cultural ambivalence. There is the form of generation gap that creates the problems between the generations. The basic foundation of the changes remains under the dominance of former involvement of the imperial impact. Concerning the major changes even the freedom contradicts in the transitional phase of the Indian society. The given lines also reveal:

‘Freedom, freedom!’ strange how often the old, withered woman used this word, strange how often . . . ‘freedom came the year I was twelve years old. Even freedom is old now.’ She lifted her face out of her lap but could not stand the intense, suffering look on her aunt’s narrow face, looked out on the unceasing train instead and heard her aunt click her tongue and tattle her papers in disgust. . . Old age will come, disease and disappointment. Don’t be impatient for it will come. Then there’ll be nothing to do but regret all the waste. You’ll see, and her voice was sucked into the vacuum of the prematurely dark rooms beyond. (177)

In these circumstances, the foundation of the freedom is also grounded on the nature of cultural certain changes rather they followed the system of education and other kinds of ambivalence because it is highly dominated by the influence of remains of colonization and impact of imperialism. Though long time is passed after the establishment of independent in India, it could not bring institutions. There are the suppressed and marginalized voices which keep the protagonist disturbed and dominant. It is the vacuum in the form of the cultural roots which are heavily dominated by the cultural imperialism.

Amla also gets irritated with the city life which differs from her previous life as we mentioned in previous pages. She understood her brother – Nirode’s life and his wish to go the locality. It shows the protagonist’s disrespects and disinterest towards the increasing trends of changes in the city of Calcutta really creates the problems to them out of which they want to escape from and tend to rest in local villages.

Grinding through the city in a tired, bulging bus, she kept her face fiercely turned to the window, away from . . . Amla understood why Nirode chose to live in a locality such as this: it could not, after all, make any difference to him whether he lived amongst men serene and reasonable and gentle or men who fought like crows over every flesh carcass. (183)

He even involves in such activities such as drugs into veins in order to escape from the tension but he realizes that this is not the cause of ordinary events that brought great changes in the life of characters and the city of Calcutta for what he sees everything like flesh carcass. He learns nothing but the ultimate cultural ambivalence that is as result remains of colonization and impact of imperialism leaves for the characters one after another ambivalent identity.

The novel ends with white step to look at the outside which really gives the exit the novel with the self actualization of the protagonist towards his lingering into search for proper settlement. He learns the pitfalls of the remains of the colonization and impact of imperialism that keeps him movable during the transitional phase of India’s changing socio-cultural values and practices. Other characters also happen to inter into the same faith that they knew about their instability and disturbance and result of ambivalent identity. Therefore, the thesis clearly deals with the protagonist’s ambivalent identity; he is culturally ambivalent that is due to the remains of colonization and impact of the British cultural imperialism by means of expansion of its civilization.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

This research entitled “Ambivalent Identity in Anita Desai’s *Voices in the City*” explicitly shows the protagonist Nirode’s ambivalent position. This takes place as a consequence of the remains of colonization and impact of cultural imperialism in the transitional phase of India’s changing society. He engages in different phases of life with distinct individuals of his own cultures and colonial and imperialist ones. The cultural, political, educational and technological powers circulated are the examples that we can through the imaginative characters with imaginative story that resulted ambivalent identity.

The text highly focuses on life of city dwellers of the middle class family in Calcutta city. It narrates the story of a Bohemian brother Nirode and his two sisters caught in the transitional phase of India’s changing socio-cultural practices. The novel basically highlights on the consequences of Indian city life of the family whose identity is culturally ambivalent. His possessions own Indian Hindu conventional society out of which he could not be away and the impacts of imperial practices are rooted in the minds of Indian city dwellers appears as the common phenomenon during the transitional phase of Indian history to the middle class people.

In this case, the writer is able to catch the psychic condition of the Indian people of her era through the protagonist Nirode who wants to escape from metropolitan Calcutta and imperial cultures. That is the riddle and unpleasant realities of the past and present in which he is highly trapped is the reflection of ambivalent identity. The researcher’s task to explore the underlying facts behind the protagonist’s wish to escape is the result of common consequences of colonization and impact of imperialism. The research seems to be more practical to understand the life of the city dwellers and their

voices to emphasize the cultural ambivalence. In this case, the protagonist becomes aware of his ambivalent experience by involvement to the people of the city of Calcutta.

As we have theorized the concept of cultural ambivalence as the situation of being culturally in dilemma or duality between and among individual, group and community. It is more applicable to the life of the protagonist Nirode. In different colonial countries, British colonial and imperial power settled and practiced their political, cultural, educational and economic dominance become one of the major causes behind the protagonist's wish to escape. Further, those people have experienced imperial dominance, could not totally separate from that of imperial metropolitan cultures or accept their own cultures. In this stance, they remain culturally ambivalent which can be taken as causal relation of the cultural ambivalence and imperialism. While analyzing Desai's *Voices in the City*, we can see sufficient proof to the cultural ambivalence and imperialism through which the characters mainly protagonist passes and remains culturally ambivalent due to his entry into the city of Calcutta which clearly possess the common features of cultural composition especially British imperial impact and dominance.

Cultural imperialism by its nature means of controlling and imposing power towards other, the British imperialist followed the same policies and strategic power become equally the dominant sources in the Indian society. That also got open space in the transitional period of the Indian history that we can find in Desai's *Voices in the City*. This output of impact of cultural imperialism has depicted the life of the protagonist culturally ambivalent among several voices that they come together in a single metropolitan city of Calcutta. Therefore, *Voices in the City* extremely concretizes the condition and problem of the protagonist and other characters as a result of colonial effect and impact of cultural imperialism sums up as the ambivalent identity.

In this way, there are distinct characters which involve with plural cultures. The characters are presented in a way with the interaction of distinct cultural contacts that results plural voice which vividly represent ambivalence nature of the characters. They are conscious in their way of life that can be seen through the character Nirode and others. It is the clear example of ambivalence which gives consciousness to the human being as whole. In this response, we really conclude that ambivalence as process of identity formation shape the meaning of the text. Because the protagonist position of self-actualization, his wishes to escape from inseparable pains, difficulties and troublesome situations that they are observed in the text in a greater sense reflect underlying structure of ambivalent.

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