



RESEARCH PAPER**Transnational Narratives in South Asian Literature: A Textual Exploration of Identity and Belonging in Sabaa Tahir's *All My Rage***

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the portrayal of transnationalism in Sabaa Tahir's *All My Rage*, focusing on the complex identities of South Asian diasporic characters within a globally interconnected context. By dissecting these elements, the study advocates for a more inclusive understanding of diasporic experiences that moves beyond historical trauma, instead highlighting the active formation of interconnected networks. These insights contribute to a deeper comprehension of literature's role in shaping and transforming perceptions of diasporic experiences within transnational social fields. Drawing on Steven Vertovec's theory of transnationalism and employing textual analysis, it explores the fluidity of identity and the creation of diverse social networks within the diaspora, emphasizing their engagement in cross-cultural dialogues and negotiation of multiple spaces. The findings emphasize the potential of transnational spaces to promote inclusivity, fairness, and the redefinition of cultural narratives, enriching the discourse on the South Asian diaspora in the digital age.

KEYWORDS South Asian Diaspora, Steven Vertovec, Transnational Social Fields, Transnationalism

Introduction

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, 2005).

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 it, "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, 2010). Therefore, this study argued 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. 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, 2013). 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.

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 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. 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. 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.

Literature Review

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, 2013). 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, 2016). In both instances, the connection to the original community remains highly significant and may overshadow ties to the country of settlement or transit.

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 Lahiri'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, 2015). 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.

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, 2017). However, these narratives do not diminish the significance of national identity, allowing individuals to "return" without adopting an adversarial stance.

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, 2013). 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. 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, 2017). 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, 2017).

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" (Hussain, 2023). 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.

Material and Methods

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 recommendations 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.

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, 2007). These intricacies encompass creating numerous intersecting spheres of belonging, multipolar reference systems, varied loyalties and identifications, complex citizenship structures, and interlinked lifestyles.

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, 2009).

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'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, 2007).

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, 2009). 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.

Results and Discussion

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.

Transnational Identities: Navigating Gender Roles across Borders

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, 2022).

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. 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.

Amidst turmoil, Misbah embodies the resilient human spirit, confronting challenges in her life in Juniper, California. Sal reflects on his mother's declining health, realizing the inevitability of her death. He reminisces about her presence, recalling cherished details like her quick walk and the flour in her hair while making roti. Noor's experiences highlight the intergenerational transmission of cultural values within the diaspora. She notes the significance of Auntie Misbah's scoldings during cooking and prayers, emphasizing that her involvement enriches Pakistani traditions. Noor's memories illustrate the deep connection between familial interactions and cultural authenticity.

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". 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". By preparing a special dish to celebrate Noor's achievements, Misbah demonstrates her support and strengthens familial bonds. She shares insights into Punjabi culture, explaining the significance of the curse "ullu da patha," or "son of an owl," which deepens Noor's connection to her heritage. Misbah also recounts her experience of hearing the legendary Pakistani singer Noor Jehan, highlighting the profound impact of her powerful voice.

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." 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". 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. 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". 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".

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". 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".

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". 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.

Beyond Borders: Transcultural Challenges and Resilience

Noor finds a steadfast ally in Salahuddin, who becomes her confidant and guiding force through the challenges of being perceived as "different." While she is grateful to her Uncle Riaz for rescuing her from the earthquake, his decision to distance himself from his culture and religion strains their relationship. Noor admires her aunt's belief in her potential and hopes for a brighter future beyond Juniper. She grapples with the challenges of reconciling familial expectations with her personal aspirations, as evidenced by her decision to abandon her essay about the earthquake and focus on volunteering instead.

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. Noor expresses a profound sentiment when she states, "Auntie believed in me. Even at the end, she believed." This reflects her aunt's belief in her potential and Noor's hope for a brighter future beyond Juniper. Despite facing challenges, Noor's resilience and determination shine through. She recognizes her worth and potential, and with the support of her aunt and others, she is determined to overcome obstacles and achieve her dreams. "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".

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.

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. 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 and drugs are found in their possession. This sudden twist thrusts them into a legal predicament, with authorities assuming Noor's involvement in drug dealing. The intertwined personal traumas, legal challenges, and societal assumptions create a compelling narrative that explores resilience and challenges prejudices. Salahudin 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". Salahuddin, burdened by guilt and a desire to preserve his mother's legacy, engages in illegal activities. Despite his intentions, he acknowledges the flaws in his reasoning and the consequences of his actions. He undergoes a transformative healing process in prison, focusing on self-forgiveness and reconciliation. This pivotal step marks a significant milestone in his quest for redemption and closure. By forgiving himself and his mother, Salahudin demonstrates profound maturity and self-awareness, releasing the emotional burdens that have haunted him. This journey toward forgiveness signifies his commitment to personal redemption and resilience, fostering a sense of inner peace and acceptance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has extensively investigated the facets of 'Transnationalism' in South Asian Diasporas. 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.

Examining South Asian diasporic texts through a transnational lens reveals how Diasporas establish and maintain connections between their societies of origin and settlement. The study emphasizes the significance of simultaneity, long-distance practices, and cultural reconfigurations. Misbah's journey highlights the interplay between traditional gender roles and transnational experiences, showing how transnationalism transforms gender dynamics by offering women new opportunities while introducing cultural tensions. For instance, guidance on clothing choices illustrates the nuanced negotiation of cultural identity.

The narrative intertwines nostalgia, cultural adaptation, and intergenerational dialogue, particularly regarding marriage. Misbah's move to Juniper represents a transformative adventure that showcases the exchange of cultural resources within the diaspora. Her enthusiasm for renovating a motel symbolizes the creation of a welcoming space, embodying resilience and cultural navigation. After Misbah's death, Salahudin's dedication to the motel reflects a commitment to preserving her vision and the transnational environment she fostered. The narrative emphasizes cultural fluidity that transcends geographic boundaries, exploring themes through music and language, as Noor's adaptation to a new language highlights the challenges of linguistic dynamics in a new setting.

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. By emphasizing their "uniqueness," these characters challenge the traditional dichotomy between center and margin, creating a transcultural dynamic. This disruption compels the dominant culture to respond positively to the unique insights these individuals bring about their history, leading to a space for negotiation and redefinition. The transnational arena, reflecting the diaspora, fosters an ongoing dialogue that shapes the identity of South Asian diasporic characters. These characters represent the inherent capacity for self-determination, asserting their autonomy and ability to forge their distinct paths toward liberation. This analysis not only breaks new ground in academic discourse but also underscores the profound implications of adopting a transnational framework in understanding and navigating the complexities of South Asian diasporic experiences in the digital age.

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