

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Book Review

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Title	Voices In The City
Author	Anita Desai
Genre	Fiction
Year of Publication	1965
Publisher	Orient Paperbacks
ISBN	9788-12220-0539

'*Voices in the city*' is a pessimistic novel that deals with chaos and the hustle-bustle in Calcutta city. The novel's backdrop was the life of Calcutta when it was turning towards the period of modernization which left people alienated. Similarly, the novel's protagonists are detached, self-center, and remain aloof from others. This novel tells the story of three siblings, Monisha, Nirode, and Amla, as they struggle to find meaning in their life while living in the Indian Capital of Calcutta. Moreover, it is based on the time spent by Desai in Calcutta in the early 1960s. This can be interpreted that the characters are facing an existential crisis as they cannot settle down in their respective lives. It is a chronicle of the social changes in a modernizing India, exploring what happens when traditional ways of life conflict with new ideas and the effect on young people.

The book is divided into Monisha, Nirode, and Amla. Each chapter analyzes the respective characters, and their lives get affected in the city of chaos voices. The book can be read from various perspectives. It depends on the interpreter's feminist perspective. Monisha's character fully justifies this as she was oppressed by her in-law's family irrespective of her dutiful wife and daughter-in-law. She ended her life by burning herself alive in the bathroom. She was devoid of love, care, and compassion throughout her life.

Psychological Perspectives would deal with a character's personality and how it gets affected. Ever it has elements of diaspora, existentialism, etc. So this novel is always a new source to explore, which further results in new findings.

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Descriptions of Calcutta frequently occur throughout the text. The city is persecuted as a force that helps to shape the characters at the center of the narrative. Desai openly presents the negative side of living in the Calcutta, emphasizing the crowds, nosiness, frenzied pace, and lack of places to think and reflect. The city is also presented as a place where young people cannot find happiness in their lives or jobs due to constant pressure.

Gironde connotes 'Calcutta' as the "Goddess Kali", a symbol of destruction and darkness. In the same way, Calcutta has eradicated all happy moments from Nirode's life and is now filled with emptiness and darkness. Desai relates the scene very well from one scenario to another one. A detailed description of every minute apart of the scene gives us a chance to imagine the entire story as if it was happening just before our eyes. It is a blunt portrayal of the life of financially limited people living in the city. However, the relationship between mother and children is also uncovered as they share bitter relations with their nation.

As a writer, Desai explores the ways people try to find meaning in their lives. The whole novel is filled with this kind of energy. It is a novel full of light and darkness, life and death. Beneath the surface, all these characters struggle against the surface; all three characters struggle against Calcutta, fighting to preserve their inner integrity.