Strategy is a kind of plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose. It is a plan which consists of both attitudes and behaviours on the part of an individual. It is also a process of planning something or carrying out a plan in a skilful way. People from different cultures, in a multicultural society, have adopted some strategies to live a peaceful life without dominating and interfering in one another’s life style. The immigrants in multicultural society try their best to integrate with other communities in the philosophy of accommodation, adjustment, compromise and become beneficiaries of available and sanctioned privileges. But for this they ideologically and existentially frame the strategies to adjust and assure themselves in an alien society. In their movement from one place and one culture to another they have attempted to change constantly, through negotiation, compromise and mutual accommodations in order to carry out their lives in a wider plural society peacefully and happily. All contemporary societies are now culturally plural. There is no society in the world which is made up of people having one culture, one language and one identity. Plural societies are the products of phenomena such as colonisation, slavery, refugee, and immigration movements. It is such a society in which a number of different cultural or ethnic groups reside together within a shared political and social framework. In such a society we find cultural diversity or diversity of cultures due to contact between cultures is a creative process, generating new customs and values without dominating and discriminating each other.
Cultural diversity is a manifestation of immigrations. Whether it is the colonizer or the colonized, immigrants or those already settled, they hold some strategies to engage themselves within the wider society. They first try to assimilate with the main society by absorbing the mainstream culture of the wider society, losing much of their root or heritage culture at the same time. In such strategy the immigrants do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interactions with other cultures. Assimilation is also termed as melting-pot strategy. The assimilation process leads the immigrants to acculturation strategy. This strategy proposes that immigrants in order to assimilate with the culture of the wider society have to lose some of their root or heritage culture but always will be identified as member of the minority culture which paves the way for integration strategy. When there is an interest in both maintaining one’s original culture while in daily interactions with other groups, it is the integration strategy they resort to participate as an integral part of the larger society. Integration is possible to the immigrants when the culture of the wider society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity. Thus a mutual accommodation is required for integration to be attained to live culturally different people in a society. By this strategy an immigrant requires to adopt the basic values of the larger society, while at the same time the dominant group needs to prepare to adopt and integrate to meet the need of all groups living together in a plural society. Thus through integration strategy, cultural diversity comes which paves the way for multicultural society. The fourth strategy is the multicultural model which promotes a pluralistic approach and addresses the feasibility of cultures maintaining distinctive identities while individuals from one culture work with those of other cultures to serve common national or economic needs. It involves social change to meet the needs of all the groups living together in the plural society for
which it requires mutual accommodation rather than change on the part of the immigrants to the wider society.

Migration has long been a part of human history and has always entailed the creation of multiple affiliations and identities. The history of human migration as a geo-demographical event has designed human beings as the most widely dispersed social animal. Over the last twenty years or so, the increasingly obvious exposure of societies, cultures and people to each other’s practices, meaning, codes and conduct has led to extensive (re)connection among locality, culture and community. With a constant and gradual development in the history of human civilisation and due to globalisation and mass migration there appeared a gradual change in the formation of identity.

People now move freely to anywhere they want to. With the end of the Second World War, migration became an unavoidable phenomenon. In the post-1945 period, the world produced the technological infrastructure systems, telecommunications, information based air transportation, high speed bullet trains, container cargo transport and multinational companies. This information revolution of the last four decades of the twenty first century is the result of the rapidly accelerated pace of contemporary globalisation. Consequently it has generated new spaces where cultures clash and mix both across and within nations. Due to rapid development in the information technology and easy transportation the map of the world is getting altered. As a result different communities have been experiencing temporary, seasonal and permanent migration from their original habitat. Globalisation also paves the way for numerous multinational companies. These companies move their staffs around from one country to another. These immigrants bring with them their own distinct ways of thought and life. As a result with the physical movement from one place to
another these immigrants bring with them along with their own distinct culture and identity, some of the ideas and practices they have absorbed in these countries. Thus immigration becomes a vital source for cultural diversity in a society. Cultural diversity or diversity of cultures is not only an inseparable but more or less an indispensable feature of modern life which paves the way for multicultural society.

Every modern society is culturally diverse or multicultural. In fact, in the postcolonial world, multicultural society can be seen as the natural result of contact between colonizer and colonized people and also as a result of migration of the colonized to the land of colonizer to live a hybrid and multicultural life overseas. Multicultural society is a consequence of the widespread movements as a result of diaspora, which has been occurred at different levels of strata, with varying magnitudes and varied reasons. The movement of people from one place to another is known as diaspora. Diaspora is not a new phenomenon. In fact it goes back to the primitive society when people used to lead a nomad life for their shelter. Generally it refers to the scattering of people. Historically it refers to the forcible dispersal of the Jews from Israel which dates back to the sixth and seventh century B.C. , though the modern diaspora is very much different from the Jewish diaspora in its essence as well as in enormity. It is usually used to denote dispersal from an original homeland to two or more destinations, often far away from homeland. Today it refers to any group or person so dispersed, transplanted from the homeland to the land of his choice. In the late millennium, it has assumed a postmodern tint. In this regard it captures transnational globalisation where issues like borders, migration, illegal migration, repatriation, exile, refugees, assimilation, multiculturalism and hybridity are focal point. It evokes “globalized and transnational forces of world economy, international migrations, global cities, cosmopolitism and localism and
deterritorialized social identities” (Ponzanesi 11). Diasporas are responsible for the beginning of multiculturalism. Regarding the modern definition of diaspora Paranjape writes:

1. Relatively homogeneous, displaced communities brought to serve the Empire (slave, contract, indentured etc) co-existing with indigenous/other races with markedly ambivalent and contradictory relationship with the Motherland(s). Hence the Indian diaspora of South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad, Surinam, Malaysia; the Chinese diasporas of Malaysia, Indonesia, Linked to high (classical) capitalism.

2. Emerging new diasporas based on free migration and linked to late capitalism: post-war South Asian, Chinese, Arab, Korean communities in Britain, Europe, America, Canada, Australia.

3. Any group of migrants that sees itself on the periphery of power, or excluded from sharing power (235).

According to Chris Berry, beyond the horizon of nation a fourth kind of imagined community is taking shape which “is a discordant and dynamic conjuncture, constituted when different cultures...with different histories and different trajectories meet, intersect, overlay, fragment and produce hybrid forms within a certain geographic space” (qtd in Paranjape 237).

The movements and immigration of people alter the nature of the world’s societies since the ancient times. Widespread social and political upheavals have produced now “more refugees, migrants, displaced persons and exiles than ever before in history” (Said 402). The dislocations of “millions of refugees, migrant
labourers, and professionals from the first world and the formation of numerous migrant ‘ethnic enclaves’ were among the most defining features of the twentieth century” (Bhatia 1) which led critics to say “diaspora is the order of things and settled ways of life are increasingly hard to find” (Appadurai 17). Nowadays, diaspora reaches beyond the mere scattering of a specific nation in a different, far away land, because in this new place, the various groups like African, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean come together that Hall describes as “the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity” (Hall 402). Regarding their homeland and hostland, diasporas are now increasingly deployed as ‘a metaphoric designation’ to describe different categories of people—“expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities tout court” (qtd. in Mullaney 8).

These various forms of dislocations are associated with postcolonialism which has been effectively and widely explored in both postcolonial theory and literary texts. Whether it is a diaspora, expatriate, refugee, exile or immigrant, his or her life, language and experiences have been altered by the paradigms of bilingualism, biculturalism, and geographical dislocation. Physically, psychologically and culturally they are caught between two worlds and their double marginalisation by both their root culture and host culture negates their belonging to either location. Through the mixing of local and global, indigenous and hybrid, these recent migration create new identities, new homes and new diasporas. Therefore, “the phenomenon of diaspora population is by no means new, but its scale in the twentieth century is dramatic” (quoted in Nelson xix) and become phenomenon for the beginning of multiculturalism.

Migration produces complex identity crisis and transformation where negotiation for identity is always a possible end. Identity constantly produces itself
anew; it is not something once and for all. Identity is always associated with a person’s desire- desire for recognition, association and protection over time and space. Identity has no universal qualities; it is constructed and made by representation rather than found. In fact the scattering of people throughout the world leads to the splitting of one’s identity. Diasporic identities are a mixture of local and global. In the words of Brah, “they are networks of transnational identifications encompassing ‘imagined’ and ‘encountered’ communities” (Brah 196). The clash between two or more cultures gives rise to the formation of a new hybrid culture. It means the encounter between two or more alien cultures results in the birth of a new culture which retains its own culture besides absorbing new things from the new culture and is thus a mixture of different cultures.

Thus diaspora becomes a site and it engages with a matrix of diverse cultures, language, histories, people, places and times. Even a single diasporic group is constituted of people of different genders, ages, races, ethnicities, languages, cultures etc. which makes it perfectly diverse in nature. Due to the heterogeneity in the diasporic communities, the modern diasporic experiences are more intricate. In this connection Avtar Brah rightly points out that “all diasporas are differentiated, heterogeneous, contested spaces, even as they are implicated in the construction of a common “we”” (Brah 184). It creates encounter between cultures which produces what Homi Bhabha theorised as ‘hybridity’. Hybridity is a dual culture where the question of identity is continually contended. It is the ‘entanglement’ of peoples and cultures. The hybridity of diaspora implies a diversity of cultures that co-exists, compete, merge and emerge in cultures that may be the outcome of a cultural meeting. As a result of colonialism and its aftermath mixing of cultures together with us versus them, east versus west, colonizer versus colonized, suppressed versus dominant has
led to many forms of hybridity. W.E.B. Du Bois, the African American thinker and sociologist of the nineteenth century expresses a similar view with his concept of the ‘double consciousness’ in his book *The Souls of Black Folk* and it echoes in clear tones the concept of the ‘mestiza consciousness’ theorised by the twentieth century Chicana feminist thinker Gloria Anzaldua. Anzaldua explains the dilemma of the displaced persons as “Graddled in one culture, sandwich between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and the value systems *la mestiza* undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war....Like other having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages” (Joseph 198). Bhabha’s conceptualisation of hybridity generalise “the term to any kind of (coloured) other, particularly to expatriate Indian writing” (Fludernik 12). Since then it becomes a “motivating factor for hybridization, a ‘third place’ between colonizer and colonized that effects the hybridization of both parties” (ibid).

Thus hybridity opens up the notion of transnational culture “based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity” (Bhabha 56). At this situation identity is at once plural and all the time negotiated. Through transnational consciousness the immigrants bind themselves together through some common shared interests. By these common shared interests like cultural habits, language, political loyalties-- they feel home away from home in an alien land in Stuart Hall’s essay *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* in which he terms as ‘an imaginary coherence’ (Hall 227). Being a diaspora, all the immigrants undergo a feeling of dislocation having root nowhere-- neither in the mother country nor in the adopted land. Bhabha calls this condition of migrant as the condition of being ‘unhomed’. But he adds “to be unhomed does not mean to be homeless; nor can the unhomely by easily accommodated in that familiar
division of social life into private and public spheres. The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow…” (Bhabha 9).

In a multicultural society identity is always in a process of transformation. Identity is not a finished product. It is “a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. It belongs to the future as much as to the past” (Hall 225). This transformation opens up a third space where hybrid identities are created, making neither this nor that, but their own. This cultural transformation among the immigrants in a new location opens up for them a new site—the in-between as a third element.

Identity is expressed through one’s own culture. Culture is not static. It alters every day. It suggests the arts, customs and institutions of a certain people or nation, thereby helping us to distinguish a certain group of people from others and one nation from another. It also helps in the burgeoning of a distinct national identity among its citizens. It is a living, breathing, multi-faceted entity in constant evolution. Culture is never the same thing from one day to the next. It has mobility which creates “an increasing number of situations in which social interactions take place across, beyond, outside and frequently without any reference to particular nations, borders and identities” (Kennedy and Roudometof 13) where the notion of Althusserian ‘hailing into being’ is very clearly applicable.

One of the most important attributes of movement from one country to another is that it gives an immigrant an ability to turn spaces into lived places and to foster one’s sense of belonging to a place. This space is a place of location and dislocation. It is “the point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of being and otherness, of ‘us’ and ‘them’, are contested” (Brah 208-209). Space in a diasporic context is both a metaphysical and physical reality, both a metaphor and metonymy of
the migrant condition. Within this space the myriad process of cultural fissure and fusion takes place which change the identity of every immigrants. Their identity becomes transcultural identities. This in-between space according to Avtar Brah is a ‘diaspora space’ which she calls multiculturalism that

marks the intersectionality of contemporary conditions of transmigrancy of people, capital, commodities and cultures. It addresses the realm where economic, cultural and political effects of crossing/transgressing different borders are experienced; and where belonging and otherness is appropriated and contested (Brah 242).

Multiculturalism suggests the co-existence of a number of different cultures. For South Asian diaspora space is both mapped as geographic experience of transnational and transcultural displacement.

The traditional notion of ‘home’ is associated with a single country of origin or birth. But it doesn’t always necessarily apply to immigrants. Contemporary movements of people have led to the emergence of traditional communities in a multicultural society. The increasing diasporization, globalisation and transnationalization have produced contested meaning of the notion of home to every individual migrant at the individual level and the notion of citizenship at the nation-state level.

In the twenty first century people belong to two or more nations/societies at the same time. The movement of people from one country to another affects the identity of a person. Conversely the identity of a person is transfused, transformed by and through various forms of movement in diverse spaces and places. The movement and space has a pivotal role in the formation and construction of the identity of a
person. Space, movement and place are the inseparable core elements of diasporic existence that affects the human existence itself.

The first generation Indian immigrants are often hegemonic in their attitudes. They suffer a certain break with the motherland. Further the distance between the motherland and diasporic settlement with then slow modes of travel and lack of requisite amount of money to make frequent journeys to the homeland heightens their nostalgia and belongingness to the mother country. They are isolated pockets of Indian culture within western society who constantly longs for their left behind motherland. They carry a sort of “Hindu toolbox” to Indianise their new surroundings:

[...] their homeland is a series of objects, fragments of narratives that they keep in their suitcases. Like hawkers they can reconstitute their lives through the contents of their knapsacks: a Ganapati icon, a dog-eared copy of the Gita or the Quran, an old sari or other desi outfit, a photograph of a pilgrimage or, in modern times, a videocassette of the latest hit from the home country” (Paranjape 243).

But in their day to day activities in the new land they perform their duty; they try to find new roots in the new adopted nation, and they are trying to establish themselves in the new land. But at the same time they are constantly dreaming, longing and desiring for the homeland left behind which they carry always in their minds. For them:

The concept of home...acts as a valuable means of orientation by giving us a sense of our place in the world. It tells us where we originated from and where we belong. As an idea it stands for shelter, stability, security and
comfort (although actual experiences of home may well fail to deliver these promises). To be ‘at home’ is to occupy a location where we are welcome, where we can be with people very much like ourselves” (McLeod 210).

Thus, the dilemma of the immigrants results in nostalgia, homelessness, alienation etc. Therefore the first generation immigrants feel a hyphenated existence.

Culture is not an isolated thing. Culture travels with the immigrants. The diasporic community understands and realise that cultures enrich through intermingling and not through isolation. The immigrant community realises the importance of the real definition of hybrid existence and adopt the hyphenated identity. They now comprehend that cultural plurality becomes allied with globalisation and thus multiculturalism flourishes. Multiculturalism frees every immigrant from cultural oppression. As a result they are deregionalised individuals living in a broader world. On the other hand the rapid development in the field of information technology, easy access of transportation narrows down the distances among people.

The feeling of displacement is always in the heart of all immigrants which leads them to feel alienated all the time in the host country. But distancing from one’s own land has a fruitful response also. Radhakrishnan asserts the fruits of distancing thus:

It is quite customary for citizens who have emigrated to experience distance as a form of critical enlightenment or a healthy ‘estrangement’ from their birth land, and to experience another culture or location as a reprieve from the orthodoxies of their own ‘given’ cultures. It is also quite normal for the same people, who now have lived a number of years in their adopted
country, to return through critical negotiation to aspects of their culture that they had not really studied before and to adopt criticisms of their chosen world (Radhakrishnan 128).

From Radhakrishnan’s point of view it is true that displacement does not exactly distances but bridges cultures, societies, nations and individuals. By going through this process a migrant is able to understand the significance of hyphenated existence or multicultural or cosmopolitan hybrid identity. Their transformation gives them a special fluid space wherein memory can intervene to create unreal and often distorted images. The new diasporas have chosen to relocate themselves in the metropolitan centres for economic reasons. Sunetra Gupta belongs to this kind as she straddles the two worlds of her origin and her adoption. Like a true postcolonial writer Gupta goes through the three phases of ‘adopt’, ‘adapt’, and ‘adept’ to use Peter Barry’s analysis of postcolonial writings. She aims at projecting multiculturalism in her writings through her international characters who consciously want to obliterate boundaries. By crossing borders of several kinds, as she herself did, a character breaks the “barriers of thought and experience” (Said 185) which opens up new ways of understanding people and situations. It helps her to have a clearer perspective on what she had in the past, which is the main subject of her narratives.

Indian immigrant writers have moved both to the formerly colonial host country, Great Britain and to Canada or to the United States. Their works deal with their own situation of migrancy, expatriation, alienation and expectations in the intermediary position which they occupy in the culture of the host country. It is through the journeys of the diaspora writers “into the incommensurable spaces within memory itself that enact individual passages, which can no longer be sustained by the
recognition of any easily identifiable or firm boundary lines whether of tradition, language, place or time” (Nasta 212).

Writers belonging to the younger generations are thus taking their explorations of the migrant self in a direction that leads them crossing over boundaries, the first step into a diasporic journey which constitutes a starting point into another space. These writers are engaged in a journey towards homewards in which the ‘idea’ of home no longer coincides with the space of origins. For them the concept of ‘home’ becomes a meta-empirical notion which differs significantly from the earlier conception of ‘homelands’. Susheila Nasta points out that writers like Sunetra Gupta, Aamer Hussein and Romesh Gunesekera “constructs a poetics of diaspora in which return is no longer possible, and the filters of fragmented memory no longer provide an untroubled or celebratory route to an ‘imaginary homeland’. Instead the multiple layers of a diasporic subjectivity are inscribed through a precarious journey into the gaps within the symbolic realm of discourse itself, where writing becomes the ‘territory of loss and memory’ and the act of narration enables the possibility of a ‘re-turn to selfhood through [a] dialogic and interrogative encounter’” (213-214).

In the field of diasporic fictions the status of present diaspora is represented by writers of post-Rushdie voices of the 1990s who focus on the narrative poetics of making memory of ‘home’ in their fictions. Sunetra Gupta travels widely in her youth, being educated in several languages, and living in a variety of locations, whether in Calcutta, East Africa or the USA. Therefore, she has retained strong affiliations with the multicultural traditions of her subcontinental background. She was born in Calcutta in 1965 and spent her childhood in Bengal and until she was ten she was in
Africa and then in India again. Her father was a professor of African history at the University of Calcutta and had love to travel for during her childhood. He insisted on taking teaching jobs in Ethiopia, Zambia, Liberia and Britain. Therefore, her early years were spent moving between Ethiopia, Zambia, Liberia and England. When she was eleven years old the family again returned to Calcutta. She moved to Britain to do her graduate in Biology at Princeton University in 1987. After her graduation she moved to England to do her Ph.D. and received her doctoral title from Imperial College, University of London in 1992. She worked as the Research Assistant at the Department of Biology at Imperial College, London during the years of 1988-89. She is married to an Irishman and now she lives in Oxford with her husband and two daughters. She has gone to the ‘first world’ not directly from her mother country which was once colonised. She has already an expatriate existence as she had passed her childhood in third world countries like Africa, Ethiopia and Zambia.

Gupta divides her time between writing and researching infectious diseases. She is a professor of Theoretical Epidemiology at the department of Zoology, University of Oxford. She has interest in infectious disease agents which are responsible for malaria, HIV, influenza and bacterial meningitis. She is principally a scientist. However, despite her restricted time for literature she has already published five novels, *Memories of Rain* (1992), *The Glassblower’s Breath* (1993), *Moonlight into Marzipan* (1995), *A Sin of Color* (1999) and *So Good in Black* (2009). Gupta is an acclaimed novelist, essayist and scientist. She was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for her first novel *Memories of Rain* in 1996. She is also the recipient of the Southern Arts Literature Prize (2000) for her *A Sin of Color* and is shortlisted for the Crossword Award. In 2009 she was named as the winner of the Royal Society Rosalind Franklin Award and the scientific medal by the Zoological Society of
London for her scientific achievements. In October 2012, her fifth novel *So Good in Black* was listed for the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature. She is also an accomplished translator of the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore and “a prodigious talent”. Western critics define Gupta as “the New Virginia Woolf from Calcutta” (Ponzanesi 93). Kirkus Reviews has called Gupta “a young, true heir to Virginia Woolf”. Like Woolf Gupta is a highly literary artist and literary writer, gives much concentration on female protagonists and has limited textual experiments. Some critics even argue that Gupta occupies between the two dominant trends in contemporary Indian English fiction- that of ‘magic realism’ (in the novels of Salman Rushdie and Vikram Chandra) and that of ‘domestic realism’ (in the novels of Vikram Seth and Anita Desai). Gupta usually writes about individuals defined by their family relationships in an extensively realistic manner. Critics like to label her as belonging to both magic realism and domestic realism. She belongs to that Rushdie and post-Rushdie generation of Indian English writers whose members are essentially cosmopolitan in their cultural and linguistic affinities.

The novels of Gupta are rich with distinctive characteristics. She gives importance to a place which is both situated in and disperses the idea of a nation, as opposed to the larger, unified, pan-Indian imaginative topos of the post-Rushdie national narrative. As a true multicultural writer the locales of all her novels are the physical spaces enclosed by London, New York, Princeton, Calcutta, New Jersey, Ghana etc. Apart from this, she uses ordinary English words like “door”, “bus”, “station” to achieve the creation of a way of life that has naturalised the cultural hybridity of colonial and postcolonial life which renders the Rushdisque ‘chutnification’ of English in untranslated Indian words and phrases.
Sunetra Gupta’s childhood has been groomed in different countries and her family’s peripatetic lifestyle have had a great impact on her work. The city of Calcutta also continues to inspire her writings. Her father was an extraordinary person who was an extremely important figure for her life. Her father besides being a professor was also an accomplished singer of Rabindra Sangeet. In fact, he had a profound influence on every aspect of her thinking. It was her father who consistently inspired her to write fiction. He inculcated within her the spirit of being able to move between the areas of art and science with ease. Gupta’s father educated her about how to receive art. Gupta is a first generation immigrant writer. In her case the process of immigration is quite different. She is a product of movements. It is her experience of having left her motherland at an early age and going to multiple locations and settling there with the intense sensibility to pen down her experiences. She has ties to her motherland and makes repeated references to it throughout her fictions.

The task of writing novels seems to be an easy and compulsive accomplishment to her. Gupta considers herself a Bengali writing in English in Britain. She sees herself in an international, cosmopolitan community that transcends such borders. Through her fictions she seeks to create identities that defy the borders of the modern construct of the nation-state. All her fictions bear characteristics of a typical postcolonial novel that uses international settings and characters who travel across continents like herself. Therefore, in all her fictions one finds Calcutta, its streets, rural Bengal, Digha, New York, London, Cork in Ireland, Princeton, New jersey, Ghana, Paris, France, and the Alps. Although she is grown up in a much more hybrid world she feels at home anywhere and everywhere.

In Gupta’s novels, memories of Calcutta, New York and London come together in such a manner that it forms a mosaic of multiculturals. Her characters live
in a cosmopolitan existence and move either from Calcutta to London and New York or vice versa. Sandhya Shukla, an eminent critic on Indian diaspora in the West observes that people from all over India come to the western countries and get settled there with full ease by becoming metropolitan diaspora. Gupta’s novels not only emphasize this focus on the mega cities, characters visit to the multi cuisine restaurants, and their off and on visit to foreign lands make them and their existence as hybrid. Gupta has a nomadic experience of geographical space which further can be defined as cultural normadism. She appears to construct a shifting literary landscape as a global symbolic home (Nasta 2002). Gupta belongs to a new type of migrant. She is academically and intellectually bright and “has been fully accepted by the host culture and has acceded to the American dream of self-made (wo) man. This relationship...to Western cultures displays a quite different kind of hybridity” (Fludernik 275) for which Gupta can be considered providing an interesting example of cosmopolitan hybridity. Her works move from one nation to another, from one culture to another with no clear sense of home and abroad. She grew up in different countries and thinks herself as transnational and multicultural representative like her characters. She says in an interview:

I think one has to be comfortable with the notion that one has one’s own cultural identity and that one doesn’t necessarily have to be at ‘home’, so to speak. But having had that cultural identity, or whatever else it is that is established for you, wherever you are rooted, whatever you are rooted in...I think we have to accept that we are going to be perpetually wandering. We are bound to, I think. That’s the kind of crisis that we’re in now, that we are forced to be in a state of perpetual wandering. I mean we can’t be at home.
Even if we sit at home, we are forced to travel, just because of what is going on around us” (Shailaja 146).

Sunetra Gupta’s fictions have a transnational settings and “transcultural spaces that are defined by what Arjun Appadurai calls “imagined worlds” where alliances and allegiances coalesce, dissolve, and coalesce again along the lives of ideas and images and are continually re-staged across, rather than within, stable nationalist cultural narratives” (ibid). As a diasporic author and true to her personal experiences of diaspora, she imagines her characters as perpetually coming and going from their native homeland to a foreign land.

Gupta’s novels focus on the first generation diasporas who are mostly imaginative about their origin. Adopting and adapting in two or more than two cultures she claims her Bengali heritage in a romantic imaginary homeland. Regarding her home or to question like ‘where you belong to’, she does not suffer any postcolonial confusion. In an interview with Kimberly Nagy, Gupta says,

As far as where home is or where I come from, to me this is securely Bengal. My roots in the Bengal culture are very deep, my father having been very connected with it...Since then I lived in places that are not home and continue to live and probably will spend the rest of life in a place that’s not where I come from. But that doesn’t pose any problems for me”(Nagy n.pag.).

Hence, this attitude helps her to teach at university like oxford without suffering from any diasporic angst. She has no obsession over the nostalgic re-creation of home like other diasporic writers nor does she celebrate the mongrel crisis about the formation of identity. In one of her interviews with Ranjan Ghosh and Christiane Schotte she
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says, diaspora “is a painful condition. Obviously, I relate to that in some ways...But in my personal case it really does not apply. I don’t have any problems with not living in Calcutta anymore. Many of us don’t live where we grew up. I’m certainly not victimized” (Ghosh and Schotte 122). Her interpretation of diaspora is an emotional one rather than the anxiety of mere physical dislocation. She comments:

...I think by definition I am a part of the diaspora. What distinguishes me perhaps from some of the debates and discourses in the diaspora is that it is not a source of any discomfort to me, by any means...I do feel like a foreigner in this country. But I like it. (117).

It is generally considered that the assimilation for the second generation immigrants runs at a much faster pace than in the case of first generation immigrants. On the other hand, the perception of home in case of first generation immigrant is truer and stronger than the second generation immigrants. As Rajakopalan Radhkrishnan feels of his son’s experiences, “It would be equally outrageous of me to claim that somehow my India is more real than this; my India is much an invention as production as his” (Radhakrishnan 125). But Gupta, being a first generation Indian immigrant, opposes such conceiving of an idealised homeland. She writes in her Homepage, “Pasting elements of people’s ancestral culture onto them, simply reinforces the idea that British culture, the culture of the country where they were born doesn’t actually belong to them. It runs counter to any idea of integration” (Gupta n.pag.).

In all her novels we find the image of the city of Calcutta which has shaped her personality and for her protagonists also. As Somdatta Mandal writes in her article “Sunetra Gupta”, “Steeped in Bengali culture, especially the Calcutta of the 1950s and
1960s that she nostalgically re-creates in her novel, her writing reveals that she can’t forget the city that she left behind. Also, she had known the city in both good and bad times and even at a distance has been loyal to it...”(Mandal 165).

While writing her first novel *Memories of Rain* (1992) she was inspired by Brendan Kenelly’s adaptation of *Medea*. This novel was published in the year when she received her Ph.D. degree. The backdrop of the novel is Calcutta and England. We get the city of Calcutta and its intellectual youth of the 1950s and 1960s. Through the novel she portrays the middle-class Bengali people and its culture in a very beautiful way. In this novel she brings together two youngsters from two different parts of the world together--Moni and Anthony. The novel is about the story of Moni, a Bengali girl, a student of English literature and an ardent lover of Tagore’s poetry, who marries her brother’s English friend Anthony and leaves her city, Calcutta. Later on they become parent of a daughter.

Anthony is handsome, intelligent, artistic, assured and hopelessly promiscuous. He is a young gentleman from England who comes to Calcutta “to study Bengali theatre” (MR 26). Moni is a typical romantic girl with a sweet melodious voice who loves to sing the melodious songs of Rabindranath Tagore. She is an undergraduate student of English literature, interested in Jane Austen and Thomas Hardy’s novels and loves Shakespeare and Keats. Her bookshelf is a collection of an eclectic range of romantic texts both in English and Bengali. For her England is a collage of romantic imagery and “loved Heathcliff before she loved any man...She had convinced herself amid the long shadows of a tropical summer evening that she would never be able to leave any man that had loved her, that she had loved once...”(MR 177). She is always inspired by the great Romantic poets especially Keats. Keats is always a favourite one to her who she feels, instils a kind of romantic
zeal in her mind and spirit. Keats’s *Ode on Melancholy* frames the dark evening of her first encounter with Anthony in a rainy day who comes to her father’s home with her brother as his friend. The texts of British literature helped her to think about London, the “imaginary homeland” of many Bengali intellectuals.

Moni has always worshipped the coloniser’s language; her brother’s terrible English hurts her. She secretly adores her close friend Sharmila who belongs to a westernised family and spoke a queer mixture of English and Bengali at home. She is a highly anglicised elite of Calcutta. Moni adores her because Sharmila is much more adept in Britain culture and literature than Moni can ever aspire to be. Like the majority of Bengalis in Calcutta Moni is anglophilic. With this fascination in her mind about London, she is fascinated by the white friend of her brother’s who comes to her place from across the seven seas-- the place of her literary imagination. She had fancied roaming with Heathcliff-like beloved upon English moors. Thus for a young romantic and sensitive girl like Moni it is a much desired escape from the poverty-stricken land of cruel social systems and hardship to the beautiful country of her dream, to which she has got acquainted through her English literature texts. Therefore when Anthony proposes her to marry him, he becomes for her a rescuer, her way to access the world of liberty. Thus she is married to and carried off across the seven seas by the white prince of her dreams.

In the Bengali fantasy, marriage with a white man from Europe is like a fairy tale. This is more so to Bengali communities because Calcutta was an ex-colony of Britain. Many Indians from this colonised territory in and out of India were already familiar with western life and norms to a certain extent which allowed them to assimilate somewhat easier and faster.
But memories flood her mind, in retrospect, as the narrative presents:

It strikes her suddenly, in the same way it had done many years ago,...that there was an immense pleasure to be found in escaping her present circumstances, in leaving the country forever. Ten years ago, he had...implored her to marry him, to come back with him to his home across the seas...And suddenly, it became clear to her that this was the disaster she must embrace...(MR 19).

In contrast to this Anthony has a coloniser’s zeal to satiate his “desire for knowledge, for experience” (MR 40), to equate the woman and the city to be controlled and explored and possessed as “a tender tropical memory” when he would leave. Literally he has colonial connection to India since his mother’s uncle lies buried in India. “He had come to this land, as his forefather’s had done, with a conviction that all he wanted would be his” (MR 40).

With the colonizer’s gaze Anthony wants to penetrate the enigma of “this uncorseted city” (MR 118) by becoming a husband to Moni. “He felt on that day that he had penetrated the very spirit of life in this city, the very essence of their culture had been revealed to him in the few dense hours he had gazed upon the rain-swollen curve of her mouth, this was what he had come to discover, to feel...oh, if he could draw his lips through the velvet valley of her hair, his experience of the tropics would be complete” (MR 124). Anthony is captivated by Moni’s beauty and virginal purity. In the early days of their love, he loved Moni so much that he had thought of dedicating his thesis “his tropical dream” (MR 82) to her and sending her a copy by sea-mail. In Anthony’s mind, Moni had remained a harmless exotic muse, who could be evoked in melancholic situations from any romantic poetry--“she dwells with
beauty-Beauty that must die” (ibid) a memory that can be cherished but can’t be lived with in real life. When his thesis remained unfinished, when the sheaves of paper gathered dust in redundant cartons and when the typewriter lay unused in the corner, his “tropical lust” (MR 84) fades in colder British climes because Moni had failed to play his virginal muse. Surprisingly “Anthony’s fascination for the wild exotic flower of the east fades as fast as Moni’s illusions about the wonderland of the west evaporate” (Vijaysree 134).

Culturally Anthony feels superior to Moni. His friends, who consider England to be “demi-paradise” and India to be “a bizarre and wonderful land” where people “still burn their wives, bury alive their female children”(MR 6) reflect the colonial psychology of superiority of their ancestors. For him she is a wasted orchid incapable of flourishing in British home which “he has sheltered her within his palms as the bud he had plucked, untimely, intoxicated by its incomplete scent, he had treasured in his glass house until he found that she would not bloom in her surrounds…”(MR 81-82). Finally it was Anna who “had led him back into the world to which he belonged, taught him to breathe richly, again, of life...he had found his way, through her, into the circles to which he had always aspired-he had longed for success, more than the love of a woman”(MR 83). Anna seems to him intellectually adequate to gauge his thirst. He finally finished his thesis in London, inspired by his affair with Anna. He read out the manuscript not to Moni but to Anna on a stolen weekend in Britain. The intoxication of his tropical lust wears off and his passion for Anna turns into mere affection. His infatuation towards Anna and his blatant disrespect for her shocks Moni. She believes that his divided heart will accommodate her which she can’t bear anymore.
Moni is a contemporary woman who wilfully accepts the life of exile. In order to live a life according to her own wishes she is eager to overcome the pull of her roots in Calcutta. She represents a new generation of middle-class Indian woman who according to Mala Pandurang, “anticipate the possibility of emigration as a given” (88). But her wilful dispersal fails to provide her the happiness that she has desired, because it is Anthony’s unfaithfulness that shatters her dream. His affair with Anna and her constant presence in their married life make Moni melancholic, indifferent and cold towards Anthony and compels her to ponder over the situation. It becomes apparent when he says:

Why should she not be happy? The sadness of his infidelity shouldn’t cripple her, she no longer feels attraction for him, this he is painfully aware of...She has a job,...she has a life, she has a daughter, what more could life have offered her, there, behind decayed shutters, from where he had rescued her, a more faithful marriage perhaps...(MR44).

Moni, by geographical dislocation and by the concept of “marriage, movement and identity”(Vijayshree 134) is an immigrant. Moni never feels any kind of rootlessness in England though after marriage Anthony transplanted her into an alien culture. London has been her cultural homeland since her college-going days. During her college days her curriculum as an English honours student had inspired her to look up the British and British culture as an ideal one.

The literary landscape becomes her “real home” (MR 174) after Moni’s marriage to Anthony. She accepts the British culture with much reverence. Even in London she manages to do the job of a translator of Bangladeshi patients to a physician. But it is Anthony’s infidelity towards her which instils in her mind to feel
like a stranger in London. She thinks as if she is finally trapped. She feels exhausted in the sterile sophistication of London away from home. The place where she acculturates and assimilates becomes an exhaustive place to her now. Her geographical displacement becomes metonymic of her emotional and moral suffering. Her sense of diasporaness is not a kind of diaspora--away from home what Gupta says:

I did not mean to diminish the true dilemma, anxiety and agony of those who are trapped here within a foreign culture and don’t know how to negotiate it. That is something that impacts on me, and I think, my first novel, to some extent, did address the issue of somebody who was confined in that way or transplanted”(Gupta n.pag.).

But when she takes final decision to return to India then the image of Calcutta with its heat and dust and unhygienic food disturbs her a lot. She remembers the hideous poverty, adulterated food and corruption of the city teeming with “the sea of humanity” (MR 69) that her daughter might ever see or taste as she now pushed away from London. Moni can’t imagine that she is going to fling her child into such a life. Imagining Calcutta,

...suddenly she remembers the sliced fruit laid bare to the roadside flies, unwashed thumbs pushing spiced potato mix into puffed wheat shells, to dip in tamarind juice diluted with drain water, rusty machines squeezing cane juice into grimy glasses, that was where she was taking her, what would she eat in that land of hunger, where children crammed their mouths with fetid soil to dull the burning of digestive juices against the thin bare walls of their gut, in the famine of ’42 her father had seen a woman, insane with hunger,
racing with her child to finish the bowl of food they shared, in those days they begged, not for rice, but for the thin scum of rice that papered against the boiling pot, and now, in the days of plenty, they thickened yogurt with lime, added ground glass to sugar, churned the seeds of spiteful yellow foxthorn flowers to adulterate mustard oil, and children lay blinded, crippled, unborn... (MR 68-69).

Moni is assimilating and acculturating with the London and its culture. She feels disturbed when she knows that back home at Calcutta she would miss the technology and “creature comforts” which are promised to every citizen in this land of civilised person and thus were “the bane of so many patriotic souls” (MR 32). But Moni could not belong to London anymore. For her, home is Calcutta now which she abandoned for Anthony ten years back.

Moni’s memories of home are powerfully evoked at moments of her extreme alienation. As Debjani Ganguli has noted rightly “whilst Moni is apprehensive about the possibility of a rejection by her maternal city, a ‘city whose tired, blistered nipples she had pushed away with disdainful lips’, her return to Calcutta is nevertheless rendered in mythical terms and enshrined by the ritualistic Durga Puja ceremony, a ceremony which enacts a welcome for the Goddess to her father’s home” (qtd. in Nasta 227). It is the home, the place where she can comfort her troubled soul where she desires to return either through mental or physical journey. But earlier although Moni has tried to sever her emotional connection with Calcutta, she has never succeeded in it because her watch which is set on Indian time reminds her activities taking place in her home:
It was six in the morning in Calcutta, her father would be stretching his limbs in preparation for his journey to the market, her mother...is boiling the water for his morning tea, her grandmother...has bathed and prayed at her small household shrine, her brother, asleep in her bed” (MR 104).

By her marriage she has been introduced as an outsider-insider in her home now. The home is an irretrievable home frozen in time and space that can be visited only in her memory, “she is seized by an overwhelming desire to return to that world, although she knows it is there for her no longer” (MR 15). On the eve of her marriage her brother makes it clear to her that there would be “no back to Bengal” (MR 178) to her. It is “Later that night, her brother came up with her onto the roof terrace, where a crisp layer of night lay above the smoky lights of the city, and looking out onto the sea of night smoke, their impenitent city, he reminded her, this is what you are giving up, this is what you will be leaving, forever” (MR 22).

Moni becomes a nowhere person--either to her homeland or to the hostland. She is sure of losing Anthony and London forever, “I love you my beloved, and you will remain among the shadows that will be my world” (MR 50). Her decision to leave London is not because of her lack of assimilation and acculturation with the host culture, but it is her inability to reside emotionally due to her husband’s infidelity towards her and his obsession to other woman. She becomes a product of new hybridity to start afresh her life and build everything anew, either in India or beyond. Therefore the city of Calcutta comes to her eyes with a spirit to embrace and accommodate all by tending the poor, hungry and abandoned of the city which she had once left behind. Rebuffed by the London of her dreams, she wishes to renew her sacred intimacy with Calcutta as “she had been too proud then, to share her pain with the city, would the city allow her now to tend its sores, the city, whose tired blistered
nipples she had pushed aside with disdainful lips, for within her a great longing has risen to hold to her all its starving children” (MR 112). Her idea of rejection and acceptance of homeland reminds her dreamy and romantic acceptance of hostland that she has left behind.

Moni’s strategies to be a multicultural in two worlds of her imagination and representing then by birth and marriage remind the readers about the uneasy life of the immigrants. She is freed from her bitterness for Anthony. With her return she releases herself from the pain of long-sustained suppressive silence. She remembers her childhood days when she sailed paper boats in the overcrowding muddy drains of the Calcutta or pelting stones at frogs in a holiday home at Digha as a childhood adventures task. Even when she leaves London, she carries the city with her in a series of nostalgic images--“watercress in the window, wild heath pond fringed by luminous rushes, ducks, foul geese among the violent yellow of new daffodils, the woman upon Oxford street crushing ice cramp comes to feed the pigeons” (MR 172). With nostalgia and memories of the city of London and its people she now comes to her own quested home--a home of memories of persons, cities and cultures where now she plans to reside.

Moni characterises Calcutta as her abandoned lover to whom she must return. Her return reminds the very plight of the visionary, dreamy and ambitious diasporas who hate their homeland and bet their life for a better settlement. She decides that charity work in Calcutta will now be her calling and Calcutta thus becomes a place of transformation to which she must return. In her theorization of migration, Sara Ahmed posits that migration is felt at the level of embodiment and bodies (re)inhabit space in their quest for homes. She claims that “[w]hat migration narratives involve, then, is a spatial reconfiguration of an embodied shelf: a
transformation of the very skin through which the body is embodied” (Ahmed 342). Through the metaphor of Calcutta as Moni’s abandoned lover to whom she must return, Gupta captures the sensory aspect of Moni’s search for home. Moni is now able to inhabit the space of Calcutta.

Her return to Calcutta is about a new beginning. She returns to Calcutta in body and uses the space of diaspora to evaluate her own identity. The third space as an ambivalent space helps Moni to create her own identity. Moni is not leaving England for India, but leaves her unfaithful, orientalist husband and returns to “the sites of hope and new beginning” (Brah 193) in search of a more dynamic identity.

The Glassblower’s Breathe (1993) is Sunetra Gupta’s second novel. The central character of the novel is ‘You’ around whom everything happens. The protagonist does not have a name and is addressed throughout the novel by the second person pronoun ‘You’. She is a young Indian woman in search of ideal love and companionship. She is a married woman and is married to a wealthy half Iranian, half English gentleman, Alexander, who stays at home while the ‘You’, the protagonist roams through the street of London in her exotic beauty and charm. Alexander like the author herself, “straddled physiology and poetics” (TGB 17) in an attempt to find the origins of war in the immunological responses of the human body. She is a deep, sensitive and academically brilliant woman. The plot of the novel happens in a single day which depicts her relationship with a variety of people and places.

The novel details a single day in the lives of a butcher, a baker and a candle-maker. All of them have fallen in love with the main protagonist You. Jonathan Sparrow happens to be a candle maker who is You’s college friend with whom she has an extraordinary intellectual affinity. ‘You’ loves him very much. In the initial
stage of the novel Jonathan Sparrow is due to leave London where he has been visiting You. She takes him to Heathrow, but he decides he can’t bear to fly to New York. So without her knowledge he returns to Central London. The butcher, Daniel who comes from South London is a lower-class English man. He is not a kind of British gentleman that colonials or ex-colonials would want to imitate. But You is captivated by his purity. You is also involved emotionally with her cousin Avishek who is a baker. He is a Bengali and has been living in England for a long time. He is already married but devotes his life to dreaming about You and is in love with You.

You is a transnational character. Like the childhood of the author herself, You’s childhood is also spent abroad. The educational life of the protagonist You is like the author herself. She comes to England for her studies. After coming to England, in the first few months she feels very lonely. She has “to grow alone into adolescence” (TGB 61) without having friends around her. In order to overcome her loneliness in England during the first few months, her father suggests:

You sat at the still and wrote stories in a beautiful white exercise book, and sucked endless lollipops, a story in English and a story in Bengali, on alternate days, that was what your father had directed, he had suggested that you write the English stories in the front half, and to write the Bengali stories, to simply invert the exercise book, and write from the back, and somewhere they would meet” (TGB 61).

The father of the protagonist You is like the father of the author who is an intellectual and in love with the culture of the city of Calcutta. She has declared that the fictional character of the father of You protagonist is inspired by her own father whom she deeply admirers. Thus “The other key character is You’s father who is very much like
my own” (Gupta n.pag.). Gupta’s father inspired her to write fictions. For Gupta, the bilingual exercise which was advised by her father, and which is scripted from the two ends of the copy is not a difficult task for her. Rather this exercise becomes an easy task for her having experience of assimilation and acculturation with multiple registers—whether they be linguistic, cultural or geographical. Gupta has diverse knowledge on diverse cultures, language and geography of the world as she moves from one country to another since her childhood. Therefore she never experiences any traumatic feelings of being an exile unlike the other diasporic writers. Even she has never have the feeling of being a diaspora— the forced dispersal associated with the Judeo-Hebraic origins of the word ‘diaspora’. For her transcultural experience she herself does not hold any idea when it comes to travel and negotiate across cultures and geographies. Gupta says in an interview:

I think one has to comfortable with the notion that one has one’s cultural identity and that one doesn’t necessarily have to be at “home”, so to speak. But having had that cultural identity, or whatever else it is that is established for you, wherever you are rooted, whatever you are rooted in...I think we have to accept that we are going to be perpetually wandering...That’s the kind of crisis that we’re in now, that we’re forced to be in a state of perpetual wandering. I mean we can’t be at home. Even if we sat at home, we are forced to travel, just because of what is going on around us (Williams n. pag.)

The characters of *The Glassblower’s Breathe* appear to defy any sense of geographical or emotional belonging. Throughout the novel, Gupta clears her view on theorising about home and diaspora by portraying transnational characters who seek the healing space of home in the very condition of being unhomed. Gupta, born in
India but having grown up in Africa, Britain, and the U.S., says about living in London:

Well I was quite keen to live here, again because I considered London to be an international city. I didn’t think of London as being part of England...I don’t feel like I live in England, which is why sometimes it’s difficult for me to answer questions like, “What do you think of the situation here? And what’s like being an Indian in England?” the truth is I don’t live in England, in a way. That’s just how it is. That’s what I’ve chosen to do is create a space that is somewhat outside of being anywhere” (ibid)

In a similar way, the characters in the novel live in a transnational and transcultural space which is ‘somewhat outside of being anywhere’. The places of the novel sprawls through the metropolitan cities like London, Calcutta, Paris and New York. But none of these cities could be considered as the true ‘home’ to any of the characters. The characters whether they born in New York or London or Calcutta or somewhere else, wander through these cities, living in each one at the same time as they are always detached from each one. These characters with their fellow friends constitute cosmopolitan wanderers whose common ground is that they live “in transnational, transcultural urban switching points” (ibid). They no sooner arrive at one metropolitan city than they are thinking of leaving that city for another. The narrator says about London, “It is a city I would say I both hate and love, if the large part of our relationship were not indifference” (TGB 107). When her acquaintance replies that he hates London, her response is simply, “When I get tired of London, I go to Paris” (ibid). According to Simon Gikandi, these urban spaces are constituted “temporality and cartography that transcend empire and nation and their founding mythologies of origins of home, of unique subjectivities” (195). In such transnational
spaces all the characters of the novel are considered to create the possibilities of new paradigms to consider them as having postimperial identities.

The cultural milieu of the novel is “one of expatriation, multiculturalism and globalisation” (Fludernik 279). All the major protagonists are “globetrotters” (ibid) of one sort or another. The protagonist is an Indian woman who is highly brilliant like the author who is living in London for a long time. She is married and lives with her husband Anthony who is an Iranian scientist. Her cousin is Avishek who produces gingerbread in a bakery in England for a long time. For preparing his popular gingerbreads, Avishek uses motifs from the architecture of Oxford and Cambridge:

Turning for a last farewell glance, he had been hit by the pastry texture of the snow-dusted spires, and this gentle vision had resurrected his desire to craft in cake flesh the spires of Oxford, his first dream, his last dream, his one enduring fantasy, Balliol in bakemeat, a gingerbread Christchurch” (TGB 59).

Avishek uses the architectural pattern of Oxford and Cambridge in designing his cakes which gives him profit by commercialising the west. His art of “Western cultural clichés can be seen as an inversion of orientalist clichés of the East, and as a commodification of indigenous cultures around the globe within a globalised economy of cosmopolitan tourism” (Fludernik 280). Such commodifications of tourist images of England within a globalised economy refers precisely to what Fludernik suggests the three criteria of hybridity in her article Colonial vs. Cosmopolitan Hybridity as “processuality, refunctionalization and interdependency” (ibid). In terms of hybridity, Avishek’s baking business is considered as “transforming culture from the ‘Centre’ into a commodity for the market” (ibid).
Avishek like the author herself, “straddled physiology and politics” (TGB 17) in an attempt to find the origins of war in the immunological responses of the human body. Similarly You is an entomologist who looks for meaning in butterflies, “for even the dullest variety were as veiled prophesies of love” (TGB 43). Jonathan Sparrow is a “poet and mathematician” (TGB 76). Like Sparrow, Gupta explores different symbolic dimension to dig for new, unexpected interpretations of the universal.

Immigrants like Gupta never bothers about the feelings of being an exile, do not idealise western man, “their attempts at assimilation are not mimicry in the strict (Bhabhian) sense of the term” (Fludernik 287). Gupta weaves thirteenth century Persian mystic poet Jalal-al-Din Rumi’s poem into her narrative style. Monika Fludernik rightly remarks, “these series of meditative poems deals with the mystic union with the Divine in the metaphoric terms of a love relationship with Shams-i Tabriz. Death is a common theme in that cycle of poems, and so are sacrifice, honor or human frailty and tenderness” (284). Gupta compares “the Divine to the death of the glassblower...about death” (ibid). Apart from Rumi’s poem, the novel has a “fundamental structural parallel with Ulysses” (Fludernik 283). Bloom, a typical mimic man has to contend with a hostile environment of Irishman, is replaced by the cosmopolitan You who positions herself above British culture. Hence, she appears to have no such problems regarding the notion of home and boundary of nation-states like the author herself. Rima, her orphaned niece who goes to London from Calcutta to stay with You gets invited to parties frequently. These characters are cosmopolitan migrants who are on a “level of equity with the elite of host country” (Fludernik 288) and hence they are like native citizens in a multicultural society like London.
The Glassblower’s Breathe is Gupta’s fictional attempt to break and change the rules of both language and form by exposing the cultural and symbolic slippages. The novel also “explores the potential of textual miscegenations, the ‘collisions’ that result by constructing an intertextual dialogue between such differently constituted ‘multiple selves’” (Nasta 233). It is observed that the textual rehearsal of such migrant transformations is not only a question of ‘overlapping, interwining and fusing of different aspects of identity’, but also involves a ‘jarring, jolting and tossing [away] of mutilated parts” (Ponzanesi 74). The novel lives in transnational spaces like London, Calcutta, Paris and New York but none of these cities could be considered the true ‘home’ of any of these characters. The characters in this novel are true multicultural persons. They wander from one place to another, although they born in one of these cities. They do not claim either a single country as their homeland.

The novel attempts ‘to create a new home’ in language through an almost plotless narrative on a single day in London which throws up all kinds of incompatible cohabitations. The all three parts of the protagonist You- “the physical, the emotional and the intellectual” (Nasta 237) is collided. Whether it is Daniel, Avishek or Jonathan Sparrow they are all migrant figures confidently represent and construct a multicultural geography and struggle in their own strategies to live in the new migrant community of England with their own personal ease. Avishek is Bengali, living in England for several years, survives by creating gingerbread versions of popular Oxbridge English icons, Sparrow is an American and worldwide traveller whereas Ivanov is a Russian émigré. At the end of the novel we find You returning to her home in London after her day-long illicit sexual liaisons to rejoin her husband Alexander. But the home where she returns is nothing but ‘a house full of mirrors’ in which she is surrounded by her three suitors--Avishek, Sparrow and Daniel-- who
eventually die in Alexander’s bathroom in a tub like the destiny of the ‘three men in a tub’ in ‘Mother Goose’. The novel is a “fictional prism” (Nasta 238) of the multiple identities of Gupta’s various characters in a multicultural society.

The novel is about a mixed cultural past “ranging from the unnamed Indian protagonist’s past, lived in the cities of Calcutta, London and new York, to a journey into a disjointed childhood and adolescence in Britain, which resists containment by either the frames of past left behind or the refractions of a present, meditated to us through her relationship to the multiple voices of the male narrators who tell her tale” (Nasta 233). The novel deals with multicultural aspects of individual characters and their voices echo with the modernist touch such as Nobokov, Virginia Woolf or James Joyce along with Rilke, Rabindranath Tagore, and the nursery rhyme story of ‘Mother Goose’. Like of then the novel recites the stories of the butcher, the baker and the candlemaker, Gapetto’s Pincchio and the Bengali tales of the protagonist’s childhood of the city of Calcutta.

The cities of Calcutta and London feature in Gupta’s third novel Moonlight into Marzipan (1995). In this novel the protagonist Promothesh is a chemist from Calcutta who takes his wife Esha and immigrates to London. Thematically it is a very complex work which does not follow a regular chronological order of events. The plot of the novel shifts back and forward in time and space leaving the story open to the readers to reach at a conclusion at their own choice. The novel is about an Indian couple, their marriage and its failure. The backdrop, like Gupta’s other two novels is again Calcutta and London. Unlike Gupta’s two previous novels, in this novel also she presents characters belonging from different countries. The personal pronoun “I” and “you” are thrown around in this novel like Guptra’s second novel The
Promothes and Esha are two promising scientists who studied together at the University of Calcutta. Both of them got to know each other while they were classmates at the university. Later on they fall in love and after their passionate romance at the university life they marry each other. After their marriage they want to keep the Indian cultural expectations in their conjugal life. They turn their garage at Calcutta house into a laboratory. Esha, despite being a scientist, turns to be a dedicated and submissive wife to support her husband in his scientific research. Therefore, she emerges as purely as Indian housewife who rolls chapattis all day by keeping aside her thesis in a dusty drawer. Like a true supporting wife she finds Promothes’s research and studies more important than her own aspirations for which Promothes and his research activities becomes her first priority. But Promothes collapses under her full dedication. He feels too unworthy to be at the centre of her world and feels incapable of living up to her grand expectations. Therefore, he resumes his research work and slips into the celebrity status. But one day when Esha’s copper ear stud accidentally falls into Promothes’s experiment solution then the unexpected reaction of the elements bring Promothes close to the scientific world again. From this reaction of the copper ear stud into the scientific solution Promothes discovers that grass is made out of gold: “turns grass into gold” (MM 6). Finally it is this metaphor which accompanies the whole novel.

This unexpected and sudden achievement of Promothes’s makes both Esha and Promothes to leave for England where an eccentric and wealthy patron Sir Percival Partridge decides to sponsor Promothes’s further investigations whereby he makes Promothes a part of his Trust under which banner various scientists from
many countries are gathered. There among many scientists he meets Yuri Sen who is an Indian researcher. His research project is unknown and it is through him that we as readers come to know that Promothesh is incapable of writing to us. He verbalises Promothesh’s failure with an expression which becomes the novel’s title: For five years now, he has been kept in this chintz dungeon on the promise of turning moonlight into marzipan and all he has managed to make his molasses at of his life” (MM 41).

While Esha and Promothesh are in London then Promothesh meets Alexandra Vorobyova, a Russian Jewish expatriate who was in charge of helping Promothesh in writing his autobiography. This autobiography is meant to be written for him by Alexandra Vorobyova. Later on Alexandra goes away and deserts the task of writing Promothesh’s autobiography. Promothesh is left with pieces of his life scribbled down in notes. It is because of Alexandra Vorobyova that there appears a crack in the relationship of Promothesh and Esha because while Promothesh is trying to translate himself into narrative for Alexandra for his biography he loses himself into her. Consequently “life and fiction, narration and narrate get confused and death overwhelsm everything with Esha’s suicide and the impossibility of repeating the sentiment” (Ponzanesi 74). It is because of Promothesh’s infidelity which leads Esha to commit suicide. Alexandra Vorobyova later on abandons Promothesh and his biography. Promothesh’s two lady suitors--Esha and Alexandra are no more with him. The first one i.e. Esha, his dedicated wife deserted his scientific works by committing suicide and Alexandra deserted his biography by being crushed by a rock in a mountain gorge. If Esha had made him into a genial scientist, it is Alexandra who makes him into an author, and when they both disappear, Promothesh is left
disoriented and unaccomplished. Esha’s death left Promothesh marooned and confused. He forgot his astonishing discovery also.

*A Sin of Color* (1999) is Sunetra Gupta’s fourth novel. Gupta is a resident in the famous university town of Oxford. Therefore there are glimpses of the city of Oxford as backdrop of this novel. The story of the novel under seven sections is named after different colours as *Amethyst, Indigo, Azure, Jade, Saffron, Ochre* and *Crimson*. Through the seven sections named after these seven colours, Gupta tells the story of three generations of a wealthy Bengali family with their roots in a house in Calcutta. The palace-like house is built by a British Officer. Indranath Roy, a wealthy timber merchant bought it from the departing English gentleman during the colonising period and gave a name to it as Mandalay, modelling it on an ideal vision of earthly heaven. The three generations respectively represented by Indranath Roy (first generation) the founder of the Calcutta house and his wife Neerupama; Debendranath Roy (second generation) who goes usually to and fro, constantly transgressing the space of origin, trying to reconstruct it overseas; and Niharika (third generation) who successfully exceed the oppressiveness of the Calcutta house and manages to construct her self-identity within a new and nurturing home in England. The novel is about the two protagonists—Debendranath Roy and his niece Niharika who made their choices in the last phases of their youths during two different time periods of their lives. The narrative sprawls across Oxford, the United States, Calcutta and rural Bengal and mostly in Oxford and Calcutta, the twin places that are close to Gupta. The characters are transnational and the geographies fluid. Debendranath Roy and Niharika both of them are victims of unrequited love. Debendranath Roy falls in love with Reba--his elder brother’s wife who is an artiste, musician and actress while Niharika falls in love with Daniel Faraday, a married middle-aged English man.
Debendranath Roy’s father Indranath Roy brings his clever distant wife to the palace-like house Mandalay and many years later when Debendranath’s elder brother becomes mature enough to be a husband then he brings his own wife with whom Debendranath is fated to fall in love. Her presence in their home gives an intense meaning to his emotions. He realises that he can never belong to her in any way although he wants to hold her secret and continue to worship her. Therefore he wants to get rid off from his obsession with her and decides to leave Calcutta for England to do his studies. Therefore he flees the house, his family and his hopeless love to find a new life in Oxford where he eventually marries an English woman whom he largely neglects. He is not interested in Jennifer, even he has refused to cut their wedding cake with Jennifer. But it is the innocent Jennifer, the simple sweetness of her soul, her honesty, her humility who wants

To live quietly by his side forever, patiently waiting in the evenings for him to return from the library, and on the days when he stayed in, to raise her eyes from her sewing to his tall back stooped over his desk, to bring him the endless cups of tea that he liked to drink, and to sit with him upon the arm of his chair as he watched cricket (SC 31).

In Oxford most of the time he is found in imagining impossible fantasies like “what it might be to touch her hands, to stroke her long fingers” (SC 24). He can not come out of the cocoon where almost all the time he is busy in dreaming about Reba. One day he comes to Cherwell to punt and the punt comes back without him. Everyone believes that he is drowned. Debendranath willingly decides not to return to his home and wife because “his life becomes too distended to contain his love for her” (SC 72). He leaves behind a pale and languishing widow in Oxford and a mystery that takes twenty years to unfold. It turns out that Debendranath had fled back to India where he
had lived incognito. Later on his growing blindness drives him back to the family and to his writer niece Niharika, who is almost the only family member living in Mandalay.

Niharika is Reba’s daughter and Debendranath’s niece. She comes to Oxford for her studies. She has her first class degrees in both her bachelor and master courses. The academic career of Niharika bears striking correspondence to that of Sunetra Gupta herself, who studied at Princeton and Imperial College, London. She later returns to her house in Calcutta in order to write a book on the disappearance of her enigmatic uncle Debendranath. She loves Daniel Faraday, a married middle-aged Englishman. He also loves her a lot and never wants to leave her. So he wants to keep his relations with Niharika as a mystery. After a year in Oxford she has to come to Princeton, New Jersey to work on her thesis for a year. Daniel comes and meets her in New Jersey also. After staying one year in Princeton she returns to Oxford again. By this time Daniel decides to move to Australia to stay with his wife and son. When they are to be departed from each other, Daniel requests her to meet one of his friends Morgan in Manhattan.

She comes to New York to meet Morgan. He is an extraordinary man and is a massive depressive. He is a homosexual in love with Daniel because he tells Niharika “he loves women, and so he will never love me, or even think of loving me as he loves you” (SC 118). With Morgan Niharika seems extremely happy. Morgan appreciates her research work on the life of a pygmy in the Bronx Zoo as a deeply fascinating one. Morgan helps her a lot by spending hours in the library in Princeton by searching for newspaper articles on the pygmy. Her research project has given him a new lease on his life. In his companionship she has found a company of complete trust, a friendship of pure platonic love devoid of any physical yearning without a
simple need to hold and touch. With Morgan she laughs as she has never laughed before in her life. When Dainel decides his plan to go to Australia, Niharika, in order to get a partial release from the unbearable pain of her love for Daniel Faraday, takes up the job of writing a novel. Meanwhile,

She ceased to think of the pygmy purely as part of the analytical exercise of obtaining a D.Phil, and instead as a character in the peculiar drama she had set out to investigate...her imagination—which had made so much out of far less-seized him and wove him into an endless string of fantasies, which she felt compelled to write down, first in Bengali, but later in English...(SC 96-97).

Finally she has submitted her dissertation and decides to come back to Calcutta. She has been at Oxford for the last six years. She wants to return now because she is seized by the urge to write a book about her uncle Debendranath and his mysterious death which itself becomes a mystery for eighteen years. Therefore she returns to Calcutta and stays in the great mansion Mandalay, which is ruined and abandoned now.

One day Debendranath comes to Mandalay where Niharika now stays alone. Since drowning, Debendranath has successfully hidden himself in a small hill-station “for his love for her, which he had taken like his only treasure to hide with in the foothills of Himalaya” (SC 187). Later on it is because of his growing blindness for which he comes back to his childhood home. After few days Jennifer comes from London to take him with her to stay in London. At Calcutta she comes closer to a doctor who devotes part of his time in helping the poor in villages and acts in a theatre
group also. With Dr. Rahul she sometimes goes to his clinic in the village and sometimes to the theatre party. Together they share their time very happily.

Meanwhile Niharika wants to return to Oxford on a one year’s creative writing fellowship. It has been almost a year since she left Calcutta. Rahul has written letter to her almost every week after she left. With every letter from him it has become clearer to her that she would willingly return to Calcutta to take her position beside her. Therefore it is her time to decide “whether she stays in Oxford on a three year Fellowship she has been offered at her old college, or whether she goes back” (SC 241). Finally she decides to come back to Calcutta and wants to lead her future life with Rahul Mitra because she realises that “her place in this world is with Rahul Mitra” (SC 265). But on the eve of her departure from Oxford it is Daniel Faraday who comes to her straight from Sydney. Niharika is in hopeless love with Daniel Faraday for which she gives up a peaceful settled life in Calcutta with Dr. Rahul Mitra. Therefore when Daniel comes to meet Niharika after six years she rejects all her future plans and follows him to commit suicide.

In the novel multiple sins that lie in colour are fuelled by obsessional love. The novel explores movements from one nation to another. Debendranath and Niharika travel from one country to another frequently. When Daniel has left Niharika in order to stay with his son and wife at Australia, Niharika left for the US. Debendranath also in order to free himself flees to England. Their off and on visits to foreign lands mark their existence as hybrid. While staying at Oxford, Niharika decides to leave for New York for one year as her married lover had left her for Australia to stay with his son and wife. So being here and there and having the advantages and experiences of frequent visits to foreign cities all over the world, they were feeling as global citizens. Their frequent travel to and fro from India to Britain
or New York creates thereby for themselves a cosmopolitan self. They are truly global citizens where no boundaries of any country evolve and hence no barriers exist. They travel from one country to another without any hesitation as if they have an inherent connection to all the cities. Their minds may lock in India but their frequent movements from one locale to another, from one culture to another break apart the demarcation of the nation-state. To them the world becomes one and all. Debendranath and Niharika both of them are informed by their awareness of the west whether by their stay in the foreign land or the consciousness of Britain formed due to the colonial encounter.

In this novel Mandalay constitutes the house of origins, the original space from which the diasporic journey of Debendranath takes off. This original space symbolises the past and every individual’s bonds with ancestorships. The second space where the characters usually prefer to go is the house of the present and of interpersonal confrontation. It is the space of transition between the past and the future in which the diasporic experience is perceived and interiorised and the locus of personal struggle to construct self-identity. Gupta’s novels are narratives of the multicultural process through which the characters’ identities are constructed. The house in Calcutta is represented as a connecting space, standing in the state of in-betweenness. Debendranath has come back to Mandalay because he needed a space in which he knew where everything was and still the changes which the house has undergone are not disagreeable to him. What makes it different from the space of memory than he ever remembers is also what re-opens the door to that very space.

In her novels we find references of Rabindranath Tagore, Bibhuti Banerji, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and the Persian poet Jalal-al-Din Rumi as well as canonical texts and children’s literature. Pinocchio is subverted by Alexander in The
Glassblower’s Breathe (176), nursery rhymes in A Sin of Color (81-82), and Memories of Rain (58) and TV sitcoms-Fawlty Towers is mentioned in Memories of Rain (100). Like that the city of Calcutta is the hometown of the vast majority of the main characters in her novels. Gupta’s every narrative thread originates within the ancestral walls of a great Calcutta house, from which the protagonist in every novel has emerged to follow their route into a new, nomadic life. Thus the ancestral home becomes a space of origins, a cross roads, and a permanent reference. The original space is a “grand Mansion” (MR 73), a “family mansion” (TGB 35), a “colonial villa” (MM 5), and a “grand villa” (SC 10). Gupta defines herself as part of the “ancient Bengali diaspora” (Nasta 213). The image of Rabindranath Tagore and his songs plays an important role in Gupta’s literary formation as well as in her characters’ cultural identity.

Gupta’s first novel, which she dedicates to her father, is overflowing with references to the renowned Indian author as well as extracts of his poems, translated into English by Gupta herself. In Memories of Rain Moni uses Tagore’s songs to ease her alienation off and express it in Bengali when she can’t translate into English. In her second and third novel also Tagore’s voice is present. In Memories of Rain Gupta had mentioned Tagore’s passion for her sister-in-law as “a deep burning had weaved within his young veins, his eyes had rested desperately upon the quiet beauty of an older brother’s wife” (MR 196). In this novel Tagore’s songs are sung by Moni to express her cultural and communicative dislocation in England. In A Sin of Color, Debendranath constructs his life around his love for Reba, his eldest brother’s wife.

Sunetra Gupta’s novels tell us the stories of different families from very different cultural and linguistic background. Her characters often marry a person from a different culture and location specially a Westerner. This results in compelling the
characters to accept and acculturate them in multicultural situations. In *Memories of Rain* Moni marries an English man, in *A Sin of Color* Debendranath marries an English lady and Niharika has fallen in love with the English gentleman Daniel Faraday and later on commits suicide for her love towards Daniel. These characters whether Moni, Debendranath, Niharika, they all share the ability to adapt to the new country and culture. In all her novels the various immigrant characters develop a positive counterculture, a “salad bowl” by which they on the one hand preserve their indigenous cultural ingredients while mixing some elements from the native Britain. This “new salad-sauce-in contrast to the American “salad-bowl” idea-adds new spice and alien flavours to the mixture, eliminating any ‘RP’ residues of standard British life-style” (Fludernik 263). Her novels belong to the genre of the multicultural novel than to the novel of immigration. According to Monika Fludernik, diaspora literature or diasporic writings can be seen to emerge among three types of texts: “the traditional immigration and assimilation story; the novel of (cultural) exile; and the multicultural novel” (263).

The first generation immigrant writers are linked with the traditional immigration and assimilation story. Even though they try to assimilate with the host culture the urgency of rememorization and idealization becomes exacerbated through the failure of assimilation. In case of multicultural novel, the native community is conceived as theoretically more open and flexible. The new generation diasporic writers head towards interrelation with the host culture and community. Hence in all her novels, diaspora is not only a strong element but also diaspora strategies as multicultural are more important for their representation of the native and foreign cultures. Gupta portrays her protagonists as individuals who successfully assimilated with the host culture. She never portrays either character on the binaries of India vs.
Britain. They willingly go to Britain, study there and fully assimilate and acculturate with the host country. She projects characters belonging from other countries also. In all her novels there is immigration scenario which is one of the vital characteristics of a multicultural society. All of Gupta’s protagonists are culturally and linguistically “free-floating” (Fludernik 265) characters. Through her novels it is clear that Gupta does not accord with the description of diasporic imaginary as outlined by critics like Robin Cohen, Clifford and Vijay Mishra. Without having nostalgic imaginary homeland which is a prominent characteristic of a traditional conception of diaspora, Gupta directs her literary works towards representing a new type of Indian diaspora. These new type of diaspora writers “are clearly converting their imagined communities into real ones, transferring their imaginary homelands abroad” (Fludernik 283). Unlike the old diaspora their emotional root is not planted in India rather it is in the transplanted culture without direct reference to India. It is no doubt that their process of adjusting with the host culture is the same like their elders but they have got a better chance in preserving their own culture as they are fully accepted by the host culture. Their diasporic consciousness “has become less ethnic and more cosmopolitan, less traditional and more constructed” (Fludernik 283) in the contexts of their acceptance and assimilation.

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