CONCLUSION

After analyzing the novels, under scrutiny, written by Sara Jeannette Duncan, the research comes to the conclusion that Duncan was, no doubt, an efficient and effective writer, but her fiction was overshadowed by the prevalent discourse relating to the impact of British colonialism in India yet her fiction also tries to bring out the anomalies of the life and lifestyle of the colonizer. It has been assumed by some critics that Duncan through her fiction challenged the stereotypes of the British living in India and thus tried to break out of it but this research work concludes that her situation was entirely ambivalent like a typical postcolonial writer. Her act of stereotyping the natives in her earlier Indian fiction like in *Vernon’s Aunt: The Oriental Experiences of Lavinia Moffat* proves that her fiction was totally in conformity with her contemporaries thereby giving her fiction a typical colonial’s attitude but looking at her other works like *The Burnt Offering* and *Set in Authority* one can set her free of the charges of being colonially biased.

She wrote six novels about India, where the last thirty years of her life were mostly spent, yet her name is not even mentioned in any of the recent studies of Anglo-Indian writing (such as Allen J. Greenberger’s *The British Image of India* (1960) and Belinda Parry’s *Delusions and Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination* (1962), though her novels of British life in India are better written than those of such contemporaries as Maud Diver and Flora Annie Steele, to whom considerable attention has recently been paid, and more interestingly for
the light they throw on the social life and the political motivations of the imperialists. (Woodcock 210)

It is pertinent to mention that Duncan felt the Englishmen living in India to be equally marginalized as Canadians and thus had her deepest concerns for them. Her fiction although has an ambivalent nature but it seems that it is slightly more inclined towards the Empire. She sympathizes with the feelings of the Englishmen to be exiled and uprooted from their own motherland. In this context Misao Dean elaborates:

The voice of colonial India, Duncan’s adult home, was also feminine: popularly conceived of as the “bride of the Anglo-Saxon race”, India was traditionally the passive field upon which the potent imperialist exercised his racial superiority. But here again Duncan’s allegiances did not follow the imperial norm: her race identified with the imperialist, yet her colonial orientation and her idealism made her sympathetic to the Indian movement for independence and to what she perceived as the contemplative, religious “oriental mind”. (DPV 5)

As stated earlier, in the introductory chapter, that Duncan being marginalized wanted to establish herself at the central point and so establishes her superiority over others and for that she adopts this route in her fiction of portraying colonizer in a good hue. She was desperate to feel superior and that was a typical colonial characteristic.

She looked with a satiric eye on the social pretentions and the snobbish distinctions with in the Calcutta Anglo-Indian community. She disliked the Bengali ‘baboos’ who had received a partial education in the English
manner and belonged to neither the new western nor the traditional Indian culture. She looked on Indian princes as material for comedy, and when she did portray an Indian character convincingly and its depth he usually turns out to be something of a villain. (Woodcock 211)

It was this colonial trait inherent in her character that comes to the forefront as soon as she touched the Indian sub-continent. It is aptly remarked that, “Sara Jeannette Duncan could not escape the racism inherent in the characterization of the British as a distinct race” (Tausky Sara Jeannette Duncan 103). Duncan’s double vision or her prejudices towards India, and its subjects has been the result of ‘Orientalism’. To quote Misao Dean again in this context:

The narrators of Sara Jeannette Duncan’s Indian novels, like the nineteenth century historical and creative writers Edward Said analyzes in Orientalism, are not neutral observers of Indian life. By 1890, the year Duncan moved to India to join her English fiancée Everard Cotes, neutral observation of India had become impossible for a British subject – all the ‘facts’ were framed by the layers of surmise, projection, history, sympathetic identification, racism and foreign policy that comprises ‘latent Orientalism’. (PS 92)

It is also very evident that through her fiction Duncan very desperately tried to make visible the void of difference that was there among English and Indian people. This difference she celebrated and therefore wanted to make it more stark and visible. Her double-vision made her snub the idea that England was superior to Canada whereas that
same double-vision made her accept English superiority over Indians. Her novels prove a source of expression of this latent characteristic in her fiction as well as personality.

Although Duncan is termed generally as a realist and her major critic Misao Dean observes that “Duncan’s readers note a certain ambivalence in the attitude to realism demonstrated in the fiction” (41). Another critic Thomas Tausky is of the opinion that “elements of realism and romance co-exist, sometimes happily and sometimes uneasily in her novels” (73). It is supported in the following remark:

An unstated hierarchy is the focus of Duncan’s portrayal of British and Indians in her Indian novels. Duncan depicts Indians as separate and different from Anglo–Indians; she rationalizes the British presence in India by agreeing that the Indian heritage, though rich in insights into human religious life, does not provide the virtues of organization, temperance and tolerance that lead to self government. (Dean DPV 151)

Her Indian novels thus are not truthful representations, but are distorted according to the temperament of the novelist and the times in which she was writing. Nowhere the researcher finds any Indian character with appreciable qualities or with noble deeds. The characters like Bepin Behari Dey and Ganendra Thakore who were revolutionaries in the Indian freedom movement, are also mutated and they are labeled as terrorists whose very existence is not safe on the part of the Empire in order to project the colonizer in a bright hue.

In The Simple of Adventures of a Memsahib the research hardly come across any significant Indian character. They are almost invisible in their own land. The projection
of Indians in the novel appears quite critical. The hypocrisy of English community is at
times revealed, but that too is not adequately done. The narrator of the novel tries to
justify colonizer’s sad plight in a country called India. The Englishmen are least bothered
to establish friendly relations with their subjects rather they like to snub them and
dominate over them. The adventures of Helene Browne are taking place in towns of India
still the cities and towns do not manage to get a place of importance in the novel. The
cities and towns and villages are all the same, there is no difference because they are all a
part of India. For Duncan, “. . . East and West may gaze at each other but never touch”
(SAM 162-63). India made Helen Browne dull and a bore. It had no positive impact upon
the anglicized lady. To sum it up in the words of Misao Dean:

> The glimpses of everyday tragedy in the Anglo-Indian community that
gives The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib its tone of sadness and regret
show that the narrator’s sympathies are firmly with her colonial
community, despite her understanding of the imperial imperatives. The
serious effects of the weather on health are only one aspect of Indian life
for the English; simpler human sorrows also abound. (DPV 36)

*The Burnt Offering* also stands in the similar hues like *The Simple Adventures of a
Memsahib* but with a little difference. The stereotypical images of Indians, depicted time
and again, makes one doubt the journalistic bent of mind of the author. How can the
narrator be so blind towards a sect of individuals? She seems to be totally against all
those who are finding faults with the Empire, let them be the Indians or the Englishmen
supporting Indian causes. Indian novels of Sara Jeannette Duncan are Indian just for a
namesake, as they hardly bring any Indian character to the centre stage and the true
Indian response or their psychology or their truthful detail of characters are not at all dealt by Duncan. A one sided view of story is provided which is really damaging. It is apprehended by Dhawan and Parikh that:

Strong and stable position of the Britishers in India at the turn of the century - during the earlier phase of imperialism - with almost unchallenged superiority is clearly mirrored in Duncan’s novels. This qualifies her as an authentic imperialist dealing with India with confidence and maturity of a colonizer expressed through the cool indifference towards the colonized. (121)

Duncan no doubt tries hard to be sincere in her writings. William H. New in *History of Canadian Literature* also finds that;

Recurrently, the author is more sympathetic to the Indian community than to the rigidity of the British social hierarchy; but while she may have written from the periphery of ruling class, she wrote also from within it. Her works were ironies of protest, but not acts of rebellion. (109)

She is ironic in her portrayal of the hypocrisy of the colonizer and the stratification of the society which was created by the government. She also included *Hindustani* words in the texts so as to give her texts an edge over other writers of her times. In *The Burnt Offering* she strives hard to bring to the surface the true Indian reality. Germaine Warkentin in this context holds the opinion that, “. . . *The Burnt Offering* is also the only novel in which Duncan attempts to see events even partly from an Indian point of view” (42) but her colonial mentality doesn’t let it happen in a proper
way. As such “. . . in Duncan’s novels Indians are not fit to govern themselves, and only in some individual cases are they fit to associate on a basis of friendly equality with Britons” (Dean *DPV* 139).

Duncan’s understanding of the moral ambience of the Raj. Reading . . . her other Indian novels we have to remember the special position, almost ideal for ironic observation, which she held in Anglo-Indian society. As wife of the curator of the Indian Museum she did not belong to the commercial strata of Anglo-Indian society, yet her husband was not one of the all-powerful members of the Indian Civil Service. Leaving the museum to become a newspaper editor, he (and Sara) remained somewhere between the commercials and the civilians, so that they never became burra sahibs yet had fairly free access to almost every Indian presence, whether in Calcutta or in the hot-weather capital of Simla. This mobility, combined with the special access to political issues conferred by her newspaper work, allowed Sara Duncan to write with irony on Anglo-Indian social relationships at the same time as she seriously considered the political issues that faced the rulers of India and the moral struggles out of which their decisions and their subsequent actions arose. (Woodcock 218)

Duncan’s well celebrated novel *The Imperialist* deals with Canadian national identity and she “evidently worked hard on the novel, seeking documents on imperialism while in India and working industriously on the proofs while on an extended visit to Brantford” (Tausky 1990 102). But, it is very sad and depressing to note that she hardly thought that the plight of India and Indians is worth any consideration. Details of matter
and material was collected for *The Imperialist* but very rarely pains were taken by Duncan to look actually and in an unprejudiced manner towards Indian people and reality.

Imperialism got a new twist in Indian context. The rule of the Empire required correction in case of Canadians but the same rule was being justified by the author in the Indian context. It is her double-policy which needs to be criticized. Why has she condemned a thing for her nation and justified it in India’s regard is a question to be thought about and the answer to the question can be obtained time and again from Edward Said’s concept of orientalism. Duncan made it a point to criticize the subject race and justify English policies. She landed in India not as a Canadian but as a representative of the British set up. To the British or rather the orientalist scholars “an orient man was first an oriental and only second a man” (Said 231). Similar was the policy adopted by Sara Jeanette Duncan who barely made Indians visible in her Indian novels. They were treated like filth and animals. They had no identities of their own. Misao Dean states:

> Like her contemporaries in Britain and the US, Duncan saw no contradiction between art and ideology, and unabashedly saw her art as that of ‘dramatizing’ an effective ‘leading idea’, as a medium for intellectual debate . . . Duncan worked from within the system by continuing to acknowledge the traditional noun as norm, yet asserting a different point of view. (Dean *DPV*, 8)

The colonized were not given a chance to govern themselves and were not supposed to be good enough to make acquaintances with the rulers. Misao Dean labels
Duncan’s novels as “. . . ‘Colonial editions’ which reproduce the aesthetic and political controversies common to the English world of her time. . .” (DPV 158). Germaine Warkentin aptly stated that, “thus, in so far as Duncan is a novelist of colonial period, it may be less India that is the focus of her attention; than the way India is seen by the Anglo-Indians who are her chosen subject” (48).

A variety of postcolonial traits have been located by the researcher in this piece of research. A whole lot of mimicry and hybridity plays its role in the works under study. In The Story of Sonny Sahib there is a hybrid British boy mimicking his ayah and friends. There are many Indians trying to mimic the colonizer by adopting their clothes, culture and language. In Set in Authority there is Sir Ahmed Hossien who finds a place in the elite club of the colonizer because of his erudition and his fair sense of judgment. He is educated and has an inclination towards the empire thereby occupying a place of being a hybrid in the colonized world.

As a Canadian, the author should have positioned herself as a liberalized individual and should have unabashedly viewed the ‘colonizer’ who was trying to dominate and subdue the innocent ‘colonized; But it is not there in the fictional world of Duncan with special reference to her Indian fiction. The white factor plays a very significant role in determining the affinity with the English instead of Indians.

“The menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double vision that is a result of what I’ve described as the partial representation/recognition of the colonial object.” (Bhabha 126). Her position thus based upon the statement by Bhabha could be termed as
ambivalent as her fiction is not clear about the stand it should take. In the first instance she ignores India and Indians but she also criticizes the behavior of the British. Although her affinities were with the Empire yet she managed to bring out the hypocrisy of her race but at the same time the fiction did not allow the Indians any space and voice. They have to be spoken for as they were thought to be incapable of defining and defending themselves.

What is important to note, however, is that despite her criticism of the complacency of Anglo-Indians - who are out of touch with the burgeoning nationalistic sentiments of the people they govern - she is sympathetic to the ideologies of empire and never imagines the possibility of colonial governance being replaced by native rule. (Supriya Goswami 40)

Although Duncan comprehends with utter complexity of grace the uncertainty of the native British community yet many a times she turns her blind eye towards the role of India and Indians in the colonial setup which ultimately lends her fiction a dramatic and ambivalent nature.

A variety of postcolonial traits are also located by the researcher in the novels under study. Mimicry and hybridity plays a significant role in the novels. In *The Story of Sonny Sahib* there is a hybrid English boy mimicking his Indian ayah and friends. There are many Indians who are trying to copy the colonizer by adopting their clothes, culture and language. In *Set in Authority* there is Sir Ahmed Hossein who finds a place in the club because of his erudition and his fair judgment that he gave in the Morgan case. The
judgment is fair according to the whites and thus they accept him. He is educated and inclined towards the Empire and this qualifies him to gain a place of repute in the colonizer’s perspective and ultimately in their club.

It has been assumed by some critics that Duncan challenged the stereotypes of the colonizer and tried to break out of it but this research work found out that her situation was totally ambivalent towards the later part of her writing career in India but in *Vernon’s Aunt* the attitude is totally in conformity with the English and she sympathizes with the feelings of the Englishmen who believe themselves to be exiled and uprooted from their motherland. It can thus be stated that Duncan during her stay in India, towards the end identified with, “Neither the One . . . nor the Other . . . but something else besides” (Bhabha 41).

Evidently, therefore, to sum up, it may be concluded that though Duncan can rightly be adjudged as a Canadian novelist who has presented a perceptive critique of Canadian and Indian social reality during the Empire’s reign in the respective nations, yet she seems to have kept her biased attitude towards Indian situations and characters inherent in her writings. Like a typical colonial, her fiction overshadowed everything that is native and like a typical postcolonial her fiction is entirely ambivalent and thus the encounter of the two takes a steady place in her fictional world especially dealing with the colonial India.

The gaps between the colonizer and the colonized have been highlighted throughout the narratives and a fair kind of description has been provided when the narrator has to show the differences between the two parts of the world. Duncan’s fiction
talks about colonialism and postcolonialism at the same time. The era she wrote her novels was a colonial era for India and thus it had its impact on the fiction of the author but it was her sensibility and capacity that led her to deviate her fiction a little bit more from her contemporaries so that a real and true picture could be framed and presented to her readers of the west. It cannot be denied that the market for her fiction was definitely in the west and so the author thought it best to let her fiction remain in the state of ambivalence so that her fiction may not offend her readers but at the same time brings out every snobbish act on the part of the colonizer as well. The nostalgia of being out of one’s motherland also finds a place in all the novels under study and thus by assigning the nostalgic traits to the British community residing in India, Duncan has played her postcolonial move very shrewdly. In her novels Sara Jeannette Duncan explores the difficulty of conveying the problems faced by the residing British men and contrasts it repeatedly with Britain. Instead of projecting Indians as colonized ones this fiction of Duncan portrays the colonizer as the one who is at a loss and who is facing more problems because they have been unsettled from their places.