

## Language, Loss, and the Third Space: Hybridity in Sujata Bhatt's "Search for My Tongue"

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**Abstract:** The present study is going to analyze the themes of linguistic displacement, cultural loss, and hybrid identity in Sujata Bhatt's poem "Search for My Tongue" in light of postcolonial theory, particularly Homi K. Bhabha's notions of the third space and hybridity. Bhatt's poem is observed as a touching consideration of the expressive and mental consequences of living between languages and cultures, exemplifying the struggles of upholding one's native tongue in a diasporic situation. The investigation shows how Bhatt uses metaphor and imagery in order to transport the intricacies of identity development in a postcolonial background, where the loss of language is indistinguishably connected with the loss of cultural legacy. By drawing from Bhabha's concept of the third space, this article emphasizes how Bhatt's work goes beyond binary oppositions of home and exile, self and other, thus forming a deeper vision of identity that includes diversity and flexibility. The poem's investigation of hybrid identity is underlined by the strain between the familiar and the foreign, as Bhatt utters the struggle to regain one's voice in the middle of the burdens of integration and cultural expurgation. This research eventually contends that "Search for My Tongue" not only echoes Bhatt's individual journey of linguistic and cultural negotiation but also acts as a larger clarification of the experiences of relegated voices dealing with the complications of postcolonial identity. Via this inspection, the present paper leads to the continuing discourse on language, identity, and the transformative potential of hybridity in the present literature.

**Key points:** Cultural Displacement, Homi K. Bhabha, Hybridity, Language Loss, Postcolonialism, Third Space.

### 1. Introduction

In postcolonial literature, language is often considered as a spot of strain, identity, and confrontation. For poets and authors dealing with the consequences of colonialism and migration, linguistic expression becomes intensely tangled with questions of cultural belonging and selfhood. Sujata Bhatt's poem "Search for My Tongue" touchingly shows this clash, expressing the expressive and mental confusion of a speaker stuck between a mother tongue and an implemented colonial language. The poem is in fact an outstanding consideration of the experience of linguistic displacement, characterized by a wish for the lost native language and the multifaceted feelings regarding bilingual identity.

Bhatt's practice of both English and Gujarati in the poem emphasizes the dichotomy of the speaker's linguistic world, signifying the larger diasporic brawl of upholding cultural origins while adjusting to a dominant linguistic setting. This paper seeks to examine "Search for My Tongue" in light of postcolonial theory, chiefly Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the third space, a liminal zone in which cultural meanings are converted and reshaped. As stated by Bhabha, hybridity is not only a mixture of cultural features but an active procedure through which new identities and meanings arise, defying inert binaries of self/other and colonizer/colonized.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

In postcolonial circumstances, language is not just a device for communication but a critical indicator of identity, power, and belonging. For human beings who migrate or live between cultures, the loss or marginalization of a native language can lead to a deep feeling of cultural estrangement and identity disintegration. Bhatt's "Search for My Tongue" sturdily enunciates this strain, still much of the current critical discourse means to concentrate closely on the poem as an expression of grief for lost linguistic legacy. This standpoint disregards the profounder difficulties of hybrid identity construction and the transformative potential of linguistic dichotomy.

The problem this research addresses is the necessity for a better understanding of "Search for My Tongue" not only as a narrative of language loss, but as a vibrant illustration of cultural hybridity and identity compromise. There is a serious gap in copiously inspecting how Bhatt's poetic form and language choice work in Homi K. Bhabha's theoretical agenda of the third space, where contradictory cultural identities interconnect and engender novel implications. By re-investigation of the poem through this perspective, the present paper is going to emphasize the inventive and resilient likelihoods entrenched in linguistic hybridity, and how Bhatt's poem defies dominant narratives of integration and cultural transparency.

## **3. Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it leads to a better understanding of postcolonial identity, language politics, and cultural hybridity in the current literature. By investigating Bhatt's "Search for My Tongue" through the perspective of Bhabha's theory of the third space, the paper presents a novel explanatory outline that goes beyond one-dimensional views of language loss and recovery. It shows how the poem exemplifies the intricacies of bilingualism and the pressures that arise from living between cultures.

This research is chiefly valuable for the researchers of postcolonial literature, diaspora studies, and linguistic identity, as it reveals how Bhatt's poetic technique, mostly her practice of code-switching and structural disintegration acts not just as an individual manifestation of cultural disarticulation but as a larger disparagement of colonial linguistic hierarchies. What's more, this investigation results in the unending deliberations about the implication of literature in demonstrating and modelling hybrid identities, expressly in progressively multiethnic and globalized societies.

At last, this article is going to underscore the significance of retrieving linguistic and cultural diversity as a foundation of power rather than an emblem of disintegration. It inspires a more unfathomable consideration of how downgraded voices deal with and reform the spaces between cultures, and how literature can be regarded as an influential tool for talking about these experiences.

## **4. Review of the Literature**

### **4.1. On the Poem**

"In Her Own Voice: Sujata Bhatt and the Aesthetic Articulation of the Diasporic Condition" (2000) by Sandten analyzes the poems of Sujata Bhatt by concentrating on how her poetry revolves around the diasporic experience, identity, and the multifaceted relationship between culture, language, and belonging in the framework of dislocation. The article starts with an introduction to Sujata Bhatt's literary influences, emphasizing her implication as a poet of the Indian diaspora. Bhatt, born in India and later living in the United States and Germany, often refers to the themes of relocation, cultural hybridity, and the hardships of dealing with manifold identities. Her poetry attracts the readers from different circumstances, particularly those who have undergone the intricacies of being dithering between various cultures (pp. 99-101).

Sandten's emphasis on the diasporic condition probes the emotional, mental, and societal features of being part of a diasporic community. This includes scrutinizing how Bhatt depicts the feeling of displacement, the strain between "home" and "away," and the quest for belonging in a world that

often describes people in terms of their roots. Bhatt's poetry can be observed as a way of giving voice to the clashing experiences of migrants and their offspring (pp. 102-109).

Bhatt's poems also depict the theme of language as an indispensable facet of identity creation. As a poet who writes in English but is affected by her native languages (such as Gujarati), Bhatt struggles with the idea of linguistic and cultural estrangement. The article then examines how Bhatt benefits from language both as a tool of confrontation and as a bridge between diverse cultural worlds. Her poems echo the difficulties of being a writer who has to circumnavigate between languages, where each language transports with it layers of cultural implication, history, and emotion (pp. 110-112).

The phrase aesthetic articulation proposes the way Bhatt's poetry articulates or transfers the diasporic experience through literary form and style. This involves studying Bhatt's practice of poetic techniques such as imagery, rhythm, symbolism, and metaphor in order to embody the disintegration and changeableness of identity in a globalized world. The article similarly discusses how Bhatt's choice of topic, accompanied by her groundbreaking poetic style, permits her to induce the intricacy of the diasporic condition (pp. 113-119). Basically, this research inspects how Bhatt's poetry gives voice to the challenges of the diasporic experience, highlighting her usage of aesthetic techniques to epitomize the intricacies of identity, displacement, and cultural negotiation in a globalized world.

"Cultural Divergence in Sujata Bhatt's Poem "Search for My Tongue"" (2022) by Nachiya is an examination of Bhatt's well-known poem "Search for My Tongue" and how it echoes the pressures and difficulties included in the cultural divergence undergone by diasporic people, mainly in relation to language, identity, and belonging. The article has begun by referring to the poem "Search for My Tongue", which is one of Bhatt's most extensively read poems. The poem is about the clash that arises when one is trapped between two cultures precisely, when one is engrossed in a foreign language (in Bhatt's case, English) but still recalls a bottomless, expressive association with their mother tongue (in Bhatt's case, Gujarati) (p. 21).

Then, the article offers a background on Sujata Bhatt's life and her position as a poet of the Indian diaspora. Her individual experience of migrating from India to the United States and later living in Germany enlightens much of her poetry, making her works intensely obsessed with the subjects of cultural hybridity and linguistic identity. At the heart of the article, we can see the theme of cultural divergence, which denotes the way in which a person's cultural or linguistic background might "diverge" or come into skirmish with the dominant culture they find themselves in. In Bhatt's poem, "Search for My Tongue", this cultural divergence is palpable in the speaker's feeling of being detached from her mother tongue after learning and adjusting to a new language. The article also inspects how this poem mirrors the discomfort and bewilderment that often go with the procedure of acculturation and the challenges of dealing with manifold cultural and linguistic identities (p. 22).

The article finishes by placing "Search for My Tongue" in the framework of diasporic literature, and states that Bhatt's investigation of linguistic loss and cultural divergence is a theme prevalent in works by writers in the diaspora who struggle with questions of belonging, identity, and the pressures between legacy and integration. In this circumstance, cultural divergence can be considered as an essential theme not only in Bhatt's work but also in the poetry of many other postcolonial and diasporic poets who analyze the hybrid nature of identity (p. 22).

Furthermore, "Glossectomy and Lyric Histories in Sujata Bhatt's Poetry" (2025) by Ramesh Sankar and Ravindran analyzes the intersection of language, identity, and historical memory in Bhatt's poetry. This concept denotes the surgical elimination of the tongue. Symbolically, it signifies a loss or disempowerment of language, identity, or individualism. In poetry, it implies the challenges of expressing one's cultural or linguistic identity, particularly in postcolonial contexts. It also refers to how language can be "silenced" or "mutilated" by colonial history, power structures, or trauma (pp. 1-12).

Lyric poetry is recognized for its emphasis on personal expression, emotion, and reflection. "Lyric histories" proposes how Bhatt takes advantage of lyricism in order to intertwine individual, cultural, and historical narratives. These histories are entrenched in such themes as migration, colonialism, loss of language, or the intricacies of hybrid identities. Bhatt is acknowledged for her work that discusses themes like displacement, loss, and the difficulty of being stuck between cultures. Her poetry often refers to the pressures between English (as a colonial language) and her native languages, principally Gujarati. Bhatt's poems commonly focus on the personal prices of living in a world where language and culture are challenged territories (pp. 13-20).

The article then examines how Bhatt's poetry studies the trauma or challenges of losing one's native language (through the metaphor of glossectomy) and how this affects identity, expressiveness, and memory. The notion of glossectomy is in fact connected to how colonial history, mainly British colonialism, has compulsorily changed language and identity in previously colonized districts, and how Bhatt refers to this in her poetry (pp. 21-28).

#### **4.2. On the Theory**

"Homi Bhabha's Third Space and Neocolonialism" (2021) by Abou-Agag discusses the notions introduced by Homi K. Bhabha, a very important postcolonial philosopher, in relation to neocolonialism. In particular, the research examines how Bhabha's theory of the "third space" can deliver an outline for understanding the intricacies of power, identity, and confrontation in postcolonial backgrounds, particularly in relation to neocolonialism. Bhabha's concept of the third space is a significant section of his postcolonial agenda. As said by Bhabha, the third space is a liminal space where cultures interrelate, hybridize, and generate new meanings. It is neither the completely dominant colonial space nor the entirely resilient postcolonial space. Instead, it is a space of in-betweenness that challenges static identities and leads to the appearance of new systems of cultural cooperation (pp. 25-33).

Neocolonialism symbolizes the continuation of colonial-like control by previous colonial powers, not through direct political control, but through financial, cultural, and ideological means. It is a method of unintended control that continues even after official colonialism is over. The neocolonial system often preserves the disparities of colonialism, with prior colonial powers upholding authority over earlier colonies through mechanisms like globalization, debt, and media influence. This paper also contends that Bhabha's third space offers a valuable viewpoint for understanding the perseverance of neocolonialism. Neocolonialism functions through the concession of cultural and financial spaces, and the third space results in the expression of resistance to these formulas of dominion (pp. 35-43).

"Homi K. Bhabha's Third Space Theory and Cultural Identity Today: A Critical Review" (2022) by Bhandari also offers a thorough scrutiny of Bhabha's significant idea of the third space and its application in the existing debates regarding cultural identity. Bhabha, as noted before, is a main person in postcolonial theory, and his third space concept is essential to understanding the convolutions of cultural identity as the consequence of colonialism. In other words, the third space is a figurative space where different cultures come into interaction and generate something new, a hybrid space that does not belong to either culture entirely but is a product of their contact (pp. 171-175).

Bhabha's theory of hybridity is fundamental to the third space. When colonized and colonizer cultures interconnect, they produce a "hybrid" identity, which is neither entirely one nor the other but a mixture that defies the binary thinking often found in colonial discourse (e.g., colonizer/colonized, self/other). The third space is where people can negotiate their cultural identity, moving beyond the restraints of static cultural classifications. This negotiation is regarded as both a challenge and a chance, as it can result in both authorization and strain (pp. 176-178).

Bhandari has inspected how Bhabha's theory has grown and how it is used today. Since cultural identity is a fluid and multi-layered notion, Bhandari has investigated how Bhabha's third space theory continues to reverberate in the 21st century. Similarly, one of the ways in which the Third

Space theory remains relevant today is in the context of globalization. As migration, digital media, and global trade increase, hybrid identities continue to emerge. Bhandari might explore how Bhabha's theory helps us understand these processes and the tensions that arise from them. Moreover, Bhandari has studied how the theory is employed in such fields as social justice, where the idea of a third space is used to refer to the relegation and authorization of marginal groups. The theory's focus on hybridity defies the concept of stable, essentialist identities and supports a more fluid vision of culture (pp. 179-181).

"Reconceiving Translation: Homi Bhabha's Hybridity and the Third Space in Literary Translation" (2025) by Khalifa examines the relationship between Bhabha's theoretical concepts specially hybridity and the third space in the field of literary translation. Bhabha is a prominent postcolonial theorizer, whose work emphasizes the intricacies of identity, culture, and power, particularly in colonialism and postcolonial societies. His most imperative ideas, hybridity and the third space, are crucial to understanding the way in which cultural encounters reform identities and meanings. Bhabha's notion of hybridity signifies the amalgamation of two or more cultural identities, which originates from colonial encounters. Rather than observing cultural identity as a static, vital, or unadulterated entity, hybridity recognizes that identities are continually transferred and malformed through communication. It is about the space where cultures meet, clash, and reconstruct one another in ways that confront customary limitations (pp. 16-20).

The article also inspects how Bhabha's ideas can be used in the procedure of literary translation. Literary translation isn't just about transporting meaning from one language to another; it is actually about transferring cultural differences and restructuring meanings across languages. Through the lens of hybridity, translation can be watched as a type of cultural conversation that brings about the amalgamation or reconfiguration of ideas, notions, and identities. It challenges the idea of accuracy in translation, signifying instead that translation includes the conception of novel, hybrid meanings. For instance, when a text is translated from one language to another, the translator isn't only swapping words; they're engaging in an act of cultural intercession that inexorably makes a new type of the original text, one that transports hints of both the source and target cultures. This act of mediation can be measured as a hybridizing procedure, where meanings grow, transmute, and sometimes even undermine the original text (pp. 21-26).

## 5. Theoretical Framework

This study benefits from Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory, chiefly the notions of hybridity, ambivalence, and the third space as the main outline for examining Sujata Bhatt's "Search for My Tongue". Bhabha's theory, presented in his important book *The Location of Culture* (1994), delivers a critical standpoint on the ways in which colonial and postcolonial identities are created, transferred, and undermined. Bhabha defies static, essentialist concepts of cultural identity, claiming instead that identity is created via interaction, negotiation, and difference. For Bhabha, the postcolonial subject exists in an "in-between" space, formed by the strain between the colonized and colonizer, tradition and modernity, the native and the foreign.

One of Bhabha's dominant influences is the notion of the third space, a liminal zone that develops in the happenstance between two or more cultural or linguistic systems. Instead of observing this space as a spot of misperception or calamity, Bhabha redefines it as a place of imaginative likelihood, a space where meanings are neither static nor unchanging, but repeatedly transferred and re-signified. The third space leads to the development of hybridity, a situation in which cultural identities are not only mixed but are reconstructed in ways that defy prevailing power structures and undermine binary obstructions. Bhabha (1994) notes, "It is in the emergence of the interstices, the overlap and displacement of domains of difference, that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (p. 23).

In "Search for My Tongue", the third space is not only representational but also material, as it is represented in the structure and language of the poem itself. Bhatt divides the poem to two parts written in English and Gujarati, visually and linguistically exemplifying the cohabitation and clash of twofold identities. The middle section, written in Gujarati script, interjects the stream of English

and restates the manifestation of the mother tongue. This structural hybridity ratifies Bhabha's theory on the page, showing the poem as a third space where both languages exist in an active, often perturbed, but ultimately co-creative association.

The practice of code-switching in the poem also exemplifies linguistic hybridity, a perception Bhabha indirectly presents in his theorization of cultural discourse. The act of implanting Gujarati into an English-language poem can be understood as a fight against linguistic hegemony and a repudiation to completely integrate into the dominant culture. Rather than depicting the mother tongue as irreversibly lost, Bhatt depicts it as something quiescent but recoverable.

By employing Bhabha's theories to analyze Bhatt's poem, this research shows how "Search for My Tongue" goes beyond an unsophisticated binary of loss and recovery. Instead, it presents a potent interpretation of how cultural identity is shaped in the flowing landscape of hybridity and the third space. Bhatt's poem becomes an act of postcolonial confrontation not only by regaining the quietened voice of the mother tongue but also by representing how hybrid linguistic manifestations can defy cultural hierarchies and redefine belonging in a globalized, diasporic world.

## **6. Discussion**

### **6.1. Language as Identity: The Trauma of Linguistic Loss**

In "Search for My Tongue," Sujata Bhatt starts with an influential revelation: "You ask me what I mean / by saying I have lost my tongue" (lines 1-2). These initial lines concisely deliver the dominant clash of the poem, which is the linguistic displacement. The phrase "lost my tongue" has a figurative implication, signifying that language is not just a device for communication but a dynamic aspect of one's cultural and individual identity. The trauma of losing one's mother tongue embodies a thoughtful loss of self, complicatedly linked with the postcolonial experience of linguistic imperialism.

Critic Nira Yuval-Davis (1994) stresses the implication of language in identity creation, uttering, "language plays a very important role in the formation and manifestation of identity, particularly for diasporic people" (p. 32). This declaration is profoundly echoed in Bhatt's poem, where the speaker struggles with the inferences of her linguistic selections. As she talks about her association with language, she expresses feelings of guiltiness and estrangement for letting English control her internal world. This interior clash has roots in the stresses of integration into a colonial linguistic hierarchy, where the act of speaking English becomes a two-edged blade. The speaker's skirmish is movingly shown in the lines:

I ask you, what would you do  
If you had two tongues in your mouth,  
And lost the first one, the mother tongue,  
And could not really know the other,  
The foreign tongue.  
You could not use them both together  
Even if you thought that way. (Lines 3-9)

Here, Bhatt shows the natural association between language and identity, suggesting that language is intensely entrenched in one's being, fed by cultural legacy and individual experiences. Though, the succeeding understanding that this relationship would weaken when outshined by the English language discloses the expressive chaos linked with linguistic loss. The speaker's guiltiness is tangible as she recognizes the corrosion of her mother tongue: "I have lost my tongue" (line 2) becomes a refrain that underlines her torment.

Homi K. Bhabha's notion of the "double bind" is predominantly pertinent in this situation. He claims that colonial subjects often find themselves in an absurd circumstance where they have to implement the colonizer's language so as to have access to power and understanding, still by doing

so, they jeopardize expunging their own cultural specificity. Bhabha notes, "The colonial subject is caught in a double bind: to be modern, to be 'civilized,' to be part of the nation, they must adopt the language of the colonizer" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). This concept agrees with Bhatt's speaker, who feels obliged to circumnavigate between her native language and the leading English language, exemplifying the strain between cultural conservation and the requirement of integration.

As the poem moves forward, Bhatt exemplifies the instinctual experience of linguistic trauma through rich images and metaphors. The speaker's expression of her bawl discloses the mental burden of cultural loss, as she navigates the abyss between her native language and the compulsory language of the colonizer. The lines "Everytime I think I've forgotten / I think I've lost the mother tongue / it blossoms out of my mouth" (lines 29-31) act as an influential proclamation of resilience and optimism. This moment indicates the possibility for recovery and the likelihood of finding one's voice in the middle of the confusion of linguistic displacement.

Finally, Bhatt's investigation of language as identity underlines the deep influence of linguistic loss on the diasporic experience. The trauma of losing one's mother tongue is not just an individual lamentation but a replication of the larger inferences of colonialism and cultural imperialism. Through the perspective of Bhabha's theories of hybridity and the third space, Bhatt's poem becomes a spot of confrontation and retrieval, where the complications of identity are incorporated rather than expunged. In this way, "Search for My Tongue" is regarded as an authoritative evidence to the permanent fight for cultural legitimacy and the recuperation of voice while facing linguistic and cultural loss.

## **6.2. The Third Space in Poetic Form: Code-Switching and Visual Hybridity**

In the selected poem, one of the most outstanding features is its structure because the poem initiates in English, changes to Gujarati in the middle, and then becomes English again. This thoughtful change is not only attractive, but also indorses what Bhabha has referred to as the third space, a place "in-between" where cultural meanings are challenged and reshaped (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). The poem's structure reflects the speaker's journey of identity, mirroring the difficulties of dealing with several languages and cultures.

The chief Gujarati piece, positioned cleverly between the English stanzas, works as the poem's representative "third space," where the speaker's inundated identity re-appears. The Gujarati lines, "mũ bhũlĩ gayĩ chũ / mārĩ bhāsha / per mārĩ bhāsha paachĩ āvĩ chē" (lines 17-23), translate to "I thought I had forgotten / my mother tongue / but my mother tongue comes back to me." This part is highly important, since it illustrates the speaker's recognition that regardless of the difficulties of linguistic integration, her mother tongue is an unforgettable facet of her identity. The return of the mother tongue indicates a repossession of self, a confrontation against the cultural expurgation enforced by colonial language hierarchies.

By visually and linguistically unsettling the poem, Bhatt shows the speaker's hybrid identity. The combination of English and Gujarati produces a vigorous interaction that echoes the speaker's interior struggle and the wealth of her cultural legacy. This code-switching is regarded as an authoritative means due to permitting Bhatt to transport the changeableness of identity in a postcolonial setting. The usage of Gujarati not only augments the poem's consistency but also declares the implication of the mother tongue as a site of belonging and validity.

Bhabha (1994) says that this hybrid space is "productive," not only a spot of crisis but one where "new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation" arise (p. 112). In Bhatt's poem, the act of code-switching is accordingly not misperception or confusion; it is an act of conception. The speaker's capacity to circumnavigate between languages replicates the diversity of her identity, letting her express her experiences in ways that agree with both her cultural legacy and her current reality.

The return to English after the Gujarati part can be considered as a repetition of the speaker's identity, as she assimilates her mother tongue into her larger linguistic background. The closing lines of the poem capture the spirit of her hybrid identity. The tongue becomes an emblem of

resistance, a testimony to the speaker's journey through loss and recuperation. It indicates not only her linguistic aptitudes but also her cultural and expressive links with her inheritance.

In this way, the poet's examination of the third space through structural and linguistic moves clarifies the difficulties of hybrid identity. The poem becomes a spot of compromise, where the speaker's manifold identities coincide and interrelate, defying the concept of static cultural limitations. By taking on the changeableness of language and identity, Bhatt wants the readers to reassess the ways in which language forms our perception of self and belonging.

### **6.3. Resistance and Regeneration: Reclaiming the Mother Tongue**

In "Search for My Tongue," the poet mightily retrieves the mother tongue as a place of resilience and renewal, instead of permitting it to stay simply an emblem of loss. The final lines of the poem figuratively embody the return of the mother tongue as an animate, living force: "It grows back, a stump of a shoot / grows longer, grows moist, grows strong veins / it ties the other tongue in knots" (lines 24-26). This rich image accentuates the influence of cultural reminiscence and linguistic endurance. The mother tongue is described not as a remnant of the past but as something that, although hidden under the surface, is ready to regrow and thrive.

Bhatt's usage of such metaphors proposes that the mother tongue owns an intrinsic vivacity, capable of restoration in spite of the struggles posed by linguistic displacement. The phrase "grows back" specifies that the mother tongue is not gone; rather, it is hidden, waiting for the right circumstances to flourish once more. This viewpoint reimagines language loss not as a perpetual breach but as a rescindable procedure, underlining the capacity for retrieval and recovery.

Bhabha (1994) refers to this issue, declaring that in postcolonial texts, "the mother tongue often acts as a site of resistance—its survival counters the cultural erasure that colonial languages attempt to enforce" (p. 95). Bhatt's poem represents this confrontation, exemplifying how the speaker's association with her mother tongue acts as a counter-narrative to the supremacy of colonial languages. The act of regaining the mother tongue becomes a proclamation of identity and cultural legacy, defying the idea that integration into a colonial language is the only route to triumph or recognition.

The line, "it ties the other tongue in knots" (line 26) is predominantly important. This imagery denotes the speaker's enablement, as it recommends that her rekindled native language has the power to disturb and undermine the hierarchy between English and Gujarati. The colonial language, once supposed as central and commanding, is now defied by the rebirth of the mother tongue. This agrees with Bhabha's statement that hybridity "unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 112). In other words, the act of implementing one's mother tongue establishes a space where the colonial language's power is challenged, and new forms of identity can arise.

Through this recuperation, Bhatt demonstrates the transformative capacity of language. The speaker's journey is one of enablement, where the mother tongue becomes a basis of power instead of an indicator of loss. The imagery of the tongue tying the other tongue in knots captures the difficulties of identity in a postcolonial setting, where the interlacing of languages echoes the speaker's multi-layered experience.

Finally, Bhatt's consideration of resistance and revival through language underlines the significance of cultural reminiscence and the lasting power of the mother tongue. By regaining her native language, the speaker not only restates her identity but also defies the colonial structures that aim to expunge it. In this way, "Search for My Tongue" is observed as an influential witness to the resilience of language and the likelihood of restoration while going through cultural loss.

### **6.4. Hybridity as Empowerment: Embracing the In-Between**

In Sujata Bhatt's poem, the examination of linguistic displacement, cultural loss, and hybrid identity is convolutedly interlaced with the speaker's experience. The poem starts with a sense of loss, showing the suffering related with the declining of one's mother tongue as the speaker struggles

with her identity in a mostly English-speaking atmosphere. Nevertheless, as the poem unfolds, it changes into a moment of repossession and authorization, eventually exemplifying the spirit of hybridity as proposed by Bhabha.

Bhabha's notion of the "third space" is critical in understanding this conversion. He believes that hybridity is not just an amalgamation of two cultures but a lively space where cultural identities can concur, interrelate, and grow. He says, "Hybridity enables the negotiation of the cultural, rather than its affirmation or negation" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 112). This negotiation is palpable in the poem as the speaker learns to clasp her double identity rather than selecting one language over the other.

In "Search for My Tongue," Bhatt's speaker talks about her struggle with the loss of her native tongue, Gujarati, as she circumnavigates the landscape of English. The first lines especially deliver the unambiguous reality of this linguistic displacement. Here, she refers to the beauty and vivacity of the native language, which starts to fade as the speaker engrosses herself in a different linguistic setting. This loss is not just an individual brawl; it echoes the larger experience of many émigrés who often feel their cultural identities weakened or obliterated in a new situation.

Nonetheless, as the poem progresses, the speaker's journey directs her to a moment of understanding and power. She learns that both languages can cohabit within her, making a unique hybrid identity. The key line "it grows back" (line 24), specifies this restoration. The imagery of a tongue growing back highlights resilience and the ability to recover lost facets of one's identity. The speaker's recognition of her hybrid identity permits her to fight the cultural expurgation that often goes with relocation.

This change agrees with Bhabha's proclamation that hybridity is a cause of authorization rather than cooperation. By accepting both Gujarati and English, Bhatt's speaker proclaims her legitimacy and agency. The poem eventually sustains that identity need not be singular to be legal; rather, it can be multi-layered. To put it briefly, "Search for My Tongue" is an effective examination of hybridity as enablement. By allowing both languages to concur, Bhatt's speaker exemplifies the negotiation of cultural identities that Bhabha supports. The poem's journey from loss to repossession represents that hybrid identities are not only lawful but can also be a basis of power and resilience in a world that often means to define us in singular terms.

## **7. Concluding Notes**

Sujata Bhatt's "Search for My Tongue" presents an emotional and prevailing consideration of the difficulties of identity, language, and belonging in a postcolonial and diasporic background. By means of the poem's exceptional bilingual structure and emotional language, Bhatt exemplifies the demonstrative and cultural disarticulation that originates from linguistic loss, whereas concurrently sustaining the likelihood of renewal and confrontation. The poem becomes more than a subjective narrative; it is actually a space where contradictory cultural identities meet, intersect, and reconfigure, an intense recognition of Homi K. Bhabha's perception of the third space.

By scrutinizing the poem in light of Bhabha's theoretical standpoint, this research has revealed how the strain between English and Gujarati in the poem mirrors the larger postcolonial experience of hybridity. The speaker's preliminary feeling of estrangement gives way to an authoritative act of regaining the mother tongue, converting the situation of in-betweenness into a place of imaginative and political intervention. The recurrence of Gujarati, "growing back" and "tying the other tongue in knots," interrupts the presumed supremacy of the colonial language and proclaims the permanent occurrence of native identity.

Furthermore, the poem's linguistic hybridity is not an indication of fragmentation but a sort of enablement. Bhatt does not show her speaker as dithering between two mismatched cultures, but rather as someone who learns to live within and speak from the space between them. By doing so, "Search for My Tongue" defies essentialist interpretations of identity and delivers a substitute image, one where multiplicity is not only conceivable but essential for self-understanding in a globalized, postcolonial world.

To put it briefly, Bhatt's poem demonstrates how literature can refer to the mental and cultural truths of hybrid identity. Via her reminiscent language and tactical practice of bilingualism, she generates a poetic third space where marginal voices regain discernibility, and where the interaction between languages becomes an influential metaphor for postcolonial pliability and change.

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