



RESEARCH PAPER

The Dynamic Tapestry of Transnationalism: Examining South Asian Diasporic Identities in Sonya Lalli's *Grown Up Pose*

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the depiction of transnationalism in Sonya Lalli's *Grown Up Pose*, emphasizing the intricate and pluralistic identities of South Asian diasporic characters as they traverse the complexities of a hyper-connected global milieu. Drawing upon Steven Vertovec's transnationalism theory and employing rigorous textual analysis, the study examines the fluidity of identity and the formation of multifaceted social networks within the diaspora, highlighting their participation in cross-cultural dialogues and negotiation of liminal spaces. By meticulously deconstructing these elements, this study advocates for a more expansive and nuanced interpretation of diasporic experiences, one that transcends the confines of historical trauma to foreground the proactive construction of interconnected transnational networks. The findings underscore the potential of transnational spaces to foster inclusivity, equity, and the reconfiguration of cultural narratives, thereby advancing the discourse on the South Asian diaspora in the digital era.

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

Introduction

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. Thomas 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 (Thomas, 2010). 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 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, 2013). 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.

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, 1997). 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.

This research focuses on the literary composition of Sonya Lalli's 'Grown-Up Pose'. Through textual analysis, it seeks to reveal the complex layers of narrative structure within the work. The study adopts a predominantly deductive approach, guided by Steven Vertovec's theoretical framework of "Transnationalism." Vertovec emphasizes the need for a transnational perspective when examining Diasporas, arguing that this outlook underscores the interconnectedness of diasporic communities through cross-border interactions, taking into account both the homeland and the host country (Vertovec, 2014). 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. It delves into the evolution of postcolonial Diasporas on a global scale, highlighting their significance in understanding evolving representations.

Literature Review

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 (Susan, 2008). 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.

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 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, 2001). 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.

Similarly, in one of his works, 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, 2019). 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". The objective is to raise awareness and encourage critical thinking beyond nationalistic viewpoints, fostering more inclusive professional citizenship in South Asian pedagogical practices.

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, 2022). 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.

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, 2019). 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.

Material and Methods

This research examines the depiction of diasporic characters in South Asian diasporic fiction, utilizing textual analysis as its primary methodology, in line with Alan McKee's guidelines for qualitative textual analysis. Adopting a largely deductive approach, the study is framed by Steven Vertovec's theory of 'Transnationalism.' It focuses on how diasporic characters are represented within the context of transnational experiences, connections, and identities. Diasporas demonstrate a capacity to swiftly navigate social spaces and create new social configurations, adding complexity to interconnected global communities. As Vertovec explains, "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, 2004). These complexities involve the creation of intersecting spheres of belonging, multipolar systems of reference, diverse loyalties, intricate citizenship structures, and interwoven lifestyles. Transnationalism, defined 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, placing it within the broader contexts of globalization and cosmopolitanism. It shifts the focus to the lived experiences and actions of diasporic communities, while also considering the structural power dynamics between their home and host countries. Steven Vertovec emphasizes that a true understanding of 'diversity' goes beyond simple notions of cultural difference or community affiliation, and includes "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).

Vertovec's approach invites us to move away from static, victim-centric views of diaspora, instead highlighting the agency and vitality of these communities. It underscores the active role immigrants play in creating and maintaining social connections, adding complexity to their experiences. He argues that notions of belonging and loyalty are not a zero-sum game tied to a single place. Being "more transnational" doesn't necessarily mean being "less integrated" (Vertovec, 2009), as diasporic identities are constantly shaped by ongoing social interactions and networks that cross geographic borders. Transnationalism offers a space for challenging traditional gender roles and family structures, providing opportunities for women, in particular, to pursue education, careers, and leadership positions. However, it does not guarantee gender equality, as cultural clashes and societal resistance may still impede progress. Transnational families, which maintain robust social networks, create new forms of socialization, as ideas, values, and practices are shared across

non-territorial settings. Vertovec sees these families as dynamic agents of both material exchanges and cultural transformation, constantly redefining their roles in a globalized world.

Women often experience elevated social status in the context of migration due to increased employment opportunities and financial control, altering power dynamics within households and communities. Through transnational activities, women can resist oppression rooted in race and class, reshaping their identities and challenging traditional gender roles. However, Vertovec notes that patriarchal structures may still persist, even within transnational contexts. Migration often reinforces or even strengthens certain gender norms. Transnationalism also influences how individuals perceive space. Vertovec's concept of "transnational social fields" reflects how Diasporas engage with both their home and host countries, developing hybrid identities that challenge conventional East-West binaries. These transnational spaces enable diasporic communities to resist essentialization, reassert agency, and challenge re-orientalist portrayals. By interacting across borders, individuals and cultures can create new, alternative narratives that break from traditional representations. The advent of digital technology has further expanded the scope of transnationalism, allowing diasporic communities to maintain strong ties with their homeland and create virtual transnational spaces that connect people globally. These digital platforms facilitate cultural exchange, cooperation, and identity formation beyond geographical borders. As Vertovec notes, modern communication technologies have amplified pre-existing social structures, creating dense, highly active networks that reshape cultural, economic, and political relationships across vast distances.

Results and Discussion

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. 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". 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". 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.

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. 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. "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 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". 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". 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". 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.

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. 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?". 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". 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". 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.

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". 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 ambience, 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. 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". 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.

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?”. 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”. 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. 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”. 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.

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”. 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.

Conclusion

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. 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. 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. 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 text expands the intellectual landscape and advocate for the transformative potential of diasporic transnationalism in reshaping societal structures and fostering a more equitable and liberated world.

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