



**POETIC USES OF DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS  
ACROSS TEXTS AND MEDIUMS, AS SHOWN IN SUJATA  
BHATT'S PURE LIZARD**

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**Abstract:** Poet Sujata Bhatt, who was born in India but grew up in the United States and had her education in Germany, writes on the connections between literature, diaspora, and memory. In particular, she uses several poetic voices (personae) that span countries, languages, and identities. Bhatt employs a variety of poetic techniques, including intertextual and intermedial approaches, in her most recent book, *Pure Lizard* [Bhatt, S. 2008. *Pure Lizard*. Manchester: Carcanet]. Using Stuart Hall's concept of diaspora as a jumping off point, I argue that Bhatt's most recent poetry collection explores a poetics of diasporic transformation through the renegotiation and appropriation of W.E.B. Du Bois's term, 'double consciousness,' as she draws on the idea of the individual who is characterised by multiple, often conflicting identities. So, I will examine how Bhatt's works and her wider poetic effort simultaneously resolve and re-enact the uneasy situation of her own and her personae's uprooted cultural identities.

**Keywords:** Double consciousness; poetry; South Asian diaspora; Sujata Bhatt.

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**Introduction:**

German-Indian poet Sujata Bhatt (cf. Sandten 2000, 99) writes from the perspective of a woman who is a migrant but who does not belong to a South Asian diasporic group. 1 Poetry by Bhatt is a refreshing change of pace from the other literary pieces in this collection, all of which are informed by the author's time spent living in South Asian diasporic groups. Bhatt's works are reflective of her own diasporic experiences; however, they cannot be understood as autobiographically. *Pure Lizard* (2008), for instance, which is her most recent collection of poetry, includes references to both Europe and Asia (German, Swedish, Finnish, Portuguese, and South Korean), as well as memories from India, ekphrastic writing (a literary, often dramatic, description of a visual work of art), intertextuality, and a variety of different media forms. 2 *Pure Lizard* uses intermedial and ekphrastic techniques to 'articulate an original, critical, and very unusual perspective on the different societies and cultures that she actively experiences,' in contrast to Bhatt's earlier work, which combined different languages to

convey her diasporic experience (cf. Sandten 1998a, 51-63; 2001, 87-98). (Sandten 2004, 194).

Here, I disentangle W. E. B. Du Bois's "double consciousness" from its genesis in 1903 (*The Souls of Black People*), when he used it to convey a "two-ness" of being "an American, a Negro" ([1903] 1996, 5). To better understand some of Bhatt's poetry, I use Du Bois's phrase as a lens. The Transcendentalist bemoaning of living "two lives, of the understanding [the demands of daily life] and of the soul" (Emerson [1842] 1982, 254) and the use of "double consciousness" as a medical term denoting split personality provided the initial inspiration for Du Bois' concept of "double con-sciousness" (e.g., the famous Mary Reynolds case<sup>3</sup>). Around the start of the twentieth century in America, du Bois used this notion to illustrate the difficulty of racial relations and the tension between the dual identities of Blackness and Americanness, which, according to the dominant culture, could not coexist.

Similarly, Sujata Bhatt's works convey the idea of conflicting kinships (her 'double selves,' as I call it) — of a desire, on the one hand, to achieve independence as a dia-sporic woman writer from India, and, on the other, to continue to 'document' India's long history of colonisation, as well as her own experience of migration and feelings of displacement. It is my contention that Bhatt's poetry writings are informed by the aforementioned competing desires, each of which results in a unique and sensual vision, as well as minute observation of the scientific, historical, and artistic realms. Bhatt does not see her various'selves' as competing or divided identities, but rather as part of her multiple poetic personal-ities and the 'diasporic condition,' in contrast to Du Bois, who conceived of 'double consciousness' as an awareness of the African-American self-perception of inhabiting 'two souls, two thoughts, and two reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body' ([1903] 1996, 5).

Notwithstanding a multicultural, feminist, and at times communal subjectivity, Bhatt's poetry is notable for its powerful autobiographical tendency, which I call confessional. Poems in which Bhatt recalls her childhood in India using metaphor and spatial allusion have a strong personal urge. In her poetry, Bhatt's "external stimuli" serve as the catalyst for the emergence of new forms of subjectivity (Sandten 2000, 115, 2004, 195). By this phrase, I mean Bhatt's innovative use of a wide variety of literary, visual, and aural mediums to express a more comprehensive diasporic awareness. Being a poet "in the world," she is not limited to the confines of any one national or cultural area, and can, with the help of a few well-chosen disguises, blend in with almost any setting she chooses to investigate. Yet as I want to show, Bhatt's poems also recognise the constraints of masking. Du Bois's expanded definition of "double consciousness" includes the following: "a weird feeling," or the ongoing experience of "seeing at oneself through the eyes of others, of measur-ing one's soul by the standards of a world that looks on in amused disdain and pity." One may argue that Bhatt's use of intertextual, intermedial, and ekphrastic appropriations reveals, even as it vehemently critiques, mainstream views of discrimination and exclusion along the lines of gender, race, class, and caste (Du Bois [1903] 1996, 5).

### **Bhatt's poetry intertextual and intermedial techniques:**

Bhatt uses "external stimuli" including paintings, etchings, litho-graphs, music, radio documentaries, and films as inspiration for many of her poetry. Visual or audio-visual exposure to these other media is the starting point for the creative and selective adaption process. In this piece, we shall use the word ekphrasis, which James Heffernan defined seminally as "the verbal representation of visual representation," to examine these transformations of works from various mediums (1993, 7). Poems by Sujata Bhatt engage in medial interference and intermedial reference by drawing inspiration from works of art and other texts that serve as what I call "external stimulus." The semiotic, aesthetic, iconographic,

or structural norms and capabilities of the original media inform the process of adaptation. Therefore, the medium must be changed to fit the poet's unique set of connections, fantasies, and interpretations. Poems, as a literary form characterised by aesthetic shortness, generally necessitate a "condensing" of the original medium. As one example, poems provide many opportunities for creative reworking of the original medium, which in turn allows for the expression of different voices. A picture, for instance, may only provide indirect meaning since it cannot 'speak,' yet a poem may provide a work of fiction a greater sense of verisimilitude, or a distinctive voice.

I turn to literary historian Irina O. Rajewsky's in-depth study *Intermediality* in order to situate myself among the many different ideas of intermediality that have been studied since the mid-1990s.<sup>4</sup> (2002). Rajewsky defines "intermediality" as the phenomenon that occurs when traditional barriers between media are disregarded (cf. Rajewsky 2002, 52) ... the origins of at least two traditionally separate art forms may be found in a single piece. In light of this, my research makes use of the communicative-semiotic/hermeneutic notion of intermediality, which emphasises the intentional linkages between the 'texts' of origin and the roles they play in the 'texts' of destination (cf. Rajewsky 2002, 48). In keeping with this approach, I contend that a defining feature of Bhatt's poetry is the metaphorical interplay between visual and linguistic aspects inside a poem.

My focus is on the ways in which the original meaning of a text is preserved and transformed when it is translated from one medium (visual or textual) to another (poetry), each of which has its own unique set of codes, possibilities, and restrictions. A crucial topic that sheds light on Bhatt's creative technique of intermedial reference is how a poem by Bhatt, with its own specific literary methods, adapts and organises themes or components of a painting by, say, Portuguese figurative and feminist painter Paula Rego. Bhatt also incorporates the writings of Paula Modersohn-Becker and Paula Rego, the two biographers and art historians, as well as other texts that provide information on the artists.

### **Anthology of Bhatt's diasporic and autobiographical poetry:**

A picture of Bhatt's grandparents prompts the speaker's "inquiry" into an Indian history in the United States in the poem "Devibhen and Harilal in Pennsylvania" (Bhatt 2008, 120). This poem might be regarded as a "confessional" poetry. The poem's epigraph, by George Lamming, alludes to this idea: "And for remembrance I had replaced enquiry" (Bhatt 2008, 120). Although Bhatt may still go to India, she is unable to return to the India of her youth. According to Sara Ahmed's perceptive analysis of strangers, home, and the postcolonial state, the persona of the poem lives in "the precise place in which [she] is nearly, but not quite, at home" (Ahmed 2000, 78). This exemplifies "the impossibility and necessity of the subject's future," where the subject travels towards but never reaches its destination (Ahmed 2000, 78). With a touch of melancholy, though, Bhatt draws inspiration from the cultural (con)text of 'India,' her family background, and Indian customs. Many lines and the title of this poem imply that the speaker is apparently residing in Pennsylvania, and she offers imaginative commentary on a black and white portrait of her grandparents, Devibhen and Harilal, using an ekphrastic writing technique. It is now the fall season. The speaker speculates on the hues her grandparents would have worn and is also informed this information, most likely by other relatives who have seen this picture and remember them. The ekphrastic description alludes to a picture shot by Datta Khopker in April 1941 in Ahmedabad, 'after lunch,' in which the speaker's grandparents may be seen dressed and standing in their characteristically unfussy manner (l. 19). Bhatt expresses her sadness at never having met her grandpa via the poem's detailed description of the image. Her grandfather passed away five years after the picture was shot. The speaker adds that she never saw her grandma in any state other than that of a

widow, "forever in white" (l. 28). 5 The speaker also expresses a desire that the photographer "had taken more images -/of the yard, the street, /of the house, /of my mum" (ll. 30–34). She muses, "If only Harilal had lived" (l. 35). Repeating the phrase "if only..." (line 37) suggests that the speaker wishes that life's events had gone a different way. A picture of the speaker's grandparents is all she has to go on, and even then, she has to rely on 'narration' from others and 'self-narration' to create a mental image of them.

The themes of name, renaming, the search for identity, and the discovery of identity through love are at the heart of the short poem "Suji" (Bhatt 2008, 52), which bears the subtitle "A naming ceremony." As far as I know from multiple personal talks with the poet, Michael Augustin, a German poet, translator, and radio commentator, uses the word "Suji" as a term of affection for his wife. This poem is Bhatt's reflection on her own interpretations and constructs of self via someone else. Bhatt implies that the speaker has not only established her position 'in the [European, and more specifically German] world' via this process of naming and renaming, but that she has also been assigned this place. Maybe the pun on "remains" in the statement "So Suji stayed" is a fitting retort to this scenario. The 'external stimulant' of food, drink, and herbs<sup>6</sup> is used by Bhatt in this poem, as it is in many of her other poems, to bridge the gaps between the many realities she has experienced. By placing the line "Half English, half Hindi, half joking -" in the poem's metrical centre (l. 6, my italics), Bhatt alludes to Du Bois' idea of "double consciousness" to describe the type of subjectivity he creates in this piece. Because the speaker is in a state of transition suggests that she is not fully formed; nonetheless, the irony is that she also "remains" in this location. Identification is a process, as Hall reminds us (cf. Hall 1990, 222–237). In 'Suji,' Bhatt appropriates Du Bois' 'two-ness,' the state of 'half-ness,' and re-enacts, but also demonstrates self-reflexivity about, the uneasy situation of her own diasporic identity as a German Indian woman writer.

Like the poem "Learning the Ramayana" from Bhatt's poetry collection *Monkey Shadows* (Bhatt 1991, 42), the book's title poem, "Pure Lizard," is an introspective piece that reflects on the speaker's youth in India. The story of "Learning the Ramayana" revolves on the protagonist's encounter with a troupe of monkey-impersonating street performers who are performing acts from the ancient Sanskrit scripture *The Ramayana*. She also encounters a creature that looks like a reptile, a lady, and a monkey all at once in this poetry. The story of the bizarre lady who resembled a monkey and a reptile is continued. I thought of her again today, /still convinced of my remembrance," she writes at the poem's finale, evoking vivid childhood recollections (ll. 35–6). After seeing this mysterious woman, the speaker is left wondering, "Who was she?" Can you tell me who she is and where she is at this very moment? (ll. 37–8). Nonetheless, in a postcolonial setting, the stranger is never wholly unfamiliar, but rather is already socially constructed along familiar (i.e. normative) lines, as shown by Sara Ahmed's concept of "strange encounters" (2000). 7 In the conclusion of the poem, Bhatt's speaker reframes Ahmed's allegation, calling this enigmatic woman "my very own Sybil" (l. 39). A sibyl (with a y) is a female figure who acts as a seer or prophet. With her declaration in line 30 that "this desperate, odd figure is mine," the speaker embraces otherness, once again acknowledging in an act of "double awareness" that this unnamed figure is both a part of herself and the source of her inspiration.

### **"Double consciousness" to describe:**

For example, "Nine Poems in Response to Etchings by Paula Rego" (7-13), "Nine Poems in Response to Lithographs by Paula Rego" (98-102) and "Four Poems in Response to Paintings by Paula Rego" (102-105) are all ekphrastic poems inspired by the work of Portuguese figurative and feminist painter Paula Rego (103–105). Included in *Pure Lizard* are a set of

poems titled "Four Poems: Paula Becker Talks" (pp. 63-69) that are derived on letters sent by Becker to either Rainer Maria Rilke or Clara Westhoff. The second part of *Pure Lizard* (there are four parts total) is called "Telemann's Frogs," after the Baroque composer Georg Philipp Telemann's concerto "Reling" or "The Frogs." This part also contains poems like "What Is Exotic?" (17) and "Storm" (20), "Bhagavati" (21), "Coffee" (24), "Good Omens" (26), "Just the Blackest Stones" (30), "Parvati Temple, Poona" (33), and "Whenever I Return," which were inspired by Bhatt's travels throughout India (34). There are descriptions of the North Sea (in "Gale Force Winds"), music (in "Piece Caprice: for Bob Zieff, the composer"), a Korean mask (in "Buddha's Lost Mother"), and a sculpture by German artist Ria Eng (56) that inspired the poems. Bhatt's poetry teacher Eleanor Wilner inspired her to write the poem "And look: the olives mature, the lizards stretch" (75). Little poems like "Seeing India in Surprising Places," in which the speaker argues that the Mayan civilization also included the half-human, half-elephant God Ganesh, and "Three Poems from South Korea" (76-79) are included in the book. It is the speaker's contention that '[m]emories warp geography' (l. 7), which functions to undermine and even demolish conventional notions of national boundaries and cultural norms. Jazz music, such as Chet Baker's "Sad Walk" (88); a study on Schiller's *Schreibtisch in Buchewald* by Dieter Kuhn; a three-hour radio documentary on Friedrich Schiller by Michael Augustin and Walter Weber broadcast on Radio Bremen (134); and many other sources (110).

In this section of the paper, I will concentrate on how Bhatt infuses the modern artist Paula Rego's perspective on feminism and female concerns into her poems that rely on Rego's paintings, lithographs, or etchings. She is uninhibited in delving farther into the realm of poetic language and thinking that she can act out, all the while keeping the natural flow, unforced improvisation, and strong 'story' drive that are hallmarks of her work. The capacity to visually communicate tales is a defining feature of Rego's paintings (thus my allusions to the "visual language" or "narrative quality" of a painting). She also uses "external stimuli" like nursery songs and J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* as inspiration for her works of art. Bhatt's lyrical imagination seems to have been stimulated by Rego's aesthetic ethics, as well. Bhatt's composing style may be better understood via his inventive use of Rego's paintings. Bhatt's poems, which are based on Rego's paintings, etchings, and lithographs, have a strong "narrative" drive since each poem tells a tale. Bhatt's "masking poetry" might be seen as an extension of Rego's work since the inanimate things and figures sometimes speak out in their own right.

Bhatt's ekphrastic poems on Rego's works, in which the latter adapts J.M. Barrie's children's book *Peter Pan*, re-inscribe disadvantaged voices and figures like Wendy, the naive and pure girl who has not garnered as much critical attention as the figure of Peter Pan. In the same way that Du Bois's concept of "double consciousness" is an indictment of racism, Bhatt's ekphrastic approach draws attention to how the female body is depicted through a feminist lens in Rego's often eerie artworks. This is especially true of the themes of menstruation, bleeding, and procreation that Bhatt re-inscribes into her poems on Rego's artworks. Ekphrastic poems about the crow's elevated role in older literary writings including fables, allegories, and fairy tales inspired by Rego's etchings "The Crow's Home" (7), "The Crow and his Cat" (7), "A Tube of Paint" (8), and "The Night Crow" (9). There is no alteration to the mythological significance of the crow or raven in either Rego or Bhatt's works. Nonetheless, both (in etching and poetry) call attention to the cats, dogs, and chicks that have fallen prey to the crow. Nonetheless, the crow's personification as a herald of death is not downplayed but rather highlighted; for example, in "The Crow's Home" (7), the crow's indifference to the plight of the other animals is shown by the line "But the crow won't/meet anyone's gaze today."

Jane Eyre/Bertha Mason haunts the ekphrastic poems "Bertha" (100) and "Biting" (100) that Rego wrote in response to his etchings of scenes from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Although recognising Brontë's exoticization and exclusion of Bertha's character, both Bhatt and Rego pick up on the concept of Bertha's craziness (who is represented largely in conformity with nine-teenth-century racial stereotypes). But, both Gilbert and Gubar's "crazy lady in the attic" is a caricature, and both the artist and the writer strive to construct a new version, a fierce rewrite of the stereotype (1979). She's not crazy, Bhatt says; she's simply angry at the guy who walked out on her before she could say goodbye. The poem "Biting" refers to the instability of the figure and, by extension, the instability of male-dominated canonical works of literature and literary criticism with lines like "In reality Bertha is youthful and shapely" (ll. 1-2) and "she has to be slain" (l. 11). Rochester's patriarchal power is challenged in Brontë's work via the use of Rego's etchings, such as "Girl Reading at Window" (98), "Crumpled" (99), "Jane on a Chair with Monkey" (99), "Jane's Back" (99), "Bertha" (100), "Biting" (100), "The Keeper" (101) and "Come to Me" (102). Rego's etching features an aged Jane who seems to be sobbing, with her eyes closed and her body contorted as if in pain. Rochester is nowhere to be seen, and the background is filled with flames. Rochester is mentioned in the third stanza of Bhatt's poem. Creative adaptations of Rego's art works are not as much motivated by the artist's life as her ekphrastic poems on Paula Modersohn-self-portraits Becker's (see. Bhatt's poetry book, *A Colour for Solitude*, 2002; cf. Sandten 2004, 193-209). Instead, Bhatt (re-)contextualizes Rego's artworks in these poems, which she describes as including "a performance aspect, emphasising on the act of spectatorship that [draws] attention to methods of seeing and their implications in modern society." Brosch (2002), p. 122. In emulating Rego's 'narrative' manner and re-interpreting and re-imagining Rego's art, Bhatt's 'masking' attempts to 'capture the force of the image' (Sandten 2004, 201). Consequently, I contend, Bhatt projects her own conceptions onto the figures themselves, thereby shifting "the tensions and ambivalences of ekphrasis onto the figure or action in the text" (Brosch 2002, 109). Rego's paintings have an unusual intermedial subtext because of the organic structure of Bhatt's poetry, which also lends the paintings a distinct vividness and narrative mode (cf. Sandten 2004, 207). By doing this, Bhatt hides her identity not only in the works of art itself, but also in the literary materials that inform them.

The picture "The Cadet and his Sister" (103) by Rego from 1988 will serve as the inspiration for my last example of an ekphrastic poetry based on Rego's works. The poem is told from the viewpoints of both the young cadet (referred to throughout the poem as "he") and his sister (referred to throughout the poem as "she"). As Bhatt imagines the cadet and his sister's life, the poem functions as a verbal or poetic rewriting of Rego's titular 'story' painting, with a greater attention - as the painting indicates - on the sister, who is depicted, in both poem and painting, as the dominating figure. There's a painting of a sister kneading in front of her brother as he sits at the table as she ties his shoes. It's because of this that she's obstructing access to the alley of trees that starts between the two walls on her right and left. Her head is down and her eyes are downcast as she studies the footwear, while her brother the cadet sits on a stone bench to the left of the picture, in front of the left wall, staring absently into the alleyway. Bhatt speculates that the trees in the backdrop alley are eucalyptus trees, writing "he'll recall the smell/of eucalyptus leaves" (l. 15). I contend that Rego's painting alludes to the cadet's imminent death on account of the cadet's World War I outfit, his head's oblique angle away from the viewer's gaze, and the presence of the rooster, a symbol of death in western Christianity, in the bottom left corner. Bhatt uses 'external stimulus' to investigate many selves/personae by heavily elaborating on the concept of self and other and by labelling the poem 'The Cadet and his Sister. Bhatt is able to conceive both critically and favourably a woman's capacities of pro-creation at a period when it was her "ascribed job" to reproduce, as

seen by his emphasis on the probable future of the cadet's sister: "she'll have a kid, a boy" (l. 25). Yet, I contend that Bhatt, being a native of India, a place where the notion of rebirth is still pervasive in Hinduism, and a society where male progeny are privileged, may also indirectly reflect these two beliefs. If the sister loses her brother in battle, Bhatt imagines that she will have a son whom she would name after him and who will be "just" like him. The red of the sister's cap and outfit is echoed in the red collar of her brother's uniform and the red stripes on his military pants, suggesting a sense of continuity that is somewhat at odds with itself. Bhatt is able to call attention to methods of "seeing" (the process of ekphrasis) and its consequences in contemporary society by copying Rego's paintings like "The Cadet and his Sister" (cf. Brosch 2002, 122).

The last piece I'll discuss is Bhatt's ekphrastic poem "Felice Beato Enters Sikander Bagh" (Bhatt 2008, 109), which is based on an image of the Sikander Bagh palace ruins. During the Indian Rebellion/'The Great Mutiny' (1857-59), the British put down in blood, as shown in this image taken in Lucknow, India, in 1858. As an Italian-British photographer, Felice Beato (1832-1909) was an early pioneer in the field of East Asian war photography. The subject of Bhatt's poem alternates between the first person singular ('you,' in this case referring to the speaker Felice Beato), and the second person plural ('our,' referring to the speakers). The latter might be seen as the "compensation" for the "failure of individual memory [by] community memory," to borrow a phrase from Sara Ahmed. To "write the history of a country," to tell "the tale of a common past that is already gone," the speaker relies on this communal memory (Ahmed 2000, 78). This is "a common history" that must be revealed and recalled, retrieved and written from memories that were never buried: "Two thousand men slaughtered/and left to rot." "It was simple to find bones/that were never buried -" (ll. 12-15, my italics). How do you want our history and legacy to be kept alive and remembered? The emphasis on chronicling and so not forgetting the horrific history of British colonisation in India (ll. 16-17) is repeated throughout the poem. The book is directed primarily at the photographer (and by extension the reader) who uses photography as a "visual documentary" medium. Then, we meet the Anglo-Indian official shown, Martin Richard Gubbins, in his own stanza: Bhatt uses the emphatic marker 'Yes' to attract attention to a stereotypically colonial circumstance (the pastoral image of a family having tea) before shattering it (l. 27). "the same same Gubbins/who murdered himself in 1863" follows (ll. 27-28). Here is where the poetry stops, and it stops quickly. Reports indicate that Gubbins killed himself owing to mental melancholy, maybe brought on by his having to leave India and relinquish his sahib title. Bhatt's creative appropriation of history and photography, which she re-writes and re-imagines as quasi-collective memory, is a hallmark of this and all of her previous poems that are prompted by "external stimuli." Bhatt is able to explain the horrible colonial atrocities which were filmed by Beato by studying a pivotal period in Indian colonial history, re-establishing a symbolic and emotional connection to her place of birth. Bhatt therefore expresses her diasporic awareness, since she does not depend on a "authoritative" account of history but instead shows in an original way that she is a part of the "constant "play" of history, culture, and power. (Hall 1990, 225). As a result, she investigates the intertwined natures of literature, memory, and migration.

### **Conclusion:**

In this essay, I have discussed how and to what degree Sujata Bhatt's poetry crosses medial, cultural, historical, and national borders in order to place her various selves and subjectivities within a larger postcolonial framework that goes beyond center-periphery dichotomies. Through the works of Portuguese feminist, figurative painter Paula Rego and the German expressionist painter Paula Modersohn-Becker, Bhatt explores and imagines a wider scope of

'other' voices, sometimes even that of inanimate objects or animals, all while critically engaging with the issue of gender in a playful way. In particular, her confessional poems show how the poet strives to reflect on the moments that have marked her identity(ies) and poetic personas as an Indian-born, American-educated, and German-resident writer, illustrating the variety of her experiences in a South Asian diasporic condition marked by a 'double,' indeed a 'multiple,' consciousness. One way to show how Bhatt's poetic personae struggle to reconcile their competing identities is to read her poetry through the lens of W. E. B. Du Bois' concept of "double consciousness." Bhatt is a woman, wife, mother, Indian, American, and German poet who lives outside of a South Indian diasporic community. The poet, in her poems, adopts a number of personae from different historical periods and geographic locations, speaking a transcultural gendered poetics that combines elements of art and literature from Europe, the United States, and Asia (both South and East). Reflecting Stuart Hall's definition of diaspora as a "awareness of a necessary heterogeneity and variety," Bhatt's works may be seen as critical interventions that oppose a homogenising of the complexity of the South Asian diasporic experience (1990, 235).

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