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## Perspicacity and Cultural Hybridity in the Works of Sunetra Gupta – A Novel Approach

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### Abstract

The hybridity depicted in Gupta's works exemplifies personified interculturality. Self-fashioning will become comparatively simple once this amalgamation is considered, and hybrid living will be less burdensome. Defining identities in a dislocated existence is an always-evolving process. The process transitions from an individual's original self-definition to an embraced concept of hybridity. Only by enduring the anguish of existing in hybridity can one aspire to reconcile with one's dislocation and attain a new self-definition. The growing hybridity of the Indian diaspora results from individual self-fashioning, and the connections among the characters in the analysed texts contribute to this phenomenon.

**Keywords:** Interculturality, Hybridity, Diaspora, Dislocation

The Indian Diaspora refers to the movement of Indians and their socio-economic and cultural Experiences of adaptation and assimilation within host communities. The anguish of migration and dislocation experienced by these writers permeates their writings. Novels and novels depict narratives of profound sorrow, nostalgia, and dislocation, when protagonists experience greater emotional and psychological torment than physical exhaustion. The dilemma of multiple identities, pertaining to their homelands and the nations to

which they moved, undermines their mentality. In a global environment, one cannot remain a cultural and social outsider in a foreign place for an extended period.

### Literature Review

#### Memories of Rain (1992) :

Sunetra Gupta, in her works such as *Memories of Rain* (1992) and *A Sin of Colour*, explores multicultural relationships. This article discusses the Indian Diaspora and literature

consumption. Gupta contends that relocation creates a juncture between the foreign and authority. As women, Gupta has established a niche in Britain and has extensively addressed women's experiences, desires, shortcomings, and their altering their position and status in both their new territory and their country of origin. Syal, with her nuanced wit, mourns the losses while enumerating the benefits of diasporic life. Conversely, for Gupta, the surrounding environment is not authentic; instead, it is a poetic interpretation of reality woven into the essence of her writings. As a genuine international author, the settings of all her works encompass several cosmopolitan places globally. The serene cadence of language, the gentle release of emotions, and the articulation of complexity emerging from being in a foreign place are prominently showcased in her exceptional narrative experiments. The connection between East and West leads to failure for Gupta's characters, culminating in dread, death, and separation. Gupta's figures are imbued with indigenous essence and exhibit minimal evidence of acculturation. The characters' interaction with the West is shown solely to illustrate the detrimental impact on Eastern sensibility resulting from this engagement. Conversely, Gupta's works predominantly concentrate on first-generation characters.

#### **The Glassblower's Breath (1993):**

Sunetra Gupta, in her novels *Contemplates* the intricacies of a woman's heart, yet acknowledges the agitation of a soul in search of its counterpart, finding no reflection in the mundane realm of men. As the protagonist oscillates between self-love and the pursuit of ideal love, the psyche is torn between affection for the homeland's culture and the essence of a foreign nation. A 13th-century poem by Jelaluddin Rumi serves as the epigraph for this novel, providing an exotic atmosphere to the unnamed "you's" nebulous experiences. A sophisticated contemporary woman from India, currently residing in London, her expressions

evoke the untamed impulses of the unconscious. The novel's temporal setting spans a single day during which the heroine explores her profound connections with three individuals.

Jonathan Sparrow, with whom she shares an intellectual connection, along with a butcher and a barber. The unnamed narrator asserts that "you," had cherished the three and had experienced a profound sensation of physical allure towards them. She is driven by her desires in search of a refuge for closeness with the butcher, while the baker, infatuated with her, trails after, despite being a married man with a six-year-old kid. She finally discovers a secure refuge in her Kensington residence, where she resides with her orphaned niece and her husband of mixed Iranian and English heritage. The narrative is shrouded in the memories of her sister's death and oscillates between the metropolises of Calcutta, London, and New York.

#### **Moonlight into Marzipan (1995):**

Sunetra Gupta, in her works and focuses on the lives of Promothesh and his wife Esha. Promothesh's intriguing finding of 118 transports him and Esha from a garage in Calcutta to the city of London. The upheaval caused by the transition and the enigmatic sequence of events culminates in Esha's death, which transforms Promothesh's existence into one of exile. *Moonlight into Marzipan* has Bengali characters such as Yuri, Luna, and Sputnik Sen, with British ones like Sir Percival Partridge and the Latino character Juan Gorrion. The narrative transitions between Orissa, Shantiniketan, and Oxford. The indigenous essence reemerges in the Ramayana, rosogollas, and joint families, among others.

#### **A Sin of Colour (1999):**

Is an enigmatic familial narrative in which the protagonist, Debendranath, abruptly vanishes and is presumed to have drowned in Oxford. His emaciated wife clings to his memories, accompanied by Niharika, the protagonist's niece. During her time at Oxford,

she is unable to solve the riddle but comes back with the recollection of a fractured connection with the now married Daniel Faraday and his companion Morgan, the final person to have seen Debendranath alive. Niharika commences her residence at the family house, where Debendranath returns, having been an exile to himself for an extended period. The homecoming evokes recollections of bereavement and the discomfort of an unfulfilled affection for his brother's wife, Reba, who is Niharika's mother. The story examines the destruction of love and the emergence of desire among transitions between nations. Gupta's **So Good in Black (2009)**:

Commences with the enigmatic demise of Damini in Calcutta and explores the lives of Byron Mallick, Ela, Damini's cousin, Max the narrator, Barbara, his first wife, Nikhilesh Mukherjee, Byron's friend and brother-in-law, Shankar Kanjilal, Damini's father, among others, including Adrija. The story examines the intricate relational dynamics that intertwine and complicate their lives. Upon returning to India after a 15-year hiatus, American travel writer Max Gate attends the funeral of renowned advocacy journalist and activist Damini, who perished in a mountain cycling accident. He resides at the seaside villa of his long-time friend Byron Mallick, a prominent industrialist and history enthusiast.

### Research Methodology

The current research is depending on both primary and secondary data. The key data has been sourced from the original texts. The secondary data was obtained from research journals, periodicals, newspapers, and the Internet. This research study is both descriptive and analytical.

### Linguistic Components in Sunetra Gupta novels

As Max navigates the chaos wrought by the intrusion of the past into the present, Byron's Responsibility in the purported murder emerges, exposing the tribulations of existence.

Gupta's characters, mostly from the first generation, had a creative and romanticized perception of their origins. Their residence in Britain fosters a profound feeling of national identity rather than instilling Britishness in them. Sandhya Shukla asserts, "Indians were not the sole individuals in transit; India itself was also journeying" (Shukla 33). Gupta examines a comparable relationship with home and homeland India in her writings. Gupta's works feature a diverse array of characters who are anchored in their original places, yet nevertheless inhabit the lives of the predominantly diasporic main characters. Sunetra Gupta's works amalgamate recollections of Calcutta, London, and New York, creating a mosaic. The mind oscillates between these realms, producing many accidental analogies. The visuals vividly encapsulate all the countries simultaneously.

In *The Glassblower's Breath*, as New York awakens in its frigid cold, the unnamed heroine instantly remembers her beloved purchasing a hardcover edition of Mann's *The Holy Sinner* in a second-hand bookstall in Calcutta. Calcutta exists vividly in memories. Calcutta has significantly influenced Gupta's character, as it has for her heroes. The "inadequacy of your relationship with the city" (Gupta, *Glassblower's* 33) was perceived as a consequence of significant internal turmoil within the psyche, leading to the protagonists' failures in relationships. In her essay "Sunetra Gupta," Somdatta Mandal states that Gupta, immersed in Bengali culture, particularly the Calcutta of the 1950s and 1960s, nostalgically evokes this metropolis in her work, indicating her inability to forget the place she departed. Furthermore, she had experienced the city during both prosperous and terrible periods and remained steadfastly devoted to it, even from afar. (Mandal 165). Sunetra Gupta's protagonists inhabit a cosmopolitan lifestyle, transitioning between Calcutta and London or New York in the first four novels, and vice versa in the fifth novel. In the *Memories*, Moni's homecoming

from her husband's territory is perceived as a return from exile. Nevertheless, Gupta occasionally transcends her predisposition toward the host land when the motherland is perceived as a locus of exile for a woman. A parallel to this exilic condition for a woman, which is popularised through marriage, is apparent in the homeland context, particularly in the life of Byron Mallick's mother, who is "exiled by her marriage to a small village before she could finish her degree in English literature" (Gupta, *So Good* 42). When viewed from a female perspective, Gupta's response to the host land or motherland as an exile appears questionable.

#### Concluding remarks

In this context, it may be asserted that the foreign territory appears unfamiliar due to its association with its inhabitants, who possess a distinct sense of divergence from the East.

Life appears wonderful when confronted just with the countryside. Individuals confront adversity only when they encounter their myriad issues and difficulties. Their lives achieve the satisfaction that was before unattainable in the former territory. In the West, a new horizon emerges for individuals once the feeling of betrayal dissipates. In *Memories*, the umbilical link is severed with the dissolution of the bond with the one who brought Moni to this world. She is brought into a new existence. Nonetheless, this trance lasts just for a little period. Although Moni waits with her toes immersed in the foreign sands, she feels utterly disoriented till she returns to her homeland. Any effort to further engage the relationship is unfeasible, as she returns to India with her sole daughter, who may have served as a conduit between the pair and the two nations. For her, the ultimate truth is the nation she abandoned. Although Moni returns with the Goddess, unlike Durga, she will not return to her husband. The omen of treading on the crow's flesh implies that nothing sacred or lovely might happen to her. Her voyage to the country is

neither a realization of dreams nor an attainment of righteousness and tranquility. The referenced examples of the Naxalite's brain reduced to porridge due to police torture, the human skulls obstructing the ponds, and the current disarray of her family collectively demonstrate that home is nonexistent. Gupta's female protagonists, like Moni in *Memories*, the unnamed heroine in *The Glassblower's Breath*, and Reba in *A Sin of Colour*, embody an orientalist discourse. Their origins trace back to the era of colonialism, leading Gupta to yield to racist and patriarchal Western ideology.

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