In depth analysis of the fictional writings of Meera Syal undertaken in the preceding chapters from a cross-cultural perspective demonstrates that she has addressed herself to all the issues associated with diasporic writings. By choosing her protagonist from dual cultural heritage, she has attempted to explore the different aspects of cross-cultural perspectives. Meera Syal belongs with two cultural lands, has gone through the experience of cultural discrimination, geographical displacement, the crisis of identity and commitment at some points in her immigrant journeys and so have her characters. The study also includes power politics, popular culture, urban subculture and ethnic and sexual identity. In Syal, there is a discernible tendency to explore trans-cultural experience. Her characters experience conflicting desires of belonging determined by the different conditions of the cosmopolitan contact zone of cultures. Many of the plays by contemporary Black women playwrights, especially of the 1980s and 1990s, which focus on what have been termed first-generation migrants, bear witness to their histories of coming to Britain in an effort to better their economic circumstances.

This is particularly but not solely true of the female characters they portray. The ambition for a life beyond drudgery and child-bearing leads to the often heart-breaking and fraught decision to leave the Caribbean in order to gain a better life. Such decisions are made within three contexts: the experience of abject poverty in the home country; women following their menfolk who have gone ahead to Britain, and Britain advertising campaigns to attract labour to the UK. A number of plays bear witness to the experiences of maldistribution and misrecognition Black and Asian women are confronted with once they arrive in England. In these plays which centre
on inter-generational conflicts between mother and daughters such as, 'song for a sanctuary', river on fire, 'Rose's Story', The 'S' Bend, Unsuitable girls, and 'My sister-wife'. In the plays main focus on the issues of individual freedom and suitable marriages, on the crucible of 'Eastern' and 'Western' values, on individuals' right of choice versus community traditions, the role of honour, custom, and practice in a context, England, which does not support, that is recognize, many of these values. Neither the issue of resources, nor the issue of teenage pregnancy is commonly raised. These plays thus deal primarily with recognition rather than with redistribution, recognition in fact that is as much about intra-community differences as it is about inter-community differences. In Mary Cooper's 'Heart game', Anju, a girl living in a village in the Sylhet region of Bangladesh, from where many of the Bangladeshi community who have settled in Britain come, dreams of marrying Raju, a boy from Sylhet living in England, not least because it will improve her materially deprived life and she assumes give her the recognition she craves. Raju meanwhile has been seeing Reeta, a girl from the same community who has grown up in England and who chafes against the dictates of her community which forbid romance unsanctioned by parents and demand an arranged marriage.

The diasporic cultural plurality is a matrix of diversity like different cultures, languages, histories, people, places, and times. In its transformational quality, diaspora is typically a site of hybridity which questions fixed identities based on essentialisms. Diaspora in multicultural scenario, political scenario brings a complex web of social, economic, and political structures. It broadly describes the process of migrating more than once and engaging meaningfully with the various places of settlement and at the same time, it attends to the broad range of sociopolitical circumstances and shifting personal capacities that frame migration. Diaspora is a
loaded term that brings to mind various contested ideas and images. It can be a positive site for the affirmation of an identity or conversely, a negative site of fears of losing that identity. Diaspora is also a popular term in current research as it captures various phenomena that are prevalent in the numerous discourses devoted to current transnational globalization like borders, migration, “illegal” immigration, repatriation, exile, refugees, assimilation, multiculturalism, and hybridity. Diasporic culture in postcolonial writings shows that people are facing the problem of displacement, cultural change, identity crisis and ethnicity and memory of their cultural homeland is very significant aspect in the life of migrants. They are caught between the two cultures and find themselves in the situation of in-betweeness. The diaporic homesickness on the one hand engenders a longing to go back to the original homeland and on the other it gives birth to an aversion for the alien culture. The difference between black and white a crossing point between insideness and outsideness thus it may seen a barrier between the cultures.

Britain is one of many societies in which questions of cultural and ethnic diversity, multi-culturalism, nation and identity have come to the fore in recent decades. While changes in different societies have their own local dimensions and momentum, the global moves towards decolonization, post-coloniality, post-modernism and globalization, have helped shape these developments in many countries. From critiques of western colonialism to the struggles of indigenous people in white settler societies, moves have been made to redefine hegemonic discourses of culture, nation and identity. Central in this process has been the challenging of dominant narratives of history, racial and ethnic stereotyping and white supremacy. These challenges have produced both counter-hegemonic discourses and new forms of identity. In the discursive realm of postcolonial discourse, power and difference between racialized
minorities in the metropoles and in the third world disappear. As the librettist for the Broadway show Bombay Dreams was quoted several years ago as saying, "Brown is the new black". William Safire noted in the New York Times that Meera Syal was not in this instance making a fashion statement. She was alluding rather to the popularity of south Asians in the west. The culture of people with brown skin from south Asia is now "hotter" than that of the culture of black-skinned people in the estimation of "with-it' whites. Indeed postcolonial politics can be seen as being complicit with late capitalism's drive to maintain its ruthless hegemony over the world's multitudes, especially its people of colour.

The increasing racial diversity of Britain since the second world war is often captured in the idea of ‘the multicultural’, a term that gestures towards difference without needing to define how it may be managed, ‘multiculturalism’, however, speaks immediately to the problem of management, asking exactly how the difference of peoples might be philosophically, ethically, and politically addressed. The phenomenon of multi-culturalism, responsible for the production of diasporic writing, is itself as aspect of post-modernism, which proclaims multicultural and multi-ethnic societies, promoting the politics of difference. The contraposition of nation and ethnicity, which is expressed as a paradox of anxious postmodernity, has to be singled out from racist ideology and move on to spotlight the social and cultural composition of society. Syal extends the enchantments and myths of the subcontinent, also introduce elements of popular culture like comics and music, films or songs. Diasporic writing draws our attention to an important aspect of our era in which responsibilities of citizens go across national boundaries. The issue of identity acquires a primal status when an individual finds himself or herself in a foreign land among foreign people, unaccustomed to the dominant culture and way of living. The
mode of belonging, affiliation and community that the author conceptualizes, transforms the concept of a traditional home as a geographical space into a political state of being. The diasporic homesickness on the one hand engenders a longing to go back to the original homeland and on the other it gives birth to an aversion for the alien culture. The philosophical justifications of multiculturalism within an idea of the politics of recognition are unpacked to suggest that the only types of identity that can be recognized are those guaranteed by ethnicity, even as the ethnic remains an unstable and contentious category. Through the study of migrants in multicultural society shows the dilemma of diasporic writers in between two cultures.

Meera Syal is a diasporic writer growing up with a dual cultural heritage. The present work is the cross-cultural study of the major works of the author. Meera Syal is a post-colonial writer. She belongs to dual cultural background. Syal first novel, *Anita and Me* and its follow-up, *Life Isn’t All Ha Ha Hee Hee*, identifies her with the funny public image developed through her television work. Meera Syal’s novels deals with the serious issues of cross culture, betrayal, marriage, sex, race, family relations and specially the gender relations. She is writer, actress, comedian, producer, singer, playwright and journalist also. Syal has made important contributions in cultural terms writing the screenplay for the critically acclaimed *Bhaji on the Beach* (1994) in which she also starred, the book for the musical *Bombay Dreams* (2000), and the first ever play by an Asian woman to be produced by the BBC, *My Sister-Wife* (1993). As an actress, she began her work at the Royal Court, and has taken up numerous serious roles such as her part in Ayub Khan-Din’s play *Rafia Rafia* (2007), and Hettie MacDonald’s film adaption of Jonathan Harvey’s *Beautiful Thing* (1996). She began her career as part of the Asian women’s writers’ workshop, writing thoroughly serious fiction which bears witness to the feminist aims of the group.
Meera Syal’s novel *Anita and Me*, like so many semi-autobiographical first novels, is an initiation narrative, a rite of passage and transition from the rural idyll of an eternal summer perspective to the dark and conflicted experience of a racialised and sexualised world. The novel begins by distancing itself from stereotypical migrant narrative which it mocks in a prefatory section by staging and stylising the ‘windrush’ moment: deference, impoverished housing, sweated labour, pregnancy, and exclusion. This has become a staple documentary, the obligatory realism of the migrant narrative. South Asian difference is visually manifest in the depiction of family life, including Meena’s grandmother’s visit from India, regular social visits by other South Asian families and a trip to the temple in Birmingham. Meena’s contact with white children is much more extensive than the white children’s with her family. Although her mother teaches at the local primary school, Anita is the only white person to enter the family home and then only once. Meena draws her own comparisons between her parents and those of the white children as she learns something of her parents’ experiences in India before coming to the UK. Gender, ethnic, stereotyping and questions of identity are raised in this novel by Meera Syal. Syal’s novel *Anita and Me* is a black British *Bildungsroman* and offers a movement from a position of naivety to enlightenment, as Meena develops and comes to terms with her own complex cultural positioning. Syal’s first-person narration is taken to reveal the progress achieved between the confused and unformulated child Meena, and the self-aware adult narrator Meena. *Anita and Me* is a novel that suggests a restoration of certainty and calm but, in fact, only reinforces anxiety and tumult. Its playful epigraph and deceptive realism is not playful in the benign sense, but rather in order to offer a representation of a volatile existence. Meena as observed character is not Meena the observer: a very different figures whose conscious pointing to the essentially gap
between narrated entity and narrative instance, reminds us of the inherently illusory nature of what we read. Anita is not a complete postmodern fiction of unreal incidence; we do not trust events such as Meena's relationship with Robert, the attack against the Asian bank manager and her own admittance of her duplicity, such as in her theft of the collection tin from Mr. Omerod's shop. These moments of sadness and depression ring true, a reflection at least of a partially changed Meena who announces herself in the scene near the end of the novel when she rejects the possibility to take revenge on Sam and Anita and tells the truth about Tracey's accident. But they stand as insights into a life which does not always seem to be fully represented by the narrative's more comic moments. Meena may have changed, but she has not completely transformed.

Such complex use of the realist form is worth distinguishing. The realism commonly employed by many recent British Asian writers can seem less stylistically vibrant than the form employed by an earlier generation, particularly Salman Rushdie, whose ebullient magical-realist style owes much too postcolonial fiction. What Syal proves, however, is that the use of a simple realist form may have its own sophisticated thematic origins- the novel's epigraph asks us to see the realist form the narrator employs as integral to her practice of recreating reality, of defining an experience that is as tangible and believable as what might actually have happened as a way of resisting that actuality. Syal's novel is thus postmodern not in Rushdie's sense but more, like V.S. Naipaul's fiction, in the way of Ian McEwen's Atonement (2001), for example in her earlier writings Syal shows a great interest in the mythical from which her later fiction should not be simplistically divorced. In this sense Anita is a novel that suggests a restoration of certainty and calm but, in fact, only reinforces anxiety and tumult. Anita is a bildungsroman; the classic elements of this narrative-
generational conflict, school experiences, the conflict between rural and urban life and an educated narrator are, as Stein rightly argues, all there in Syal's novel. But Syal's comedy does not easily point towards the transformative potential held by the protagonists' that Stein argues for. Equally, the sense in which Stein argues for a black British novel of transformation in terms of the transformation of British society and cultural institutions' is questioned by the fact that the narrator's admission suggests little in Tollington—or indeed in white Britain more generally—has in fact been challenged or transformed by Meena’s presence.

Meera Syal’s shows the classical elements of the narrative in the form of generational conflict, school experiences, the conflict between rural and urban life. Meena learns the art of circumventing the indifferent and the unpleasant, like the migratory birds and discover new lands and shores. Syal is a writer whose fiction is deeply engaged in a dialogue with modernity and brings to surface the cross-cultural issues and problems the modern world still finds itself grappling with. The issues that these novels raise are at the heart of contemporary debates about the past, diasporic identity, gender, sexuality and the ways in which the past comes to haunt the present. In that sense the film based on her novel Anita and Me has a legitimate claim for a place in an anthology on contemporary British fiction. Syal’s second novel Life Isn’t All Ha Ha Hee Hee is less funny than Anita and Me, nevertheless both novels share a perspective on how humour functions. Syal’s novels are deeply ironic, where irony is a mode of comedy with this Syal focuses on serious events with lightness and humour. Syal’s novels focus on the most profound issues facing the British Asian Community, yet the critique of both white and Asian communities implicit in handling the issues more effectively transmitted through humour rather than didactic moralising. Syal’s television career does genuinely become relevant. The Goodness
Gracious Me exposed the prejudices of both English and Asian communities in a format that makes the viewer more receptive than they might be to a more direct criticism. Meera Syal poses difficult questions about immigrants and cultural assimilation within British secularism, presenting modern Muslim identities—as embodied by Farah and her parents—in tension with the feudal Muslim identities of conservative immigrants like Asif and his first wife Maryam. Maryam stands at the crossroads of these conflicting identities, a victim who is determined to survive the circumstances. There is no middle ground for Syal, as neither Maryam nor Farah emerges successfully from the trauma. Syal recognizes the regimes of tradition that work to the detriment of women, and both argue for a move away from tradition toward more emancipatory forms of identification through a decolonization of the self. Neither Ahmad nor Syal suggests what that self might be. But the negativity of their critique implies that they see modern secular individualism as the way out. The playwright, becoming British means coming to terms with specific histories of oppression while struggling to find new, emancipatory strategies for creating viable British Asian identities. Syal's screenplay My Sister-Wife (1993) presents the cultural transactions across ideologies of belonging. Transnational identifications inform the dialogues in this text, dismantling older notions of Englishness, nationness, and left politics. This screenplay presents the contradictory and pleasurable sites of transnational affiliations, struggling to maintain coherence within the rapidly shifting political and psychic trends of everyday existence.

This strategy has peculiar relevance in a British Asian female context. The issue of female solidarity has always been of great importance to Syal. Her screenplay My Sister Wife a British Asian woman, Farah, comes to discovers a solidarity with her ‘enemy’, her new husband’s first wife, in a polygamist Muslim household; another
wife in similar circumstances explain this relationship. Syal’s comedy is less about being funny than about a survival mechanism that re-creates events so that their negative aspects are not entirely disabling. If there is sometimes laughter in this, then it only signifies that the emotion being obscured is perhaps particularly negative, as comedy is taken to its most powerful form in humour. Our popular image of Syal is a woman who makes us laugh. But we need also to look beyond this laughter. Meera Syal’s *Life Isn’t All Ha Ha Hee Hee* offers a different response to the effects of globalization upon gender identities. Syal’s novel represents traditional South Asian culture as repressive for women and her characters do not encompass the range of class divisions. Syal attempts to manufacture dramatic tension in *Life Isn’t All Ha Ha Hee Hee* by centering the narrative on Deepak’s marriage to Chila and his subsequent affair with Tania. The ensuing melodrama, in conjunction with the pop culture language of the novel and fast paced narrative, evokes the tone of Soap Opera and popular film.

The stylistic features of the text support the theme of globalization eroding traditional South Asia gender identities by underlining the extent to which the central female characters conceive of their identities in terms of global popular culture, rather than South Asian Cultural tradition. While the destabilizing effects of globalization upon traditional South Asian gender identities are represented with respect to the women in the novel, the response by the South Asian female characters is decidedly more mixed. One of the contradictions in the novel’s representation of gender is that despite its negative portrayal of traditional South Asian men, Syal also appears aware of how seemingly progressive versions of white male identity often mask strategies for reinforcing traditional gender hierarchies. Syal’s novel addresses the theme of
violence against South Asian women and raises a number of problems that result from an oversimplified valorization of Western gender norms.

Syal places more emphasis upon the male-female relationships in the South Asian Diasporic context in Britain. Despite the various debates, contradictions and complexities associated with the term globalization, it nevertheless remains a crucial concept for understanding contemporary South Asian diasporic fiction produced in Britain. Her novels present the cultural values through various female characters and the atmosphere in which they live. The characters represent the post-colonial world, full of materialistic values and broken identity, divided between the English social setting and the Indian family milieu. Syal’s astute use of different genres requires a new type of assessment and highlights the notion of hypertext and literary contaminations: Meena’s stories is to be modelled on the author’s autobiographical experiences but at the same time they reflect the actual travails of childhood. *Anita and Me* presents agonizing struggle of growing up in the crushing clash of cultures. Syal wovens her novel between sympathy and satire of British Asian culture. She also pokes fun at the traditional desires of her female characters.

Syal is particularly insightful and inclusive in depicting the options available to British Asian women in relation to their cultures of origin and destination. Syal attempts to blend aspects of both cultures together in a different way. What is distinctive about Syal’s work is her disruption of these binary polarities projected for British Asians, women in particular. Assertions of cultural divergence from white British culture do not imply a complete acquiescence in all aspects of the culture of origin. Syal’s work suggests that escape or exile is not the only alternative for British Asian women. Syal’s portrayal contest the patriarchal expectations imposed on Asian women by the majority community and their own communities. Syal is clearly a
feminist and she also asserts the importance of Indian feminism. Syal’s screenplay Bhaji on the Beach (1993), articulates a wide range of gender issues. The film ridicules attempts to view women through stereotypical, patriarchal, ethnocentric ways of seeing. Despite Syal’s ironic narrative tone, her portrayals of Asian communities characterised by a warmth and depth make her criticisms more palatable. The popularity of Syal’s novels is part of the proliferation of novels by women for increasingly lucrative female readerships over the last decade. Her novels are less literary and more accessible. Syal’s storytelling is dramatised in several kinds of format and points out an intense impulse to narrate, to deal with the word and operate in a creative manner. Syal gives prominence to peripheral figures: the immigrants, with their fantasies of belonging and identity. Meera Syal wittily lampoons the fake myth of the purity of races and hierarchies and her textural strategy, which should not confused with a fashionable pretention of teaching intercultural education, is endowed on the television medium, a popular tool to argue in a global community. Meera Syal’s fiction represents the traditional role of women in diasporic fiction. She shows the typecast role played by the old ladies in dual cultural heritage.

Syal explicitly frames the issues of gender roles, family disputes, community conflicts and traditional role played by the female and also comes to bring forth their diasporic conditions and their way of thinking in a foreign land. Syal shows some key issues on identity crisis between the two cultures. Meena’s sense of inadequacy epitomizes the corporeal aspect and originates from her broken identity, divided between the English social setting and the Indian family milieu. The Punjabi girl’s crisis of identity coincides with a fastidious rejection of her body, a typical childish act which also displays a sense of unbelonging of the body, perceived as a rigid line of demarcation between genuine Indianness and captivating Englishness, which she fears
she cannot cope with. The Tragedy is that the children of the migrants far removed in
time and space do not even have ‘fragmentary’, partial memories’ which could help in
laying the foundations of ‘constructs’ like ‘home’ and ‘belonging’. They are deprived
of what Rushdie calls ‘interior knowledge’ because they had never been to their
native lands. Their knowledge of the distant place – its history, language, culture is
based only on their mental construct. It’s more fictionalized, more mythic. Syal’s
awareness of this state is expressed in the prefatory note tagged to Anita and
Me. Imagination, fictionalization, mythification play an important role in ‘inventing the
tradition’, which is the point of reference and where identifications is sought
particularly when there is failure to belong to the other culture. Diasporic or
postcolonial authors writing or adapting for cinema or television express a throbbing
anxiety by exposing the novelty of intercultural forces at work in British society to the
western theatre. Syal’s work on TV, radio, theatre and cinema as well as fiction,
reflects the extent to which migrant texts have diversified from their more narrowly
literary origins. Syal’s narratives reflects her immersion in British popular culture,
evident particularly in the style of humour and sitcom aesthetic of her films and
novels.

Meera Syal shows the environment of both culture like the British and Indian
in which the characters have the strong sense of their own identity and they do not
want to remain in British culture but also want to keep alive their traditional values of
Indian culture. Meera Syal’s narratives are women-centered. A women centred novel
may or may not be feminist, where as feminist novel foregrounds conscious-raising. It
can be said that the process of immigration an interminable one, will result in the
increase of immigration in future. In fact the author look beyond the trapping of
counter culture to the new values. Her novels are instances of transformation of
something personal into popular cultural forms that promise self-realisation through consumption, through relationship, intimacy or through self-exposure. Yet another aspect to investigate in this thesis what a new dimension Meera Syal adds to English fiction by concentrating on the exploration of this troubled sensibility in the form of a typical modern phenomenon. Meera Syal who like Kureishi was born in Britain, has emphasized the need she felt as a child to constantly construct strategies for survival, to make up stories, even tell ‘lies’, as a means of creating a differently mirrored space, a space which could enable the ironic possibilities of ‘double-entendre’ and comedy to explode prevailing stereotypes. The literary voices of the Asian diaspora in Britain derive from a variety of different histories, and emerge from a number of diverse subject positions. They are both local and international at the same time. The specific backgrounds of individuals writers, and the nature of their various aesthetic practices, have been determined not only by a colonial or postcolonial relationship to Britain, but also as a consequence of issues of class and gender within, as well as a range of other cultural and linguistic factors. Many works by writers of the South Asian diaspora today feature prominently in critical discussions of the contemporary novel worldwide, the history of the process of its evolution, and the difficulties many writers experienced in making interventions into the narrow discourses of a closed, and largely western.