RE-ORIENTALISM OR TRANSNATIONALISM: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF SONYA LALLI'S *GROWN UP POSE* AND SABAA TAHIR'S *ALL MY RAGE*

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Re-Orientalism Or Transnationalism: A Textual Analysis of Sonya Lalli's** *Grown up Pose* **and Sabaa Tahir's** *All My Rage* submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

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Date

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents and to the cherished memory of my late grandparents, whose unwavering love, wisdom, and sacrifices have been a guiding light throughout my academic journey.

To my dear parents, whose boundless support, encouragement, and sacrifices paved the way for my education, your belief in my potential has been my greatest motivation.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Re-Orientalism or Transnationalism: A Textual Analysis of Sonya Lalli's Grown up Pose and Sabaa Tahir's All My Rage

This study embarked on a comprehensive exploration of Steven Vertovec's concept of 'Transnationalism' within the context of South Asian Diasporas, while also engaging with the prevalent concept of 'Re-Orientalism'. The primary focus of this research is to delve into the literary works of Sonya Lalli's '*Grown up Pose'* and Sabaa Tahir's *'All My Rage'*. In an era characterized by heightened global interconnectedness and cultural exchange, the conventional frameworks of literary analysis necessitate thorough reconsideration and expansion. Through textual analysis, the objective was to unveil the intricate layers of narrative construction embedded within these works. By scrutinizing how these texts negotiate and, at times, intentionally challenge existing Orientalist conventions, the research aimed to make a substantial contribution to the ongoing discourse on cultural representation and transnational perspectives. The examination of these literary works facilitated a broader exploration of the nuanced interplay among culture, identity, and globalization woven into the fabric of these narratives. By dissecting and interpreting these elements, the research sought to provide valuable insights contributing to a deeper understanding of the role of literature in shaping and transforming perceptions of diasporic experiences within transnational social fields. At its core, transnational diasporic spaces emerge as catalysts for the empowerment of South Asian diasporic characters, equipping them with the means to redefine their identities. The study elucidated how these spaces offer enlightening experiences that serve to broaden perspectives and contribute to a more inclusive and interconnected global narrative. Furthermore, the study delved into the concept of Habitus, as proposed by Bourdieu, and its application to transnational perspectives. It shed light on the intricate nature of these perspectives and advocated for a more nuanced discussion on how literature can play a transformative role in shaping diasporic perceptions, thereby enriching scholarly discourse in the field.

Keywords: *Habitus, Re-Orientalism, Steven Vertovec, Transnational Social Fields, Transnationalism*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The study delves into the concept of 'Transnationalism' portrayed in the chosen texts, addressing the concept of 'Re-Orientalism' within the South Asian Diasporas. Rogers Brubaker suggests that throughout history, the concept of "diaspora" has primarily been linked to the Jewish migration, often considered the archetypal illustration. The contemporary ease of crossing borders and the modern individual's inclination to see themselves as global citizens have compelled theorists to develop new epistemological frameworks capable of capturing these changes. Early migration literature primarily used the term diaspora in the context of 'traditional' population dispersal. However, as noted by Brubaker, the term 'diaspora' is now more commonly used in everyday discourse to describe the dispersal of people, encompassing situations where there is no actual physical migration (Brubaker 7). This broad application of the term suggests not only a dispersion of the meaning of the term in the representations of themselves but also creates a fresh opportunity to question the boundaries of identity within their community.

Transnational Diaspora studies depart from traditional approaches focused on reasons for migration. Instead, they emphasize the post-migration process, particularly the formation of communities after individuals migrate. This approach moves beyond simplistic push/pull models that primarily explore factors compelling migrants to leave their home countries and attract them to host countries. Transnational Diaspora studies delve into the complexities of community formation, identity construction, and the intricate social dynamics that unfold after migration. Rainer Bauböck explains, "Being part of a diaspora entails the ability to coexist across the global, local, and host or home country scales, blending these three dimensions while giving preference to one or two" (Bauböck 45). Therefore, this study argues for a more collaborative and inclusive approach, advocating a shift in perspective through the lens of 'transnationalism' to better understand and engage with the diverse perspectives present within diasporas.

In the realm of Transnationalism, diaspora venues play diverse roles, serving as hubs of power, platforms for resistance, and arenas for exploration. They push forward new perspectives, urging individuals to blend into new social and historical contexts while holding onto their origins. Girish Daswani stresses that diaspora encompasses more than

just a global phenomenon; it involves the sharing and contestation of migration memories from various places, forging roots in multiple locations. According to Daswani, "Engaging in embodied practices and rituals serves as a means for individuals to reconnect with their homeland" (Daswani 85). Therefore, this study aimed to scrutinize South Asian diasporic texts through a transnational lens. It highlights the intricate processes through which Diasporas establish and sustain intricate social connections that link their societies of origin with those of settlement. This approach accentuates simultaneity, long-distance practices, and the reconfigurations of culture. As a result, a transnational South Asian discourse, acting as a diasporic practice, generates alternative discursive spaces capable of unraveling the social, cultural, and economic ties shaping the South Asian diaspora in host lands.

This study delves into the evolution of postcolonial Diasporas on a global scale, highlighting their significance in understanding evolving representations. Originating from European perspectives, portrayals of Orientals in literature transition to self-representations by Oriental communities, leading to multicultural, cosmopolitan diasporic identities. The study contends that Diasporas, characterized by their fluidity and mobility, possess the capacity to challenge rigid authoritarian ideologies. By bridging local-global perspectives and blending past-present experiences, Diasporas navigate a dynamic realm transcending traditional boundaries, contributing to the transformation of cultural and social paradigms. Their knack for connecting diverse spaces positions Diasporas as catalysts for change, challenging established norms and fostering a more inclusive, interconnected worldview.

Johnson Nadja accentuates that contemporary Diaspora calls attention to the relationship between the homeland and active participation of the host land because they have a very global outlook, living locally but occupying global identities. They often embody identities that transcend their physical locations (Najda 5). In this context, contemporary Diasporas exhibit a global outlook, embodying a lifestyle that involves living locally while concurrently occupying global identities. This transcends physical locations as individuals navigate the complexities of a world where their affiliations extend beyond national borders. As noted by Teodora Şerban, "The creation and sustenance of intricate social networks that transcend geographic, political, and cultural borders contribute significantly to the evolution of diaspora from a static concept of 'immigrant' to a more dynamic and fluid notion of 'transmigrant'" (Şerban 5). This evolution reflects the multifaceted nature of diasporic existence, where individuals navigate and negotiate their

identities across various dimensions, continually shaping and reshaping the contours of their diasporic connections. Such an approach recognizes that, irrespective of geographical relocation, an individual's sense of home remains an integral aspect of their identity, influencing their perspectives and instilling a sense of responsibility and connection to their place of origin. The notion of 'home away from home' encapsulates the diaspora's unique ability to straddle two or more worlds, fostering a rich and layered understanding of identity beyond singular national or cultural affiliations.

Akhil Gupta asserts that as people traverse different locations, regroup in new places, reshape their histories, and redefine their ethnic projects, the 'ethnic' in ethnography undergoes dynamic changes. As people move around, reassemble in new places, recreate their histories, and restructure their ethnic projects, the 'ethnic' in ethnography acquires a dynamic change. Diasporic landscapes are no longer recognizable as they have ceased to be tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically self-conscious, or culturally homogeneous (Gupta 3). This marks a shift from conventional perspectives that regarded Diaspora landscapes as recognizable, tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically self-conscious, or culturally homogeneous. Instead, the diasporic experience is defined by fluidity, adaptability, and an ongoing negotiation of identity within the changing contexts of diverse locations. The evolution of diasporic landscapes reflects a departure from conventional understandings, challenging fixed perceptions and embracing the diversity inherent in the diasporic experience. This shift is integral to the broader postcolonial movement, which has transitioned from endorsing cultural nationalism and nation-building to actively engaging with the globalized world. According to Maria Luisa Di Martino,

> Exploring the realm of migrant individuals and their experiences, transnational literature emerges as a potent tool. This approach necessitates viewing the lives of immigrants as an interconnected universe involving both home and host countries, along with various socio-cultural networks, memories, and personal and collective identities. This process is integral to the deconstruction and reconstruction of their experiences (Martino 15).

To understand these experiences fully, one must unravel their layers and challenge stereotypes, aiming for a nuanced understanding. Approaching diasporic lives from an interdisciplinary and systemic perspective allows for a comprehensive examination. Migrants are seen as multidimensional individuals navigating between geographical and

emotional realms, influenced not only by the reasons for migration but also by their ties to their home countries, which continue to shape their social and cultural context in new environments.

This research primarily explores the literary compositions of Sonya Lalli's *'Grown up Pose'* and Sabaa Tahir's *'All My Rage'*. Employing textual analysis, the aim is to uncover the intricate layers of narrative construction embedded within these pieces. The study employs a predominantly deductive approach in line with the theoretical framework of 'Transnationalism' proposed by Steven Vertovec. Vertovec's perspective emphasizes the importance of adopting a transnational outlook when understanding Diasporas. He contends that such an approach highlights the interconnectedness of diasporic communities through cross-border exchanges, considering both the homeland and the host land. The research aimed to provide a structured and data-driven understanding of the intersection between literary representation and transnational experiences within the diaspora. This research utilizes Textual Analysis, precisely aligning with Alan McKee's recommendation for Qualitative textual analysis, to examine the representation of diasporic characters in South Asian diasporic fiction.

Re-Orientalism frequently delves into the manifestation of Orientalist concepts in contemporary cultural, political, and media discourses, examining how these notions influence present-day perceptions of Eastern cultures, particularly within diasporic communities. According to Lau, A prevalent distortion of images arises from an excessive emphasis on South Asian identity and the rigid portrayal of fictional South Asian characters adhering strictly to traditional ideals (Lau 582). On the other hand, Diasporas also exhibit a distinctive Diaspora consciousness within the framework of Transnationalism, marked by dual or multiple identifications. It reflects a de-centered attachment, wherein individuals navigate a simultaneous sense of 'home away from home,' existing both 'here and there.' Similarly, through an examination of the experiences of diasporic characters in selected texts, the study seeks to discern how transnational spaces can serve as arenas promoting equity and inclusivity, thereby challenging predetermined dichotomous narratives.

The study acknowledges that diaspora isn't solely shaped by historical events but is an ongoing process influenced by continuous social interactions, relationships, and networks that transcend geographical boundaries. Unlike narratives focused solely on historical trauma and survival, the modern understanding of diaspora presents it as a

dynamic and continuous phenomenon. In this new framework, immigrants are seen as actively creating and sustaining diverse social connections across their home and host societies. This perspective moves beyond a simplistic view of diaspora, recognizing the complexity and diversity of individuals' social interactions and networks throughout their transnational experiences.

1.1 Problem Statement

Re-Orientalism in the diaspora context argues that South Asian diasporic writers often unintentionally reinforce binary distinctions in their Postcolonial texts, leading to issues like inauthenticity, misrepresentation, and the exploitation of their cultural heritage. This perpetuates exploitation and oppression for individuals from colonized backgrounds, impacting their portrayal, social status, cultural identity, and gender equality, despite evolving societal norms. Despite these challenges, there's a persistent desire within Diasporas to transcend geographical, social, and cultural barriers, engaging in global conversations to challenge and reshape existing cultures and narratives. By examining the experiences of diasporic characters in specific texts, the study aims to explore how transnational spaces can promote fairness and inclusivity, challenging preconceived binary narratives.

1.2 Research Objectives

Keeping in view this problem statement, I have devised the following research objectives:

- To explore the trajectories of 'Re-Orientalism' and 'Transnationalism' in the South Asian Diasporas through the selected texts.
- To scrutinizes how contemporary South Asian Diasporas bring about new forms of social diversity and transcend the pre-claimed binaries in the selected texts.
- To examine how transnational diasporic spaces shape the experiences of Diasporas in terms of empowerment and liberation.

1.3 Research Questions

The formulated research questions are aligned with the specified research objectives:

1. What are the orientations of 'Re-Orientalism' and 'Transnationalism' in South Asian diasporic communities, as reflected in selected texts?

2. How does 'Transnationalism' help South Asian Diasporic characters transcend the pre-conceived notions of Re-Orientalism in the texts?

3. In terms of empowerment and enlightenment, how can transnational diasporic spaces influence the experiences of South Asian diasporic characters?

1.4 Significance of the Research

The central significance of this research is to shed light on the dynamic evolution of the 'Re-Orientalization' narrative, explicitly focusing on the emergence of a "transmigrant" archetype. Such diasporic individuals diverge from a strong association with any particular culture or group and instead align more closely with a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Furthermore, the study posits the considerable significance of the transnational habitus concept in exploring diasporic experiences within the contemporary digital age. This concept, acting as a valuable framework, proves instrumental in unraveling the intricate mechanisms through which Diasporas navigate the complexities of diversity. It also sheds light on how these communities actively cultivate transnational and cosmopolitan skills, contributing to their resilience and adaptability in a globalized society.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

The increasing multidimensional diversity and growing social complexity, coupled with diasporic Transnationalism, have become inevitable aspects of today's globalized society. In this contemporary context, the study posits that understanding the approaches adopted by South Asian diasporic writers is crucial for navigating dichotomies. The selected texts reflect conventional norms and societal pressures that hinder the flourishing of diverse perspectives. However, adopting a cosmopolitan perspective opens promising avenues for studying Diasporas in the modern era. It offers a fresh interpretation of transnational actions and allegiances among diasporic populations as they extend their aspirations beyond their home and host countries.

1.6 Research Delimitations

South Asian nations encompass India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and others. Due to time constraints, covering the literature of all these countries takes much work. Therefore, the present study is confined to analyzing one Pakistani novel, *"All My Rage,"* and one Indian novel, *"Grown-up Pose."* Further, the study has theoretical limitations as it does not incorporate Vertovec's concepts, such as conceptual cross-fertilization within the Transnationalism domain.

1.7 Definition of Important Terminologies

Re-Orientalism

"Re-Orientalism" refers to the contemporary revival or reinterpretation of Orientalist themes and stereotypes. It involves the inadvertent perpetuation of Orientalist perspectives within the cultures traditionally labeled as the "Orient." This concept underscores the persistence of historical biases and stereotypes in modern contexts. Lisa Lau describes Re-Orientalism as, "The theory of Re-Orientalism, centering on the involvement of Orientals in perpetuating Orientalist ideas, observes an intriguing phenomenon. Even when occupying elite or powerful positions, this diasporic elite group of Orientals consistently positions the West as the center and themselves as the 'Other'". They are not merely subjected to Othering by Western powers but actively engage in self-othering (Lau 8).

Transnationalism

Transnationalism is the phenomenon of individuals, ideas, and activities transcending national boundaries, fostering connections and interactions on a global scale.

It reflects the interconnectedness and interdependence of diverse societies in a globalized world. Steven Vertovec states, "Transnationalism encompasses the numerous connections and interactions that bind individuals or institutions across the borders of nation-states. Transnationalism is frequently linked with the flexibility of constructed styles, social institutions, and everyday practices. These phenomena are commonly articulated through concepts such as syncretism, creolization, bricolage, cultural translation, and hybridity" (Vertovec 6).

Transnational Habitus

Transnational habitus encompasses the dispositions, attitudes, and cultural practices individuals form during their engagements in transnational spaces. It captures how people maneuver and reconciles their identities within diverse cultural and geographic environments, emphasizing the dynamic and flexible characteristics of habits and cultural behaviors in transnational experiences. According to Steven Vertovec, "The transnational habitus takes into consideration both the social standing of the migrant and the circumstances surrounding transmigration. This factor explains the resemblance in the transnational habitus among migrants belonging to the same social category (such as class, gender, or generation) and the adaptation of transnational practices according to specific situations" (Vertovec 67).

Transnational Space

Transnational space is a conceptual domain where interactions, connections, and influences transcend national boundaries, creating a dynamic environment that nurtures global connectivity and cultural exchange. As described by Thomas Faist, "The transnational habitus takes into consideration both the social standing of the migrant and the circumstances surrounding transmigration. This factor explains the resemblance in the transnational habitus among migrants belonging to the same social category (such as class, gender, or generation) and the adaptation of transnational practices according to specific situations" (Faist 67).

1.8 Organization of Study

The thesis is divided into five major chapters

Introduction

The inaugural chapter of my thesis is dedicated to introducing the research topic, providing a comprehensive exploration of its background, formulating the problem statement, elucidating its significance, and clarifying the research delimitations. The primary objective of this chapter is to lay the groundwork for comprehending the intricacies associated with Re-Orientalism and Transnationalism.

Literature Review

The upcoming chapter explores existing research, identifying gaps that warrant exploration. Examining previous studies will offer varied perspectives on my topic, providing valuable insights. This thorough review aims to address specific research gaps, laying the foundation for a comprehensive exploration of the research problem.

Research Methodology &Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents a thorough presentation and explication of the methodology employed in the research thesis. The focus is on providing a detailed account of the research methodology and the selected approach for the study. Additionally, the chapter extensively elaborates on the Theoretical Framework, centering on Transnationalism as the guiding theoretical perspective shaping the study. This section aims to deepen the comprehension of the systematic and theoretical foundations underpinning the research.

Analysis and Discussion

Referencing the mentioned novels, an analytical inquiry is poised to unfold, examining various inherent facets within the literary works. Rooted in contemporary novels, the analytical study will explore the diverse aspects of Diasporas through a transnational lens. The analysis, executed by employing the qualitative textual analysis methodology, is conducted per the specified theoretical framework.

This section of the study includes a comprehensive examination and discussion of the collected data. The analysis involves scrutinizing the information, drawing connections, and exploring patterns within the dataset.

Conclusion

Following the thorough analysis and discussion of the data, this chapter proceeds to formulate conclusions. Additionally, it highlights potential areas of investigation that can be explored as opportunities for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review surveys scholarly discussions surrounding diasporic experiences in the South Asian context. Its primary aim is to provide an in-depth and nuanced comprehension of the intricate dimensions inherent in the South Asian diaspora. By integrating a diverse range of scholarly viewpoints, the review seeks to capture the complexities of diasporic dynamics, delving into the social, cultural, and psychological aspects of individuals navigating the intricate landscape of migration and settlement. It addresses the formation and negotiation of identities within this diaspora, illuminating the intricate interplay between individuals and the communities they join, all while being shaped by global influences. The adoption of a theoretical framework encompassing Re-Orientalism and Transnationalism offers a conceptual perspective for analyzing the reinterpretation of the East and the interconnectedness of individuals and cultures across national borders. Consequently, the literature review meticulously explores the multifaceted interactions that mold the experiences of the South Asian diaspora, contributing to a more nuanced comprehension of the subject matter within the broader context of global migration and identity development.

Diasporas encapsulate diverse cultures, historical and contemporary circumstances, characteristics, trajectories, and experiences. These communities exist in a tangible geographical sense, signifying the actual dispersal of people, and in a conscious, imagined sense, reflecting a shared awareness of belonging to a community. Membership in a diaspora community involves a dynamic "rooting and branching process," shaping and influencing perceptions (Hall 77). These communities often emerge through shared experiences, narratives, and interactions among individuals from the same homeland, resulting in constant change and evolution. Concurrently, indigenous diasporic authors contribute to this ongoing narrative. While some may inadvertently perpetuate Orientalist discourse by oversimplifying the complexity of cultures, peoples, and places, others offer historiographical accounts that challenge Western/colonial perspectives on the history of the Oriental region and the interactions between colonizers and the colonized (Hall 72).

Transnationalism has served as a framework focused on the existence of enduring, long-distance connections that traverse borders. Through this lens, scholars can explore how migrants construct and reshape their lives, acknowledging their simultaneous rootedness in multiple societies. Ayse Caglar succinctly captures this perspective by stating, "Current scholarship on Transnationalism provides a new analytic optic which makes visible the increasing intensity and scope of circular flows of persons, goods, information and symbols triggered by international labour migration" (Caglar 67). Furthermore, the concept of diasporic spaces has evolved within this transnational framework. These spaces are no longer perceived as isolated locales. However, they are instead recognized as integral components of a global living environment that transcends national boundaries and is intricately woven into broader social networks. This holistic approach enhances understanding of the multifaceted nature of diasporic experiences and their complex interplay within the global context. Transnationalism extends beyond conventional notions of pluralism, globalization, or postcolonial instances. The territories of movement and transnational communities are produced by globalization and result from socioeconomic inequalities. "The presence in the host country, while limited in terms of geographical reach (in transit locations), can paradoxically exhibit strength for transnational communities (in the host location)" (Bauböck 47). In both instances, the connection to the original community remains highly significant and may overshadow ties to the country of settlement or transit.

By doing so, Transnationalism broadens the analytical framework to encompass the intricate intersections of individuals and communities in the transnational space, offering a nuanced understanding of their experiences, challenges, and evolving identities. Consequently, postcolonial diasporic texts increasingly adopt a global perspective. The understanding of the postcolonial has expanded beyond geocultural borders, existing within a translated context where the diasporic experience is intricately connected to global dynamics. This shift signifies a more nuanced and interconnected portrayal of diaspora, acknowledging the complex interplay of local and global forces that shape the diasporic narrative in contemporary postcolonial discourse. In the words of Nina Glick Schiller,

> A crucial aspect of framing the transnational paradigm involves the assertion that individuals deemed transnational actors lead 'dual lives.' The fundamental distinction lies in how scholars interpret the idea that transnational actors are

concurrently 'both here and there' or 'neither here nor there'—variations that underscore differing perspectives on the process (Schiller 11).

Similarly, recognizing multi-locality catalyzes a desire to forge connections with others in the current location ('here') and the remembered or ancestral place ('there'), who share similar trajectories and roots. In the dynamic landscape of mobility, individuals and groups construct places that extend beyond presumed ancestral living spaces.

2.2 Transnationalism and Re-Orientalism in Literary Narratives

According to Carine Mardorossian, Central to this emerging transnational critical framework is the reevaluation of spatial dynamics, encompassing national and cultural geographies. It involves reconsidering languages and literature and reorienting the examination of race, gender, sexuality, and class within and beyond national borders. Particularly relevant to this anthology is identifying fresh theoretical perspectives and the opportunity to reassess the humanities' role and importance in the contemporary world (Mardorossian 7). She characterizes transnational spaces as "a timely and essential intervention in an extensive dialogue about mobility, settlement, borders, power, subjectivity, creativity, language, translation, and various other aspects. It contemplates colonial legacies while acknowledging the influence of alternative histories. Moreover, it insists on our awareness of "how we inhabit a shared yet progressively unequal global ecosystem, prompting us to craft an improved 'ethnography of global connection'"(Mardorossian 7). Consequently, the social construction of 'Home' transcends locations with deep historical roots, transforming into a product of relocalization or multilocalization, particularly within diasporic communities. Similarly, within the framework of Transnationalism, ancestral spaces of Diasporas are no longer to be perceived as isolated and confined locales; instead, they are integral components of a global living space that transcends national borders. These spaces embody simultaneous situatedness across different geographical locations, providing a lens through which one can comprehend the overlapping place-times in the lives of Diasporas. In the words of Stuart Hall,

> In the era of cyberspace, transnational connections no longer necessitate consolidation through migration or exclusive territorial assertions. A diaspora, to a

certain extent, can now be maintained or reconstructed through the mind, cultural artifacts, and a shared imagination (Hall 17).

The meanings embedded in these diasporic spaces evolve within contexts characterized by continuities, connections, and conflicts. As these spaces interconnect with transnational realms, the concepts of home and homeland take on new dimensions, becoming layers in the intricate spheres of belonging. Faist characterized transnational space as not a fixed location but a dynamic and delimited process. Transnational social spaces extend beyond the linear migratory connections of the initial generation of migrants and acquire an independent existence. A qualitative leap occurs when "transnational social spaces exhibit self-reinforcing processes or the dynamics of cumulative causation". This concept bears similarity to the idea of path dependence associated with stable equilibrium concepts in economics (Faist 6). This interconnectedness with transnational spaces adds a dynamic and multifaceted dimension to the understanding of home and homeland, reflecting the evolving nature of diasporic life in a globalized world. In the words of Nina Glick Schiller,

> Transnational social fields consist of interconnected networks linking individuals, directly or indirectly, to institutions in more than one nation-state. These connections play a role in the power dynamics where institutionalized social relations define the boundaries of social spaces (Schiller 112).

These networks may include family ties, professional relationships, cultural communities, or diasporic groups that span across different countries.

Carole Martin described the concept of 'Transnationalism and Rhizomatic Subjectivities' through Jhumpa Lahiri's *Oeuvres*. The concept of "rhizome-root assemblages" based on host- and homeland as opposed to roots connected by a rhizomatic tissue can prove helpful in debates of hybridity and alternate forms of Transnationalism to capture various layers of identity at once. Furthermore, the model might be expanded to include third cultures or other rooted "knots of arborescence" due to the rhizome's open-ended character. It should be observed, too, that not all of her characters are as content as Lahiri to follow a rhizomatic trajectory. The hybrid protagonists created by Lahiri cross international boundaries physically and conceptually to create dynamic subjectivities that defy clichéd notions of migration. According to Lahri's work, Transnationalism disrupts the conventional notion of the nation-state by transcending and blurring national boundaries through cosmopolitanism. It presents a "new moral and ethnic standpoint suitable for 21st-

century global life," advocating for the inclusion of everyone as a "citizen of the world." This perspective aligns with the notion of an "open-ended movement (Martin 5). However, while some characters enjoy emphasizing their ancestry as South Asians or supporting their assimilation into American culture, others enjoy embracing other cultures or going on unexpected journeys without set destinations, challenging the constrictive framework for examining society.

Ruth Maxey explores second-generation British Asians' resistance to their ancestral homeland, countered in Lalwani's *Gifted*. Protagonist Rumi Vasi finds inspiration in India, contrasting challenges in Britain with emotional freedom there. Her parents' ease in India challenges the notion of greater freedom in the West, suggesting staying in India might have been better emotionally. Lalwani shows the emotional cost of moving West and the elusive sense of belonging in diasporic journeys. Rumi's India visits provide warmth lacking in the UK, making her daydream about relocating but risking her South Asian affiliation. Belonging in South Asia for Diasporas requires a spiritual quest, transcending representational transnational journeys. (Maxey 17). However, these narratives do not diminish the significance of national identity, allowing individuals to "return" without adopting an adversarial stance.

Sk. Shaheen discusses Rohinton Mistry's works as diasporic narratives that delve into Indian history. Mistry portrays the challenges of Bombay Parsis, highlighting their struggles to assimilate and gain recognition in their adopted culture. The Indian Diasporic communities in Mistry's works navigate complexities of homeland and migration, crafting stories influenced by economic, social, and political pressures (Shaheen 3). Language, culture, and history are pivotal in diasporic memory. Language holds symbolic significance, acting as a means of empowerment and facilitating a journey of self-discovery. Rohinton Mistry's writings, especially in Parsi contexts, feature a blend of English with Gujarati, Hindi, and Marathi, creating a hybrid linguistic expression known as Indian English. This linguistic fusion in postcolonial literature stands out for its incorporation of everyday words like bhaiya, yaar, humko kuch nahin maloom, masala, Bismillaha, goswalla, chalo, morcha, chooli, parinambay-sharam, etc., marking a departure from the metropolitan norm and symbolizing difference and separation.

A transnational perspective on Diasporas delves into the interconnectedness between the countries of origin and the societies where individuals settle. The concept of

"Normative transnationalism" redirects attention from diasporic identities to transforming identities in the countries of origin as non-migrant individuals engage in transnational networks. Adriana Elena elaborates on 'Normative Transnationalism' in Desai's *Inheritance of Loss*, describing it as "A phenomenon where immigrants and family members back home become increasingly aware of events in both the sending settings and abroad through enhanced communication" (Elena 3). In Inheritance of Loss, the letter-writing technique between Biju and his father exemplifies this transnational connection, maintaining international family ties. Biju, facing financial challenges in New York, becomes a node in a global social network, actively influencing events in his home village through letters. The exchange of information through letters blends distant realities with local issues, showcasing how diverse communication methods connect an Indian community at different levels. On the other hand, the cook in India experiences a rise in social standing due to receiving letters from America, cherishing them as mementos of his son's success abroad. This dimension of Transnationalism highlights how non-migrant individuals undergo a shift in perspective upon receiving messages across transnational connections, even if they have not personally relocated, as they are profoundly influenced by the events, values, and practices of their transnationally connected relatives and fellow villagers abroad (Elena 5).

Similarly, in one of his works, Khurshid Alam explores the shared aspiration for an ideal, transcendent, and transnational world devoid of discrimination and exploitation, as articulated by poets Iqbal and Tagore. Despite their alignment with nationalistic themes, which have been accentuated by their respective countries, the poets' imaginative expressions create transnational spaces conducive to cross-border dialogues. Both acclaimed as National Poets, Iqbal, and Tagore contribute to regional cosmopolitanism, challenging the inflexible boundaries of nationalism and advocating for values of unity. "Although Iqbal's poetry expands the realm of transnational poetics from the perspective of Muslim spiritual democracy, Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian National Poet, occupies this hybrid space in his own distinct manner" (Alam 5). Alam's work also underscores the challenges inherent in comparing poets from politically opposed countries, India and Pakistan, within the context of interactive teaching. His exploration involves experimental and thought-provoking approaches, prompting inquiries about the interchangeability of national poets for the sake of human unity, the gender dynamics within South Asian

nationalism, and the influence of colonial/postcolonial structures on the feminization of homelands. "While Iqbal theorizes a God-fearing intellect, Tagore terms it as higher instincts of sympathy and mutual help. Both these South Asian National Poets unanimously argue that modern Western forms of nationalism are divisive" (Alam 6). The objective is to raise awareness and encourage critical thinking beyond nationalistic viewpoints, fostering more inclusive professional citizenship in South Asian pedagogical practices.

Fauzia Ameen's research focuses on the transnational realm as a cosmology shaped by colonialism, examining how anticolonial regimes and resistance strategies encounter challenges within this framework. She explores the literary works of South Asian Diaspora writers, specifically *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy and *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai. Ameen draws on Homi K. Bhaba's concept of hybridity and Avtar Brah's idea of 'Diaspora space' to propose that these spaces can alleviate the marginalization faced by individuals navigating a globalized world. In the transnational sphere, the diaspora experiences a collision of social, cultural, and political spaces, resulting in a pervasive sense of non-belongingness and in-betweenness, particularly evident in the South Asian Diaspora. The study argues that within the transnational framework, diaspora and hybrid identities encounter challenges, leading to exclusion and the reinforcement of hegemony across various domains. Ameen suggests that the transnational environment creates hybrid individuals caught between two worlds, inhabiting the West while belonging to the East, resulting in a situation akin to catastrophe (Ameen 4). The research proposes that, besides embracing hybridity, there may be advantages in asserting one's native identity for self-promotion and projection. This assertion could break down binaries and open opportunities for indigenous affirmation within the Western world.

Pardeep Kaur's in-depth analysis of selected South Asian diasporic fiction explores the yearning for freedom among postcolonial individuals who resist oppressive power structures to assert their subjectivity. The narratives focus on the suppressed subjectivities of third-world women, queer individuals, illegal migrants, and victims of violence. Kaur aims to connect people from diverse South Asian nation-states, fostering a transnational community in the diaspora. Examining novels like *Maps for Lost Lovers, Aadujeevitham, Brick Lane*, and *When the Waters Wail*, Kaur reveals a nuanced South Asian subjectivity that acknowledges its fluid and evolving nature. The analysis explores tensions between

home and host, tradition, and global discourses, highlighting the impact of international ideological forces on internal conflicts within South Asian groups. The research concludes that South Asian subjectivity is dynamic, constantly evolving with influences from time and location. Characters in the narratives exhibit dynamism, reflecting the intricate nature of human subjectivity in the diaspora. "Despite the imposition of subjectivity by influential discourses, individuals have the ability to subvert these narratives, embodying a postcolonial belief in agency and an ongoing struggle for acknowledgment and self-discovery" (Kaur 24). The narratives offer a dual perspective, engaging in an ongoing discourse between the past and present, emphasizing history, memory, tradition, alienation, and self-awareness. The portrayal of South Asian diaspora reality is contested, differentiated, heterogeneous, and volatile, with subjects continuously evolving and emerging anew.

As a concept within the diasporic community, Re-Orientalism emphasizes the role of Orientals in perpetuating Orientalism. Even when occupying privileged positions or positions of power, these elite groups of Orientals continue to regard the West as the center and position themselves as "Others." Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes characterize Orientalism as "a recurring discourse through which the East constructs new narratives about its identity" (4). The process of Re-Orientalism assumes control, distorting the representation of the Orient, seizing voice and platform, and relegating the Oriental within the Orient to a position of 'The Other.' In another article, Mendes outlines how South Asian diasporic writers struggle to break free from the East-West binary and find themselves entangled in processes of 'Self-othering' and 'Western-centering.' This perpetual self-peripheral of the East/Orient remains Western-centric, "upholding the original orientalist dichotomy's status quo, reinforcing the West's centrality" (5). Pakistan is consistently portrayed as the hostile 'other' in an orientalist manner, not only by the Americans (the West) but also by the protagonist himself (the East).

In one of his writings, Jameel Al-Ghaberi discusses Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and argues that the migration of South Asian Diaspora writers to the West empowers Asian women, enabling them to adopt a more radical and rational stance against gender discrimination. The initial depiction of Nazreen as a traditional mother and submissive wife during the early years of her marriage reinforces the novel's assertion that her journey to London was pivotal for her liberation. Life in her homeland is portrayed as being

characterized by control, conditioning, and violence, not only for her but also for other women in similar circumstances. In the culturally more open-minded Western world, Nazreen gains the freedom and space to contemplate possibilities beyond the roles of mother, wife, and daughter. This departure from her past life is evident in her refusal to return to Bangladesh with her husband and her participation in ice skating after the book, symbolizing her embrace of a new culture (Al-Ghaberi 5). Conversely, Bangladesh is depicted as a place where women face continual harassment and oppression, serving as a contrasting backdrop to the more liberating environment of London. Therefore, the transformation of the South Asian diaspora into influential individuals after leaving their home country for a foreign destination, particularly one in the West, signifies that distant lands can serve as a pathway to their independence.

Rohma Saleem delved into Uzma Aslam Khan's *Trespassing* and Qaisera Shiraz's *Typhoon* through the lens of Re-Orientalism, considering both authors as diasporic individuals claiming familiarity with South Asian culture and norms. Saleem posits that the writers advance an orientalist agenda by exhibiting a keen interest in the West. She asserts that these authors while portraying elements of ignorance and an uncivilized society, have also magnified Pakistan's corruption, poverty, and lawlessness. While acknowledging the presence of these social issues in Pakistani societies, Saleem notes an exaggeration in these literary works that perpetuates the notion of duality between the East and the West. This perspective is encapsulated in "self-othering," a recurring theme throughout both novels. Saleem emphasizes, "This portrayal of corruption, misuse of power and authority might be alien for a Western society, but this is precisely the picture they have of the East in their minds" (Saleem 19).

According to Salman's article, Diasporic writers tend to propagate specific cultural images that may only apply to a specific section of society. Geographically and ethnically situated, South Asian writers are seen by Saleem as strategically positioned to cater to an Anglophone audience and challenge the inherently male-dominant oriental image (Saleem 3). Saleem contends that these generalizations contribute to perpetuating myths and stereotypes of South Asian women being confined to perpetual servitude. The key challenge lies in characters from colonized backgrounds encountering a familiar atmosphere akin to the conditions prevalent during colonization before gaining independence.

Ambreen Hai delves into Mueenuddin's fiction within the context of Anglophone South Asian literary history and Pakistan's postcolonial feudal system. He argues that Mueenuddin's makes a significant intervention by employing strategies of subaltern representation that delve into servant interiority and underscore the interconnected systems of power dehumanizing subaltern individuals stigmatized in domestic servitude. The analysis explores the intricate impacts of servitude on vulnerable individuals situated at various levels of a meticulously examined feudal system inherited as "a colonial legacy by an ineffective postcolonial state" (Hai 34).

In a broader sense, Mueenuddin's work implicitly critiques the postcolonial nation for its utter failure to protect its most vulnerable citizens. Similarly, Faheem Arshad contends that Mueenuddin's anthology provides numerous instances illustrating the subjugation, subservience, and objectification of South Asian women. In specific cases, women are relegated to object status, with power, authority, and agency exclusively linked to males, while submission and subservience are assigned to females. The male characters embody supremacy, authority, and power, with female characters relying on them. Males are treated as individuals, while women are perceived merely as bodies (Arshad 11). The reduction of women to object status grants influential men the authority to exert power and control over them, relegating women to mere objects in a patriarchal world overwhelmingly dominated by men.

In Manohari Rasagam's exploration, he investigates the impact of young adult literature by authors from the South Asian Diaspora on the consciousness of diasporic South Asian readers. The research highlights that young adult literature by Western metropolitan authors often caters to a Eurocentric audience, potentially sidelining non-white perspectives. Rasagam's study focuses on multicultural young adult texts globally, particularly those by South Asian diasporic authors, examining whether using allegories like cultural myths challenges and dismantles the hegemony of metropolitan Eurocentrism. Three specific works— *Dahling If You Luv Me Please Please Smile* by Rukhsana Khan, *Bindi Babes* by Narindher Dhami, and *Blue Boy* by Rakesh Satyal—are analyzed for how these authors employ allegory, drawing from a South Asian transnational heritage, to weave narratives in the context of the metropolitan public school. Rasagam aims to show that incorporating South Asian cultural myths and folklore into familiar settings for young adult readers enhances awareness of the cultural heritage of diasporic youth. The integration of

South Asian consciousness through history and allegory, according to Rasagam, blurs boundaries between metropolitan and South Asian spaces, resulting in a transnational merging. This transnational habitation occurs as diasporic characters comfortably embrace their cultural inheritances within a metropolitan space, straddling and embracing both worlds. The study, centered on young adult literature, asserts that protagonists can reconnect with their cultural homelands and navigate diverse spaces, establishing a connection with their origins even within a Western context (Rasagam 17). The fluidity portrayed in these narratives allows young readers to reinterpret unfamiliar locations, revisit histories, and strengthen their ties to cultural roots, contributing to the development of ethnic identity.

Maria Luisa Di Martino, in her exploration of the literary works of migrant women who share life stories influenced by international transit and migration, delves into how these women navigate emotions, undergo identity transformations, and engage in socio-cultural negotiation for integration and adaptation. She emphasizes that the perpetual movement inherent in literature mirrors the perpetual movement of human mobility and migration, forming a symmetry in the effort to negotiate with the new context of host countries (Martino 11). United by their migration as a form of self-exile from oppressive pasts, female migrant writers actively participate in shaping their nomadic existence and rejecting the passive victimhood often associated with history. Re-writing involves articulating migration experiences across various genres and reframing migrants' lives independently of trauma levels. By deconstructing their identities as 'migrant,' 'woman,' and 'writer,' these individuals reconstruct their sense of self through writing, assigning names to their experiences. "It should be stressed that in transnational literature, place and literary production are interconnected, and female migrant writers show us the duality of locality and global places linked in the subjectivity transformation and self-reflection of their works from an intersectional approach, which reflects the intersection of different based-discrimination categories" (Martino 15). Her findings underscore the imperative for public policies to recognize the challenges faced by migrant women in reshaping their identities in transit and host countries. These women must navigate a spectrum of opportunities and constraints, adopting coping strategies to fit into the societal context of their host countries.

Kanwal Mand's article delves into the involvement of South Asian families in the migration process, emphasizing its effects on individual identity, generational and gender roles, and household norms. Traditionally, South Asian households have been characterized by physical proximity, a central hearth, and patrilocal residence. Migration decisions in South Asia are intricately linked to the household's needs and social connections. Initially, male migrants played a pivotal role by sending remittances back home and establishing transnational kinship ties. As subsequent phases unfolded, with the inclusion of women and children, significant shifts occurred in family dynamics and adherence to traditional norms. Mand observes,

> In South Asia, migration is a household decision tied to the needs of its members. Simultaneously, migration shapes the experience of family life and the relationships among its members. Consequently, migration becomes a catalyst for change, resulting in novel ways of relating (Mand 11).

The article explores how migrant families adapt rituals to navigate transnational experiences, especially in marriage. It highlights women's roles in caregiving, provisioning, and social connections, including remittances and daily responsibilities. The importance of evolving care and provision notions across generations and locations is emphasized, considering broader social, economic, and political structures.

Hussain's article addresses the critical issue of women's subalternity, suppression, and marginalization. He aims to explore the representation of women as subaltern objects, highlighting their marginalization, double colonization, and the physical and mental torture they endure within social and political contexts as depicted in Tahir's novel *All My Rage*. The research is anchored in Gayatri Spivak's seminal work "Can the Subaltern speak?" which provides the theoretical framework for the study. Spivak's theory underscores the suppression and marginalization of subaltern classes in society, with a particular emphasis on oppressed and subjugated women in Indian society. By employing this framework, the article seeks to illuminate the ways in which women in *All My Rage* are rendered powerless and voiceless. "The discussion on Sabaa Tahir's novel shows that the novel has represented and highlighted the issues of subalternity, violence, women's marginalization, suppression, subjugation, patriarchy, and double colonization. It has been argued that women have been the victims of violence, marginalization, patriarchy, and subjugation" (250). The research is significant in its potential to amplify the voices of subaltern and marginalized women in

society. By depicting a realistic portrayal of a society that victimizes, marginalizes, and deems women inferior, the study aims to challenge and disrupt these oppressive narratives.

2.3 Conclusion

While the studies above have effectively substantiated their claims, and situated within various post-colonialist frameworks, have extensively explored dichotomies, the phenomenon of 'othering,' and the relegation of South Asian communities to peripheral positions with Western states assuming central roles; my inquiry seeks to expand on this discourse. The objective is to delve into the dynamic patterns of diasporic practices and discern shifts in modes of perceptual orientation, focusing on elements such as dual citizenship and the inherent transcendence embedded in diaspora experiences. The current study has aimed to closely examine the connections upheld by South Asian diasporic characters with their homeland. However, rather than strictly adhering to a 'Re-Orientalist' perspective, the analysis adopts a nuanced approach that acknowledges binaries while accentuating the emergence of transitional communities.

The research employs a qualitative textual analysis to examine the impact of Transnationalism on diaspora literature, particularly focusing on South Asian diasporic authors' efforts to challenge Eurocentrism and promote cultural heritage awareness. The study aims to explore how texts reshape cultural narratives, highlighting the transformative potential of transnational perspectives in literature. By delving into these themes, the research provides valuable insights into the dynamic relationship between Transnationalism and the cultural consciousness of diasporic communities, offering a rich and in-depth analysis of these complex interactions.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as the strategic gateway through which the intricacies of a study are methodically unfolded. Simultaneously, in developing a sturdy theoretical framework, the researcher has aimed to create a conceptual foundation supporting the study by drawing on established theories and conceptual models to navigate the exploration of the research problem. This study investigates Steven Vertovec's theoretical concept of 'Transnationalism,' focusing on how it addresses the diaspora dynamics in today's world in contrast to traditional ideas of Re-Orientalism. The theoretical framework acts as a perspective through which the research questions are scrutinized, providing a theoretical foundation for the analysis and interpretation of findings.

3.2 Research Methodology

The design of this study is qualitative. The research will be a Textual Analysis of *Grown-up Pose* and *All My Rage* by Sonya Lalli and Sabaa Tahir, respectively.

This research investigates the representation of diasporic characters in South Asian diasporic fiction, employing textual analysis as its chosen methodology, which aligns with Alan McKee's recommendation for qualitative textual analysis. The study adopts a predominantly deductive approach consistent with the theoretical framework of 'Transnationalism' proposed by Steven Vertovec. The focus is on exploring how diasporic characters are portrayed within the context of transnational experiences, connections, and identities. The research aimed to bring a structured and data-driven approach to understanding the intersection between literary representation and transnational experiences within the diaspora.

The study shifts its focus from fixed object systems to the dynamic realm of relational transcendence within narratives, emphasizing diasporic characters' active interactions and engagements with their surroundings. This qualitative shift prioritizes functional aspects of characters' roles and relationships, moving beyond a static understanding to explore interactions' dynamic and evolving nature, capturing the fluidity inherent in transnational experiences. Qualitative textual analysis, guided by McKee, is the

methodological approach to gathering information about how individuals interpret texts within specific contexts.

A philosophical foundation underlies textual analysis, proposing that even basic words and depictions of the world are inherently 'texts'—there exists never just one definitive or 'correct' manner to portray anything in the world. Numerous accurate descriptions can aptly depict the same 'truth,' emphasizing the inherent multiplicity in conveying meaning (McKee 8).

This approach challenges preconceived notions about diasporic communities, going beyond literal content to explore how texts influence individuals, groups, and communities within broader societal frameworks. The analysis aimed to discern how individuals and groups interpret selected texts within contemporary settings, linking interpretations to larger, globalized structures shaping diasporic communities. The methodology recognizes reasonable interpretations as legitimate, emphasizing group consensus and challenging traditional notions focused on exotic colonized cultures. The non-reactive stance in data scrutiny involves words and symbols, allowing for standardized analysis and replication. The intricacies behind this issue are intricate and hinge on the fundamental premise of textual analysis, asserting that there isn't a straightforward, singular representation of reality to use as a benchmark for assessing the accuracy of a newspaper story or a film. Any version of 'reality' we employ for comparison is inevitably another representation—a different text. Acknowledging a contextual anchor in interpreting texts underscores that changes in context can yield diverse interpretations" (Mckee 7).

This study aims to interpret texts through the lens of 'Transnationalism' within the South Asian Diasporic context, aligning with previous research on Re-Orientalism to establish a robust theoretical foundation. The methodology explores how diasporic texts transcend simplistic binaries, examining contrasting elements within narratives, such as cultural clashes and conflicting perspectives. The research also aimed to uncover underlying perspectives, ideologies, cultural assumptions, and worldviews shaping diasporic identities, relationships, and interactions depicted in the texts.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

The present study explores the theoretical framework of 'Transnationalism' proposed by Steven Vertovec, addressing the dynamics of diaspora in the contemporary world compared to preconceived notions of Re-Orientalism. With the evolving times, South Asian diasporas have reshaped the global landscape, replacing outdated concepts like the "brain drain" with new models such as the "brain circuit" (Girish 5). The emergence of novel transnational public spheres has significantly altered cultural exchanges between developed and developing worlds. Diasporas demonstrate the ability to swiftly navigate social spaces and establish new social configurations, leading to many complexities associated with interconnected social worlds. According to Vertovec,

> Transnationalism denotes the active and continuous sharing of information, funds, resources, as well as frequent travel and communication among members of a diaspora, both with individuals in their homeland and elsewhere within the globalized ethnic community (Vertovec 37).

These intricacies encompass creating numerous intersecting spheres of belonging, multipolar reference systems, varied loyalties and identifications, complex citizenship structures, and interlinked lifestyles.

3.3.1   *Self-Orientalization and Re-Orientalism*

In their exploration of contemporary literature by diasporic writers from the Orient, Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes shed light on the phenomenon of 'Self-Orientalization'. They highlight how these writers, situated within the diaspora, sometimes perpetuate stereotypical ideas associated with South Asian people. This departure from the colonial era, where Orientalism was primarily propagated by Occidentals, ironically persists in contemporary South Asian literature authored by diasporic writers. Not only do these writers reaffirm Orientalist ideas, but they also, at times, magnify and embellish realities and situations. Conversely, within the context of Re-Orientalism, South Asian diasporic characters often adhere to Western characterizations of Asian individuals. This perspective suggests that despite being crafted by individuals from the diaspora, these characters tend to conform to prevailing Western stereotypes of Asians. Such portrayal may involve depicting characters in ways that reinforce certain expectations or preconceived notions held by Western audiences. As Lau and Mendes delve deeper into these dynamics, they

invite critical reflection on the complexities of identity, representation, and power within contemporary South Asian literature.

The juxtaposition of 'Self-Orientalization' and Re-Orientalism highlights the complex dynamics at play within diasporic literature. On the one hand, there is the phenomenon of diasporic writers unintentionally perpetuating Orientalist ideas about their communities. On the other hand, there is the portrayal of characters that unintentionally conform to Western stereotypes. These examinations shed light on the intricate interplay between identity, representation, and the power dynamics inherent in diasporic literature. Lisa Lau identified three ways diasporic writers contribute to the notion of Re-Orientalism.

> The initial approach involves a common distortion of images arising from an excessive focus on South Asian identity, resulting in a rigid portrayal of fictional South Asian characters strictly adhering to traditional ideals associated with the region. This distortion includes conventional South Asian structures constructed from Western perspectives. The second method is characterized by an "inclination to generalize with totalization," wherein sweeping statements become commonplace rather than exceptional. This involves incorporating deceptive or biased data, leading to criticism of local customs and traditions. The third method revolves around the "blurring boundaries between fiction and autobiography (Lau 225).

According to Lau, in the realm of literature, the portrayal of South Asian identity often unfolds through three distinct yet interrelated methods. Firstly, there exists a prevalent tendency toward the common distortion of images, where characters are depicted according to rigid traditional ideals linked to the region, often filtered through Western lenses. This practice yields oversimplified and stereotypical representations that fall short of capturing the rich diversity and intricate layers of South Asian cultures. Secondly, we encounter an inclination toward generalization with totalization, where broad assertions about South Asian societies are made based on incomplete or biased data. This tendency often leads to the unfair critique of local customs and traditions, devoid of the necessary historical and cultural contexts for understanding. Lastly, the narrative landscape encompasses a phenomenon wherein boundaries between fiction and autobiography blur, as authors intertwine personal experiences with fictional storytelling. While this fusion can inject authenticity into literary depictions, there exists a risk of perpetuating stereotypes or

distortions if authors overly rely on their individual viewpoints. These methods underscore the intricate challenges and subtle nuances inherent in accurately representing South Asian identity in literature. They call upon authors and readers alike to engage in deeper, more nuanced, and inclusive dialogues that honor the complexities and multifaceted nature of South Asian cultures and identities. Whether intentional or unintentional, these techniques prompt diasporic writers to self-orientate, essentially narrating ideologies reminiscent of those propagated by colonial masters.

Re-Orientalism can manifest in diverse ways, encompassing the romanticization of cultural customs, the oversimplification of identities, and the imposition of stereotypes. Likewise, South Asian Diasporic communities may face bias, marginalization, and exclusion, often being perceived as outsiders or 'others.' Nevertheless, transnational environments hold the potential to challenge and disrupt orientalist narratives and practices by empowering diasporic communities to redefine and negotiate their identities and cultural traditions. These environments play a crucial role in shaping the experiences and identities of diasporic groups, offering a platform for cultural interchange, networking, and solidarity. They allow Diasporas to maintain ties with their homeland while establishing new connections with the host country and its cultures.

3.3.2 Vertovec's Conceptualization of Transnational Dynamics

Contrarily, Transnationalism, characterized as the "process through which immigrants establish and maintain intricate social connections linking their societies of origin and settlement," separates diaspora from the migration process and places it in the broader framework of globalization and cosmopolitanism. It shifts the focus to diasporic communities' lived experiences and actions while considering the structural power dynamics between the two spaces. Likewise, as per Vertovec, The transnational implies that a genuine acknowledgment of 'diversity' encompasses not only easily graspable concepts of cultural difference or community affiliation, nor more sophisticated ideas surrounding multiple or hybridized identities, but also "the diversity of connections and affiliations – some of which pertain to people, places, and traditions beyond the confined boundaries of nation-state residence" (Vertovec 19).

Vertovec's conceptualization invites a departure from static and victim-centric perspectives, emphasizing the agency and vitality of diasporic communities. By

highlighting the active role played by immigrants in creating and maintaining social connections, this approach underscores the complexity and richness of their experiences.

> Belonging, loyalty, and a sense of attachment are not components of a zero-sum game anchored in a singular location. In other words, being 'more transnational' does not inherently imply being 'less integrated,' and conversely, being 'less integrated' does not necessarily encourage or fortify patterns of association that are 'more transnational' (Vertovec 89).

It acknowledges that historical events do not solely define diaspora but is an ongoing process shaped by continuous social interactions, relationships, and networks that transcend geographic boundaries.

Transnationalism has created a space for diversifying gender roles and family structures, allowing individuals and communities to challenge and reshape traditional norms while navigating global connections and diverse cultural settings. In transnational communities, individuals often have the opportunity to question and redefine conventional gender roles. Women, in particular, may find more excellent agency and opportunities outside of traditional gender expectations, such as pursuing education, careers, and leadership positions. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that Transnationalism does not automatically guarantee gender equality or acceptance of diverse gender identities. Cultural clashes and societal resistance can impede progress toward total gender inclusivity and equality. Likewise, transnational families function as an indicative social structure that generates new forms of socialization. This is because the sharing of ideas between generations, the transmission of values, and the cultivation of social practices are now more frequently occurring in non-territorial settings.

Vertovec suggests that the concept of a 'transnational family' is defined by robust social networks, acting as a protective barrier that enables the manifestations of Transnationalism to unfold as a fluid continuum rather than imposing a stark division that separates life into two distinct worlds. The extensive social networks surrounding transnational families play a crucial role in facilitating the smooth flow of various elements, including individuals, goods, job opportunities, and information. According to Vertovec, The transnational family is shielded by its expansive social networks, allowing transnational experiences "to form a fluid continuum instead of a radical divide compartmentalizing life into two separate worlds" (Vertovec 64).

Furthermore, these networks function as dynamic platforms for the ongoing recreation and adaptation of cultural values and practices within the context of transnational experiences. This reflects the continuous and interconnected nature of transnational life, where the boundaries between different aspects of existence are not rigidly defined or sharply delineated. Instead, the porous nature of these boundaries facilitates a constant exchange and interaction among the elements that constitute the transnational experience. "Transnational families are, therefore, conduits – or even agents – for both material exchanges and the creation, recreation, and transformation of cultures" (Vertovec 65).

Vertovec's argument suggests that the strength of transnational families lies in their ability to harness the flexibility and adaptability facilitated by expansive social networks rather than being hindered by geographical or cultural distances. The implication is that these families, supported by robust social connections, skillfully maneuver through the intricacies of a globalized world, maintaining a sense of continuity and interconnectedness. This approach helps mitigate potential disruptions from a stark division between various facets of life. Additionally, Vertovec emphasizes that the assertion doesn't imply complete independence for children from their communities of origin. Critical decisions in their lives often involve both family spheres, with ties to the parental homeland shaped by the parents' activities and interests. However, the children may struggle to fully comprehend the efforts made by their parents to keep them oriented to their roots (Vertovec 70).

From Vertovec's standpoint, women experience an elevation in their social status during migration, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. This advancement is attributed to increased employment opportunities and gaining control over financial resources. The economic empowerment derived from employment can alter power dynamics within households and communities. Transnational practices are depicted as avenues for women to construct resilient identities and resist oppression rooted in race and class. Participating in transnational activities, such as working across borders, empowers women to assert themselves, attain independence, and challenge traditional gender roles. According to Vertovec, Transnational families illustrate the operation of culturally constructed gender concepts across diverse environments. "The role of women in households, and consequently daily gender dynamics, can undergo significant and empowering transformations in various interconnected ways. This is particularly evident when wives and daughters migrate, taking on the role of breadwinners for the families they leave

behind" (Vertovec 75). Through transnationalism, both men and women are exposed to alternative gender ideologies, institutions, and practices. This exposure can lead to diverse and blended outcomes, encompassing challenges and reassessments of gender ideologies, beliefs, relationships, and practices before migration.

According to Vertovec, Participation in transnational social spaces varies between men and women. Men seem to show more extraordinary dedication to sustaining public and institutionalized transnational connections, while women, in contrast, exhibit a more substantial commitment to engaging in the life of the host country (Vertovec 76). However, it is essential to recognize that remote involvement does not automatically reduce the endurance of patriarchal dominance. The dynamics within transnational interactions embody a nuanced equilibrium, where women encounter advancements in specific areas but may still grapple with patriarchal frameworks. In some instances, gender structures are firmly established or fortified by migration and transnational living. According to Vertovec,

> Migration studies often find that irrespective of cultural background, women's social status – in the household and community (both local and transnational) – generally improves through the migration process, primarily through access to employment and a certain degree of control over income and material resources (Vertovec 76).

Space is not a static entity but a product of actions and processes that determine its orientation, position, and temporal dimensions. Transnational spaces empower Diasporas, providing a platform for active engagement in global dialogues and challenging prevailing discourses and power structures. Through connections across borders, diasporic communities can defy essentialization and stereotyping, constructing alternative narratives and representations. Despite orientalist depictions prevalent in transnational spaces that may contribute to the marginalization and stereotyping of South Asian diasporic communities, these spaces also offer opportunities for resistance. Diasporic groups can assert their agency and identities, resisting re-orientalist portrayals. Emphasizing the importance of relationships that transcend geographical, cultural, and political boundaries, transnational spaces underscore the local, national, and global interconnectedness. This highlights the potential for meaningful relationships and social formations to surpass borders.

Interactions within transnational spaces contribute to developing hybrid identities that challenge traditional East-West binaries and stereotypes. Vertovec suggests that transnationalism has altered people's connections to space, notably by establishing transnational "social fields" or "social spaces" that link and position specific individuals in more than one country (Vertovec 23). Consequently, transnationalism acts as a counterforce to re-orientalism by establishing new spaces for dialogue and exchange. As people and cultures interact across boundaries, novel identities and cultures can emerge, challenging established narratives and representations.

Transnational spaces serve as a platform for acknowledging and representing voices and perspectives from the Orient within Western culture, disrupting prevailing narratives. Diasporas mold their behaviors through mobility experiences and a fusion of local, national, and international cultural influences. Individuals can embody multiple habits simultaneously by engaging in diverse practices across different settings. Building upon the preceding discussion, Vertovec proposes that diasporas encompass diverse cross-border economic, cultural, and political strategies and dynamics, signaling an "increasing disconnection between territory, subjectivity, and collective social movement" (Vertovec 89). This phenomenon introduces novel social morphologies, including transnational communities, networks, and social spaces. Just as an individual's social background and early experiences shape their "way of being" in the world, social habitus, defined as a system of "durable and transposable" dispositions generating methodologies and representations, clarifies this process through an often unconscious understanding of exteriority (Vertovec 87).

In mobility, diasporic communities establish novel connections with space, weaving their lives intricately into specific patterns that embrace multimodality as the standard. As diasporic individuals traverse diverse locations across multiple cultures, their inhabit spaces transform 'transnational social spaces.' As per Vertovec, These spaces constitute "a continuum where life paths, individual and collective strategies, and the flow of ideas and artifacts contribute to altering or establishing multicultural environments" (Vertovec 86).

Various social groups' assignment of diverse identities can enrich cultural diversity or give rise to conflicts. Distinct social groupings, demarcating different realms of identity,

foster cultural variety or tension. This ongoing process continuously molds and reshapes connections and oppositions, persistently evolving over time and within specific spaces.

> Each habitat or locality embodies a range of factors influencing identity: these encompass local histories and stereotypes of inclusion and exclusion, geographies of cultural distinctions and class/ethnic separation, entrenched socio-economic hierarchies, the extent and nature of collective mobilization, access to and nature of resources, and perceptions and regulations governing rights and responsibilities. The interplay of these multiple contexts forms what some refer to as a 'transnational social field (Vertovec 88).

A global perspective empowers Diasporas to seek acknowledgment in an interconnected world, especially within cultural and public domains. It enables an appreciation of the intricacy, interdependence, fluctuations, contextual nuances, and multilevel mediations of Diasporas and their impacts in a rapidly evolving world, thereby augmenting the conceptual richness of the idea of social transformation (Vertovec 125). Unprecedented interactions between transnational structures and diasporic processes intricately weave behavioral patterns and cultural norms into intricate scenarios, potentially sparking new lines of thought across borders. Transnationalism challenges the idea of a fixed, singular identity tied solely to one's nationality or cultural background. Instead, it recognizes that individuals and communities engaged in transnational experiences often navigate between different cultural, social, and national spheres. Their identities are fluid and can evolve based on interactions with their home and host countries. Various factors, such as ethnicity, language, religion, gender, and class, frequently shape transnational identities. These factors intersect and interact, influencing the way individuals perceive themselves and are perceived by others.

In our modern, digitally connected world, transcending one's roots has taken on a new dimension, involving active participation in online communities and networks that extend far beyond national borders. The virtual space provides a unique arena where individuals can forge identities and affiliations that transcend traditional geographical and cultural boundaries. The concept of transcending roots in this context implies a departure from localized perspectives and an embrace of global interconnectedness. Transnational spaces, physical or virtual, are pivotal in facilitating global connections, cultural exchange, and cooperation. They serve as platforms that enable individuals, communities, and

organizations to interact, learn from each other, collaborate, and pursue shared objectives in an increasingly interwoven world.

> While migrants persist in maintaining robust emotional, loyal, and affiliative connections with their families, traditions, institutions, and political organizations in their home countries, advancements in the 'technology of contact' have significantly impacted the scope, intensity, and rapidity of such interactions (26).

In the digital realm, virtual transnational spaces come to life through online platforms and digital communities, acting as global hubs that enable individuals worldwide to connect, collaborate, and exchange ideas. With modern communication and travel technologies now bringing dispersed populations together more than ever, the conventional assumption that attachment to the homeland will significantly diminish, especially after the first generation and even more so after the second, appears less self-evident (Vertovec 165). The influence of these technologies extends beyond the establishment of new social structures; instead, they magnify and fortify pre-existing social patterns. This amplification occurs as individuals and institutions engage in interconnected relationships that transcend national boundaries. While these technologies may not inherently create new social patterns, they notably enhance and solidify existing ones. The emergence of dense and highly active networks spanning vast geographical areas plays a crucial role in reshaping various aspects of social, cultural, economic, and political relationships.

The concept of habitus is crucial for understanding the development, content, and mechanisms of these perspectives and values and their potential transformation through Transnationalism. Vertovec draws on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of habitus, which refers to a socially and culturally conditioned set of enduring dispositions or tendencies for social action. This dualistic set of dispositions predisposes migrants to respond to specific situations in a manner that is not always consciously calculated but is grounded in a deliberate acceptance of behavioral or sociocultural norms. The transnational habitus takes into consideration the social position of the migrant and the context in which transmigration occurs. "The dispositions of habitus selectively generate everyday social practices immediately and in the context of specific social fields. As a set of neither wholly conscious nor wholly non-conscious perceptions, outlooks, points of reference, habitus guides personal goals and social interactions" (Vertovec 77).

As diasporic writers establish and replicate a habitus characterized by dual-orientation, it further influences postcolonial literature. At the core of the habitus concept is internalizing social expectations and value systems and incorporating them into bodily dispositions. Concurrently, habitus represents the collective, learned system of usually unconscious or implicit rules shaping the values practiced by individuals in a transnational context (Vertovec 89).

As per Bourdieu, migrants possess a specific set of dualistic tendencies that influence their responses to various situations, which may be deliberate yet not always calculated. This inclination is not merely a conscious adherence to specific behavioral or sociocultural norms; it incorporates the migrant's social position and the context of transmigration. Consequently, migrants from the same social groupings, such as class, gender, or generation, share similar transnational habitus, adapting their transnational practices to specific circumstances (Bourdieu 78). Vertovec, in examining the transnational experience through the lens of habitus, contends that it reveals the formation of 'Binaries' by diasporic authors. This illustrates how these patterns redirect individual habitus towards 'bifocality' or a dual orientation in response to evolving conditions. This perspective highlights the emergence and manifestation of dual orientations within diasporic communities, where South Asian diasporic writers, for instance, construct binaries between 'Orients' and 'Occidentals' (Vertovec 92).

Moreover, the concept elucidates that any person's relocation and integration into a new social system entail a re-orientation of habitus. This process is imperative as it involves negotiating and skillfully selecting actions by the immediate, local systems of structured relationships. Furthermore, it underscores that transnational life experiences can give rise to dual orientations and a personalized repertoire of values and action sets derived from diverse cultural configurations.

The transnational habitus holds broader implications for social and political structures, challenging conventional ideas and emphasizing the need for more inclusive and diverse forms of diasporic citizenship (Vertovec 94). Furthermore, it highlights the importance of understanding the intricate and dynamic ways individuals navigate multiple cultural and social contexts. Transnationalism is an ongoing process of integration and adaptation, where individuals and communities blend elements of their heritage with new aspects from their host environment. This dynamic process enables the construction of

identities that maintain a connection with the past while responding to current circumstances. According to Vertovec,

> The coexistence of images and ideals related to the homeland and the host land is accompanied by the centrality of the transnational community. This results in a continual balancing act between the host land's economic and political power and the homeland's fertility and spirituality (Vertovec 110).

This continuous ambivalence and negotiation of seemingly opposing worldviews are integral to the diaspora experience. Diasporas maintain multistranded connections to their places of origin, significantly influencing the lifeworlds of migrants and those left behind. These connections encompass social, cultural, and economic ties that intricately integrate various dimensions of transmigrant lives.

For instance, diasporic authors depict contrasting family structures within the framework of Re-Orientalism. One portrayal emphasizes Western civilization, highlighting qualities such as mutual understanding, close relationships, and open expressions of opinions. In contrast, another representation depicts a family environment where children feel silenced and oppressed, fearing harsh and offensive reactions from their parents. This portrayal of South Asian families underscores the presence of a generation gap, impeding the development of warm relationships and fostering anxiety and strained communication.

However, various aspects of diasporic family life merit attention, including how parents raise their children and navigate their own experiences. "Long-distance parenthood" emerges as a standard feature, linking fragmented families and geographically dispersed households, a characteristic observed in many diasporic experiences (Vertovec 45). It's important to note that this doesn't suggest the independence of children's lives from their home communities, as significant life choices often involve considerations from both locations. Nonetheless, parents' interests and activities influence children's connections to their ancestral home, creating challenges in understanding efforts to maintain rootedness. As Vertovec notes, "The disjuncture between parents' transnational orientations and children's local ones may lead to exasperation" (Vertovec 47).

Expanding on Bourdieu's notion of habitus, an alternative perspective considers culture as a 'toolkit.' From this standpoint, cultural attributes amassed from various sources throughout an individual's life are seen as resources that can be employed to formulate

diverse action strategies, adapting to specific situations. However, an individual's fundamental orientations, dispositions, and cultural structures are also shaped and employed through institutionalization within the family. The processes and elements involved in constructing a person's repertoire of habits become even more intricate when social conditioning and family life unfold in two or more settings. Practices, perspectives, and frames of reference from one context may be substituted or blended.

Vertovec emphasizes the interplay of first and second-transnational habitus, various local conditioning factors, and second-generation youths' hybrid or multicultural habitus. Transnational habitus significantly influences individual and family life courses and strategies, perceptions of self and collective belonging, personal and group memories, collective sociocultural practices, and other modes of cultural reproduction where the second generation is embedded. Moving across borders and interacting with people from different backgrounds, transnationalism provides opportunities for individuals to explore and embrace new cultural practices, languages, and traditions. It becomes a catalyst for questioning and challenging ingrained beliefs and norms. The transnational experience fosters a sense of openness and adaptability, encouraging individuals to navigate the complexities of multiple identities and engage meaningfully with a global community. In essence, transnationalism offers a more inclusive and dynamic perspective on identity and belonging.

3.3.3 Interplay of Re-Orientalism and Transnationalism

Re-Orientalism and transnationalism are two concepts that intersect and diverge in the exploration of identity, power dynamics, and representation within South Asian diasporic narratives. While they both address aspects of globalization, cultural exchange, and identity formation, they do so from distinct perspectives and with different implications. The relationship between transnationalism and Re-Orientalism is intricate. While transnationalism challenges and subverts Orientalist stereotypes and depictions by establishing networks and connections that transcend national boundaries, thus challenging traditional notions of identity and culture, Re-Orientalism underscores the complex transformations occurring in contemporary societies due to globalization, migration, and cultural exchange. It highlights the need for critical cultural analysis to comprehend how power and culture are negotiated and constructed in a transnational context. The concept of transnationalism disrupts conventional assimilationist models, which assume that migrants

will eventually adopt the culture of their host country at the expense of their original culture. Instead, transnationalism proposes that individuals can maintain ties to their cultural roots while actively engaging in and contributing to their host societies.

Re-Orientalism revolves around the perpetuation and reconstruction of Orientalist narratives by individuals within the Orient itself. It emphasizes how elites and powerful groups within non-Western societies participate in framing the East according to Western preconceptions, perpetuating the 'Othering' of their own cultures and identities. It can impede authentic identity formation by perpetuating stereotypes and limiting the agency of individuals to define themselves outside of Western frameworks. It often leads to internalized self-othering and reinforces hierarchies within non-Western societies. Transnationalism, on the other hand, focuses on the fluid movement of people, ideas, and cultures across national borders. It examines how individuals navigate multiple cultural identities and affiliations, transcending the confines of nation-states in their lived experiences and interactions. It embraces the multiplicity of identities and the blending of cultural influences that characterize diasporic experiences. Transnational individuals may draw from diverse cultural sources to construct hybrid identities that resist singular categorization.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Diaspora, which historically predates transnationalism, has traditionally emphasized the heightened "connectedness" facilitated by information, communication, and technology, linking Diasporas with their places of origin. It is crucial to recognize that Diasporas are entangled in a complex web of overlapping, mixed, and partial influences, attachments, and obligations that extend beyond a single homeland. As aptly articulated by James Clifford, "decentered, lateral connections" can be just as significant as more traditional ties rooted in the concept of origin and return (Clifford 87). Similarly, South-Asian Diasporas tend to redefine cultural dynamics, with their orientation less fixed on roots in a specific place or a longing for return and more focused on their ability to recreate their culture in diverse locations. It is within the framework of transnationalism that contemporary interpretations of diaspora gain relevance, considering continuity, community, and attachment across geographical boundaries. In contrast, transnational space acknowledges the establishment and maintenance of connections and networks that surpass geographical, cultural, and political borders. Simultaneously, it recognizes the interplay and coexistence of the local, the national, and the global. The transnational concept underscores the potential for developing meaningful relationships and social formations that extend across borders, facilitated by the creation of intricate networks. Consequently, it proves particularly pertinent in understanding how migrant and diasporic communities establish and sustain multifaceted social connections.

4.1 Sonya Lalli's *'Grown-Up Pose':* A Dive into Transnationalism

Grown-Up Pose, penned by Sonya Lalli, delves into the life of its central character, Anu Desai, a thirty-year-old resident of Toronto, Canada. At first glance, Anu seems to have everything one could wish for—a loving spouse, a beautiful home, and a fulfilling career. However, as she navigates the complex terrain of modern adulthood and societal expectations, she starts to question her life choices and the path she has taken. Anu finds herself at a crossroads, torn between the desire to conform to traditional Indian expectations and her pursuit of personal dreams and aspirations. It presents a poignant and thought-provoking exploration of the challenges many individuals encounter when trying to

harmonize their cultural heritage with their personal ambitions and the societal pressures of adulthood.

4.1.1 Transnational Explorations: Navigating Gender and Family

Gender dynamics and family structures constitute essential elements within cultural institutions, molded by sets of beliefs and values passed down through social traditions and individual experiences. In the realm of transnational social interactions, distinct patterns emerge in the engagement between men and women. Vertovec's perspective suggests that women, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, experience an enhancement in their social status during the migration process. Transnational practices are portrayed as avenues for women to forge robust identities and resist oppression based on race and class. Engaging in transnational activities, such as employment across borders, allows women to assert themselves, gain independence, and challenge traditional gender roles.

An illustrative example involves Mags suggesting that Anu take charge of a Yoga Studio. Initially deeming the idea implausible, Anu laughed it off. However, Mags discerned a glint of determination in Anu's eyes, transforming the concept into something more feasible. Anu, who had followed a conventional life path encompassing education, career, marriage, and motherhood, found herself grappling with a sense of emptiness despite these societal milestones. This introspection led her to question whether one could truly appreciate and find fulfillment in every aspect of life while still sensing something missing. This narrative encapsulates the complexities of gender dynamics in transnational contexts, highlighting both the opportunities for women's empowerment and the persistent challenges posed by patriarchal norms. "Anu's longing for something more was palpable as she looked out of the window at the darkened sky and heavy clouds, desiring to shape and transform them into something entirely new with her own hands" (Lalli 32). Anu's wedding didn't align with her expectations. While she was dedicated to her nursing training, Neil was focused on advancing his career at Google and later as an independent contractor. This initial mismatch in priorities and aspirations may have set the stage for later conflicts.

Anu discovers that Neil lacks basic household skills and is not considerate of her needs. This discrepancy in their domestic contributions could lead to frustration and feelings of imbalance in the relationship. Anu's decision to hire a cleaner indicates her proactive approach to managing the household despite her demanding schedule. Despite

hiring help, Anu becomes increasingly exhausted and irritated by Neil's parenting efforts and flexible work hours. The implication is that Neil's choices seem more for his convenience than for the mutual well-being of their family. This dynamic could contribute to a sense of neglect and strain in their relationship. The turning point occurs when Anu returns home to find chaos, with Neil preoccupied with CNN and seemingly oblivious to the disorder around him.

> Most of their neighbors' drives were already clear, and one of them had even graciously shoveled the sidewalk in front of Anu and Neil's house. Fuming, she handed a wad of cash to the driver and then started the laborious trek up the snowy drive in her heels. She followed a trail of coats and scarves down the hall, through the kitchen, and up the few stairs to the living room area. Neil was there, of course, with CNN on mute in the background (Lalli 58).

This moment serves as a catalyst for Anu to contemplate separation from Neil. It signifies a breaking point and prompts her to reevaluate the state of their relationship.

Anu's contemplation about separation evolves into a profound realization, a moment of introspection that serves as a crucial turning point in her life. As she grapples with the complexities of her marriage, Anu acknowledges that somewhere along the way, she has lost touch with her own interests and personal pursuits. This moment of self-awareness becomes a pivotal realization, prompting her to delve into the significance of self-discovery and personal fulfillment within the context of her relationship. The separation itself becomes a catalyst for Anu to reevaluate and rediscover aspects of herself that may have been overshadowed by the demands of marriage and motherhood.

> She couldn't even recall how she used to spend her time before Kanika was born. Her entire life had seemingly revolved around her daughter's well-being, her appetite, her amusement, and her emotions (Lalli 46).

The all-encompassing nature of her role as a mother is unveiled as a significant contributor to this detachment from personal interests. Prioritizing her daughter Kanika's well-being, Anu's focus had become singularly devoted to the responsibilities of motherhood, leaving little room for her individual passions and pursuits.

In transnational communities, individuals often adjust their gender roles and family structures to meet diverse cultural expectations. For instance, women who migrate for

employment may take on non-traditional roles as providers, while their male counterparts might assume caregiving responsibilities. This adaptation challenges conventional gender norms and prompts a reconsideration of family dynamics. Families in these situations face distinct challenges, including maintaining connections over distances and reconciling varied cultural and societal expectations. Consequently, a blend of hybrid cultural practices and the integration of diverse family traditions may emerge. In the case of Priya and Anu, their relationship remained harmonious initially because Anu adhered to traditional South Asian expectations without challenging or making choices aligned with her personal interests. Many South Asian cultures deeply embed expectations about gender roles, family dynamics, and the sacrifices expected of women, especially mothers. However, tensions emerged later when Priya distanced herself from Anu after Anu decided to separate from her son. These conflicts may also mirror broader generational and cultural disparities. Anu's choices signify a departure from traditional expectations, underscoring the evolving perspectives of younger generations regarding personal autonomy and fulfillment.

> As an Indian mother, Priya was upset that Anu had prioritized herself over her son and wanted her to perpetuate the facade of a "happy family" by continuing to make sacrifices and compromises, as expected of a South Asian woman. "Neil would always choose his mother, pick his relationship with her over their marriage (Lalli 92).

Priya's wish for Anu to maintain the illusion of a "happy family" underscores the importance attributed to external appearances and societal expectations. Neil went so far as to label the decision to separate as "immature," despite having his own shortcomings as an absent father who frequently neglected his responsibilities.

Post-separation, Anu's ability as a mother came under scrutiny, and she faced judgment for expressing a need for respite. This was particularly disheartening given that Neil and Priya were also sharing parenting responsibilities part-time. "How can she be so busy?" Lakshmi mumbled, as if Anu weren't even there. "Neil and Priya are looking after her daughter half time." Anu's jaw dropped. Her daughter? Only Anu's daughter" (Lalli 82). Anu was taken aback when Lakshmi exclusively referred to the child as "her daughter," leaving her surprised and perplexed about Lakshmi's perspective. Lalli exemplified the dynamic of 'transnational disciplining' between Anu and the first-generation diasporic characters as an illustration of how they preserved traditional customs. For instance, when

preparing a Punjabi feast, Anu might have utilized a food processor for chopping, reduced the soaking time for rice and lentils, and streamlined the cooking process for efficiency. In contrast, Priya and Lakshmi preferred to prolong the tasks, incorporating breaks for conversation, gossip, and rearranging Anu's kitchen items.

Anu's relationship with her mother, Lakshmi, is characterized by a nuanced interplay, underscored by a significant generational gap that is prevalent within their diasporic community. Lakshmi, driven by a desire to shield Anu from the complexities of the world, inadvertently became a hindrance to her daughter's personal growth and hindered her ability to learn valuable life lessons from firsthand experiences.

> Her breath hitching, she wondered what they'd say if she told them she regretted having always obeyed them. Coming home early to study, to sit nicely on the couch with her legs crossed and her back straight, like a good Indian girl. Dating and marrying the appropriate man. Buying the right house. Choosing the right profession. What if she told them that she should have gone to Europe and pursued yoga when she'd had the chance? That she should have gone after her dreams (Lalli 82).

Anu was expected to obediently follow guidance without making mistakes, adhering to the societal expectations imposed on good Indian girls. As Anu reflects on her life decisions, her breath hitching indicates the emotional weight and turmoil she experiences. She questions the implications of constantly obeying her family's expectations, which have dictated various aspects of her life, including her education, behavior, relationships, and career. Her contemplation extends to the choices she could have made differently. She wonders about the opportunities she may have missed by conforming to societal norms and familial expectations.

In the realm of gender roles, certain cultures may adhere to more conventional and traditional viewpoints, dictating specific roles and expectations for individuals based on their gender. An example of the clash between traditional and contemporary viewpoints on gender roles is evident in the scenario involving Anu and Neil's contemplation of purchasing a townhouse in Kitsilano, their preferred neighborhood. Kitsilano, known for its urban amenities and proximity to downtown, university parklands, and the beach, represents a lifestyle choice aligned with modern preferences and aspirations. However, Anu's parents interjected with their perspective, emphasizing the importance of practical

considerations, particularly regarding housing arrangements suitable for a growing family. They suggested prioritizing a larger house with more bedrooms, typically found in the suburban areas closer to them and Priya.

In making their decision, Anu and Neil weighed the practical advice provided by her parents against their own desires and aspirations. Despite their inclination toward the lifestyle offered in Kitsilano, they ultimately opted for the financially responsible choice of staying near their parents. This decision reflects a convergence of practical considerations and familial expectations, aligning with the perceived norms associated with responsible adulthood. "Staying close to their parents was the financially responsible decision. What a grown-up did, and so that was what they did" (Lalli 27). Eventually, Anu and Neil made the financially responsible choice to stay near their parents, aligning their decision with what they perceived as the conventional expectations of grown-ups.

4.1.2 Beyond Borders: Anu's Yoga Studio Transnational Journey

Vertovec posits that Transnationalism has transformed spatial relationships, giving rise to transnational 'social fields' or 'social spaces' that connect and position individuals across multiple countries (12). According to Vertovec, individuals and communities actively cultivate and expand transnational social fields, where connections, practices, and identities span across diverse nations. Lalli's narrative reflects the intricate nature of Anu's travel experiences, offering insights into her interactions with diverse cultural and geographical contexts.

> Over the years, she'd traveled around Canada a bit especially the beautiful western coastline. Hiking. Camping. Skiing. Anu went to Las Vegas the year she and Monica had both turned twenty-one, although they'd blown all their money shopping and couldn't afford to go out in the evenings. And Neil had taken her to Mexico for their honeymoon. Since then, they had been back to the same resort twice, both times with their parents and Kanika (Lalli 78).

The recurrent trips to India during her childhood illustrate a transnational connection, as Anu shuttles between Chandigarh and Ludhiana, experiencing the diverse family environments on both Lakshmi's and her dad's sides. These regular visits foster a transnational identity, shaping Anu's understanding of her heritage and familial connections across borders. The mention of Las Vegas and the budget constraints faced

with Monica highlights a different facet of transnational experiences, the intersection of personal growth and cultural exposure. Anu's trip to Las Vegas at the age of twenty-one signifies a rite of passage into adulthood, but the financial limitations speak to the challenges that can arise when navigating unfamiliar spaces. Nevertheless, there were occasions when Anu had to turn down some of her travel opportunities. "Despite being invited along, each time she'd turned Jenny down on her exotic month-long trips abroad. Now she wasn't sure why. Because it would have worried her parents? Because Neil would be home with Priya, working and missing out?" (Lalli 47). This suggests a sense of responsibility or consideration for the feelings of her family members. Anu reflects on the potential impact of her absence on her husband Neil and their daughter Priya. She questions whether her decision to decline Jenny's invitations was motivated by concerns about Neil having to manage household responsibilities and parental duties alone in her absence. Anu's commitment to her family's well-being and her desire to maintain stability and support at home may have influenced her decisions regarding travel opportunities.

Traveling abroad for an extended period might have been perceived as a source of anxiety for her parents, leading her to prioritize their peace of mind over the opportunity to embark on exotic journeys. However, following her separation from Neil, Anu found amusement in her solo trip to London. The spaces within the city served as a source of liberation for her.

> And so all week Anu had done London on her own. She ate mouthwatering masala prawns and black dal at the bar in Dishoom. She walked the South Bank and wandered the streets of East London taking photographs of the vintage shops and graffiti, spent way, way too much buying the clothes all the fashionable Londoners seemed to wear. She went to all the sights, the museums, the tours—and after nearly a week, there was still more to do (Lalli 127).

Throughout the week, Anu engaged in various activities that allowed her to explore the city independently and immerse herself in its vibrant culture. The mention of walking the South Bank and wandering the streets of East London reveals Anu's interest in both the iconic landmarks and the eclectic neighborhoods of the city. She took the opportunity to capture the essence of East London by photographing vintage shops and graffiti, showcasing her appreciation for the artistic and cultural elements that define different areas of the city. Anu's exploration reflects a sense of freedom and independence as she navigates the

cityscape on her terms. "Anu did want to be happy. It was the reason she had always tried to please her parents. Why she followed her heart and married Neil at the age of twenty-three. Why, years later, she had left him and was now taking over a yoga studio" (Lalli 135). The yoga studio played a transformative role in Anu's life, emerging as a significant space that had a profound impact on her.

During Anu's inaugural visit to the studio, an immediate connection was established as she found herself captivated by its ambiance, evoking powerful memories and associations. The studio's stripped-down, uncluttered, and straightforward design struck a chord with Anu, transporting her back to a different time when she had regularly attended a yoga studio throughout her high school and university years. The familiar elements of the studio's bare, clean, and simple aesthetics resonated deeply within her, acting as a poignant reminder of the past and contributing to the profound impact it had on her.

> The tasteful birch panels on the wall were whitewashed and reminded Anu of the beach house she and Neil had once rented while she was pregnant with Kanika (Lalli 28).

Upon acquiring the yoga studio, Anu experienced a profound realization that the space held untapped potential for transformation and development. This epiphany ignited a passionate spark within her, prompting Anu to embark on a purposeful journey aimed at revitalizing and reshaping the studio. Her visionary perspective extended beyond the studio's initial appearance, symbolizing a commitment to creating a space that not only mirrored her personal experiences but also offered a welcoming and rejuvenating atmosphere for others. Anu's recognition of the inherent possibilities within the studio became the catalyst for a meticulous and thoughtful revitalization process. Anu envisioned a holistic space that went beyond the physical aspects, fostering an environment conducive to overall well-being and self-discovery.

> She could change the name, repaint the walls, and give the studio more ambience. She imagined the front room flooded with twinkle lights, ferns, and basketry—from ideas she'd found and filed away on a secret Pinterest board (Lalli 72).

Firstly, Anu contemplates changing the name of the studio, a symbolic move that could signify a fresh start and align the space more closely with her vision. The act of renaming can carry significant meaning, and in this context, it suggests a desire to redefine and

reinvent the identity of the studio under her ownership. Secondly, the idea of repainting the walls underscores Anu's intention to bring a visual transformation to the studio. The choice of colors can greatly impact the ambiance, influencing the mood and energy within the space.

In an effort to attract new students, Anu, with the assistance of Imogen, implemented a weekly trial program at a reduced cost. However, the outcomes fell short of expectations. Although evening classes saw better attendance, primarily from university students, the revenue generated was insufficient to cover the studio's rent expenses. Anu's resilience was evident as she faced the difficulties of sustaining her studio. Despite the financial constraints, she harbored a strong desire to expand the offerings of her yoga studio, envisioning a diverse range of classes that included mindfulness and meditation. However, the studio's clientele was primarily comprised of university students, middle-aged women with disposable income, and seniors. Recognizing the need for broader outreach, Anu felt compelled to extend her efforts.

Her presence in the studio marked not only her commitment to the business but also her personal growth as a South Asian woman. It became a platform for self-discovery and empowerment, providing the direction she had been seeking in her life. To streamline operations, Anu delegated responsibilities to her friend Monica, who managed the initial setup of the studio. Anu took charge of various aspects, including renovations, cleaning, and overall improvements.

> She put Monica in charge of setting up the studio proper: organizing the equipment, varnishing the hardwood floors, and arranging the minimalist decorations. Meanwhile, Anu tackled everything else. She installed the new faucets and fixtures, deep-cleaned the change room and bathrooms, painted all the walls but Jenny's feature wall either a Swiss coffee off-white or a dove (Lalli 208).

Understanding the importance of creating an inviting atmosphere, Anu focused on enhancing the studio's amenities. This involved investing in audio systems, decorations, and other elements to make the space more appealing and diverse. Her multifaceted approach showcased a commitment to not only financial sustainability but also the creation of a welcoming and inclusive environment. Despite the hurdles, Anu's actions reflected her dedication to transforming the yoga studio into a thriving community space that went beyond the boundaries of a typical fitness center. Despite the complexity of the task, she

manages to navigate the installation process successfully, highlighting her resourcefulness and determination to overcome obstacles.

In the digital realm, virtual transnational spaces come to life through online platforms and digital communities, acting as global hubs that enable individuals worldwide to connect, collaborate, and exchange ideas. In response to the evolving landscape, Anu contemplates diversifying the offerings of her yoga studio beyond the conventional weekend classes. Her vision includes the creation of unique sessions like "Ladies' Nights In". This innovative approach challenges the exclusivity of catering solely to the usual demographic, suggesting a more inclusive and community-centric model. "Why couldn't she hold classes on weekend nights, just because nobody else seemed to? She could brand them "Ladies' Nights In." Weren't her adult friends always complaining to her how hard it was to meet other likeminded women outside of work?" (Lalli 197). Anu reflects on the potential for expanding her studio's offerings by introducing weekend night classes targeted specifically at women, an idea she believes has considerable merit. She contemplates the possibility of branding these sessions as "Ladies' Nights In," a concept designed to cater to the needs and preferences of her female clientele. Anu's entrepreneurial mindset is evident as she considers the practical aspects of implementing this idea. She suggests charging double for these specialized classes and offering participants a complimentary glass of wine or coconut water as a gesture of hospitality and relaxation. This combination of fitness and socialization aligns with her understanding of what her adult friends, and potentially other women in her community, an opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals in a relaxed and supportive environment. By creating a space for women to come together, exercise, and socialize, she seeks to address this need and foster meaningful connections among her clientele.

Recognizing the importance of establishing a strong online presence, Anu and Neil refine their digital strategy by incorporating search engine optimization (SEO) and social media efforts. Neil accesses the administrative page of the website developed by Imogen, highlighting his ability to navigate digital platforms and utilize web-based tools effectively. This strategy is intended to improve the website's ranking in search engine results pages, thereby increasing its visibility to potential clients who are seeking fitness studios or related services online.

Neil logged in to the admin page of the website Imogen had created, and in a few clicks, he linked everything to the studio's social media accounts to increase SEO— which, Neil explained, would increase traffic to the website. She was in awe. With a little paint and a fresh idea, this studio could really work (Lalli 197).

The objective is to amplify the visibility of their yoga studio, making it more versatile and attractive to a wider audience. By harnessing technology, Anu transforms her studio into a digitally sophisticated and globally accessible environment. Through these strategic endeavors, Anu comes to the realization that surpassing competitors isn't the primary goal; rather, introducing new ideas and enhancements is crucial for thriving in a constantly evolving global and digital landscape. Her realization that the success of the studio does not solely depend on outdoing competitors but rather on leveraging innovative ideas and effective strategies to differentiate itself in the market. Through Neil's technical skills and strategic approach, Anu gains confidence in the studio's potential for success and begins to envision a bright future for her business.

Anu is depicted as actively and strategically promoting her yoga studio's open house event, employing a mix of traditional and digital marketing methods to reach a broad audience. This platform was chosen for its wide-reaching capabilities, allowing her to target a diverse cross-section of her potential clientele.

She'd paid an arm and a leg for Facebook advertising to hit a huge cross section of her potential demographic starting that very day. The week before, she'd also papered the neighborhood with flyers and e-mailed out a press release about the open house to several hundred, maybe close to a thousand, media contacts that Monica had discreetly borrowed from her publicist friend (Lalli 211).

Anu invests in Facebook advertising, allocating a significant budget to target a broad demographic of potential customers. By leveraging the extensive reach of Facebook's advertising platform, she aims to generate interest and awareness among individuals who may be interested in attending the open house event or exploring the studio's services. The decision to start the advertising campaign immediately indicates a sense of urgency and the desire to generate immediate interest and attendance for the upcoming open house. The preceding week's efforts involved a multifaceted approach. Anu adopted a more localized strategy by distributing flyers throughout the neighborhood. This traditional method aimed

to capture the attention of local residents and passersby, potentially drawing in those who may be interested in attending the open house.

Similarly, Lalli mentions, "And Instagram. Instagram, too. It needs to be online, Anusha. You think anyone's going to see your flyers?" Imogen grabbed the last stack of posters from her backpack and set them down on the desk with a thud. They'd papered all the coffee shops, grocers, college campuses, and independent shops this side of Vancouver" (Lalli 156). Imogen also emphasizes the importance of an online presence, specifically mentioning Instagram, in promoting Anu's yoga studio. The mention of Instagram specifically points to the popularity of visual-centric social media platforms, where engaging content can quickly capture attention and spread organically. Instagram is known for its visual appeal and the potential to reach a wide audience, making it a valuable tool for businesses, especially those in the wellness and lifestyle sectors. Imogen's rhetorical question, "You think anyone's going to see your flyers?" challenges the efficacy of traditional advertising methods in the digital age. The implication is that relying solely on physical flyers may limit the reach and impact of the promotional efforts. Within transnational context, it underscores the need to leverage online visibility to complement traditional methods, acknowledging the evolving landscape of advertising and communication in the modern era.

4.1.3 Transnational Habitus: Cultural Complexity in Lalli's Work

Pierre Bourdieu's sociological framework centers on the concept of habitus, encompassing the array of social practices, inclinations, and values that individuals internalize through their socialization and experiences within a particular cultural setting. In transnational spaces, where individuals have connections to multiple cultures and societies, their habitus undergoes a transnationalization process. Anu reflects on the profound challenge of conveying the concept of divorce within a cultural context deeply rooted in traditional practices of arranged marriage. She expresses the difficulty of explaining divorce to a generation that was predominantly bound by the conventions of arranged marriages, where individuals had little to no say in choosing their life partners. She highlights how marriages in this generation were characterized by an overwhelming commitment to staying together, irrespective of personal feelings of love or compatibility. The emphasis on enduring marriages regardless of emotional fulfillment underscores the deeply ingrained societal norms and expectations surrounding marital relationships.

> That last lie had been the hardest to tell. How else did you explain divorce to a generation who largely didn't get to choose whom they married, overwhelmingly stayed together regardless of love? Where families picked their children's spouses from a lineup, chose their future based on horoscope, height and weight, skin color and caste? (Lalli 110).

The difficulty in conveying the idea of divorce is rooted in the habitus of a generation that largely didn't have the autonomy to choose their life partners. Anu vividly describes the process of arranged marriages, where families took on the responsibility of selecting spouses for their children based on a variety of criteria. These criteria included considerations such as horoscopes, physical attributes like height and weight, as well as societal factors like skin color and caste. The mention of these factors underscores the intricate web of cultural and social considerations that influenced the formation of marital unions in the community. The societal expectations embedded in their habitus overwhelmingly prioritize staying together regardless of love, emphasizing the endurance of the marital bond over individual desires.

The habitus of South Asian communities, shaped by cultural traditions and societal expectations, makes it challenging for them to comprehend or accept the idea of divorcing a spouse chosen by familial considerations rather than personal preference.

> Anu swallowed each bite hard as she felt her throat constricting. They were loving, doting, supportive parents—but only because Anu had never given them a reason not to be. Only until she became a single mother, someone who wanted more than what good Indian daughters, wives, and mothers were supposed to want (Lalli 119).

It suggests that Anu's parents have been loving, doting, and supportive, but these qualities are contingent on her adherence to traditional roles expected of a "good Indian daughter, wife, and mother". The cultural habitus, in this case, dictates predefined roles and aspirations for women, and Anu's deviation from these norms is perceived as challenging the established order. Her recognition that her parents' approval is conditional upon her conformity to societal norms reflects the pressure and scrutiny placed upon women to fulfill predetermined roles and expectations within traditional Indian families. This departure from the expected path creates tension and uncertainty in her relationship with her parents, as she fears their disapproval and disappointment.

Transnational habitus extends this understanding to acknowledge that individuals who navigate transnational spaces and have connections to multiple cultures and societies develop a transnationalized habitus. Anu attempts to recall her own behavior at Imogen's age, acknowledging that she had frequented bars and occasionally consumed alcohol with friends and her then-husband, Neil.

> Anu tried to remember herself at Imogen's age. Sure, she'd gone to bars like this; a few times, she'd drunk one too many vodka 7 Ups with her friends and Neil, but she'd never been stupid about it. Neil would sit with her in a booth, bring her water, and protectively drive her home when a party got too wild. Anything that had even come close to "stupid," she had shared with Neil (Lalli 49).

However, she contrasts her experiences with Imogen's by stating that she had never been "stupid" about it. Anu recalls how Neil played a protective role during these social outings, ensuring her safety by sitting with her, providing water, and responsibly driving her home when necessary. It implies that Anu's choices were influenced not only by her individual disposition but also by the dynamics of her relationship with Neil. This interplay between individual habitus and relational dynamics is an essential aspect of understanding behavior within the framework of transnational habitus. "They loved her, but didn't they know how much it hurt? Obsessing, obtruding, berating—that was the way so many Indian parents loved" (Lalli 83). The mention of "Indian parents" introduces a cultural dimension to the narrative.

Anu hints at cultural expectations and parenting styles that might be prevalent in Indian families, where expressions of love can sometimes manifest in ways that might seem intense or intrusive by Western standards. While the parents genuinely care for Anu, the intensity and manner in which that love is expressed may create emotional conflicts. This complexity adds depth to the portrayal of familial bonds.

> Why hadn't she ever told them the truth? She loved Neil; she always would, but Anu didn't want to be his mother, his caretaker, or his housekeeper. She didn't want a life like Lakshmi's or Priya's: the life of an Indian housewife, in which everyone and everything mattered but her. She wanted a life for herself, and her parents needed to accept that (Lalli 111).

Anu explicitly expresses her reluctance to embrace roles like Lakshmi's or Priya's, representing the archetype of an Indian housewife. The rejection of this traditional role suggests a desire to break free from societal expectations and norms that may confine women to domestic roles at the expense of their individual aspirations. Anu's resistance to being Neil's mother, caretaker, or housekeeper challenges stereotypical gender roles. It suggests a desire to redefine her identity and role within the family beyond traditional caregiving responsibilities, emphasizing her need for a more egalitarian and personally fulfilling relationship.

Anu engages in a casual and playful interaction with Ryan, involving the use of black eyeliner. The action is seemingly spontaneous, reflecting a lighthearted moment between the two characters.

Anu rolled her eyes and opened her purse. She pulled out a stick of black eyeliner and flicked down the visor. Glancing into its small mirror, she carefully smeared a spot of black in her hairline just above her ear. Turning to Ryan, she did the same to him (Lalli 34).

The use of the visor and its small mirror as tools for the playful act implies a familiarity with these everyday objects. The habit of utilizing such items for personal grooming or quick adjustments may be ingrained in Anu's habitus. The choice of using makeup in this unconventional way reflects a departure from traditional cosmetic practices. "As the final touch, Anu pinned a fresh flower into Kanika's hair and then smudged a touch of black eyeliner behind her ear. "There. You're ready" (Lalli 241). The act of pinning a fresh flower into Kanika's hair likely carries symbolic significance. Fresh flowers are often associated with beauty, vitality, and cultural traditions. This act may symbolize an adornment for a special occasion, celebration, or an important moment in Kanika's life. In terms of habitus, this could be a recurring practice that is culturally ingrained within the family. Smudging a touch of black eyeliner behind Kanika's ear echoes a similar act as mentioned above. In certain cultures, black eyeliner may have protective or symbolic connotations. The repetition of this action suggests a cultural continuity or a shared family tradition. "Wasn't that what Lakshmi had told Anu as a child? To stave off the difficult conversation about what their superstations meant until she was older?" (Lalli 242). The reflection on Lakshmi's advice to Anu as a child introduces a layer of intergenerational connection. This further reflects on what Lakshmi had told Anu as a child introduces the element of

intergenerational transmission within the habitus framework. Lakshmi's guidance to delay difficult conversations about superstitions until Anu was older implies a certain wisdom and understanding of the complexities of life. Superstitions often carry cultural significance and are passed down through generations. The act of delaying conversations about superstitions aligns with the idea of preserving cultural beliefs within the family.

4.1.4 Exploring 'Home' in Anu Desai's Journey

The concept of "home" holds both symbolic and tangible significance. However, for diasporic populations, the notion of home is intricate and incomplete, diverging from the traditional idea of a fixed sanctuary. Anu's use of Instagram to stay connected with the events in Vancouver exemplifies the role of technology in bridging the gap for individuals in the diaspora. Since virtual platforms become a means for diasporic communities to participate in and witness events from their homeland, fostering a sense of connection despite the physical distance. Anu's thoughts about the holiday concert evoke a sense of nostalgia and longing. She imagines the scene in Kanika's classroom, describing the details of the setting, the parents, and the atmosphere.

> She refreshed her feed, and her stomach dropped as a new photo appeared. It was a photo of Kanika and a dozen other kids, posed in front of the backdrop Anu had built for the holiday (Lalli 132).

This vividly imagines the emotional impact and desire to be present for her family's important moments, highlighting the temporal dislocation due to the time difference between Anu's location and Vancouver. This gap emphasizes her physical distance, a common theme in diasporic narratives. The photo of Kanika at her holiday concert reminds Anu of her absence, intensifying her feelings of longing and isolation. She wonders if Neil will remember to take photos and if Kanika will ask about her absence, underscoring the emotional toll of being physically distant during significant family events. Anu grapples with the consequences of prioritizing her career, highlighting the complexities and sacrifices of modern parenthood. In transnational spaces, "home" gains complex meanings beyond one place or identity, adapting to multiple connections. Anu, after a tough day, finds solace in her dorm room, feeling lonely and missing her husband, Neil, and daughter, Kanika.

Rolling to the side, she was almost surprised to find the cold concrete wall—and not Neil nor Kanika nestled in beside her. Warm limbs like hot water bottles beneath the sheets. The smell of Neil's deodorant. Kanika's pineapple shampoo. Crumbs on the pillow because Neil loved to eat his toast in bed (Lalli 136).

Crawling under covers clothed hints at seeking comfort and warmth, replacing familiar presence. The dorm room, starkly different from family warmth, emphasizes the void felt. The absence of family scents intensifies longing. Neil's deodorant and Kanika's shampoo evoke shared memories. Crumbs from Neil's toast habit add domestic familiarity, painful reminders of loss. In a similar vein, Anu's journey to London did not unfold as anticipated, prompting a swift desire to return to her "home" the moment she learned of Priya's heart attack. She confronts the weight of her circumstances and the limitations imposed upon her by her current reality. As tears well up in her eyes, she finds herself grappling with a profound sense of longing and resignation, yearning for a life that seems unattainable to her.

The tears welled up, and they wouldn't stop. She wanted to be Imogen or Marianne or any other young girl with an infinite list of choices before her, but the truth was, Anu had only two: She could stay, pounding her fists and grinding her teeth through the pain, forcing herself to experience life the way others seemed to live it, or she could go back to her real life (Lalli 138).

Anu's reference to Imogen or Marianne, presumably figures she perceives as having limitless opportunities and choices, underscores her own feelings of constraint and limitation. She envies these young women who appear to possess boundless potential and freedom, in stark contrast to her own restricted options. The tears welling up and the inability to stop them suggest a profound emotional turmoil within Anu. The depth of her feelings is expressed through the powerful imagery of tears, symbolizing the overwhelming nature of her internal conflict. Despite her longing for a multitude of choices, Anu acknowledges that, in reality, she feels constrained to only two options. The dichotomy presented: staying and enduring pain or returning to her "real life" underscores the complexity of the decision she faces and the weight of the consequences associated with each choice. Anu quietly grieves for the woman she never got to be, hinting at unrealized dreams or unfulfilled aspirations. The sadness she feels may stem from a sense of loss or

the recognition that societal constraints limit her ability to fully embody the person she envisions herself becoming.

4.1.5 Transnational Odyssey: Navigating Identity and Entrepreneurship

Vertovec's concept of transnationalism challenges the idea of being confined to a single cultural or national identity, encouraging individuals to embrace a sense of global citizenship and actively engage with diverse perspectives and experiences. Anu's close friend, Jenny, offers advice that centers on the importance of self-discovery and the value of allowing oneself to make mistakes. Jenny encourages Anu to take the time to truly get to know herself, emphasizing that this process involves embracing periods of being single and acknowledging the possibility of making mistakes along the way, she says, "You need to get to know yourself, let yourself make some mistakes along the way. Anu, if you've never been single for more than five seconds, how exactly are you supposed to know what kind of guy you even want? Or what you want out of life—" (Lalli 34). Jenny's statement begins with an emphasis on the significance of self-exploration and the acceptance of one's imperfections and mistakes. By encouraging Anu to "get to know yourself" and "let yourself make some mistakes along the way," Jenny underscores the notion that self-discovery is an ongoing process that requires patience, introspection, and a willingness to learn from life's experiences. This advice implies that growth and self-awareness often emerge from the lessons learned through trial and error, rather than from a fear of making mistakes or taking risks. Jenny's words convey a message of empowerment, encouraging Anu to take ownership of her journey of self-discovery and to embrace the complexities of her identity and aspirations. By advocating for self-exploration, acceptance of mistakes, and the pursuit of personal fulfillment, Jenny supports Anu in her quest to live authentically and to cultivate a deeper understanding of herself and her place in the world.

> She had been twenty-nine years old the first time she let them down, the first time she ever saw their faces fall, their unpracticed looks of dismay. "Neil is moving out." The concept was so foreign, it was like she was speaking to them in French. Why would she ask her hardworking, loyal husband to move out? Why did she need space? Their house was two thousand square feet! How could Anu be so selfish as to do something for herself? (Lalli 27)

Anu, at twenty-nine, faces a daunting task: telling her parents about Neil moving out. Their reaction is shock and disbelief, as they can't grasp why she'd seek space within marriage,

viewing it as selfish. Their values of loyalty and self-sacrifice clash with Anu's decision. Their home's size, at two thousand square feet, represents stability, deepening their confusion about her choice. The rhetorical question, "How could Anu be so selfish as to do something for herself?" reflects the societal expectations placed on women, particularly within the context of marriage and family, where prioritizing personal needs is often viewed negatively.

Anu's narrative illuminates the clash between individual autonomy and familial expectations within the context of South Asian culture. It underscores the challenges of navigating personal desires amidst societal norms and familial obligations, highlighting the complexities inherent in renegotiating traditional roles and relationships. After parting ways with Neil, Anu had additional time for introspection and recognized how her interests had evolved over time. "Anu's whole life evaporated into her daughter's health and appetite, amusement and emotions. She had liked reading and going for hikes with her dad or Neil. She had hung out with her friends" (Lalli 46). Anu, tired of societal expectations and craving independence, still seeks approval from her mother, Lakshmi. The pressure to be a "good Indian girl" forces Anu into pretense, hiding her true self for maternal acceptance. This conflict reflects her struggle with societal norms, autonomy, and familial validation.

> Good girls listened to their mothers. But Anu hadn't wanted to listen to anyone. She got tired of listening. Yet, still Anu wanted Lakshmi's approval, and so she pretended. She pretended to be her mother's good Indian girl, the lies piling higher and higher, small ones and large alike, until this wall emerged between them. A wall Anu needed to knock down (Lalli 219).

Anu's character challenges this archetype. Despite the societal pressure to conform, Anu experiences a sense of rebellion against the constraints imposed upon her. She grows weary of adhering to societal expectations and yearns for autonomy and self-determination. Despite her resistance to conformity, she still harbors a deep-seated desire for her mother's approval and validation. This desire for maternal acceptance motivates her to adopt a facade of compliance and adherence to cultural expectations, even if it means sacrificing her authentic self-expression and beliefs. Imogen's presence was transformative for Anu, leading them from partying to considering opening a yoga studio together. Initially feeling like an impostor with Imogen's bold style, Anu surprisingly felt a sense of belonging.

Witnessing Imogen smoking a joint, a habit she'd disliked, made Anu question why she'd never tried it. She also pondered the differences between Western women like Jenny and Imogen, who seemed freer in their choices, compared to Indian women. This contrast made Anu rethink her own beliefs and reservations. When Imogen asked her why she is not agreeing to the idea of owning a Yoga studio while the opportunity was right in front of her she told Imogen, "There's a lot holding me back" (Lalli 72). Anu, a single mother juggling parenthood and a mortgage, reflects on the daily grind lacking fulfillment. Her talk with Imogen becomes a turning point, where she faces deep-seated conflicts and insecurities. Lalli also notes,

> She was told "Yoga is a hobby, Anu, not a profession. Don't you want a job that will give your health benefits? What kind of wife and mother teaches yoga?" Teaching yoga, one day running her own studio was the only dream she had ever had, and her parents had crushed it right out of her. Anu had started yoga when she was fifteen years old (Lalli 31)

Anu views teaching yoga as more than just a job; it's a lifelong dream and a profound calling. She imagines a studio filled with twinkle lights, ferns, and basketry, reflecting her creativity and desire for a peaceful space for her students. However, her parents are skeptical and resistant, dismissing yoga as a hobby and questioning its viability as a career. This clash between conventional expectations and her passion underscores Anu's struggle to pursue her dreams. Her reflection on a photograph symbolizes her journey towards liberation and authenticity.

> She inspected the photo. It was black-and-white, of a woman maybe her own age in an unimposing courtyard. Her legs stretched out in front of her, her head tilted up to the sun, eyes closed, arms out behind propping her up. Anu couldn't help but stare. Her pose was striking. Her shopping bags were casually discarded by her feet, with leafy greens and round-shaped bread having fallen out on the pavement. The woman looked free. So pure. Briefly, Anu wished she were the woman in the photograph (Lalli 106).

The desire to embody the woman in the photograph reflects a yearning for a liberated and authentic life, free from societal constraints. The monochromatic image captures a carefree and uninhibited woman in a simple courtyard, symbolizing genuineness and self-expression beyond cultural expectations. Anu's introspection deepens after hearing

Jake's tales of teenage travels, leading to a surge of jealousy and prompting her to question her life choices, especially regarding exploration and pursuing personal dreams. "An even more pressing and guilt-ridden question emerged: If given the opportunity, would she leave everything and everyone behind for a fresh start right now?" (Lalli 79).

Anu's contemplation is symbolized by her hand on the car window, a barrier between her reality and envisioned possibilities. A guilt-ridden question complicates her internal struggle: leaving for a fresh start challenges commitment and has consequences. She craves adventure, highlighting her conflict of present choices versus untapped potential. The narrative delves into the tension between rootedness and the urge for exploration, physically and metaphorically. "This year would be different. She would save and find a way. She would set the time and money aside, and she would make time to be there for her friends" (Lalli 224). Anu's internal dialogue captures the universal theme of contemplating alternate life paths and the complexities of personal aspirations within the context of one's cultural and societal background.

> She yearned for the freedom to do what, precisely? To live life on her own terms? To embody the kind of woman she admired, perhaps envied? To revert to being a carefree youth rather than a responsible adult, ready to confront whatever challenges the world presented (Lalli 73).

Anu experiences an emotional fog likely due to navigating the complexities of her identity as a South Asian transnational woman. She juggles cultural expectations, personal aspirations, and the challenges of assimilating into a new cultural context. Her reflection on wanting to revert to being carefree rather than responsible resonates with many South Asian transnational women who struggle to balance cultural and familial obligations with personal freedom and autonomy, leading to internal conflict.

Following the creation of the Yoga House, Anu directed her attention towards repairing her relationship with her parents, with a particular emphasis on reconnecting with Lakshmi. Anu breaks the silence by expressing gratitude for a garland that Lakshmi had previously sent. The mention of the garland is not only a gesture of appreciation but also serves as a symbol of a connection between them. "Did she, too, realize this was the first time they'd spoken alone in months, maybe nearly a year? "I never thanked you for the garland you sent," Anu said, wiping her wet nose with a tissue. "It's been hanging in the studio doorway this whole time." Lakshmi gave her a small smile. "It'll be hanging there

today" (Lalli 219). Anu reveals that she has kept the garland hanging in the studio doorway throughout this extended period, suggesting its significance in her life. The act of wiping her wet nose with a tissue adds a touch of vulnerability to Anu's demeanor, possibly indicating that this conversation is emotionally charged or that she is feeling a range of emotions. Lakshmi responds with a small smile, suggesting a subtle acknowledgment of the shared sentiment. Similarly, she began to reassess her relationship with Neil, contemplating the possibility of their marriage.

> She wasn't imagining it; the last few years of their marriage hadn't been a marriage. It had been cohabitation, an existence. Neil had taken her for granted. Had Anu also not failed to appreciate him and their life together? Could she not be unreliable, unreasonable? What if present-day Neil had existed back then, and he had been the supportive, reliable, loving partner she'd always wanted him to be—would it have been enough for her? Or would she have nonetheless pushed it all away? (Lalli 227).

For Anu instead of a genuine partnership, it felt like mere cohabitation, a shared existence rather than a meaningful connection. Anu's reflections on her marriage can be understood through a cultural and transnational lens, considering the unique challenges and dynamics that may be at play. Anu questions her own role in the relationship. She wonders if she, too, failed to appreciate Neil and their life together. This introspection suggests a willingness to consider her own shortcomings and contributions to the problems in their marriage. The concept of marriage is deeply rooted in cultural norms, and women may face pressures to conform to traditional roles and expectations. Anu's sense of cohabitation rather than a fulfilling marriage might reflect the clash between her expectations, influenced by cultural norms, and the reality of her relationship. "As she confronts her past, delves into her cultural heritage, and grapples with the realities of her present circumstances, Anu embarks on a profound voyage of self-discovery and transformation" (Lalli 121). Anu confronting her past implies a deliberate and introspective effort to come to terms with and understand the events, choices, and experiences that have shaped her.

As she reflects on the potential outcomes of her business endeavor, she acknowledges that failure would not strip her of the fundamental aspects of her life. She would still have her family, friends, and the resilience to overcome any financial setbacks. This realization empowers Anu to confront her fears with a newfound sense of resilience and perspective. "Anu had nothing to lose but her ego. If the business floundered, she'd

find herself in debt that eventually she'd be able to work her way out of. She'd still have her family, her friends. A livelihood of her own" (Lalli 223). Anu realizes she can ponder matters others may lack the luxury or ability to do. She acknowledges her agency and boldness in worrying about her business. This autonomy emphasizes her privilege to focus beyond survival. She contemplates having little to lose but her ego, noting her privilege, supportive network, and commitment to gratitude and life's meaningful aspects beyond business.

4.2 Global Threads: Unraveling *'All My Rage'* By Saba Tahir

Tahir crafted *"All my rage"* through the perspectives of three characters: Salahudin (Sal), Noor, and Misbah. The narratives of Sal and Noor unfold in the present tense, providing a dynamic immediacy to their stories. In contrast, Misbah's narration offers a background, shedding light on her arranged marriage to Sal's father, Toufiq, and the circumstances that prompted their departure from Pakistan to embark on a fresh start together in California. At the center of the narrative are Salahudin and Noor, both grappling with the challenges of life shaped by their ethnic backgrounds and family complexities in a town marked by pervasive racism. Salahudin contends with his mother's health, his father's struggles with alcoholism, and the decline of the family-owned motel. Meanwhile, Noor's dreams of attending college face diminishing prospects under the oppressive attitude of her indifferent uncle.

4.2.1 Transnational Echoes of Home: Navigating Identity and Belonging

In transnationalism, "home" is intricately nuanced, encompassing how individuals and communities navigate and shape their sense of belonging, identity, and connection across international boundaries. Vertovec contends that transnationalism challenges the conventional understanding of home as a static and localized entity, underscoring the dynamic and fluid nature of individuals' relationships with various locations and cultures (77). In a vivid recollection, Salahudin reflects on a cherished memory of Ama, surrounded by her cousins, amid a communal activity involving a giant barrel of iced mangoes.

> I recall Ama with her numerous cousins, clustered around a massive barrel of iced mangoes. They sliced them open, and juice dribbled down as laughter filled the air. 'Pakistan resides in our veins,' I informed him. 'If you ever go there, you better bring me along' (Tahir 122).

The statement, "Pakistan lives in the blood," conveys a powerful sentiment. It suggests that the essence of Pakistan, its cultural heritage, traditions, and the shared experiences of the family are deeply ingrained in their very being. It goes beyond a geographical association; it recognizes that the connection to Pakistan is integral to their identity, coursing through their veins like blood. This sentiment reflects a profound and enduring link to the cultural roots that define their sense of self and belonging. The insistence that, "If you ever visit, you better take me," reveals a desire to be part of the experience, to physically connect with the homeland that is so deeply embedded in the family's collective memory. It is a plea to be included in the tangible, lived experiences that contribute to the evolving nature of home. This desire to be taken along on the visit underscores the importance of shared experiences in shaping the concept of home within the transnational context.

Transnational feelings about home blend homeland nostalgia with a love for the current place. Misbah warmly describes her grandmother, Bari Dadi, using vivid, nostalgic language, showcasing their deep emotional bond and Bari Dadi's importance to Misbah and their cousins.

> Bari Dadi, weathered and redolent of garlic and pomegranate, possessed a substantial, tender midsection into which I would affectionately press my head. She nurtured a dozen grandchildren, including my numerous cousins, tending to diaper changes, soothing tantrums, and even venturing up trees (Tahir 164).

Bari Dadi's "substantial, tender midsection" symbolizes warmth and nurture, with Misbah fondly remembering feeling secure against it. This gesture highlights their close bond, where Bari Dadi offers comfort and reassurance. Their connection is enriched by sensory memories like garlic and pomegranate scents and the softness of her belly. This nurturing role deepens the emotional ties shaping the evolving notion of home. Transnational individuals, balancing past and present attachments, navigate complex identities, shaping the dynamic concept of home in their experience. She further mentions, "While residing in Lahore, the laughter of my parents' nieces and nephews—my numerous cousins— resonated through the courtyard. As the eldest girl, it fell upon me to take care of them" (Tahir 241). The interplay between these sentiments can elicit a spectrum of emotions, ranging from the warmth of familiarity when reflecting on the past to a sense of fulfillment and belonging in the present. As expressed by Misbah, "In America, as Toufiq guided our green Honda along a road winding alongside the rocky blue Sierra Nevada, memories of

Quetta flooded my mind. The car window exuded a chilly draft, and the night sky resembled that of Quetta" (Tahir 151). Misbah notes similarities between American and Quetta night skies, recalling Quetta's clear sky and expansive galaxy while stargazing in America. This comparison underlines universal beauty in stargazing. The celestial scenes over Sierra Nevada evoke wonder, blending natural beauty with Quetta memories, shaping Misbah's emotional world.

Noor and Salahuddin engaged in discussions about Pakistan, using tools like Google Maps to virtually explore places like Swat and Karachi. This digital journey sparked shared nostalgia, bridging the distance and reconnecting them to the essence of their homeland. Their experience was intimate, filled with vivid sensory details like the earthy red sandstone of landmarks, evoking memories and sensations. The mention of the call to prayer added a spiritual dimension, resonating deeply and highlighting the influence of cultural and religious elements on their identity. Including ambient sounds like live electric wires crackling enhanced the realism of their multisensory virtual exploration.

> We wandered around in Swat and Karachi on Google Maps. Watched travel vlogs about the Badshahi Mosque and Lahore Fort. I must have visited both when I was little because when I look at them, I smell the earthy red sandstone. Feel the reverberations of the call to prayer in my bones and hear the crackle of live electric wires (Tahir 121).

Their digital journey served as a shared ritual, enabling Noor and Salahudin to reestablish a connection to Pakistan, a place of personal significance. Through this virtual exploration, they traversed landscapes of memories, emotions, and cultural resonances, bridging the past and present in their relationship with their homeland.

Noor grapples with both physical and emotional pain, hinting at a traumatic experience, likely an earthquake. Her memories of home appeared fragmented and unclear, with a reluctance to recall events from before the earthquake due to associated distress. She expressed a longing for someone or something undefined. The presence of an unidentified "little voice" highlighted her disorientation and isolation, emphasizing the impact of the disaster on her sense of identity and home.

> My chest hurts. I miss . . . something. A place? A person? I don't remember much from before the earthquake. I don't want to. Those memories wake me up in the

> middle of the night. They trick me into thinking I'm trapped in that closet, back in the village. But this memory isn't like that. It's warm. Sticky luddoo sweets at a wedding. The creak of a rope bed as I snuggled with my grandmother. Chasing a skinny chicken through a courtyard. The mellow green of my grandfather's hookah. A littler voice. Brother? Sister? Cousin? (Tahir 65).

The mention of memories from before the earthquake triggers a mix of emotions in Noor. While she acknowledges the pain and fear associated with these memories, she also recognizes moments of warmth and connection that existed before the disaster. The sensory details like sticky luddoo sweets, the creak of a rope bed, chasing a chicken, the mellow green of her grandfather's hookah evoke a vivid sense of place and nostalgia for the simplicity and intimacy of her childhood. The uncertainty surrounding her familial connections reflects the destabilizing effect of the earthquake on her life and relationships.

In a parallel vein, following her encounter with Imam Shafiq, Noor articulated a profound yearning and admiration for his intimate connection with Pakistan. She passionately conveyed a burning desire to immerse herself in an experience that mirrors Imam Shafiq's profound connection to the country. Inspired by the depth of his affinity for Pakistan, Noor seeks to cultivate a similar sense of closeness and understanding, expressing a fervent longing to explore the country firsthand and forge her own meaningful connections with its culture and heritage.

> At this moment, a fiery longing consumes me. Imam Shafiq makes an annual pilgrimage to Pakistan. I've glimpsed his Pixtagram, witnessing his seamless command of Urdu. His sisters joyfully played the dholki at his Lahore wedding, and in the videos he shared, his family radiated closeness, engaging in playful banter in the comments. Although born in America, he possesses an intimate knowledge of Pakistan, right down to the nuances of biryani—the kind of familiarity I yearn for (Tahir 124).

Her burning desire to know Pakistan "down to the biryani" suggests a deep yearning for similar cultural immersion and understanding. This paints a vivid picture of Imam Shafiq's experiences and, in doing so, captures Noor aspiration to forge a similarly profound connection with the homeland. "But I realize as I cry into his shirt that I feel rootless. Pakistan is not home anymore. Juniper never was" (Tahir 105). While some migrants may align more closely with one society, the majority maintain multiple identities, connecting

them concurrently to more than one nation. As a result, the evolving nature of home in the transnational experience becomes a physical space and a rich and intricate network of emotional and cultural connections that span borders. Salahudin's poignant recollection also serves as a testament to the sensory richness of the transnational journey.

> I revisit that particular day—the sizzle of hot ghee in the pan, the pungency of onions and the kick of garlic, and the refreshing coolness of the air conditioner like damp cotton. I transport myself back to the echoes of Ama's laughter, mingling with the laughter of Noor and me (Tahir 55).

The vivid imagery of hot ghee popping off the pan, the tantalizing aroma of onions, and the piquancy of garlic, intertwined with the cool embrace of air conditioner-induced wet-cotton freshness, transports us to a specific moment. In the echo of Misbah's laughter and the harmonious symphony of Noor's and Salahudin's shared experiences, the essence of home transcends physical boundaries, resonating as a deeply personal and cherished connection.

Technological advancements and the increasing interconnectedness propelled by globalization profoundly impact shaping transnational experiences. For instance, Noor paid a visit to Misbah during her hospitalization, and she recounts the experience,

> Auntie may be unable to hear, yet I choose to play the music of the artists she adores—Reshma and Masuma Anwar, Mohammed Rafi, a childhood favorite of her father, and Abrar-ul-Haq, a cherished artist of hers (Tahir 44).

This narrative snippet illustrates the interweaving of cultural influences and the transcending of geographical boundaries. Through the carefully chosen music, Noor provides a sensory experience for Auntie and creates a bridge between generations, cultural influences, and familial memories. Playing these specific artists becomes a form of shared expression and emotional connection within the family. It bridges Misbah's past, her family's history, and the present moment, creating a multi-layered connection. Mohammed Rafi, Auntie's father's favorite, and Abrar-ul-Haq, Auntie's favorite when she was little, and underscores the generational and familial connections embedded in the music choices. This suggests a tradition of passing down musical preferences and creating a sense of continuity through shared tastes.

Following Misbah's passing, phone conversations among family members unfold, revealing a narrative that blends familial concern and diverse cultural perspectives on

Misbah's departure. Some express disbelief, struggling with the surreal idea that such an integral figure in their lives could no longer be present. Others, influenced by cultural beliefs deeply ingrained in Pakistan, attribute Misbah's untimely death to the malevolent influence of the evil eye, introducing a layer of cultural interpretation to the mourning process.

> The majority of the calls originate from Pakistan, with Ama's cousins, aunts, and uncles reaching out—a collection of brown faces that I ought to recall more vividly from a solitary visit a decade ago. Some express disbelief, while others attribute Ama's demise to the evil eye, nazar. All are eager to speak with my father (Tahir 57).

The phone conversations become a space where emotions, disbelief, and cultural perspectives converge, highlighting the intricate interplay between personal grief and cultural beliefs. The responsibility bestowed upon Salahudin transcends the personal; it becomes a communal duty to navigate the intricate web of emotions, cultural beliefs, and familial connections that entwine with her mother's passing.

4.2.2 Transnational Identities: Navigating Gender Roles across Borders

Vertovec asserts that transnationalism is a dynamic and evolving space that prompts a reevaluation and reshaping of conventional gender roles. According to Vertovec, transnational experiences frequently prompt the adaptation and reconsideration of traditional gender roles among migrants (77). Misbah's life in Juniper, California, unfolded as a series of challenges that seemed to compound with each passing day. The decision to relocate from Pakistan to the unfamiliar grounds of California began a new chapter for her and her husband, Taufiq. Little did she know that this chapter would be defined by the formidable task of managing the Cloud's Rest Inn Motel. From the outset, Misbah found herself grappling with the demanding responsibilities that came with overseeing the motel. The day-to-day operations, customer satisfaction, and the business's overall success rested squarely on her shoulders. It was a daunting role, made even more challenging by the fact that her husband, Taufiq, was struggling with alcoholism.

> Having lost both his parents and with uncles, aunts, and cousins dispersed, he stood as a rare Pakistani with minimal family connections. There was nobody to anchor him to a place that only brought him sorrow. When he secured the engineering job

at Juniper's military base, the decision was clear. While Pakistan was my home, it wasn't his, and my priority was his happiness (Tahir 152).

Taufiq's battle with alcoholism added an extra layer of complexity to Misbah's already demanding life. The emotional toll of dealing with a spouse in the clutches of addiction took a toll on her well-being. She found herself navigating not only the intricacies of managing a motel but also the delicate terrain of supporting a loved one through the throes of addiction. As Misbah devoted herself to the welfare of the Cloud's Rest Inn Motel and her husband, life threw yet another curveball. In the words of Salahudin, "Too expensive. We don't have health insurance. I should've made her go. Abu should have helped her with the motel. My uncle should have donated a kidney. But none of us did what we should have done" (Tahir 19). The revelation of her illness added an element of personal struggle to the mix. The weight of physical health concerns and the relentless demands of her professional and personal life created a perfect storm of challenges.

Migrants may grapple with varying cultural expectations regarding gender norms, leading to a renegotiation of roles within familial and societal contexts. The persistent pressures of overseeing the motel, managing her husband's addiction, and confronting her health issues haunted Misbah every waking moment. The balancing act she performed daily required resilience, strength, and a capacity for endurance that few could fathom. However, amidst the turmoil, Misbah stood as a testament to the indomitable human spirit, confronting adversity with courage and determination to navigate the complex web of responsibilities that had become her life in Juniper, California. In the words of Sal,

> In the last few months, as Ama got sicker, as it finally sank in, I thought: One day my Ama will die. Everything that she ever was will die with her. The way she walked quickly, and flour in her hair when she made roti, the lines in her forehead when she yelled at me for doing something stupid. Her Saturday morning parathas and her smell, cardamom and Pine-Sol and lotion (Tahir 62).

He acknowledges the gradual decline in his mother's health over the past few months. As her illness progresses, he becomes increasingly aware of the inevitability of her death. He reminisces about various aspects of Ama's presence that have left indelible impressions on him. He recalls mundane yet cherished details of her daily routines, such as the way she walked quickly and the sight of flour in her hair while making roti. These sensory memories

evoke a sense of intimacy and nostalgia, highlighting the significance of everyday moments in shaping his bond with his mother.

An important consequence of transnationalism is the potential for substantial shifts in family dynamics for women engaged in transnational experiences. Noor recounting of her experiences, such as being scolded during Pakistani cooking, participating in prayers, maintaining ties to traditional Punjabi culture, and sharing stories about iconic figures like Noor Jehan, underscores the intergenerational transmission of cultural values within a diasporic context.

> Pakistani cooking shouldn't exist if Auntie Misbah isn't scolding me for sampling it. Prayers don't feel real without her teasing me for wrapping my scarf too tight. Like a gray-haired village granny worried about her virtue, she used to say (Tahir 64).

Noor implies that Auntie Misbah's involvement is essential for the authenticity and richness of Pakistani cooking. Her scolding for sampling the food suggests a deep connection between Auntie Misbah and the culinary traditions of Pakistan.

Within transnational settings, the concept of "transnational disciplining" becomes evident, where parents endeavor to shape their children's behavior by traditional customs. Sal acknowledges that even in an unfamiliar place like Podunk, California, and he remains faithful to the principles of Pakistani hospitality instilled in him by his mother. Despite being far from Pakistan, Sal carries these cultural values with him and applies them to his interactions and behaviors in his new environment. "Ama taught me Pakistani hospitality long ago. Even in the middle of Podunk, California, there are rules. One is that you don't leave dozens of people in your house to fend for themselves, no matter what the occasion" (Tahir 57). He mentions a specific rule of hospitality that he learned from Ama, which is not to leave guests to fend for themselves, regardless of the occasion. This rule underscores the importance of caring for guests and attending to their needs, reflecting a deep sense of responsibility and respect for hospitality customs. His statement also highlights his ability to adapt and integrate cultural values into different contexts. Despite being in California, Sal remains connected to his Pakistani heritage through the practice of hospitality, demonstrating the resilience and adaptability of cultural traditions in diverse settings.

Auntie Misbah slow-cooked kofta for me when I aced a test. Taught me why ullu da patha—son of an owl—was her favorite Punjabi curse. Told me about hearing the legendary Noor Jehan when she was a girl. Her voice was so powerful I thought it would split my soul. Maybe your parents named you after her. That's why you love music (Tahir 65).

By preparing a special dish as a form of celebration, Misbah shows her support and care for Noor's achievements, fostering a sense of familial closeness and appreciation. She shares insights into Punjabi culture and language with Noor by explaining the significance of the Punjabi curse "ullu da patha," which translates to "son of an owl." Through linguistic and cultural explanations, she enriches Noor's understanding of her cultural heritage, fostering a sense of connection to her roots and identity. Similarly, she recounts her experience of hearing the legendary Pakistani singer Noor Jehan in her youth, describing the profound impact of her powerful voice.

Salahuddin, when recalling his exchange with Misbah, recounts, "This morning, while putting on the shalwar-kameez she got me last Eid: Wear jeans instead of shalwar, Putar, she whispered. Unless you want your ankles showing" (Tahir 52). Misbah's advice to "wear jeans instead of shalwar" carries cultural nuances. The shalwar-kameez is a traditional South Asian outfit. The suggestion to wear jeans instead may indicate a departure from traditional attire, possibly influenced by a desire to conform to or blend in with a different cultural setting. The whispered addendum, "Unless you want your ankles showing," adds a layer of cultural modesty. In many South Asian cultures, the exposure of ankles might be considered immodest or inappropriate. The advice appears to blend practicality (opting for jeans) and adherence to cultural norms (ensuring modesty by avoiding the exposure of ankles). It illustrates how clothing choices can serve as a visible marker of cultural identity, and the advice given is likely an attempt to guide the individual in navigating these cultural nuances, especially in a context where traditional and Western attire intersect. It reflects a moment where cultural practices intersect with contemporary choices, and the advice serves as a subtle guide for the individual to navigate the balance between traditional attire and the cultural norms of the current setting. This example exemplifies the ongoing dialogue between generations and cultures within a transnational context, illustrating the intricacies of adapting to a new cultural environment while maintaining a connection to one's heritage.

4.2.3 Transnational Spaces: Analyzing Misbah's Motel Journey

Vertovec argues that migrants maintain intricate and enduring social, economic, and cultural connections across borders, forming "transnational social fields." This concept underscores the complexity of modern migration, where individuals engage in multifaceted interactions that transcend national boundaries. As Misbah mentions, "I like collecting stories," I said. "I'd love to own a restaurant or an inn. To gather the stories of everyone who passes through. But . . . my mother prefers that I marry." (Tahir 49). Misbah expresses her aspiration to own a restaurant or inn as a means of gathering stories from those who visit. This aspiration highlights their desire to create a welcoming and inclusive space where individuals can share their experiences and connect with others, emphasizing the value of community and storytelling. Further she reveals the tension between her personal aspirations and her mother's preference for marriage. This conflict reflects the pressure to conform to societal and familial expectations regarding marriage and gender roles, highlighting the complexities of navigating personal ambitions within the context of cultural norms and familial obligations. Her ambition to create a gathering place for stories may clash with traditional expectations tied to marriage, emphasizing the complexities that individuals, particularly women, often navigate when pursuing personal and professional goals. When Misbah moved to Juniper, she described her experience as, "It seemed like we had entered another world. My stomach fluttered with excitement. This marked the start of a new adventure, the kind I had yearned for as a girl" (Tahir 152). Misbah's awe at the surroundings feels like entering another world, with rock formations exciting her deeply. This wonder captures the thrill of a new adventure and exploring unknown places. Reflecting on childhood dreams adds depth, showing personal growth and introspection. Her overwhelming enthusiasm makes her feet not touch the floor while exploring.

> I couldn't fathom his weariness. My excitement was so overwhelming that my feet barely touched the floor. I traced my fingers along the thick-bricked chimney, resonating with the wild wind's howls. The L-shaped kitchen boasted gleaming linoleum floors and a weathered wooden counter, worn enough for me to etch my initials with a fingernail. Crackers were tucked in the cabinets, and I indulged in one, generously spreading it with dark honey from my mother's bees in Lahore. Below, in my new home, I walked back and forth, contemplating (Tahir 153).

As she continues to immerse herself in this new home, Misbah discovers crackers in the cabinets and engages in a sensory experience, nibbling on one and complementing it with dark honey from her mother's bees in Lahore. The ambiance is further enriched by the rhythmic crackling of the ceiling beneath the soft paws of an unseen animal, introducing an element of mystery and natural connection. Amidst these immersive experiences, Misbah engages in thoughtful contemplation, recognizing the significance of a name in shaping both individuals and the places they inhabit. Inspired by grand hotel names, she contemplates their suitability for her new home. However, none of these names feels appropriate, suggesting Misbah's search for a name that authentically reflects the essence of her narrative and the unique character of this space, and later, she decides, "The Clouds' Rest," I whispered to him. "We'll call it the Clouds' Rest Inn Motel" (Tahir 153). It creates a vivid and introspective moment that resonates with anticipation, personal connection, and the quest for authenticity. Misbah also detailed the process of renovating her motel when she rented it out to a woman in need; providing additional elaboration on the experience, she states,

> I allocated to her the room we had recently refurbished. We replaced the sagging bed and worn-out furniture with a cozy mattress and freshly upholstered orange chairs. Toufiq repaired the malfunctioning TV, and I adorned the room with a yellowing National Geographic magazine featuring Yosemite, framing the pictures above the bed. The door had a fresh coat of paint, making it a space I took pride in (Tahir 164).

She meticulously renovated the room, replacing worn-out furniture with a cozy mattress and fresh orange chairs, ensuring a comfortable and pleasing environment. Her gesture of handing over keys to "Room one to the right" extends hospitality and warmth, reflecting her aesthetic sense and dedication to guest comfort.

In a poignant reflection, Misbah recalls a moment with a fortune teller who foretold the nature of her future family. The prophecy detailed that she would have three children, each with distinctive characteristics. Misbah interprets the prophecy, assigning identities to each aspect mentioned. "I remembered the fortune teller who told me I would have three children. "A boy. A girl. Moreover, a third that is not she, nor he, nor of the third gender." The boy was Salahudin. The "third," the motel. And this was the girl. My last child" (Tahir 241). The mention of a child who doesn't fit into traditional gender categories reflects a

departure from societal norms. This unconventional characterization parallels Misbah's third child, which she links to her motel. The motel, by challenging gender norms and societal expectations, embodies the essence of the "third" child from the prophecy. It's depicted not just as a physical place but as a living entity that defies conventional categorizations, mirroring the concept of transnational spaces that transcend boundaries. Thus, the motel symbolizes the transnational experience itself.

Following their mother's death, Salahudin, much like Misbah, took an active role in managing and operating the motel. His involvement included participating in various aspects of the motel's day-to-day activities and decision-making processes. His dedication to the motel showcased a sense of familial responsibility and highlighted the collaborative efforts in navigating the complexities of their changed circumstances within a transnational space. As he mentions,

> I can't lose this place. Not after losing her. In the end, I didn't make Ama rest or drag her to dialysis. I didn't do shit to save her. I failed her. But I can save the Clouds' Rest. I can make sure the blood, sweat, and tears she put into this place weren't for nothing (Tahir 74).

Sal feels a strong sense of responsibility towards the Clouds' Rest, presumably a place of significance to both him and his mother. He views it as a tangible connection to Ama, representing her hard work and dedication. The Clouds' Rest symbolizes not only a physical space but also the legacy of his mother's efforts and sacrifices. Salahuddin reflects on the last moments of his mother's life, where her thoughts were focused on a seemingly simple yet meaningful request: "Water the flowers." It was just a few hours before her passing, and even in that critical time, her love for the Clouds' Rest, the family motel, remained at the forefront of her mind. "Nurture the flowers. She had just a few hours left, and that was occupying her thoughts. It was because of her deep affection for the Clouds' Rest. For years, she struggled to transform the Clouds' Rest into something that filled her with pride" (Tahir 74). It becomes a symbolic gesture that resonates with Misbah's profound connection to the Clouds' Rest, reflecting her investment of heart and soul into this space that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries.

Misbah finds joy in connecting with the diverse patrons of the Clouds' Rest, reflecting the transnational essence of the place. It serves as a gathering spot for people from various backgrounds, showcasing interconnectedness and cultural diversity. Her fond

memories of these interactions highlight her genuine appreciation for the diverse stories and backgrounds that transnational spaces embody. Salahudin emphasizes Misbah's enduring commitment to the Clouds' Rest, showcasing the resilience and dedication needed to manage such a space amidst cultural intersections and global dynamics. Despite the challenges, Misbah tirelessly worked to turn the motel into a source of pride, embodying the spirit of transnational entrepreneurship. Her legacy is deeply tied to the Clouds' Rest, symbolizing both a physical location and a transnational hub where diverse narratives intersect. Her dedication underscores the lasting impact of transnational spaces, fostering connections and leaving an emotional legacy.

4.2.4 Transcultural Habitus: Dual Perspectives on Culture and Cuisine

The strength of transnational habitus lies in the automatic and deeply ingrained nature of habits, which are developed through becoming accustomed to specific behaviors and thought patterns. According to Vertovec, proficiency in social behavior often evolves from repetitive, routine actions that become integral to an individual's or community's lifestyle. Misbah and Noor shared a deep passion for music and movies, embracing diverse desi and international genres. During their time together, they occasionally watched desi shows, creating a warm and intimate atmosphere. Misbah expressed the idea. "I'd make you a cup of tea and we could catch up on Dilan dey Soudeh" (Tahir 27). The mention of "Dilan dey Soudeh" suggests a shared cultural reference or interest between Misbah and Noor. It could be a popular television show, movie, or other form of entertainment that they both enjoy or have in common. By suggesting they catch up on it together, Misbah seeks to strengthen their connection and bond over shared interests. Simultaneously, they explored international genres, as Salahudin describes "The last time I cried like my soul was being ripped out was years ago, when Noor, Ama, and I all watched this movie Ama loved. The Never-ending Story" (Tahir 71). The fact that this memory stands out as a particularly emotional moment for Sal suggests that it holds symbolic significance in his relationship with his family. The shared experience of watching the movie together may have served as a catalyst for emotional expression and connection among them. Noor's diverse music taste reflects transnationalism. Exploring various genres transcends cultural and national boundaries, showing cultural fluidity. Her globalized outlook is shaped by a range of cultural expressions.

> I think of the Verve singing "Love Is Noise." Florence and the Machine and the
> thundering drums in "Cosmic Love." Rihanna's consuming pain in "Love on the
> Brain." Masuma Anwar mourning her fate in "Tainu Ghul Gayaan." They all mix
> in my head (Tahir 263).

Noor's reference to artists like The Verve, Florence and the Machine, Rihanna, and Masuma Anwar highlights the diversity of her musical tastes and influences. These artists span different genres and styles, suggesting that Noor draws inspiration from a wide range of musical sources. Noor describes how these songs "mix in [her] head," suggesting that they intertwine and overlap within her consciousness. This integration of music reflects the profound impact that music has on Noor's emotional landscape, influencing her thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of the world around her.

Misbah grapples with the tension between her fluency in Urdu, her native language, and her hesitation toward English-medium books. This tension mirrors broader cultural dynamics in Pakistan, where English can be linked to colonialism and privilege. Despite her father's encouragement, she feels disconnected with English, viewing it as foreign and not aligned with her lived experiences. "So often I shied away from English-medium books, though my father insisted I read them. English was like the broken shards of glass that lined the high walls in wealthy neighborhoods. Urdu was melodic. Like gossamer, as this John Muir said" (Tahir 50). Misbah uses metaphorical imagery to contrast her perception of English and Urdu. English is likened to "broken shards of glass" in wealthy neighborhoods, suggesting fragmentation and disconnection. In contrast, Urdu is described as "melodic" and "gossamer," symbolizing elegance, fluidity, and cultural richness. The imagery of high walls hints at barriers or elitism associated with English. Despite initial reluctance, Misbah recognizes the emotive power of words, citing John Muir's quote to highlight Urdu literature's enchanting and nostalgic qualities. Furthermore, Misbah's addition of Urdu words in the conversation underscores the idea that language is not merely a tool for communication but a carrier of emotions, cultural nuances, and individual identity. "I'd sneak out my window and walk the fifteen minutes to the motel. She'd be waiting, ice cream in hand. "Ben aur Jerry tay ter-reh chang-ay tay pehreh vakth tay prah vah," she'd say. Ben and Jerry are your brothers, in good times and bad" (Tahir 69). In essence, Misbah's reflection on language preference goes beyond a mere linguistic choice. In the case of Noor, she mentions

Upon my arrival in Juniper, I had no command of the English language. My parents hadn't anticipated its necessity. Chachu, with his lofty demeanor, wouldn't converse in Urdu or Punjabi. I would eavesdrop on him at the liquor shop and then retreat to the bathroom to practice in front of the mirror. "Hello, my name is Noor. I'm sorry, can you say that again? I'm sorry, I don't understand (Tahir 168).

Noor initially lacked knowledge of English upon arriving in Juniper, indicating forthcoming linguistic challenges. This gap in awareness may result from factors like a sudden move or limited information about the new linguistic environment. The term "Chachu" is used to refer to an uncle, with the descriptor "too high-and-mighty to speak Urdu or Punjabi" suggesting a choice to not use familiar languages. This decision may stem from a desire to assimilate or a perceived status linked to English. These phrases are vital for basic communication, reflecting a practical approach to language learning. Understanding this linguistic transformation is key to grasping how the first generation's habitus change affects subsequent generations.

The transnational habitus becomes a lens through which individuals and communities interpret and respond to the evolving social, cultural, and economic landscape. As Salahudin remarks, "If I illuminate the room, I can anticipate what will come into view—Ama's impeccably written cursive, refined at a girls' school in Pakistan, fading against the tidy strips of masking tape affixed to bins: Keys. Doorknobs. Tools. Yarn" (Tahir 56). This example highlights the meticulous organization in the household, where Misbah's careful labeling of bins with specific categories, such as "Keys," "Doorknobs," "Tools," and "Yarn," signifies a deliberate effort to bring order and structure. Each item is assigned a designated place, contributing to clarity and organization in the storage space. The reference to Misbah's education in Pakistan introduces a cultural dimension to the narrative, indicating the origin of her refined cursive skills. The faded cursive against the masking tape suggests a history of consistent use, emphasizing the enduring nature of Misbah's organizational habits. This shared characteristic is portrayed as a learned behavior, implying that Salahudin has inherited this skill for organization from their mother.

Similarly, in the context of transnational habitus, Tahir provides insights into how individuals navigate cultures in different cultural settings, particularly regarding food choices and adherence to specific cultural norms. Sal mentions Ama, who has insisted on

adhering to halal practices. This suggests that Sal's family or cultural background emphasizes adherence to halal dietary restrictions, which encompass specific guidelines regarding food preparation and consumption in accordance with Islamic principles.

> Thurber's is bustling, and I secure a table while Noor goes to order the food—roast beef sliders for her and a vegetarian sandwich for me. Ama insisted on adhering to halal practices, and I can't help but feel a pang of guilt for deviating from that habit (Tahir 145).

The mention of "Ama" being strict about keeping halal introduces a cultural and religious layer to the narrative. Halal refers to food that is permissible in Islam. Feeling guilty about potentially breaking the habit of adhering to halal practices, Salahuddin suggests a conflict between cultural and religious habits and the new environment's offerings. Despite the internal conflict, the fact that Salahudin and Noor are navigating this new environment, making choices, and claiming a table indicates the adaptability of transnational habitus. Individuals can negotiate and adapt their habits and behaviors while still grappling with the influence of their cultural backgrounds. Salahuddin expresses a cultural trait deeply ingrained within him as he interacts with Imam Shafiq. As he says, "Do you want something to eat, Imam Shafiq, or—" I blurt it out. The habits of generations of Pakistani hosts die hard" (Tahir 155). Salahudin's words encapsulate the enduring influence of cultural hospitality practices, specifically those rooted in Pakistani traditions passed down through generations. Offering food to a guest is a deeply ingrained social custom in many South Asian cultures, signifying warmth, generosity, and a genuine desire to make guests feel welcome. The term "blurt it out" suggests that Salahudin's offer is spontaneous and reflexive, driven by a cultural habit so deeply embedded that it surfaces instinctively. The phrase "die-hard" implies the resilience and persistence of these cultural habits despite changes in environment or circumstances.

Culinary practices and rituals are deeply ingrained in transnational habitus. Individuals may maintain traditional cooking methods, recipes, and mealtime rituals to preserve cultural identity and a connection to their heritage. Sharing meals that reflect transnational habits becomes a way to pass down cultural values across generations. Sharing and preparing traditional dishes become acts of connection and identity expression within transnational habitus. In this case, Salahudin's longing for a dish rooted in Pakistani culinary traditions demonstrates how the continuity of cultural practices enriches his

transnational experiences. "I revisit that particular day—the sizzling hot ghee jumping off the pan, the pungency of onions, the sharpness of garlic, and the refreshing coolness of the air conditioner. I return to the echoes of Ama's laughter, as well as Noor's and mine" (Tahir 55). Sad vividly recalls the sensory experiences of the day. The "sizzling hot ghee jumping off the pan" evokes the sounds and sights of cooking, suggesting a scene where food is being prepared, likely in a traditional or culturally significant manner. The mention of ghee, onions, and garlic adds depth to the culinary atmosphere, creating a vivid image of flavors and aromas permeating the air.

He further mentions, "We were pretending to do homework but actually stealing the chapli kabobs Ama was frying up "(Tahir 55). The mention of chapli kabobs, a type of traditional Pakistani dish, adds cultural context to the scene. It indicates that the family may have cultural traditions centered on food and communal dining experiences. The familiarity and comfort associated with traditional dishes serve as a form of cultural continuity and a means of navigating the complexities of a transnational existence.

Salahudin's craving for a specific dish encapsulates the essence of transnational habitus, where cultural practices, even in the realm of food and flavors, persist and shape the lived experiences of individuals as they navigate diverse cultural landscapes. "And the food. My mouth waters at the thought of a steaming bowl of spiced rice. Little garam-masala-soaked chunks of chicken baked in. Fried onions on top" (Tahir 123). The image of "little garam-masala-soaked chunks of chicken baked in" conjures the rich flavors and tender texture of the chicken, infused with the complex spices of garam masala.The reference to garam masala and fried onions hints at the cultural context of the dish. Garam masala is a blend of spices commonly used in South Asian cuisine, adding depth and warmth to dishes. Fried onions are a popular garnish in many Indian and Pakistani dishes, contributing both flavor and texture.

Noor was surprised to find out that one of the spices was not preferred by Salahudin. She mentions, "Lal mirch gives me a stomachache!" "How are you even Pakistani, Salahudin?" (Tahir 118). Noor mentions "lal mirch," which translates to red chili or red chili powder in Urdu. In South Asian cuisine, particularly Pakistani and Indian, lal mirch is a common spice used to add heat and flavor to dishes. Noor jokingly attributes her stomachache to the consumption of spicy food, implying that Sal's avoidance of spicy food contrasts with cultural expectations. Noor's comment also touches on broader cultural

themes related to food preferences and identity. It highlights the diversity within cultural groups and challenges stereotypes about homogeneous cultural practices. Noor's actions highlight the continuity of cultural practices across generations, even in different cultural settings. It emphasizes the enduring nature of cultural practices and how they contribute to the richness of the transnational experience.

4.2.5 Beyond Borders: Transcultural Challenges and Resilience

The concept of transnationalism, as described by Vertovec, challenges traditional spatial categorizations such as 'sending' and 'receiving' states, suggesting that migrants are not bound to a binary choice between these two. Instead, transnationalism operates 'between states,' emphasizing a de-territorialized understanding that transcends geographical limitations (Vertovec 197). Noor stumbles upon an unwavering ally in Salahuddin, who not only becomes her closest confidant but also assumes the role of a guiding force through the challenging experience of being perceived as 'different.' It is noteworthy that without the heroic efforts of her Uncle Riaz to rescue her and the entire family from the aftermath of the earthquake in Pakistan, their survival might have been compromised. While a profound sense of gratitude is owed to Uncle Riaz for this life-saving act, the subsequent revelation of his decision to distance himself from his culture and religion introduces a strain into their relationship, particularly for Noor. Despite Uncle Riaz's pivotal role in rescuing her, his mean-spirited stance surfaces as a hurdle for Noor, as he discourages her from pursuing higher education or envisioning a future beyond employment at his liquor shop.

> In my admissions essay, I attempted to delve into the earthquake, exploring the dynamics between my parents, Chachu, and the liquor shop. However, I swiftly stashed it away in a drafts folder the following day. Instead, I crafted a piece about my experiences volunteering at a traveling clinic, meticulously proofread it, and submitted it to every school except UCLA. Dealing with that application turned out to be an entirely distinct disaster (Tahir 102).

Noor initially explores the earthquake's impact but later abandons it for another topic, hinting at an internal conflict. This could stem from a desire to distance herself from the past or present a more polished image to college admissions. She shifts to writing about volunteering, aiming to showcase positive aspects for admissions boards. This conflict complicates her vision for the future, reflecting the challenges of reconciling familial

expectations with personal aspirations. She expresses a profound sentiment when she states, "Auntie believed in me. Even at the end, she believed. Similarly, she was told by Khadeeja, "It means," She says, "that you are getting the hell out of Juniper and becoming a doctor, Noor Riaz" (Tahir 293). Noor grapples with a mix of hope and anger. Her aunt's legacy of hope helps balance her frustrations, motivating her to overcome obstacles and chase her dreams. This inner conflict showcases Noor's resilience and determination. She recognizes her worth and potential, hinting at qualities that surpass her current environment in Juniper. The clash between hope and rage reflects a complex struggle, fueled by both frustration with her surroundings and the support she received from her Auntie. Khadeeja's directive further reinforces this, seeing in Noor the potential for a career in medicine and a future beyond Juniper's constraints. This external affirmation, coupled with Noor's internal struggle, paints a picture of resilience and determination. Both narratives highlight Noor's journey towards a brighter future, breaking away from limitations and expectations to fulfill her potential.

> I must escape this place, not just for Auntie but also for my own sake. I need to evolve into something more. Enduring an earthquake, learning English, facing loss, rebuilding everything—I didn't go through all that just to stagnate in Juniper. There's something greater waiting for me. Auntie held onto that belief, so it's crucial for me to embrace it as well (Tahir 69).

Noor expresses her aspiration to transcend her current circumstances and strive for personal growth. She has faced challenges such as surviving an earthquake, learning English, and coping with loss, which have strengthened her resilience and determination. Her desire to leave Juniper reflects a profound drive for a more fulfilling life, not only for herself but also for her Auntie, whom she feels responsible for. Noor draws strength from her aunt's belief in her potential and hopes for better opportunities beyond Juniper. The adversities she has overcome, including surviving a natural disaster, mastering a new language, and dealing with loss, have not hindered her but rather catalyzed her growth, shaping her narrative in profound ways.

Venturing beyond cultural origins isn't straightforward; it can bring complex emotions, identity negotiation, and even loss as individuals navigate diverse cultural contexts. After Misbah's passing and his father's alcoholism, Sal is tasked with running the motel. Despite his writing skills, he can't focus on studies or dream of college, abruptly

transitioning into adulthood and managing the motel without support. "Two weeks after Ama's funeral, most of her creditors figure out the motel's phone number. They stop blowing up her cell—which I eventually turned off —and start calling the Clouds' Rest" (84). Salahuddin faces a significant hurdle when he takes on the responsibilities of managing the motel's laundry tasks. The sight and scent of the laundry room trigger a strong visceral reaction in him, inducing panic and nausea, indicative of an underlying past trauma. Approximately two weeks after his mother's funeral, creditors begin contacting the motel to address outstanding debts, signaling a heightened urgency and determination to resolve financial matters.

Noor steps in to help Salahudin manage the motel, but their collaboration takes an unexpected turn when they are stopped for speeding, leading to a discovery of drugs in their possession. This sudden twist adds complexity to the narrative, thrusting them into a legal predicament with serious implications. Authorities assume Noor's involvement in drug dealing based on the findings, exacerbating the situation. The intertwined personal traumas, legal challenges, and societal assumptions create a compelling narrative that explores resilience and challenges prejudices. The story becomes a poignant exploration of facing hardships while dealing with societal biases and legal complexities, making the characters' journey more compelling and relatable. "My abu is fighting his battle alone, because of me. My Ama lost the thing she poured her soul into, because of me. The girl I loved—still love— has moved on. The thoughts circle and repeat, an evil refrain" (Tahir 306). Salahuddin reflects on his past decisions and regrets deeply the circumstances that led him to this point. He feels overwhelmed by grief and helplessness, compounded by guilt for not being able to save his mother from her illness. Faced with pressing financial challenges related to the motel, Salahuddin, in a moment of desperation, decides to sell drugs as a drastic solution to salvage the establishment. This impulsive choice reflects his emotional turmoil and highlights his determination to preserve his mother's legacy at any cost.

> After Ama's passing, the realization hit me—we were on the verge of losing the motel she had devoted her entire life to. I felt a profound sense of guilt; I couldn't save her from her illness. In an attempt to salvage the motel, I resorted to selling drugs. However, it was an ill-conceived motive. I should have acknowledged that, at times, life entails losses—be it parents, places, or friends (Tahir 291).

Salahuddin acknowledges the flaws in his reasoning, describing it as a "bad reason" to engage in illegal activities. His admission reveals a complex mix of emotions, including grief, guilt, and a desperate desire to preserve a tangible remnant of his mother's legacy. This statement unfolds as a moment of introspection and self-awareness for Salahuddin. It reveals the internal turmoil he experienced, the flawed reasoning behind his decisions, and the eventual acknowledgment of the need for acceptance and letting go. In this admission, Salahudin confronts the consequences of his actions and begins to grapple with the complexities of loss, guilt, and the profound impact of his choices on himself and those around him.

Burdened by guilt and determined to secure a better future for Noor, Salahudin takes decisive action. Suspecting hidden opportunities for Noor, he and Art break into Riaz's study and discover an acceptance letter from UCLA addressed to Noor. Despite presenting this revelation to Noor, she remains resistant to forgive him. The situation escalates into a legal affair as Salahudin testifies at their trial, accepting full responsibility for his actions and detailing the circumstances, emphasizing Noor's innocence. Contrary to his lawyer's advice, Salahuddin admits to all charges, dropping allegations against Noor. However, this choice leads to a three-year prison sentence for Salahudin, with the possibility of a reduction to 18 months with good behavior.

However, while serving his time in prison, Salahudin undergoes a profound and transformative healing process. During this period, he makes a conscious decision to release the grip on the need for specific details about his past trauma. Instead, he shifts his focus towards a journey of self-forgiveness and reconciliation, extending this forgiveness to Misbah, his mother. This represents a pivotal step in Salahudin's personal growth, marking a significant milestone in his quest for redemption and closure. The decision to let go of the quest for specific details about his past trauma signifies Salahudin's acknowledgment that dwelling on the intricate details may hinder his path to healing. By choosing to forgive himself and his mother, Misbah, Salahudin demonstrates a profound maturity and self-awareness. This act of forgiveness becomes a crucial aspect of his journey, symbolizing the release of emotional burdens that have haunted him.

The warmth of the mug, infused with the fragrance of cardamom, triggers memories of her hands reaching for mine—always so delicate, so tender. I close my eyes,

allowing myself to recall. "Forgive me, Ama. I took too long," I eventually express. "There is much to catch up on (Tahir 312).

The transformative process in prison signifies Salahudin's commitment to personal redemption and closure, indicating a shift towards a healthier, more resilient state of mind. It reflects his ability to confront and overcome the emotional scars from his past, fostering a sense of inner peace and acceptance. The journey toward forgiveness becomes a powerful narrative element, portraying Salahudin's resilience and the capacity for personal growth even in the face of challenging circumstances.

Within the context of the South Asian Diaspora, the characters intricately shape their identities, expressing distinct characteristics that defy prevailing norms in mainstream culture. The emphasis on recognizing their "uniqueness" introduces a transformative element, disrupting the conventional dichotomy between center and margin. This disruption generates a transcultural dynamic, compelling the dominant culture to respond positively to the unique insights these individuals have developed about their history. Essentially, this creates a space for negotiation and redefinition. The transnational arena, functioning as a reflection of the diaspora, mirrors a profound connection, fostering an ongoing dialogue that molds the identity of the characters within the South Asian Diaspora. The characters represent the inherent capacity for self-determination, asserting their autonomy and intrinsic ability to forge their distinct paths toward liberation. In synthesizing these elements, the analysis not only breaks new ground in academic discourse but also seeks to underscore the profound implications of adopting a transnational framework in understanding and navigating the complexities of South Asian diasporic experiences in the digital age.

4.3 DISCUSSION

Exploring transcending borders delves into the intricate interplay of gender dynamics, familial ties, and cultural influences. This narrative reveals a nuanced perspective on how men and women navigate the challenges of maintaining connections across borders and assimilating into host countries, respectively. Anu's journey serves as a microcosm, shedding light on the opportunities for empowerment and the hurdles posed by entrenched patriarchal norms. The dissonance between Anu's expectations and the reality of her marriage to Neil exposes a misalignment in priorities. Neil's shortcomings in

household skills and consideration become sources of frustration, sparking Anu's contemplation of separation. This pivotal decision disrupts her role as a mother, plunging her into uncertainty about how to redefine her time and identity. The conflicts between Anu and Priya underscore the broader generational and cultural disparities, highlighting how Anu's choices deviate from traditional expectations. This narrative, therefore, serves as a reflective lens through which to understand the complex interweaving of gender dynamics, familial expectations, and cultural traditions in the context of transcending borders. Anu's interaction with her mother, Lakshmi, is a poignant illustration of the generational gap in their diasporic community. Here, the adherence to societal norms, particularly the expectations for "good Indian girls," becomes an oppressive force inhibiting personal growth and self-expression. This narrative underscores the challenges the clash between transnational perspectives and ingrained cultural inclinations within the familial sphere poses.

Vertovec's concept of transnational 'social fields' illuminates the contemporary landscape shaped by interconnected spaces spanning countries. These spaces, propelled beyond physical boundaries by technological advancements, now extend into virtual realms. Anu's life experiences, spanning childhood trips to India and solo travels, vividly exemplify the multifaceted nature of transnationalism. Anu's recurring visits to India are pivotal in cultivating her transnational identity, offering exposure to diverse family environments. Her travel decisions, intricately woven with financial constraints and familial considerations, signify a nuanced interplay between personal desires and responsibilities. In essence, Anu's journey is a compelling narrative that brings to life the intricate dynamics of transnationalism, as influenced by physical and virtual dimensions.

Anu's solo trip to London is a liberating experience that showcases the transformative power of travel. The yoga studio she establishes becomes a central transnational space, fostering personal growth and empowerment. Despite financial challenges, Anu adapts by integrating digital tools, diversifying offerings, and employing strategic measures to thrive in the evolving transnational and digital environment. Technology plays a pivotal role as she leverages SEO, social media, and digital advertising to transform her studio into a globally accessible hub. Her marketing strategy, blending traditional methods with online innovations, culminates in a successful open house event, highlighting the importance of a strong online presence. Anu's journey demonstrates the

synergy between personal perseverance, digital adaptation, and the transformative potential of technology in creating an inclusive transnational community.

Delving into Pierre Bourdieu's sociological framework, which revolves around habitus, sheds light on the social practices, dispositions, and values individuals internalize through socialization. Anu's struggles articulating her choices, particularly in embracing single motherhood, emanate from the cultural habitus that prescribes predefined roles. Her actions, influenced by her unique habitus and the relational dynamics with Neil, illustrate the complex interplay within the transnational habitus. Cultural norms, such as the intense expressions of love from Indian parents, contribute to emotional conflicts within Anu. Her deliberate deviation from traditional roles becomes a poignant manifestation of the clash between personal aspirations and cultural expectations, further underscoring the intricate dance within the transnational habitus. The narrative explores cultural nuances through everyday actions like using eyeliner or pinning flowers, showing how these small gestures carry significant cultural meaning. The story weaves these nuances into transnational habitus, examining their role in shaping individual behaviors and perspectives, especially in diasporic experiences. Technology, like Instagram, is shown as bridging emotional gaps in the diaspora, while Anu's imagination of a holiday concert reveals yearning for family moments. The concept of "home" is fluid, encompassing multiple connections. Anu's internal conflicts reflect tension between personal desires and societal norms, exploring how expectations impact choices and self-perception.

Anu's contemplation of leaving everything behind reflects a common theme of questioning life choices amidst cultural and societal influences. Through her journey, she undergoes a transformative experience, reevaluating relationships and priorities. Reconnecting with her parents and reassessing her marriage signify her evolving understanding of identity, autonomy, and fulfillment. The narrative promotes self-discovery and authenticity, urging individuals to embrace their true selves while navigating multiple identities. Anu's entrepreneurial venture leads to introspection, gratitude, and a realization of privilege, emphasizing the value of meaningful experiences over material success. Her story metaphorically mirrors broader diasporic and transnational experiences, exploring identity formation, cultural negotiation, and the pursuit of authenticity in a globalized world. Technology and globalization play crucial roles, shaping transnational experiences and fostering shared nostalgia through tools like Google Maps. The narrative

also delves into the emotional complexity of nostalgia for the homeland versus appreciation for the current residence. Following Anu's journey, the narrative navigates cultural expectations, personal aspirations, and the challenges of assimilation, unraveling the intricacies of transnational habitus and its impact on self-discovery within diverse cultural landscapes.

Misbah's journey vividly illustrates the intricate interplay between traditional gender roles and transnational experiences. The text delves into the transformative impact of transnationalism on gender dynamics, presenting women with newfound opportunities while simultaneously introducing tensions as they navigate a spectrum of cultural expectations. Instances, like guidance on clothing choices, vividly depict individuals' nuanced negotiations to preserve their cultural identity amidst evolving surroundings. The narrative adeptly weaves together the multifaceted tapestry of transnational experiences, embracing elements of nostalgia, cultural adaptation, and an ongoing dialogue between generations and cultures. Misbah's story becomes a compelling lens through which to explore the complexities inherent in navigating the intersection of traditional gender roles and the dynamic landscape of transnationalism.

The narrative traces Misbah's journey, driven by a genuine desire to collect stories and harboring dreams of establishing a restaurant or inn as a haven for diverse narratives. Yet, societal expectations, particularly those surrounding marriage, instigate a palpable tension between Misbah's aspirations and the pull of traditional norms. Misbah's relocation to Juniper marks the commencement of a fresh adventure, underscoring the transformative essence inherent in migration experiences. The dynamic exchange and creation of diverse cultural resources within the transnational diaspora challenge conventional landscapes, giving rise to emerging cultural identities that transcend rigid categories. Misbah's narrative becomes a poignant exploration of the evolving intersection between personal dreams and societal expectations, offering insights into the transformative potential embedded in the journey of migration and the forging of new cultural identities.

The narrative delves into Misbah's enthusiasm as she steps into a novel space, meticulously undertaking the renovation of a motel to symbolize the creation of a distinctive and hospitable ambiance. The act of christening the motel is not merely a formality; it mirrors a quest for authenticity and a yearning to shape the narrative of this space. Misbah's motel emerges as a symbolic embodiment of the transnational experience,

encapsulating themes of resilience, adaptation, and navigating cultural complexities. Salahudin's unwavering dedication to the motel even after Misbah's passing underscores the enduring impact of transnational spaces, forging connections that resonate emotionally and leave a lasting imprint. Similarly, Misbah's legacy intertwined with Clouds' Rest signifies a transnational hub where diverse narratives converge, offering a testament to the enduring influence of spaces that transcend borders and embody the richness of collective stories.

Salahudin's sense of suffocation following Misbah's passing highlights the constraints inherent in a fixed identity tethered to a particular location. During her presence, Misbah served as a bridge to expansive transnational connections, infusing diversity into their shared space. Opting not to sell the motel signifies a dedication to upholding Misbah's vision and perpetuating the transnational environment she carefully crafted. This decision becomes a poignant commitment to preserving the legacy of a space that transcends borders and stands as a testament to Misbah's dream. Misbah and Noor's shared passion for music is a powerful testament to the depth of their connection. The narrative underscores the theme of cultural fluidity transcending geographic and cultural boundaries, using music exploration as a vehicle for this expression. Language choices reflect emotional and cultural ties, playing a pivotal role in shaping interpersonal relationships. Noor's adaptation to a new language challenges the dynamics of linguistic transformation in a novel environment.

Within the domestic sphere, Misbah's meticulous organizational habits, passed down to Salahuddin, become a tangible manifestation of enduring cultural influence. Choices in food and hospitality practices further exemplify the adaptability of transnational habitus in unfamiliar settings. Culinary rituals transform into acts of connection and identity expression, enriching the transnational experience. The yearning for traditional dishes is a poignant illustration of how cultural practices endure, contributing to continuity and comfort in transnational living. The lighthearted banter revolving around spice preferences becomes a playful reminder of the diversity and individuality thriving within a shared cultural background. In essence, the narrative brings to light the intricate layers of connection, adaptation, and continuity within the transnational experience, emphasizing the role of cultural practices in shaping a rich and multifaceted shared identity.

The narrative revolves around Noor's search for identity, supported by Salahuddin, while dealing with Uncle Riaz's culturally distant rescue. It portrays transnationalism as a

journey filled with enrichment but also complexity, involving the intricate negotiation of identity and moments of profound loss. Noor's resilience shines through with external encouragement. The concept of super-diversity is highlighted as Noor leaves Juniper for personal growth. Salahuddin's journey managing the motel amidst family tragedies and societal prejudices adds depth. Reflecting on past choices, Salahuddin learns acceptance and initiates a healing process through forgiveness, leading to personal growth and closure.

The narrative explores Misbah's organizational habits, which reflect enduring cultural influences in domestic and unfamiliar settings, shaping culinary rituals and hospitality practices. It emphasizes the role of cultural practices in creating a shared identity within the transnational experience. Noor's journey for identity is contrasted against Uncle Riaz's rescue, showcasing the complexity of transnationalism. Noor's resilience and Salahuddin's challenges managing the motel add depth, culminating in Salahuddin's transformative journey of forgiveness, signaling personal growth amid cultural dynamics. Their experiences shed light on diverse identities influenced by political, social, and cultural forces, impacting both themselves and others. They challenge stereotypes and contemplate issues of national community and diaspora, navigating affiliations with their countries of origin amidst technological advancements.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

In conclusion, this research has extensively investigated the facets of 'Transnationalism' in South Asian Diasporas, addressing the widespread concept of 'Re-Orientalism.' The contemporary global landscape, characterized by increased border crossings, capital flow, and a sense of global citizenship, prompted new epistemological frameworks. A shift from traditional migration studies to transnational diaspora studies was emphasized, redirecting focus from the reasons for migration to the post-migration processes, community formation, and identity construction.

In addressing the problem statement, the study highlighted the inadvertent contribution of South Asian diasporic authors to binary distinctions and cultural exploitation through re-Orientalism. By portraying stereotypical representations, these authors sometimes reinforce existing cultural biases. However, this research advocates for a collaborative and inclusive approach through the lens of 'transnationalism' to comprehend and engage with the diverse perspectives within South Asian Diasporas. This study contributes to the evolving discourse on diaspora by advocating for a transnational perspective, recognizing the intricate dynamics, and fostering equity and inclusivity within the South Asian diasporic experience. This exhaustive investigation also presents a compelling proposition: an intricately designed transnational framework to examine and elucidate the complexities of diasporic processes in the contemporary digital age. The framework introduces a sophisticated perspective that places significant emphasis on the dialogical aspect inherent in the transnational existence of Diasporas.

At its essence, the transnational framework symbolizes scholarly innovation, recognizing the extensive and nuanced range of orientations along the local and cosmopolitan continuum. The study acknowledges the harmonious coexistence of local and global influences within this spectrum, providing a more holistic understanding of the intricate dynamics shaping diasporic experiences. Fundamentally, transnational diasporic spaces act as catalysts for empowering South Asian diasporic characters, equipping them with the means to redefine their identities while offering enlightening experiences that

broaden their perspectives and contribute to a more inclusive and interconnected global narrative. By incorporating both transnationalism and re-Orientalism, this research offers a nuanced understanding of identity formation and cultural negotiation within the South Asian Diaspora, ultimately promoting a more inclusive and equitable global society.

Considering the research questions mentioned in the introduction chapter, the following answers have been devised for the current study. Transnationalism is pivotal in enabling South Asian diasporic characters to transcend pre-conceived notions of re-Orientalism in the provided texts. Rather than perpetuating static and stereotypical representations, transnationalism introduces a dynamic dimension to the narratives, allowing characters to navigate and transcend the limiting frameworks of re-Orientalism. Through transnational experiences, characters gain agency in shaping their identities beyond traditional expectations and challenge the predetermined roles assigned by re-Orientalist perspectives. The fluidity and interconnectedness facilitated by transnationalism disrupt fixed notions of cultural identity, enabling characters to engage with their heritage in diverse ways. This engagement often involves a negotiation of dual identities and a conscious effort to bridge the gap between the homeland and the adopted culture, thereby subverting and challenging pre-conceived notions inherent in re-Orientalist frameworks.

Vertovec's conceptualization of diaspora departs from one-dimensional narratives of trauma and victimization, framing it as a dynamic and ongoing process where individuals actively forge and maintain diverse social connections. Ultimately, exploring transnationalism in these texts serves as a transformative force, allowing South Asian diasporic characters to transcend restrictive stereotypes and actively participate in shaping their narratives. Anu's narrative serves as a poignant reflection of the intricate layers of transnationalism, spotlighting the interwoven tapestry of physical and virtual realms, personal aspirations, familial duties, and the transformative potential inherent in transnational experiences. Similarly, Misbah's narrative poignantly explores the dynamic interplay between personal aspirations and societal norms, offering insights into the transformative potential of the migration journey and the creation of unique cultural identities.

Transnational diasporic spaces wield a profound influence on the experiences of South Asian diasporic characters, contributing significantly to both empowerment and enlightenment. These spaces, characterized by their intercultural intersections and fluid

boundaries, offer a unique environment for individuals to navigate and redefine their identities. In terms of empowerment, transnational diasporic spaces provide South Asian diasporic characters with a platform to assert agency over their narratives. By transcending geographical and cultural confines, characters can actively shape their identities, challenging stereotypes and restrictive norms in their host and homeland cultures. Exposure to diverse perspectives and the blending of cultural elements within these spaces empower individuals to embrace their hybrid identities and assert their unique voices. Anu's life underwent a transformative shift, with the yoga studio playing a pivotal role. Acquiring the studio, Anu recognized its untapped potential, inspiring her to embark on a journey of revitalization. This endeavor reflected her vision to create a space that echoed her personal experiences and provided a welcoming and rejuvenating atmosphere for others. Similarly, Misbah's legacy intertwined with Clouds' Rest symbolizes a transnational hub where varied narratives come together, serving as evidence of the lasting impact of spaces that surpass borders and encapsulating the richness of shared stories.

Furthermore, transnational diasporic spaces serve as crucibles for enlightenment by fostering cultural exchange and mutual understanding. Interactions within these spaces expose South Asian diasporic characters to a rich tapestry of ideas, beliefs, and traditions, facilitating a broader and more nuanced worldview. This exposure challenges ethnocentrism and promotes a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in cultural diversity. As a result, individuals in transnational diasporic spaces often experience personal growth, expanded empathy, and a heightened awareness of the interconnectedness of global communities.

The study argued for a collaborative and inclusive approach, advocating for adopting a 'transnationalism' lens to better comprehend the diverse perspectives within Diasporas. As articulated in the study, the transnational framework highlights a transformative role in empowering marginalized individuals within diasporic transnationalism. By doing so, the analyzed texts expand the intellectual landscape and advocate for the transformative potential of diasporic transnationalism in reshaping societal structures and fostering a more equitable and liberated world.

In the specific context of the South Asian Diaspora, individuals carve out their identities, expressing distinctive characteristics that challenge prevailing perceptions within mainstream culture. The emphasis on the significance of respecting their

"difference" introduces a transformative element, disrupting the traditional center-margin binary. This disruption creates a transcultural dynamic that implores the dominant culture to respond constructively to the unique knowledge these individuals have crafted about their past. In essence, the confrontation between the nation-state and the diaspora played out in political and cultural arenas fosters an environment of negotiation and redefinition. The transnational space, acting as a mirror to the diaspora, reflects the deep-rooted connection with the national context, fostering an ongoing dialogue that shapes the identity of individuals within the South Asian Diaspora. Additionally, the study integrates the concept of re-Orientalism, examining how diasporic individuals navigate and resist stereotypical representations imposed by both Western and Eastern perspectives. By challenging these stereotypes, they create new, multifaceted identities that transcend simplistic cultural binaries.

Lalli's narrative in *Grown up Pose* explores the complexities of transcending borders, delving into gender dynamics, familial ties, and cultural influences. Anu's personal journey serves as a microcosm, revealing the challenges and opportunities in navigating connections across borders and assimilating into host countries. Her marriage to Neil exposes the dissonance between expectations and reality, leading to contemplation of separation and a redefinition of identity. Conflicts with Priya highlight generational and cultural disparities, deviating from traditional expectations. The detachment between transnational viewpoints and local tendencies emerges as a source of familial tension, particularly regarding cultural disparities and gender expectations. Anu's interactions with her mother, Lakshmi, exemplify the generational gap within their diasporic community, where societal norms constrain personal growth.

Vertovec's transnational 'social fields' concept is applied to Anu's experiences, illustrating the contemporary landscape shaped by interconnected physical and virtual spaces. Anu's journey, including visits to India, solo travels, and a solo expedition to London, showcases the multifaceted nature of transnationalism. Her yoga studio becomes a transformative transnational space, fostering personal growth, empowerment, and adaptability to the digital landscape. Anu strategically integrates technology, leveraging SEO, social media, and digital advertising to create a globally accessible community. The culmination of her efforts is seen in the open house event, symbolizing the transformative impact of embracing technology in the pursuit of a transnational and inclusive community.

As these individuals navigate the intricate terrain of cultural integration and exclusion, their actions challenge established norms and encourage a more inclusive understanding of diverse identities. The transcultural element introduced by the diaspora prompts a constructive response from the dominant culture, fostering a richer and more nuanced cultural tapestry. Therefore, the interplay between the nation-state, the transnational space, and the South Asian Diaspora unveils the complexities within political and cultural realms and underscores the transformative power of unique perspectives. This multifaceted interaction catalyzes evolving narratives, urging societies to embrace the diversity inherent in diasporic experiences and fostering a more inclusive and enlightened cultural landscape. Anu's narrative serves as a poignant reflection on the intricate layers of transnationalism, highlighting the interwoven tapestry of physical and virtual realms, personal aspirations, familial duties, and the transformative potential within transnational experiences. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's sociological framework of habitus, the narrative explores how individuals internalize social practices, dispositions, and values, showcasing Anu's struggles in articulating her choices within the transnational habitus. Seemingly mundane moments, such as the playful use of eyeliner, become reflections of deeply ingrained habits, symbolizing cultural continuity. The narrative weaves these cultural nuances into the broader fabric of transnational habitus, compellingly exploring home, identity, and belonging within diasporic and transnational experiences. The role of technology, especially platforms like Instagram, bridges emotional gaps for individuals in the diaspora, creating connections across physical distances. '

Anu's consideration of leaving everything behind reflects a universal theme of questioning life choices within cultural and societal contexts. The transformative impact of Anu's journey is evident in the reassessment of relationships and priorities, advocating for self-discovery, authenticity, and an appreciation of meaningful aspects of life beyond external success. The narrative becomes a metaphor for a broader exploration of diasporic and transnational experiences, shedding light on the intricate processes of identity formation, cultural negotiation, and the pursuit of authentic selfhood in a globalized world. Technological advancements and globalization play a pivotal role in shaping transnational experiences and fostering shared nostalgia through virtual explorations. The narrative also highlights the coexistence of nostalgia for the homeland and a growing fondness for the current residence, contributing to a complex emotional spectrum. Overall, the journey of

Anu, a South Asian transnational woman, skillfully navigates the complex interplay between cultural expectations, personal aspirations, and the challenges of assimilating into a new cultural context, unraveling the layers of complexity that define the dynamics of transnational habitus and its profound impact on individuals in their quest for self-discovery within diverse cultural contexts.

Examining South Asian diasporic texts through a transnational lens revealed intricate processes through which Diasporas establish and sustain social connections between their societies of origin and settlement. The study brought attention to simultaneity, long-distance practices, and the reconfigurations of culture, emphasizing the role of transnational discourse in unraveling the complex ties shaping the South Asian diaspora. Similarly, Misbah's journey vividly illustrates the intricate interplay between traditional gender roles and transnational experiences. The narrative explores the transformative impact of transnationalism on gender dynamics, presenting women with newfound opportunities while introducing tensions as they navigate cultural expectations. Instances like guidance on clothing choices depict nuanced negotiations to preserve cultural identity, the narrative weaves together nostalgia, cultural adaptation, and intergenerational dialogue within the tapestry of transnational experiences. Misbah's story navigates the tension between individual aspirations and traditional norms, especially regarding marriage. Her relocation to Juniper marks a transformative adventure, showcasing the dynamic exchange of cultural resources within the transnational diaspora. The narrative explores the evolving intersection of personal dreams and societal expectations, emphasizing the transformative potential of migration and forging new cultural identities.

Delving into Misbah's enthusiasm for renovating a motel, the narrative symbolizes the creation of a distinctive and hospitable space. The motel becomes a symbolic embodiment of the transnational experience, encapsulating resilience, adaptation, and cultural navigation themes. Misbah's legacy intertwined with Clouds' Rest is a transnational hub where diverse narratives converge, illustrating the enduring impact of spaces that transcend borders. Salahudin's dedication to the motel after Misbah's passing signifies a commitment to preserving her vision and the transnational environment she crafted. The narrative emphasizes the theme of cultural fluidity transcending geographic and cultural boundaries, using music exploration as a vehicle for this expression. Language

choices reflect emotional and cultural ties, with Noor's adaptation to a new language challenging linguistic dynamics in a novel environment.

In the era of technological empowerment, Diasporas find themselves at the forefront of transnational activities, utilizing digital tools to explore diverse cultures. The impact of the digital age extends beyond mere convenience, fundamentally transforming the daily lives of migrants and providing a fresh lens through which to understand migration dynamics. The technological prowess of diasporic individuals, particularly their adeptness at accessing various media and communication technologies, signifies a manifestation of the cosmopolitan condition. Through these digital tools, meaningful relationships are forged across borders, epitomizing the interconnected nature of the contemporary world. The transnational perspective accentuates the potential for fostering intricate networks and underscores their transformative ability to transcend and challenge traditional boundaries. Within this transnational framework, Diasporic identity is experienced as multi-positional, existing in both symbolic and geographic spaces. The intertwining of these spaces contributes to the nuanced and dynamic nature of diasporic identities, reflecting the diverse influences that shape them.

The intricate intersection of technology, transnationalism, and diasporic identity is a multifaceted canvas upon which contemporary migration dynamics unfold. The transformative influence wielded by the digital era upon Diasporas not only accentuates their heightened interconnectedness but also unveils a spectrum of challenges that demand nuanced solutions. It becomes imperative to ensure that the far-reaching benefits of technological empowerment permeate through all strata of society, transcending geographical and socio-political constraints. Within this nexus, technology acts as both a catalyst and a mediator, shaping the experiences and interactions of diasporic communities. The digital realm not only facilitates instantaneous communication but also serves as a platform for exchanging ideas and cultural expressions and forming virtual communities. This heightened interconnectedness, however, comes hand in hand with challenges that underscore the need for tailored and sophisticated solutions.

5.2 Future Recommendations

To build upon the insights of this study and further the understanding of South Asian Transnationalism, future research should consider the following recommendations:

1. A comparative analyses between virtual and physical transnational experiences can be conducted to gain insights into the similarities, differences, and unique dynamics in the construction and maintenance of diasporic identities across different spaces.

2. Explore the influence of language use, cultural symbols, and digital practices on virtual transnational identities, analyzing how individuals perform and negotiate their identities in virtual spaces.

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