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Peer-Reviewed Journal

Dr. N.G.P. Arts and Science College

Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

Department of English

Fiesta of the Mind

**Exploring Food and English Literature
in Interdisciplinary Horizon**

CP - Volume 1, Issue 1 - May 2025

Guest Editors

**Dr. A. Hazel Verbina
Dr. S. Sudha
Dr. B. Umaa Devi
Dr. M. Marimuthu
Dr. S. Sree Sakthi Prem**



**“This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”**

— William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

**“If more of us valued food and cheer and song
above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.”**

— J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

**“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well,
if one has not dined well.”**

— Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

“There is no love sincerer than the love of food.”

— George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*

**“One cannot have too large a party.
A large party secures its own amusement.”**

— Jane Austen, *Emma*

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A Performativity Analysis of Female Vampires, Cannibalism and Gender Subversion in Alma Katsu's *The Hunger*

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Abstract

*This paper is an earnest attempt to present how female vampires in Alma Katsu's *The Hunger* employ cannibalism to subvert traditional gender roles and embody power using Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. Butler's concept of gender as a constructed performance offers a framework to analyse how female vampires reject societal norms by embracing their predatory, "monstrous" nature. In a patriarchal context that enforces women's passivity, nurturance, and domesticity, the female vampires' cannibalistic acts become performative gestures that dismantle these gendered expectations. Their hunger symbolizes repressed desires and ambitions, and their transgression of taboo positions them as agents of autonomy and power. By using cannibalism as a metaphor for defiance and control, Katsu critiques the restrictive performativity of traditional femininity and reimagines female identity through a lens of strength and liberation. This study highlights how *The Hunger* leverages horror to interrogate the constructed nature of gender and envision a radical redefinition of feminine power.*

Keywords: Performativity, Cannibalism, Gender Subversion, Transgression.

Alma Katsu's *The Hunger* explores the horror of the Donner Party tragedy, not only through the lens of survival but through the subversion of gender norms. In this reimagined history, female vampires emerge as figures of monstrous femininity, transforming acts of cannibalism into symbols of power and resistance. Traditionally, women have been assigned roles that are nurturing, passive, and defined by their relationships with others primarily men and children. However, the female vampires in *The Hunger* reject these roles, embodying a violent, autonomous power that stands in stark contrast to societal expectations of women.

Judith Butler's theory of performativity, articulated in *Gender Trouble* (1990), provides a critical framework for understanding how these vampires subvert traditional gender roles. Performativity, according to Butler, is the idea that gender is not something one inherently possesses but something one "does" through repeated actions. Gender is not a biological fact but a series of socially constructed performances, which can be disrupted and redefined. By applying Butler's theory to the female vampires' cannibalistic acts, this paper will demonstrate how Katsu uses monstrosity to reimagine femininity as a form of power and autonomy, asserting that these characters perform gender in ways that defy traditional norms. In her seminal work *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler argues that gender identity is not an essential truth or something biologically determined. Instead, gender is constituted through repeated acts, behaviours, and performances regulated by societal norms. As Butler states, "Gender is a kind of doing, an act, a sequence of acts, that constitutes gendered subjects" (*Gender Trouble*, p. 33). This means that gender identity is not an innate characteristic but something performed, and reinforced through repeated social behaviours. These performances, however, are not fixed, they can be disrupted, subverted, and re-performed.



Butler's theory challenges the traditional binary understanding of gender roles, where femininity and masculinity are seen as opposites and essential to one's identity. She suggests that if gender is performative, it is subject to change and can be resisted. A person can subvert gender norms by "repeating" gender in ways that resist conventional expectations. In *The Hunger*, the female vampires perform gender in subversive ways, particularly through their engagement with cannibalism, which embodies a radical departure from traditional roles of femininity.

In Katsu's novel, the female vampires' cannibalistic acts function as radical performances of power, autonomy, and violent qualities typically denied to women in patriarchal structures. By consuming flesh, they not only survive but assert control over their bodies and destinies. Their actions, driven by a need to feed and survive, go beyond the conventional expectations of passivity and care, performing instead a new form of power that transcends traditional gendered performances. The act of cannibalism in *The Hunger* serves as both a survival mechanism and a means of re-performing gender. Traditionally, cannibalism is viewed as a taboo act that is inherently violent, taboo, and beyond the scope of acceptable social behaviour. In many societies, the consumption of human flesh is regarded as a violation of the natural order, making it the ultimate abject act. In *The Hunger*, the female vampires embrace this abjection as a source of power, positioning themselves as active participants in their survival rather than passive victims.

Cannibalism becomes a way for the vampires to reject the prescribed gender roles of femininity, which often dictate women's roles as caregivers, nurturers, and the objects of men's protection. Historically, women have been expected to be self-sacrificial and nurturing roles that often render them vulnerable and dependent on patriarchal structures. In *The Hunger*, however, the female vampires are far from passive. Instead, they become predators, consuming others in acts that challenge the very definition of femininity. In one key scene, Katsu describes the moment when the vampires first take part in cannibalism:

The hunger was unbearable, a gnawing emptiness that they tried to fill with whatever was available, even human flesh. They had no choice—there was no turning back now. They were no longer the helpless victims of nature; they were the hunters now, the predators. (Katsu, p. 153)

Here, the female vampires embrace their transformation from passive figures into active, powerful agents. The act of cannibalism, initially driven by necessity, becomes a symbol of their empowerment. They no longer adhere to the traditional gendered expectations of women as nurturers or dependents but instead embody the characteristics of hunters aggressive, self-sufficient, and in control of their fates. In another scene, one of the female vampires, Margaret, reflects on how their survival tactics have altered their identities: "We've become something different. Something dangerous. And I don't know if that's a good thing, but it's something we have to accept" (Katsu, p. 170).

Margaret's acknowledgement of their transformation highlights the way cannibalism forces them to abandon old identities and adopt new ones. This "dangerous" transformation subverts the traditional, nurturing role of women and instead presents a form of femininity that is powerful, predatory, and self-defined.

Butler's theory emphasizes that gender is a performance, a set of repeated acts that conform to societal expectations. In *The Hunger*, the female vampires' acts of cannibalism are a radical re-performance of femininity. They reject the passive, nurturing roles typically associated with women, instead performing a masculinity-inflected femininity that embraces



power and violence. Through this re-performance, they assert control over their survival and redefine what it means to be feminine.

In the context of *The Hunger*, cannibalism functions as a performative act that challenges traditional gender norms. By engaging in cannibalism, the vampires redefine femininity, turning the expected maternal and nurturing qualities into traits of violence and autonomy. Their actions expose the limits of socially constructed gender roles, revealing how gender is a malleable, performative act rather than a fixed identity.

One of the most striking instances of this re-performance occurs when the vampires, faced with starvation, turn to each other for sustenance:

The hunger was a shared thing, something that bound them together. It was no longer just about survival. It was about taking control of their fate. They were no longer dependent on the men, and the children. They were their own creators now. (Katsu, p. 174)

At this moment, the female vampires' consumption of human flesh signifies their break from traditional gender roles. They are no longer seen as passive recipients of men's protection or as nurturers of children. Instead, they assert their autonomy by taking control of their fate, a performance that redefines their femininity as independent, autonomous, and empowered. Their ability to take life, rather than give it, positions them outside traditional gendered expectations. The act of cannibalism becomes a tool for empowerment in *The Hunger*. Through consumption, the female vampires gain strength, but more importantly, they gain control over their lives and bodies. Cannibalism allows them to break free from the constraints of a patriarchal society, which often demands that women be submissive, nurturing, and dependent. By embracing cannibalism, the female vampires in *The Hunger* reject these societal demands, choosing instead to embody a form of femininity that is self-sustaining and powerful. As Butler notes, "If gender is a set of acts, then its repetition has the possibility of creating new forms of identity" (*Gender Trouble*, p. 35). The female vampires in *The Hunger* use their cannibalistic acts to perform new identities, ones that reject the passive, dependent roles typically imposed on women. They perform strength and independence, positioning themselves as autonomous agents capable of survival and power.

The performative nature of the female vampires' actions in *The Hunger* underscores the fluidity and malleability of identity. Their transformation into vampires is both a physical and symbolic rejection of societal norms, allowing them to embody an alternative femininity that is active, predatory, and autonomous. This transformation illustrates how gendered identities can be destabilized and rewritten through repeated acts that defy and reimagine the traditional performance of gender. Cannibalism, in this context, becomes a radical act of self-definition, enabling the female vampires to embody power on their terms. By situating Katsu's female vampires within Butler's framework of performativity, this analysis highlights how the novel critiques the rigidity of gender roles and explores the potential for resistance through subversive acts. *The Hunger* challenges the reader to reconsider the boundaries of femininity, monstrosity, and agency, presenting the female vampire as a figure of transformative potential. In reclaiming their hunger and embracing the monstrous Katsu's characters reveal the limitations of gender as a construct and how its performative nature can be disrupted to achieve liberation. Ultimately, the interplay of Judith Butler's performative theory and Katsu's narrative demonstrates how speculative fiction serves as a fertile ground for reimagining gender and power. The female vampires of *The Hunger* emerge as powerful symbols of resistance, rejecting the confines of traditional gender performance and carving out spaces for autonomy, strength, and subversive identity. Through this lens, the act of



cannibalism transcends its horror, becoming a revolutionary tool for dismantling and reimagining the roles imposed on women.

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Between Pen and Fork: A Gastronomical and Psychosexual Investigation Behind Kafkaesque Perspective

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Abstract

Feeding on fears and nourishing nightmares, a human who was left scarred as a result of surreal experiences, Franz Kafka was a prisoner in his world. A life spent in an inescapable solitude with constant psychological melancholia, Franz Kafka is often subjected to several critical perspectives, discussions and debates. This research employs Abraham Maslow's theoretical concept to differentiate and highlight the interdependence between the physiological and psychological needs of human beings. It then focuses on the physiological need of food and its relationship to culture, traditions, and psychology, exploring the intersectional area of gastronomy. Investigating Franz Kafka's personal life experiences from his Letter to His Father and The Metamorphosis, this research discusses the causes and consequences of his psychological conflicts and masculinity crisis, examining his strained relationship with his father and his psychosexual eating disorder that is analyzed further through the lens of feminist-vegan critical theory of Carol Adams and psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud and Hilda Bruch.

Keywords: Physiological, Psychological, Gastronomy, Kafkaesque, Psychosexual, Anorexia

Life is to exist and/or live. To exist is to breathe, eat, drink, and procreate in broader aspects. To live is to exist and further, feel, understand and prioritize the abstract concepts of love, safety, control, relationships, spirituality and more. According to the American Psychologist, Abraham Maslow, existence is primary and solely physiological, while living is secondary and includes psychological aspects. The primary needs for human survival are physiological and include breathing, food, water, shelter, clothing and sleep. The secondary needs are predominantly psychological and include love, safety, self-esteem and self-actualization (Maslow 379-382). The nature of the connection between the primary and secondary human needs can be described as interdependent. For instance, it is common for an individual to struggle to sleep under stressful circumstances. In this case, sleep, which is a physiological need, is affected by stress, which is psychological. In simple terms, physiological needs are influenced by psychological needs and vice versa.

Food, one of the primary physiological human needs, plays a pivotal role in influencing the psychology of an individual. Food does not merely satiate one's hunger but is linked to one's cognition and memory. John Allen in his *The Omnivorous Mind*, states, "Food is an effective trigger of deeper memories of feelings and emotions, internal states of the mind and body" (2012). Triggering feelings, shaping emotions, thereby motivating actions and reactions, and conditioning one's external behaviour, food can be regarded as the most influential physiological need with psychological influences.

Gastronomy, which is defined as the study of the relationship between food, culture and tradition ("gastronomy"), projects food as a major representative or marker of a particular culture, community or society with emphasis on the recipes. The gastronomical perspectives are often employed to explore socio-cultural representation, exploring themes of



identity, emotions and memory, intersecting with anthropology, sociology and psychology. From the discussion of the physiological, psychological and sociocultural associations of food, it is fair to state from a context-dependent perspective that what we eat is how we feel and what we eat is what we are.

Born in Prague, the capital of what was formerly known as Bohemia and currently known as the Czech Republic, Franz Kafka was a Jewish writer who lived from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. He died at the age of forty due to Tuberculosis. His fictional and non-fictional narratives were published posthumously by his friend and confidant Max Brod against Kafka's wish to burn them. A poignant writer, neither by profession nor by passion, Kafka, a lawyer by profession, penned his pain into words as a means of escapism from his world. The unique characteristics of Kafka's writing are labelled as 'Kafkaesque'. In an interview, Frederick Robert Karl, one of the notable American literary critics and biographers, provided a comprehensive interpretation of the term Kafkaesque. He interprets Kafkaesque as a tendency not to give up but to continue to struggle in a surreal world, where one no longer has control over anything, and everything around is against oneself and deeply disappointing. He adds, "You don't give up, you don't lie down and die. What you do is struggle against this with all of your equipment, with whatever you have. But of course, you don't stand a chance. That's Kafkaesque" (1991). It is right to state that behind the conceptual term of Kafkaesque lies the hopeless life struggles of Franz Kafka, reflected through his literary works.

Joseph Epstein provides one of the befitting descriptions of Franz Kafka as "Hypochondriac, insomniac, food faddist, cripplingly indecisive, terrified by life, obsessed with death" (2013). It is significant to understand that Epstein's description of Kafka was not merely due to the mere textual characteristics of his writing, but the underlying expression of his intimate life struggles and experiences employed as a means of coping mechanism and escapism. Many factors have affected Kafka psychologically to a greater extent. From his autobiographical epistolary works to fictional stories and novellas including *Letter to His Father* and *The Metamorphosis*, the existential tone and complex metaphorical descriptions and imageries reveal the life struggles and psychological conflicts of Franz Kafka. He was a victim of authoritative parenting and strict cultural and gender norms that had cultivated his irreparable psychological conflicts. This research, with a particular focus on Kafka's dining experiences, dietary beliefs and habits, food descriptions, and preferences, as found in his literary works, aims to provide a critical gastronomical and psychosexual investigation. In concern to Epstein's description, Kafka was a "hypochondriac" (2013), a sleep-deprived person with constant and intense anxiety and fear of developing a fatal illness. He was a "food faddist" (2013), who followed Fletcherism, which is a dietary belief of chewing any food until it becomes liquefied and ready to swallow (Rothe field 2023). It is said that he overemphasized such an extreme dietary practice and consequent food habits.

Kafka's intensely intimate and emotional epistolary work, *Letter to His Father* sheds light on his bitterly complicated relationship with his father Hermann Kafka, who was a tyrannical figure, whose authoritative, oppressive and abusive attitude and ironic parenting had left Kafka feel inferior, insecure and powerless. Hermann had established an unhealthy and intimidating control over his son's life, dominating and directing him to be confined to conventional gender norms that had negatively impacted his psyche. Whenever Franz Kafka was unable to perform as per the norms, Hermann's ironical comments, "Can't you do it in such-and-such a way? That's too hard for you, I suppose. You haven't the time, of course?" (Kafka), that was aimed to degrade and discourage Kafka, left him emotionally distressed,



filled with feelings of unworthiness and emptiness. It is significant to discuss Kafka's father's interactions involving dining and table manners that reveal the hypocritical traits of his father. Franz writes,

What was brought to the table had to be eaten, the quality of the food was not to be discussed—but you yourself often found the food inedible, called it “this swill,” said “that cow” (the cook) had ruined it. . . “Eat first, talk afterward,” or “faster, faster, faster,” or “There you are, you see, I finished ages ago.” Bones mustn't be cracked with the teeth, but you could. Vinegar must not be sipped noisily, but you could. (Kafka)

In addition, by exhibiting a hypocritical attitude while dining, it is evident that Hermann Kafka also embodied masculine ideals in terms of dietary habits and physique. His regular consumption of meat and beer, and intimidating exhibition of his physique made Franz feel insecure, inferior and powerless. Before focusing on masculine norms in terms of physique which includes body shape and image, it is significant to understand the gender norms and conformities associated with different dietary practices. The connection between food and gender performance can be discussed through the lens of feminist-vegetarian critical theory proposed by Carol J. Adams. In her seminal work titled, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, published in 1990, Carol J. Adams argues that meat eating is linked to toxic masculinity as it aligns with patriarchal traits of violence, harm, abuse, objectification and consumption (73). She projects veganism to be aligned with feminism as it challenges patriarchy which is linked with meat consumption. Although this theoretical perspective is subjected to many criticisms, it is justifiable in the case of Hermann Kafka, who as a meat eater, showcased patriarchal traits of authority and hypocrisy.

Franz Kafka who consumed meat and beer along with his father during his childhood, adopted a strict vegetarian diet and teetotalism later in his life (*Paper and Salt* 2013). His choice to become a vegetarian and teetotaler might be due to ethical concerns and chronic digestive problems. However, from a gastronomical perspective about food memories and sensory experiences, Kafka could have become a vegetarian and teetotaler to prevent recalling the upsetting food memories or reliving the harrowing dining experiences with his abusive father. Further, from the theoretical perspective of Carol Adams, it is fair to state Franz Kafka, who was unable to consume what was gendered as masculine, had experienced an intense masculinity crisis, felt psychologically demasculinized, affected by heightened a sense of disgust and shame. This is one of the major reasons Kafka created male protagonists in all his fictional works and psychologically demasculinized them.

One fine example is Kafka's infamous male protagonist, Gregor Samsa from *Metamorphosis*, who is dehumanized and reduced into a giant insect feeding on “old, half-decayed vegetables, bones from last night's supper” (245) and eventually abandoned by his family members who leave him to die. Demasculinization and dehumanization of Samsa is the evident expression of his position in both domestic and social spaces. Focusing on masculine norms in terms of physique, Hermann's intimidating exhibition of physique made Franz feel inferior and powerless. He writes,

I was, after all, weighed down by your mere physical presence. I remember, for instance, how we often undressed in the same bathing hut. There was I, skinny, weakly, slight; you strong, tall, broad. . . before the people, you holding me by my hand, a little skeleton, unsteady, barefoot on the boards, frightened of the water. (Kafka)



Moreover, the gendered food and dietary norms, and the physique comprising the body image are also deeply gendered with masculine and feminine ideals. Franz Kafka intimidated by his father's physique was psychologically demasculinized, feeling insecure, inferior and powerless. It is significant to shed light on the eating disorder of Franz in further discussing his psychological demasculinization due to body norms. As a hypochondriac and food faddist, Kafka's excessive fear of being affected by a serious disease linked with his fletcherist food habits align with the psychological condition termed as Anorexia nervosa, which can be analyzed through the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud and Hilde Bruch. The causes of anorexia might be due to social and cultural pressure regarding an ideal body image and its traits including feelings of unworthiness and lack of self-esteem psychologically and weight loss physically (Anorexia Nervosa, 2022). Taking into account the causes and common traits of the disorder of anorexia along with Kafka's feelings of insecurity, inferiority and powerlessness regarding his physique and reported body weight of only 45 kilograms or 99 pounds despite his height of 6 feet 1 inch (Granda 2024) due to his fletcherist diet, it is reasonable to state that Kafka could have been suffering from this very condition.

Sigmund Freud, a popular Austrian psychoanalyst and Hilde Bruch, a renowned German-American psychoanalyst provide their insightful perspectives on anorexia nervosa. Before focusing on the psychoanalytical perspectives of Freud and Bruch, it is essential to understand that the psychoanalytical and feminist approaches are shaped by two distinct trends, "one focuses on its roots in the fantasy, the other in the reality of childhood and adolescent deprivation and abuse" (Sayers 1998).

Freud's statement, "the well-known anorexia nervosa of girls seems to be a melancholia occurring where sexuality is undeveloped" (103) has its focus on fantasy with gendered notions implying that the condition predominantly occurs in young girls and women during their adolescence due to their unconscious sexual fears. This psychosexual perspective is true about the consideration of anorexia nervosa as a disorder of females about studies showing higher prevalence among women compared to men (Kotadia 2023). Freud's theoretical statement partially aligns with the case of Franz Kafka considering his biological sex, sexuality and gender performance. It should be noted that although many critics claim Kafka to be a homosexual, there is no strong evidence to support the claims as Kafka was a womaniser who was involved in intimate romantic relationships with at least three women (Das 2020). By taking the literary records and evidence available, it can be said that Franz Kafka was a heterosexual person who was unable to perform according to the masculine norms in both domestic and social spaces.

Hilde Bruch has provided a befitting theoretical perspective that completely aligns with the case of Franz Kafka. In her *The Golden Cage: The Enigma of Anorexia Nervosa*, she says that people with anorexia nervosa are "engaged in a desperate fight against feeling enslaved and exploited" (xxii). Further, she adds that such internal conflicts are due to parental autonomy and control over everything including the child's dietary habits, which makes the child feel incompetent in every aspect of his or her life. Her theoretical perspectives are true and completely align with the case of Franz Kafka, who was overshadowed by his father and felt worthless throughout his life. It is fair to state that Kafka's intricate relationship between food and psychology transcends beyond the contemporary gastronomical perspectives, particularly about memory and intersects with psychosexuality the result of his psychological demasculinization due to patriarchal oppression, dietary habits and insecurity in his body image.



To conclude, discussing the interdependence between Maslow's physiological and psychological human needs, this research emphasized the role and significance of food and explored the contemporary gastronomical perspectives. By focusing on Franz Kafka's personal life and dietary beliefs and habits, shaped by the psychological conflicts resulting from his father's authoritative parenting and patriarchal traits, which was justified through the discussion of the gendered norms associated with food consumption through the lens of Carol Adams's feminist-vegetarian critical theory. Focusing on Kafka's eating disorder, it is reasonable to assert the possibility of his suffering from Anorexia Nervosa with its traits aligning with his case. Further, discussing anorexia through two major focuses of psychoanalytic and feminist approaches through the theoretical perspectives of Freud and Bruch, it is conclusive that Kafka's anorexia was psychosexual, partially due to his demasculinized gender performance and completely a result of unhealthy parental autonomy and control. It is suggestive to conduct further research considering Kafka's religious and cultural identity and practices as a Jew due to various studies and data claiming that people who belong to Jewish culture are more prone to develop eating disorders (Laufer et al. 2023; Gorden and Kofman 2014; Tanya et al. 2012; Pinhas et al. 2008).

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**Food as an Instrument in Patriarchy of Harassment, Assault and Death**

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Abstract

Kitchen, cooking and food have persisted the jurisdiction of women may be from the Neolithic age when men went out for hunting, and farming and the women were in the caves cooking meat on the firewood and taking care of their children. Centuries have passed by witnessing tremendous change in the paradigms of human life still one aspect hasn't altered which is the role and duty of women. Women are coronated as the queens of their empire that is kitchen willingly or unwillingly and once coronated they have to reign the kingdom with their full might. In the Indian context, women are deified as Annapurna at the time of marriage rituals but the same Goddess is harassed, bruised, attacked, assaulted, and killed in her sanctum that is the kitchen for centuries and the story hasn't ended yet. The queen or the Goddess strives day and night to fill the stomachs of her family members, yet nobody pays heed to her desires and likings. Womenfolk sacrifice their whole life to appease the family through her cuisines but she is rarely recognized. Hardly anyone cares about her hunger. The circumstances are identical everywhere in the world. In this research paper researcher will try to analyse three poems, first 'The Great Indian Kitchen' by Hiba Ashraf, the second 'Another Woman' by Imtiaz Dharkar and the third 'Goblin Market' by Christina Rossetti to shed light on the symbols of kitchen and food as the instruments of patriarchy, harassment, assault and death. The researcher has used descriptive and analytical research methods for this research.

Keywords: Turmeric, Patriarchy, Assault, Death.

Introduction

Kitchen, cooking and food have persisted the jurisdiction of women may be from the Neolithic age when men went out for hunting, and farming and the women were in the caves cooking meat on the firewood and taking care of their children. Centuries have passed by witnessing a tremendous change in the paradigms of human life still one aspect hasn't altered that is the role and duty of women in the kitchen. Women are coronated as the queens of their empire that is kitchen willingly or unwillingly and once coronated they have to reign the kingdom with their full might. In the Indian context, women are deified as Annapurna at the time of marriage rituals but the same Goddess is harassed, bruised, attacked, assaulted, and killed in her sanctum that is the kitchen for centuries and the story hasn't ended yet. The queen or the Goddess strives day and night to fill the stomachs of her family members, yet nobody pays heed to her desires and likings. Womenfolk sacrifice their whole life to appease the family through her cuisines but she is rarely recognized. Hardly anyone cares about her hunger. The circumstances are identical everywhere in the world.

Primary Sources

In this research paper researcher will try to analyse three poems, first 'The Great Indian Kitchen' by Hiba Ashraf, the second 'Another Woman' by Imtiaz Dharkar and the third 'Goblin Market' by Christina Rossetti to shed light on the symbols of kitchen and food as the instruments of patriarchy, harassment, assault and death.

**Research Methodology**

The researcher has used descriptive and analytical research methods for this research.

Discussion

Hiba Ashraf's, 'The Great Indian Kitchen' is a direct condemnation of the Indian tradition where women are imbued with the idea of winning a specific space in their husband's heart through food cooked by her own hands. Many women are enslaved or they enslave themselves in the four walls of the kitchen hypnotized by the same idea. According to the poet they spend or waste their whole life cooking various tasty cuisines for their husband, children, in-laws and relatives but the whole endeavour is useless to gain any recognition or identity for themselves. She even fails to secure her place in her partner's heart. Her efforts go unrecognised. She is blamed and criticised for her untidy looks, and clothes which smell of spices, onions and garlic.

The poet herself might have witnessed these kinds of incidents in her home as the poem has a biographical tone. Her Ammi strived hard to secure a place in her Abba's heart by preparing and serving various concoctions for various delicacies. She continued this ritual from the day she was married and entered the house till her last breath. But the poet asserts the futility of her mother's hardship to receive love from her Abba in return for the food she served. The saying goes wrong, and the poet repeats, 'The path of love passes through the stomach'. She has been an eyewitness to this failure. Efforts of her mother's gone in vain. Even when she died her hands were tinted with a yellowish tinge of turmeric. This line is an eye-opener, in Indian tradition, the girl applies Haldi or turmeric during a marriage ritual and here her mother dies with the same Haldi on her hands which she has been using also as a spice in her food. The several years in between, have been wasted by the poet's mother in search of love which she never received from her counterpart. Here the question arises whether food has failed love has failed or the whole marriage system based on gender bias and discrete roles has failed. The daughter poet is a witness to this whole scenario. As the legacy passes on to the next generation, will she be able to believe in the Marriage system and the duties and responsibilities assigned to it? It is really difficult to decide whether the title 'Great Indian Kitchen' is glorifying or condemning the Indian kitchen.

In the poem 'Another Woman' by Imtiaz Dharkar, the poet highlights the struggle of the newly married girl to cope with the new milieu in the in-law's house, especially in the kitchen which was earlier dominated by another woman that is her mother-in-law. The title of the poem itself is eloquent and asserts the otherness of the woman in her husband's house till her last breath though she converts it into home. Indian daughters have grown up listening to this statement by their parents, 'this is not your house, your house and permanent place will be your in-law's house'. And when she steps into her in-law's house, she is always treated as another woman. She is always taunted by the in-laws especially her mother-in-law who isn't ready to accept this girl as the daughter-in-law. The foremost motive behind it is, that she is afraid to mislay her dominance over her only province which is the kitchen. This poem also focuses on the next most prominent aspect that is women have no choice of food. They have to eat the remaining morsels after feeding the whole family. Sometimes or many times they have to suppress their likings and dislikes about the food. As the poet has depicted in this poem, the newlywed girl liked Radish but she couldn't purchase it because her mother-in-law had given her limited money. Due to financial constraints, she could only purchase *Methi* that is Fenugreek in that amount. So, she imagines that she is enjoying the crunch of radish in her mouth and satisfies her taste buds in her imagination. She is a young girl, of a fragile frame who goes to the market every day, wearing a saree that she is unable to handle,



with the little amount handed over by her mother-in-law. She comes home, and chops the vegetable, staining her hands yellow. This has become an integral part of her daily routine. Afterwards, when she is cooking, she has to face the dark looks of her mother-in-law. Curses are heaped upon her by her mother-in-law for bringing less dowry. When her husband arrives, she crouches even more. This comments on the fragmented love-less relationship between the couple. There is a lack of bonding, affection, trust and support in their relationship. She is gazing continuously at the pot on the stove surrounded by the orange flames. Maybe she is finding the similarities between her and the pot. She might be thinking that, as she is scorching by the vehement words of her husband and mother-in-law, similarly, the pot is burning and blackening or vice-versa. In the last stanza of the poem, the poet touches on the dark reality of the Indian marriage system which is dowry death. And in the last few lines of the poem, readers come to know about the tragic end of this girl in the kitchen. This newlywed girl is charred in the kitchen itself by throwing kerosene on her shrunken body as a result of malnutrition or rather continuous starvation. She succumbs to the fire burns immediately. The poet criticizes the silence of society on the issue of the dowry death.

In this poem also as in the poem 'Great Indian Kitchen', the kitchen becomes the symbol of harassment and death. Food becomes the symbol of an unfulfilled hope, longing for love and expectations of women. In the kitchen which is her only province in the whole house, there also the woman remains another, as one another woman that is mother-in-law has acquired position and power may be after one more another woman. The horrifying scenario of a burning woman in her kitchen, the pitiable condition of the daughter-in-law who is half-fed herself but has to take care of each and everyone even in miserable financial condition. The pathetic situation is put forth where women have to neglect and negotiate their own choice of food. The Goddess of the house is harassed, half-fed, cursed, and blamed for not bringing the price of her food from her parents in the form of dowry, putting forward the dark reality of the Indian kitchen and the harsh facts of the Indian marriage system.

Christina Rossetti's 'Goblin Market' which is the most discussed symbolic poem has been analysed from various perspectives of temptation, desire, consequences, and self-sacrificial love. But the poem should be pondered taking into consideration the leitmotif of wish or choice of women for a specific food item and the sacrifice or the price she has to pay for the same. The criticism of the society which womenfolk have to face is another consequence of the female expressing her desire. In this poem, two sisters, Laura and Lizzie fall prey to the call of merchants of Goblin to sell tasty fruits which they cannot resist. The temptation of Laura even after continuous warning from her sister Lizzie could not satiate. And once she rebelled and has tasted the fruit, she desires more, even if she becomes frantic for that. Lizzie couldn't see the pitiable condition of her sister and paying silver coins brings more fruits for her sister. The silver coin is refused by the Goblin merchants. Instead, they force Lizzie also to taste the sweetness of the fruit which she firmly refuses. They have heard the stories about a village girl who had been prey to the trap of the Goblin men and the girl had lost her life still they could not resist and become the prey themselves. The vulnerability and fragility of women when they assert their choices of food or the harsh repayment in the form of their chastity while subsiding their hunger, put forward the question in front of the readers, how long this victimisation of women for food or assertion of their will and choices will continue?

Conclusion

In the three poems of three poets for this research' is the interweaving aspect which



stands for starvation, suppression, obligation, cheating, victimisation and death. Food also emerges as the character who is representative of the patriarchy, instrumental in assault and death. Food a basic necessity transforms itself into an obligation and duty reinforced by the patriarchy upon womenfolk. In the Indian context, food becomes the medium to secure a place in a man's heart by his wife by cooking and serving the food lovingly which is seen contradictorily as the unavoidable duty by their husbands. So, their longing for love remains unfulfilled till their death. Turmeric the symbol of the marriage ritual comes out bleak when the poet's mother dies with her hands stained yellow by the turmeric in the kitchen. The *Methi*, which is just a leafy vegetable become the symbol of dislike, hatred and oppression. Radish acquires the meaning of longing and unfulfilled love. The flames of the stove convert into a torch for the coming generations. The choice of food if asserted can blacken the chastity of the girls as in 'Goblin Market', or else they will be labelled as frantic for asserting their choices. Thus, food which is hailed, and celebrated as an indisputable part of the rich history, culture and tradition of the particular community, province or state, stands out in these poems as the harsh symbols of starvation, suffering, sadness and death. Food which is an elixir for human life turns out to be poison in these three poems ending the lives of three women who are protagonists of their life drama.

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Food as Metaphor and Symbol in English Poetry

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Abstract

*This paper, titled *Feasts of the Imagination: Food as Metaphor and Symbol in English Poetry*, examines food's use in poetry, not just as sustenance but as a powerful metaphor for various human experiences and emotions. Food in poetry often goes beyond its physical role to symbolize memory, desire, intimacy, and identity. Through an analysis of poems like William Carlos Williams's "This Is Just to Say", Pablo Neruda's "Ode to Tomatoes", and Seamus Heaney's "Oysters", the paper explores how food is used to evoke sensory experiences and emotions. Williams's poem reflects on guilt and indulgence, while Neruda's ode celebrates the vibrancy of everyday life. Heaney's *Oysters* uses food as a metaphor for sensual pleasure and connection to the past. Further, poems like Gwendolyn Brooks's *The Bean Eaters*, Li-Young Lee's *Eating Together* and Dickinson's *I Had Been Hungry*, *All the Years* illustrate how food connects people, reflecting the bonds of family, tradition, and shared experience. Food in poetry also speaks to universal themes- literal and emotional- such as comfort, loss, and nourishment. By delving into these works, the paper highlights how poets employ food to explore the complexities of human relationships, the passage of time, and the profound connection between the body and the mind. Through food-related imagery, poets not only depict the act of eating but also reveal deeper layers of meaning, making food an essential tool for storytelling and introspection. Ultimately, this paper aims to demonstrate how the theme of food enriches the literary landscape, offering insights into the emotional, cultural, and social dimensions of life.*

Keywords: Poetry, Food, Metaphor, Feast, Symbol.

Introduction

The intricate relationship between food and poetry has fascinated readers for centuries. Food, in its essence, is vital for survival, but in literature, particularly poetry, it transcends its literal role to become a powerful symbol of emotions, memories, relationships, and identity. Poets often use food as a metaphor to explore deeper human experiences, ranging from indulgence and desire to loss and tradition. This paper explores the symbolic use of food in the works of renowned poets such as William Carlos Williams, Pablo Neruda, Seamus Heaney, Gwendolyn Brooks, Emily Dickinson and Li-Young Lee, emphasizing how food imagery enriches the poetic landscape.

Sensory Appeal of Food in Poetry

William Carlos Williams' poem *This Is Just to Say* exemplifies the interplay of guilt and pleasure through the simple act of eating plums. The poem, presented as an apology, captures the tension between indulgence and remorse. The sensory imagery of the "sweet and cold" plums evokes a visceral reaction, highlighting the intimate and personal nature of food. Through its brevity and simplicity, the poem encapsulates the mundane yet profound human emotions tied to everyday acts of consumption (Williams 37). Food here is not merely sustenance but a means of exploring human vulnerability and moral conflict. Similarly, Pablo Neruda's *Ode to Tomatoes* celebrates the vibrancy and abundance of life through the imagery



of the tomato. The ode glorifies this humble fruit, transforming it into a symbol of community and nourishment. Lines such as “the tomato... offers its gift of fiery colour and cool completeness” illustrate how food connects people and becomes a shared cultural experience (Neruda 112). Neruda’s ode exemplifies how food can elevate the ordinary to the extraordinary, turning a staple ingredient into a metaphor for life itself. The ode’s celebratory tone underscores the communal nature of food, emphasizing how it bridges gaps and fosters unity.

Memory and Desire

Seamus Heaney’s *Oysters* explores the sensual and reflective dimensions of food. The poem juxtaposes the physical act of eating oysters with deeper reflections on memory and indulgence. Heaney’s description of oysters as “salty and brine-stung” evokes the tactile and gustatory pleasures of food while hinting at the transience of such moments (Heaney 85). This interplay between the corporeal and the emotional underscores food’s role as a bridge between the body and the mind. The oysters serve as a metaphor for the fleeting nature of pleasure, rooted in the physical yet extending into the philosophical. In Gwendolyn Brooks’ *The Bean Eaters* food serves as a metaphor for simplicity and resilience. The poem depicts an elderly couple sharing a modest meal of beans, reflecting their enduring bond and humble existence. Brooks’ portrayal of the couple’s meal highlights the themes of routine, love, and survival, showing how food sustains not just the body but also relationships and traditions (Brooks 56). The poem’s focus on modesty and survival emphasizes the role of food as a grounding force, connecting individuals to their histories and shared struggles.

Food - a Medium of Connection and Healing

Li-Young Lee’s *Eating Together* delves into the themes of family and loss through the act of sharing a meal. The poem’s depiction of a meal following the death of a loved one underscores the role of food in mourning and remembrance. Lee’s evocative imagery, such as the “rice steaming” and “fish with soy sauce,” conveys a sense of warmth and intimacy, demonstrating how food becomes a medium for connection and healing (Lee 142). By portraying a family’s collective act of eating, Lee highlights the universality of grief and how food can provide solace. Food in poetry also addresses universal themes such as comfort, nostalgia, and the passage of time. For instance, Emily Dickinson’s *I Had Been Hungry, All the Years* uses hunger as a metaphor for unfulfilled desires and the bittersweet nature of fulfillment. Dickinson’s exploration of hunger as both a physical and emotional state reflects the complexities of human longing and satisfaction (Dickinson 89). The poem’s depiction of hunger as a multifaceted experience underscores its symbolic power, representing both absence and yearning.

Universal Themes of Food in Poetry

By examining these poems, it becomes evident that food in poetry is not merely a backdrop but a dynamic element that shapes the narrative and deepens the reader’s understanding of the human experience. Food imagery serves as a bridge between the tangible and the intangible, offering insights into emotions, relationships, and cultural identities. Through their creative use of food, poets invite readers to reflect on their connections to sustenance and the meanings embedded within it. Furthermore, food imagery often captures the intersection of the mundane and the profound. Poets like Neruda and Lee show how everyday meals can become poignant markers of cultural heritage and familial bonds. Similarly, the sensuousness in Heaney’s descriptions reveals the intimate pleasure and nostalgia that food evokes. Whether as a celebration of abundance or a marker of deprivation, food in poetry illuminates the intricate interplay of sensory experience.

**Food and Identity in Literary Contexts**

The symbolic resonance of food in poetry also extends to themes of identity and memory. For instance, Lee's *Eating Together* not only portrays a family meal but also highlights the cultural significance of traditional dishes in maintaining ties to heritage. Brooks' depiction of a simple meal in *The Bean Eaters* captures the resilience of marginalized communities, showcasing food as a source of sustenance in both literal and metaphorical terms. Additionally, the role of food in representing unfulfilled desires and societal constraints is evident in Dickinson's *I Had Been Hungry, All the Years*. Her nuanced use of hunger as a metaphor underscores the complexities of aspiration and fulfillment. Similarly, Williams' *This Is Just to Say* juxtaposes indulgence with guilt, reflecting the moral dilemmas and emotional intricacies associated with food consumption. The communal aspect of food is also a recurring theme in poetry. Neruda's ode to tomatoes and Brooks' depiction of shared meals emphasize the role of food in fostering community and connection. These works highlight how food transcends individual consumption to become a collective experience, symbolizing unity and cultural identity. Moreover, food imagery in poetry often evokes a sense of nostalgia, linking the act of eating to memories and traditions. Heaney's portrayal of oysters and Lee's depiction of family meals illustrate how food serves as a conduit for recalling the past and preserving cultural legacies. These poems demonstrate how food anchors individuals to their histories, providing a sense of continuity and belonging.

Conclusion

In exploring these themes, the paper highlights the interdisciplinary appeal of food in poetry, blending literary analysis with insights into identity, memory, and human connection. The works of poets like Williams, Neruda, Heaney, Brooks, Emily Dickinson and Lee demonstrate how food transcends its functional role, becoming a powerful metaphor that nourishes both the body and the soul. Through the lens of food, these poems offer a rich tapestry of human experience, inviting readers to savour the profound meanings hidden within the ordinary. Hence, food in poetry serves as a multifaceted symbol that enriches the literary landscape. Whether as a marker of personal memory, a metaphor for emotional states, or a representation of cultural heritage, food provides poets with a versatile tool for exploring the complexities of human existence. By engaging with food-related imagery, readers are invited to reflect on their connections to sustenance and the myriad meanings it holds. Through their creative and evocative use of food, poets reveal the profound interplay between the tangible and the intangible, offering insights into the shared experiences that define humanity.

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Spices and Symbolism in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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Abstract

*This paper explores the multifaceted role of spices in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. Beyond their culinary function, spices serve as potent symbols, evoking themes of desire, repression, forbidden love, and the suffocating social and political climate of post-colonial India. Through a close reading of passages involving spices like cardamom, pepper, and cinnamon, the paper analyzes how Roy employs sensory imagery and olfactory experiences to convey the complexities of human emotions and the intricate web of social and political constraints.*

Keywords: Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*, Spices, Symbolism, Post-colonialism.

Introduction

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, published in 1997, is a landmark work in post-colonial literature that intricately weaves themes of love, loss, societal constraints, and political turmoil in the context of Kerala, India. The novel, which won the Booker Prize, is a richly layered narrative that explores the lives of fraternal twins, Rahel and Estha, and their families, against the backdrop of rigid social hierarchies and cultural taboos. Among its many symbolic elements, spices such as cardamom, cinnamon, and pepper play a significant role, transcending their culinary function to evoke themes of desire, repression, and resistance. Through Roy's masterful use of sensory and olfactory imagery, these spices become metaphors for human emotions and the suffocating social and political climate of post-colonial India. The objective of this paper is to analyze the multifaceted role of spices in *The God of Small Things*, focusing on how they symbolize the tension between personal desires and societal constraints. Specifically, the paper examines how Roy employs spices to evoke sensory experiences that mirror the complexities of human emotions, illuminate forbidden love, and highlight the intersection of cultural identity and political resistance. By delving into the metaphorical significance of spices, this study seeks to uncover the nuanced ways in which Roy uses them as narrative devices to bridge the intimate and the political, enriching the novel's exploration of human relationships and societal structures.

Literature Review

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* has been widely analyzed for its rich symbolism, intricate narrative, and exploration of themes such as love, caste, and post-colonial identity. Scholars have often highlighted the novel's sensory imagery as a key element in its storytelling. For instance, Mary N. Layoun (2000) emphasizes how Roy employs vivid descriptions of the physical and natural world to mirror the emotional and psychological states of her characters. Similarly, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) discuss the novel's use of everyday objects and cultural symbols to critique the entrenched caste and class hierarchies of Indian society.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach, combining textual analysis with cultural and symbolic interpretation.

**Spices and Symbolism in the Novel**

In *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy masterfully weaves sensory imagery into her narrative, using seemingly mundane elements like spices to convey complex emotions and societal dynamics. Spices, ubiquitous in the cultural and culinary traditions of Kerala, take on a symbolic role in the novel, representing themes of desire, memory, and oppression. Through the evocative scents of cardamom, cinnamon, and pepper, Roy bridges the intimate experiences of her characters with the broader socio-political realities of post-colonial India. By closely analyzing key moments where spices appear in the text, this explanation aims to demonstrate how Roy transforms these sensory details into powerful metaphors, enriching the novel's exploration of human emotions and the constraints imposed by caste, class, and tradition discussed with the textual ideas like,

Cardamom

Cardamom, with its pungent sweetness, emerges as a recurring symbol of desire, sensuality, and forbidden love in *The God of Small Things*. It permeates the air during intimate moments, evoking a sense of longing and forbidden pleasure. For instance, when Rahel and Velutha share a stolen moment under the tamarind tree, the air is thick with the scent of cardamom: "The air between them was thick with the smell of cardamom and the musk of his sweat. It was the smell of their forbidden love. The smell of the history of their lives." (Roy 117) This passage highlights how the aroma of cardamom becomes inextricably linked to their forbidden love, symbolizing the intensity and secrecy of their relationship. Cardamom also evokes memories of childhood innocence and the fleeting nature of joy. As Rahel recalls a childhood incident involving cardamom seeds, she reflects on the fragility of happiness and the enduring power of memory: "The memory of the cardamom seeds, green and plump, lying on the white plate, was a sweet and sharp one. Like the taste of cardamom itself. A taste that lingered on the tongue, a ghost of pleasure." (Roy 43) This passage underscores how the aroma of cardamom, even in memory, retains the power to evoke both pleasure and pain, reminding Rahel of lost innocence and the bittersweet nature of life.

Pepper

Pepper, with its fiery pungency, symbolizes the intensity of emotions, the volatility of the political climate, and the simmering discontent beneath the surface of a seemingly placid society. It reflects the fiery nature of suppressed desires and the simmering anger of the marginalized. The novel frequently employs the imagery of pepper to describe the intensity of Rahel's emotions, particularly her anger and frustration: "Her anger, like freshly ground black pepper, stung her eyes." (Roy 156) This metaphor vividly captures the intensity of Rahel's anger, emphasizing its sharp, biting quality. Pepper also symbolizes the simmering tensions within the social and political fabric of Ayemenem. The arrival of the Communist Party, with its promises of social change, is described in terms of a "pepper fire" that ignites the hearts of the local people: "The Communist Party, like a sudden pepper fire, had ignited the hearts of the poor." (Roy 168) This imagery suggests that the arrival of the Communist Party has stirred up long-simmering discontent and ignited a flame of hope and rebellion among the marginalized.

Cinnamon

Cinnamon, with its warm and comforting aroma, evokes memories of childhood, family traditions, and a bygone era. It represents the comforting embrace of tradition and the enduring power of family bonds. The novel frequently employs cinnamon to evoke nostalgic memories of childhood and the warmth of family gatherings: "The smell of cinnamon and cloves, the aroma of Christmas cakes baking in the oven, filled the house." (Roy 25) This



passage evokes a sense of warmth and nostalgia, reminding Rahel of the comforting rituals and traditions that defined her childhood. Cinnamon also symbolizes the enduring power of family bonds, even in the face of adversity. As Rahel recalls her childhood, she remembers the comforting presence of her grandmother, whose embrace was as warm and comforting as the aroma of cinnamon: "Her grandmother's arms smelled of cinnamon and old age." (Roy 47) This image highlights the enduring power of family love and the comforting presence of elders, even in the face of loss and grief.

Arundhati Roy utilizes the sense of smell to create vivid and immersive sensory experiences for the reader. The aroma of spices permeates the narrative, evoking emotions, memories, and a deeper understanding of the characters and their experiences. Through the evocative power of olfactory imagery, Roy transports the reader to the bustling markets of Ayemenem, the intimate spaces of the Ipe household, and the vibrant streets of the city. The sensory experience of spices enhances the reader's engagement with the narrative, allowing them to experience the story on a visceral level.

Conclusion

In conclusion, spices in *The God of Small Things* transcend their culinary function, serving as potent symbols that reflect and amplify the novel's core themes. Cardamom symbolizes desire, forbidden love, and the fleeting nature of joy; pepper represents the intensity of emotions, the volatility of the political climate, and the simmering discontent beneath the surface of society; and cinnamon evokes memories of childhood, family traditions, and the enduring power of family bonds. Through the evocative power of olfactory imagery, Roy creates a multi-sensory experience that immerses the reader in the world of the novel and enhances their understanding of its complex themes. The analysis of spice symbolism in *The God of Small Things* reveals the intricate interplay between the sensory and the symbolic, highlighting the novel's profound exploration of human emotions, social realities, and the enduring power of memory and tradition.

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Food as a Symbol of Scarcity and Struggle for Survival in *Waiting for Godot*

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Abstract

Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) is the most appropriate example of a human's absurd nature, symbolizing the existential struggle for meaning, the monotony of life, and the persistence of hope amidst a seemingly indifferent universe. This research paper explores multiple symbols that are expressed through food in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, analyzing its critical role in reflecting scarcity, monotony, and the struggle for survival within the play. The researcher of this research paper examines, how Samuel Beckett uses food as a metaphor for survival and despair. This play is a mirror to the human condition emphasizing the duality of food as both a physical necessity and a symbol of psychological hunger. The interplay between scarcity and the struggle for survival highlights the fragility of hope amidst the boredom of waiting. In due course, this paper argues that Beckett's recurring motifs such as carrots, turnips, and chicken bones are a balance between something needed and something pointless. It is explored as a strong symbol of the characters' deep anxiety and their unstable connection to reality. Through an analysis of, seemingly mundane elements this paper emphasizes the existential struggles of the play's characters, encapsulating themes of repetition, futility, and the search for meaning in a world devoid of purpose. This study argues that food in *Waiting for Godot* transcends its immediate utility, becoming a poignant emblem of humanity's enduring quest for meaning in an indifferent universe. Through this lens, the paper seeks to illuminate Beckett's profound commentary on survival, despair, and the poetic absurdity of existence.

Keywords: Scarcity, Struggle, Survival, Monotony, *Waiting for Godot*.

Introduction

Food is a recurring motif in literature, depicted by various authors in diverse ways. It often serves as a symbol or theme, portraying different aspects of human existence and emotion. In Samuel Beckett's absurdist play *Waiting for Godot*, food functions as an impactful theme of scarcity, the struggle for survival, and the fundamental plight of human beings, embodying the playwright's deep commentary on hope, despair, and the tediousness of existence. As a form of literature, the play serves as a medium for exploring the psychological thoughts of its characters, with their dialogues shaping and expressing their inner turmoil. The play's minimalist approach magnifies the significance of even the smallest references to food, such as carrots, turnips, and chicken bones. These simple items go beyond their basic role as nourishment and are transformed into symbols of survival and the essential emptiness of the character's existence. The small amounts of food show that the characters are struggling not just physically but emotionally and psychologically too. Their hunger for identity makes them wait endlessly for meaning or salvation, which they hope will come with Godot. The repetitive interactions about food express the boredom of their life. Estragon gradually becomes dissatisfied with carrots which displays declining hope due to ceaseless waiting. Samuel Beckett skillfully balances the tension between food's necessity for life and



its symbolic pointlessness, illustrating human endurance in the face of a seemingly unconcerned world in *Waiting for Godot*.

Aims and Objectives

This research paper aims to examine how Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* addresses the significant themes of lack of resources, the fight to survive, and the struggles of being human. The researcher's objective is to evaluate ideas of hope, despair, and the absurdity of existence in the play. This research paper analyzes food as a symbol of scarcity, the struggle for survival and humanity's existential plight. By evaluating the play, the research seeks to demonstrate how present play emphasizes the fundamental needs required for survival.

Methodology

The researcher has utilized both analytical and descriptive methods in this paper. These approaches were applied to examine and explain the subject matter in depth.

About the Author

Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) was an Irish playwright, novelist, and poet, recognized as one of the most influential literary figures of the 20th century. He stands as a benchmark for many genres within drama such as expressionist, absurd and experimental. He is renowned for his contributions to the Absurdist movement, which deals with the themes of existentialism, futility, and the search for meaning in an often ambiguous world. Beckett's works are characterized by their striking, minimalist settings and depictions of characters grappling with profound uncertainty and despair. His iconic play, '*Waiting for Godot*' (1953), exemplifies the themes of triviality and boredom inhuman life, suffering, meaninglessness of life and exploitation. The situation of the tramps is an allegory of human life.

Literature Review

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting For Godot* centres around two characters, Vladimir and Estragon, who wait endlessly and seemingly without purpose for, 'Godot', who or what 'Godot' might be the audience never gets to know. This ceaseless waiting serves as a powerful symbol for the human condition and the everlasting quest for meaning in an ambiguous and unresponsive universe. The plot lacks action and there is no progress, just like the famous dialogue of Beckett's protagonist Estragon, 'Nobody comes, nobody goes', (Act I, pg. 30) other than the dialogues and brief episodes of minor diversions. Pozzo and his servant Lucky appear in the scene. Pozzo eats and delivers a lecture on philosophy to Vladimir and Estragon. Beckett captures the endless tedious nature of human experience itself, where actions do not always have a goal or meaning. The play ends with the same sense of meaninglessness. Vladimir and Estragon decide to leave and they do not move. After all, there is no other place to go, as the play has demonstrated. With all these explicit themes, one should consider the symbolism of food in the play. What does food represent in *Waiting for Godot*? The key themes related to food are discussed in detail, highlighting its symbolism and significance in the play. Researchers have abundantly analyzed Beckett's absurdist approach and themes of existentialism. Within this framework, food emerges as a significant motif, reflecting both the physical and symbolic dimensions of human existence. Lawrence Graver (2004) highlights the symbolic weight of ordinary objects, including food, in Beckett's work. He connects this motif to humanity's broader search for meaning in a world that appears careless of their needs. For him, Vladimir and Estragon are crafty enough, but at the same time they run out of words and images, and so 'they have to turn back to the old stand-bys, Gogo's (Estragon) boots and Didi's (Vladimir) radishes and turnips.' (p. 58). John



Peter (1987) calls it a closed play in which the audience is deprived of actions that exist outside the play, Vladimir's carrot exists in a vacuum, for it tells us virtually nothing about the character's background or their situation, he admits that '*Waiting for Godot* may turn out to be the single most important event in the theatre since Aeschylus'. Beckett's recurring food motifs bridge the tangible and the metaphysical, portraying the struggle for survival alongside the human quest for purpose. However, the recurring motif of food in *Waiting for Godot* transcends its literal role, symbolizing the fragility of hope, the cruelty of dependency, and the absurdity of life. Beckett uses food as a central metaphor in his play which encompasses the existential struggles of his characters.

Symbol of Scarcity

Food is presented as scarce in *Waiting for Godot*, symbolizing the physical and emotional deprivation experienced by the protagonists, Vladimir and Estragon. They frequently express hunger and talk about food but their access to food is minimal, reflecting their barren existence and lack of sustenance both literal and metaphorical as in the lines below:

Estragon (violently): I'm hungry!

Vladimir: Do you want a carrot? (Vladimir rummages in his pockets, takes a turnip and gives it to Estragon who takes a bite out of it. Angrily.)

Estragon: It's a turnip!

Vladimir: Oh pardon! I could have sworn it was a carrot. (He brings out a carrot and gives it to Estragon.) There, dear fellow. (Estragon wipes the carrot on his sleeve and begins to eat it.) Make it last, that's the end of them. (pp. 15,16) [2]

This shows how limited choices of existence have been imposed on them. The scarcity of food highlights the absence of comfort and certainty that the characters face in their fight for survival in the world. One of the emblematic instances of food in the play is Estragon eating a carrot. As he chews, he reflects on its flavour, noting that it starts sweet but becomes increasingly bitter. This simple act takes on a deeper symbolic meaning. The carrot's initial sweetness exemplifies fleeting moments of satisfaction or hope, but its gradual loss of flavour mirrors the characters' diminishing optimism and occurrence of despair. While eating the carrot Estragon remembers that he has asked something to Vladimir, when Vladimir demands a repetition of the question Estragon says, "I've forgotten. (He looks at the carrot appreciatively, and dangles it between his finger and thumb.) I'll never forget this carrot. (He sucks the end of it meditatively.) Ah yes, now I remember. (His mouth full, vacuously.) We're not tied?" (p. 16) [2].

This reflects the effects of malnutrition, leading to their forgetfulness. Beckett speaks more through the actions of his characters than words. Their actions also reveal how minimal food increases its value, as seen when Estragon sucks on the end of a carrot. Their constant struggle to find meaning and fulfilment in an uncertain world is highlighted in the play. Estragon's remarks about the carrot emphasize their preoccupation with insignificant details and distract attention from the emptiness of waiting. The act of eating is a fundamental necessity of humans, which serves as a symbol of their larger existential struggle. The carrot is not just nourishment but a momentary relief, its scarcity reverberating the larger absence of meaning in their lives. Beckett uses the characters' immersion in the simplest of foods to highlight their deprivation and the absurdity of their condition. Another example is Pozzo's meal, where he consumes chicken while Lucky, his servant, receives the scraps. Pozzo drinks wine from his bottle enjoys his chicken voraciously and throws the bones on the ground, after



sucking them. Estragon stares at the bones thrown by Pozzo, illustrating how even a useless thing can satisfy the people who are deprived of necessities.

Estragon (*timidly*): Please Sir...

Pozzo: What is it, my good man?

Estragon: Er... you've finished with the... er... you don't need the... er... bones, Sir?
(p. 21) [2].

This highlights the discrimination between rich and poor and the way the deprived have to struggle for survival. Pozzo directs Estragon to Lucky and sarcastically says, "but in theory the bones go to the carrier." These words emphasize inequality and the dehumanizing effects of scarcity. Food in this context serves as a symbol of power and privilege, with Pozzo taking pleasure in his abundance while Lucky remains subservient in his despair. The scattered references to food in the play symbolize the barrenness of the characters' world. The simplicity and inadequacy of the food items reflect the play's overarching themes of longing, futility, despair and the cyclical nature of waiting. They try to find ways to endure uncertainty and hopelessness. With no abundance or diversity, food serves as a constant reminder of their lack and deprivation, emphasizing the themes of survival and futility. In *Waiting for Godot*, food is more than nourishment; it is a poignant symbol of the characters' fragile existence and their never-ending search for meaning in a desolate and uncertain world. Beckett uses these limited mentions not just to depict physical scarcity but to explore the existential hunger that defines the human condition.

Food for Survival

Pozzo's luxury is shown in a lavish meal of chicken and wine, followed by smoking a pipe, which symbolizes privilege, while Lucky's lack of nutrition highlights the degrading impact of reliance on others. This reliance on one another for basic nutrition and direction is filled with cruelty and imbalance, mirroring the existential challenge of finding meaning, when survival is the only business. The concept of giving and taking food is central to their interaction, which emphasizes the dissonance between their need for nourishment and the emptiness they feel. This struggle for sustenance goes beyond the physical; it represents the characters' desperate search for meaning and purpose in a reckless world. The act of gnawing on chicken bones highlights Pozzo's inhumane behaviour, as he, unwilling to be denied, angrily allows Estragon to chew the bones instead of Lucky:

Pozzo: Do you want them or don't you? (*Silence of Lucky. To Estragon.*) They're yours. (*Estragon makes a dart at the bones, picks them up and begins to gnaw them.*) I don't like it. I've never known him to refuse a bone before. (*He looks anxiously at Lucky.*) Nice business it'd be if he fell sick on me! (*He puffs at his pipe.*)(p.p. 21,22) [2].

The relationship between Pozzo and Lucky is that of a master and a slave, Pozzo offers food and Lucky serves him as a subjugated recipient. This interaction emphasizes the broader fight for resources, where survival is shaped by power. Food has become a tool of control in their relationship which mirrors power dynamics and the unequal distribution of resources. Vladimir tries to protest the way Pozzo treats Lucky, by saying that to treat a man like that is a 'scandal', but it doesn't help the situation. The symbols of food, radishes and carrots are repeated in the next Act too. Estragon and Vladimir are involved in similar conversations:

Vladimir: Would you like a radish? (Vladimir fumbles in his pockets, finds nothing but turnips, finally brings out a radish and hands it to Estragon who examines it, and sniffs it).



Estragon: It's black!

Vladimir: It's a radish.

Estragon: I only like the pink ones, you know that!

Vladimir: Then give it back to me. (p. 52) [2].

The way Vladimir puts back the carrot when not in need, shows the deficiency they face. Actions and words, both are repetitive in the Second Act. This everlasting, worthless conversation intensifies the futility of their existence. Their actions such as waiting, asking and eating, are repetitive which displays never never-ending hardship of human life in the face of an indifferent universe. Their struggle for food becomes symbolic of the broader human condition: an endless, cruel fight for survival, meaning, and connection in a world devoid of clear answers. In this struggle, there is no resolution, one can find only the persistent efforts amidst relentless ambiguity. Through different actions in the play, food is represented as a symbol of the struggle that goes on for survival, sustaining the body and fulfilling the basic physiological need for nourishment. This highlights not only physical scarcity but also the inability of Vladimir and Estragon to escape the cyclical nature of their struggles, as the last sentence of the play suggests, 'They do not move.' (p. 70) [2]

Conclusion

In conclusion, Samuel Beckett used food not only as a basic need to stay alive, but also as a profound symbol of deprivation, scarcity, and the struggle for survival in his absurd play, *Waiting for Godot*. Through the recurring motifs of carrots, turnips, radishes and chicken and squeezed bones, Beckett embodies the contradiction of food as both a literal and metaphorical element, which reflects the characters' physical hunger and their deeper, psychological longing for meaning in an unconcerned universe. The play's sparse setting displays the significance of even the minute references to food, which become powerful symbols of the monotony, futility, and despair inherent in the human condition. He invites the audience to reflect on the depth and complexity of the play. The lack of food represents the social structures that sustain inequality and shortage, leaving some people struggling to survive. Beckett has successfully depicted the miserable reality of his characters and has given prominence to the larger themes of resource inequality and the ongoing, often pointless, search for meaning. Beckett's short dialogues highlighted the delicate balance between survival and the inherent absurdity of life, where even the most basic of needs are ruined by the emptiness of their existence. Food serves as a reminder of the precariousness of life and the hope for something better let it be salvation, a sense of purpose, or simply survival. Finally, food goes beyond just being something practical or necessary, serving as a poignant metaphor for humanity's enduring struggle to find meaning in a world that offers none. Through this lens, one can recognize a powerful commentary on survival, despair, and the absurdity of existence, leaving a lasting impression on the philosophical exploration of the human condition.

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Untold Hunger of Dalits in *The Prisons We Broke*

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Abstract

The engagement of themes such as Food in Literature is often related to marginalization theory. It should be utilized to justify the theme of food and social class. The Prisons We Broke, a poignant autobiographical narrative by Baby Kamble, elucidates the suffering and hardship of Dalits in Maharashtra, knuckling particularly on food and social class. Kamble, a Dalit activist inspired by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, portrays her community's struggles with social class, starvation and the indignities perpetuated by Brahminical dominance. Through this lens, this memoir reclaims Dalit identity and exposes the socio-political systems perpetuating inequality using their food culture.

Keywords: Dalits, *The Prisons We Broke*, Hunger, Food, Social Class.

Introduction

Food literature is a genre that investigates the significance of food in shaping identity, memory and community. Food literature delves into bigger themes such as tradition, globalization, sustainability and food politics through narrative. It combines the visceral joys of eating with deeper life observations, creating a rich and intriguing writing field. Dalit literature has served as an influential medium for conveying the living reality of underprivileged people, as well as their food culture, and Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* is a pioneer work in this tradition. Kamble describes food as a potent metaphor for both suffering and survival. The story highlights the social indignities that Dalits experience when acquiring food, standing a distance away from the village shop, receiving products thrown at them, and leaving money on thresholds to prevent 'polluting' the upper castes. Even the fleeting moments of joy during the month of Ashadh, when families could clean their homes and prepare meals, stand in sharp contrast to the relentless starvation endured throughout the year. Yet, *The Prisons We Broke* is not merely a story of suffering; it is a narrative of defiance and hope. Through Kamble's unflinching exploration of hunger, caste and gender, she offers a profound critique of systemic inequality while celebrating the resilience of Dalits, making her memoir a vital testament to their untold struggles and enduring spirit.

Untold Hunger of Dalits

In *The Prisons We Broke*, Baby Kamble vividly portrays the sugar shovel of the culture of the Mahar community, highlighting their resilience and capacity to preserve joy amidst systemic oppression. Despite being subjected to caste-based discrimination, the Dalit community managed to create fleeting moments of happiness and unity. These moments were not grand or extravagant but were deeply rooted in their traditions, rituals, and the strength of their collective spirit. One such instance is the month of Ashadh, which Kamble describes as a rare period of relief and celebration for the Mahar community. She writes, "Ashadh was a blessing for their starved bodies—when the tongue was satiated with the tastes it loved". During this time, families came together to clean their homes, polish their huts, and prepare meals, which brought a sense of normalcy and dignity to their otherwise



harsh lives. Though brief, these celebrations became a vital source of emotional and cultural sustenance, offering moments of happiness amidst relentless struggles.

Food, a central part of their culture, transcended its physical purpose and became a symbol of resilience. Women played a pivotal role in preparing meals and upholding these rituals despite the scarcity of resources. She illustrates their efforts, stating, “Women would clean their huts, polish the walls and floors with dung, and arrange their broken pots in a pyramid, one on top of the other”. These acts, though humble, reflected their determination to maintain cultural pride and solidarity. Spiritual practices also played an essential role in their cultural identity. Festivals and offerings to goddesses like Mari Aai provided a connection to their traditions, even in the face of adversity. Kamble reveals how these rituals became opportunities to reaffirm their sense of belonging and shared history. Though heavily influenced by Brahminical impositions, these practices retained a unique flavour shaped by their experiences and struggles. Amid all this, Dalit women emerged as the custodians of culture, preserving their identity and values while facing both caste and gender oppression. Their resourcefulness and endurance ensured that even in times of deprivation, the community could find reasons to come together and celebrate. Kamble’s account illustrates how their culture acted as a refuge, providing sweetness and solace in an otherwise bitter existence. Through her narrative, Kamble sheds light on the subtle yet significant ways the Mahar community preserved their cultural essence. The "sugar shovel" of their traditions, rooted in small joys and collective strength, stands as a testament to their resilience and refusal to be defined solely by their suffering.

Baby Kamble uses food as a powerful symbol and as a ladle of suffering to highlight the systemic oppression and dehumanization endured by the Dalit community. Hunger is not only a physical condition in Kamble’s narrative but also a recurring reminder of the pervasive caste-based inequalities that defined the lives of the Mahars. Denied access to resources, Dalits lived on the fringes of society, where starvation was a daily reality and food scarcity underscored their socio-political marginalization. Kamble vividly portrays the Maharwada’s grinding poverty, where hunger dominated every aspect of life. She writes, “If eleven months of the year were together a horrible curse on the Mahars, Ashadh was an antidote. When else could they experience moments of joy and comfort?” This statement captures the harshness of Dalit life, where even a single month of adequate food and minor comforts was considered a blessing.

The humiliation of acquiring food is another crucial aspect of Kamble’s exploration of suffering. Dalits faced systemic indignities when attempting to purchase food, often treated as untouchables even in these basic interactions. Kamble recounts how Dalit women had to maintain physical distance from shopkeepers,

The shopkeeper would come out and, from a distance, throw the things into her pallav... She would then respectfully keep her money on the threshold. That of course did not pollute him! (*The Prisons We Broke*, p. 26)

This act of throwing items instead of handing them over underscores the daily discrimination Dalits faced, reducing their humanity to an object of pollution. Food transactions became symbols of their social exclusion and reinforced their subordinate status within the caste hierarchy. The Impact of hunger on children is depicted in heartbreaking detail, emphasizing its physical and emotional toll. Kamble describes malnourished children, writing, “Children up to nine years of age would look as thin as sticks... snot dripping from their noses in green gooey lines”. This vivid imagery highlights how food deprivation was not just a temporary hardship but a marker of intergenerational suffering, “They had to fill their stomachs with



thorns to stay alive.” Hunger stunted their physical growth, diminished their vitality, and reflected the deep neglect of an entire community. She critiques the role of caste and patriarchal structures in perpetuating food scarcity. Dalit women, who were burdened with ensuring their families’ survival, bore the brunt of hunger’s psychological and physical impact. Despite their tireless efforts, they were subjected to both societal scorn and domestic oppression, reflecting how caste and gender intersected to compound their suffering. Through these raw and unflinching accounts, Kamble transforms food from a basic necessity into a symbol of systemic oppression, humiliation, and survival. *The Prisons We Broke* not only narrates the Dalit community’s struggles with hunger but also critiques the broader socio-political structures that deny them dignity. Food becomes a metaphor for the denial of equality and justice, making it central to Kamble’s powerful critique of caste oppression.

In *The Prisons We Broke*, Baby Kamble intricately chronicles the transformation of the Dalit community under the influence of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s revolutionary teachings as a teaspoon of sprouting hope. One significant aspect of this transformation was the Dalit rejection of eating the flesh of dead animals, a practice imposed upon them by the caste hierarchy. This rejection symbolized a larger struggle for dignity, self-respect, and hope for a better future, breaking free from oppressive traditions that defined their caste identity.

The eating of dead animals was historically tied to the caste system, where Dalits, particularly the Mahars, were forced into roles that Brahminical society deemed impure. She describes how this practice dehumanized them, reducing their existence to a state of servitude and indignity. She vividly narrates the lives of the Mahars, highlighting the grim reality of handling carcasses:

These strings were our holy threads, the markers of our birth, our caste—like the janeu of the Brahmins. These strings had to be there because on these strings we would hang the intestines of dead animals in order to dry them!” (*The Prisons We Broke*, p. 21)

This gruesome reality was normalized within their community as a result of centuries of systemic oppression. However, with Ambedkar’s teachings, the community began to recognize the link between such practices and their subjugation. Ambedkar emphasized that eating the flesh of dead animals was not a choice but a condition imposed by the caste system to reinforce the “untouchable” status of Dalits. Rejecting this practice became a symbol of resistance against caste-based exploitation.

Thus did our Maharwada join the Ambedkar movement. Everybody took an oath never to eat dead animals and the atmosphere resounded with the slogan, ‘Bhimraoki jai!’ From that day onwards the Mahars of Veergaon stopped eating dead animals. Even today when people come together, the memories of this incident conies alive. (*The Prisons We Broke*, p. 76)

Kamble illustrates how Ambedkar’s message instilled a sense of hope and agency among Dalits. By refusing to eat the flesh of dead animals, they reclaimed their humanity and challenged the societal norms that perpetuated their marginalization. She writes about the awakening of the Mahar community, where individuals began to critically evaluate and abandon practices that degraded them. This shift was not just about dietary changes but about asserting their dignity and striving for equality. Moreover, rejecting the consumption of dead animals symbolized a break from the psychological chains of caste. It was a step towards reimagining their identity, moving away from practices that Brahminical society associated with pollution and impurity. Kamble emphasizes the pride and determination that emerged within the community as they sought to redefine themselves on their own terms. This



transformation marked the beginning of their journey towards self-respect and socio-political empowerment.

Through her narrative, Kamble conveys how this rejection became a beacon of hope for Dalits. It signified their refusal to be confined to the roles assigned by the caste system and their commitment to forging a future of dignity and equality. By avoiding the flesh of dead animals, Dalits not only broke free from an imposed cultural burden but also challenged the systemic structures that sought to dehumanize them. In doing so, they reclaimed their agency, strengthened their identity, and fueled their aspirations for liberation. This act, though seemingly small, became a profound statement of defiance and hope, encapsulating the essence of the Dalit struggle as depicted in *The Prisons We Broke*. Kamble's work immortalizes this transformation, highlighting the courage and resilience of a community determined to overcome centuries of oppression.

Conclusion

The Prisons We Broke intertwines food and literature to show a vivid picture of Dalit life, using food as both a symbol of systemic oppression and a medium of resistance. Kamble's narrative highlights how food or the lack thereof is central to the Dalit experience, representing not only physical hunger but also the social and emotional starvation inflicted by caste-based discrimination. Through depictions of rituals, festivals, and survival strategies, Kamble elevates food beyond its material role, transforming it into a symbol of resilience and community spirit. Whether it is the fleeting joy of Ashadh or the rejection of consuming dead animals, food becomes a powerful narrative tool, illustrating both the dehumanization endured by Dalits and their courageous fight for dignity and identity. Kamble's work exemplifies how food, as a literary motif, can illuminate struggles for equality and justice, making her narrative a cornerstone of food literature that bridges personal experience with collective emancipation.

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Food and the Fragmented Self in Aimee Bender's *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake*

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Abstract

Food has been portrayed in literature to convey the character's intentions, to add details to the setting, and to reveal hidden messages. It acts as a symbol which carries a profound meaning, how it is served, how it is dined or how it tastes. The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake brings out the mood in which the food is cooked and this power is bestowed upon nine-year-old Rose. She starts to interact with food metaphorically as she starts to taste the cooks' emotions. She feels alienated from her family and surroundings as she is not able to connect with others or talk about what she is going through. Food symbolizes her separation from others and the young adult burden in the postmodern family setting. Stress eating and self-starvation are the two extremes teens push themselves to cope with pressure, depression, anxiety, breaks and so on. Food has become a funnel through which the negative energy is released. Aimee Bender's novel personifies the food in which people vent their frustration as the food starts to show the feelings of humans who make them. Her novel highlights the importance of food in daily life and shows a healthy balance between food and emotions. As food is consumed emotions are also consumed and it shapes people's identity as food helps in physical body to grow. Each needs different kinds of food for their mental and physical growth which is vital in the postmodern/ tech generation.

Keywords: Food, Identity, Emotion, Symbol, Postmodern, Teenage.

The idea of family from the primitive age to now has been people who live and share food under the same roof. Food plays a significant role in forming a family. Every family becomes a small part of society. Therefore food has become the smallest unit of the biggest world, such food is symbolized in literature to convey emotions, sentiments and cultural practices. In the novel, *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake*, the nine-year-old Rose starts to develop a strange power during her ninth birthday which makes her aware of the cooks' moods and emotions while making the food. Rose initially struggles to accept her new power but eventually, she begins to cope with her situation. Later in the novel, some other characters also possess some set of unique powers which make them more unique and special.

Aimee Bender brings out a dystopian family separated from one another but shares a meal as a family. As they are separated from one another they are estranged from each other life. Rose starts to understand the family's dysfunction and starts to mature from a young age. Rose's mother, Lane at the end of the novel says, "Sometimes, she said, mostly to herself, I feel I do not know my children." (310) It is strange that Rose's mother till the end of the novel does not know the power her daughter and offers to bake a cake as they did when Rose was eight. Lane opines, "Maybe she'd make me a lemon chocolate cake next time, but I put a hand on her shoulder gently and said I didn't like lemon chocolate cake so much anymore. But you used to!" (310) Rose considers herself to be an alienated or outcast person from her family. She feels alone in the familiar family environment on her ninth



birthday. From then onwards, she moves forward with her life all alone. Her ability to taste the food along with the cook's feelings makes her special, but for her, it seems more like a bane than a boon. Her longings to be a part of her family resulted in nothing but vainness. She tries to mingle with her brother (Joseph), which only increases the gap between them further. Maybe her actions resulted in negative rather than positive progress in their relationship. Her desire to gain ground can be a reason for her alienation, but Rose also tries to be less noticeable, which results in being forgotten.

Youth in the post-modern world tend to become addicted or consume less quantity of food because of various reasons such as maintaining their body structure, due to depression, overthinking, no parents to oversee their children's daily food routine etc.... The protagonist Rose as a youngster consumes less homemade foods and eats factory-produced foods that are junk foods because of her magical gift of tasting the cook's feelings while cooking the food. She is afraid to know people's emotions and their true feelings. To know one's real nature through food causes trauma that Rose suffers throughout her life. Food becomes an essential part of life and it should be made with utmost care and dedication as food becomes poisonous through cooking is conveyed through the novel, *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake*.

The feeling of alienation in a familiar environment can be considered possible when a person's true feelings are neglected by the family and surroundings. Rose feels alienated when her words mean nothing but just some chit-chat. At dinner time, Rose's mother avers, "Rose thought I missed a part, Mom said. I didn't say that, I said, clutching my plate, cake gummy and bad in my mouth. No way, said Joe. It's complete. Thank you, she said, blushing. We all have different tastes, honey, she said, rubbing my hair. It's not what I meant, I said. Mom." (17) Her parents' negligence of Rose's words made her grieve that something is wrong with her and starts to keep her opinions and thoughts to herself, which reduces much of her communication with her family, leading her to feel alienated. Rather than mentioning it as not being able to understand, it is more like one does not want to understand their children's minds as they are busy dealing with their affairs, such as being on time for work, having secrets and trying to hide them, and personal problems.

Food became an open secret. Every meal can reveal any information she wants or not. Finally Rose starts to eat emotion rather than food according to her capacity to hold on for the day. Food starts to consume Rose which is vice versa. She starts to accept her power as she starts to work in a restaurant. Rose moves out of her home to lead a deserving life for her age as a food analyst. As she grows up, she learns more about emotions and starts to accept new emotions. She became mature at a young age, buried her childhood and assumed a new role which her fragmented self thought her to be. Rose wants to be the vibrant self which makes her unique from her brother, Joseph, the genius. In *Psychoanalytic Criticism* Rob Lapsley encloses, "As no human being can ever fully coincide with an idea, in so far as the child imagines it coincides with this ideal it is lost to misrecognition: the child's 'self-understanding' is a form of misunderstanding." (72 – 73)

When Rose is trying hard to protect her façade, she forgets that new identities can be created for her, which leads to her separation from their family. Rob Lapsley talks about the possibility of embracing new identities in *Psychoanalytic Criticism* by stating, "As the subject never coincides with a signifier, resistance is always possible; interpellation can be refused." (76)

Aimee Bender's *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake* exposes clusters of different emotions of people. The novel has the characteristic of evoking the readers' emotions as well. This novel consists of many themes, especially food, magic realism, supernatural



elements, psychology, alienation, separation, disoriented family, self-referentiality, unstable identity, young adults' roles and lifestyle, contradictory or ironical behaviour throughout the story and helps in knowing and accepting post-modernism. By analysing Bender's novel from a post-modern perspective, the study proves that identity is a fake concept as every character in the novel clings to different identities assumed by themselves to form an organised family but in the process, the idea of an organised family not only ends up collapsing but also their fake identities consume everyone in the house. The process of revealing the actual feelings and personality happens in different and many circumstances. Especially through magic, supernatural elements and self-understanding. Through the element of surprise, Bender creates a situation in which her characters are exposed to their superhuman powers. The real person inside the pretended façade glows much brighter than the masks they use in the social world. These typical masks not only deceive others but also themselves.

The psychological and emotional states of people differ as their inner form is revealed through the ability of Rose to taste the emotions of people through their cooking. By mingling food into a magical element in her coming-of-age novels like *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake*, the novelist brings out the young children's mindset at their prime age and the importance of food and the significance of the person who cooks the food who is being forgotten in the materialistic world. The cook's emotions are heightened in their cooked food through which they express themselves.

The symbolic representation used by Bender adds score to the better understanding of the readers. By giving magical significance to human senses like taste (Rose), touch (Joseph) and smell (grandfather), Bender awakens the blended senses of readers who forget to use their God-given senses because they are living in a hurry-burry world. She also gives a warning to parents about their children who are young and on the brink of the transition to their next stage in life about their psychological changes and their tendency to seek attention from their surroundings, either through family or friends. Children who become adults assume roles that are not meant for them. During the period of transition, fragmented families only become sources for their imagination to be heightened to the next level and they assume the roles of adults, which results in different problems for their future. By highlighting the assumed identity and the alienation and separation that occurred in the growing process with magic realism their level of understanding is specified using food as a medium of knowing.

Bender's writing gives an awakening call to all sorts of readers about the adulthood period and its importance and implications in the process of their growth are brought out in this paper. The two unattended children, Joseph and his little sister Rose, superhuman powers are personified as the change in body and psychology of children who become adults and the handling of their abilities in two different ways indicates their power to comprehend the situations and their decisions, which leads to separation as they assume the role that society allows them. The desperation for attention leads to maintaining a false identity and ends up in a disparate fragmented family. The study highlights the instability of human life and helps to understand the need to prioritize the children in families. Accepting the children with their merits and demerits is the best thing the parents can do to support them.

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An Analysis of the Impacts of Climate Change on Food Production in *Gold Fame Citrus* and *Memory Of Water*

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Abstract

Climate change significantly impacts global food systems, causing reduced crop yields, water scarcity, soil degradation, pest and disease spread, and strain on fisheries and livestock. These disruptions disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, increasing hunger, malnutrition, and food inequality. Urgent efforts are needed to create resilient agricultural systems and ensure equitable food access. Gold Fame Citrus by Claire Vaye Watkins depicts the drought and the devastating effects of climate change on California, transforming the once thriving agricultural landscape into a wasteland, causing water scarcity and societal inequality. The novel highlights the collapse of traditional food systems and the reliance on artificial or processed foods. In Memory of Water by Emmi Itäranta explores the water scarcity crisis caused by climate change, affecting food production and societal stability. Freshwater becomes scarce, limiting traditional crop production and leading to widespread reliance on synthetic or rationed food. The novel emphasizes the fragility of food systems and the unequal distribution of resources, resulting in growing social tensions and inequality, as people struggle to adapt to a life of survival rather than abundance. This proposed research paper critically analyses the impacts of climate change on food production and scarcity in the select works.

Keywords: Climate Change, Drought, Water Scarcity, Food Production, Survival.

Introduction

Food literature uses different literary narratives to examine the cultural, societal, and individual meanings of food. It explores how relationships, identity, and traditions are shaped by food, frequently reflecting more general contexts like memory, class, gender, and power. Food functions as a metaphor for sustenance, community, and tradition in both fiction and nonfiction works. It also provides a prism to examine social injustices and environmental concerns. Food literature relates the personal act of eating to the intricacies of human experience and global structures, from historical details of culinary customs to contemporary stories about food security and sustainability. By profound effects on the agricultural industry, food safety, and human well-being, climate change has become one of the biggest challenges to the world's food production. The global food supply is under stress as a result of traditional farming methods being disturbed by rising temperatures, changing weather patterns, and an increase in the occurrence of catastrophic weather events. Crop yields are among the most immediate effects of climate change. Staple crops like wheat, rice, and maize, which are the foundation of food worldwide, can be hindered by rising temperatures. This problem is made worse by droughts and irregular rains, which limit the amount of water available for irrigation. On the other hand, heavy rains and floods can harm crops, erode soil, and interfere with planting schedules, as a result of the combined consequences, agricultural



productivity declines, endangering the affordability and availability of food. Fish and livestock are also severely impacted. While acidification and temperature changes in the water disturb marine ecosystems and cause dwindling fish populations, heat stress lowers the productivity and health of animals. Communities that rely on fishing and farming for their livelihoods and protein intake are especially impacted by these effects. The pests and diseases flourish in warmer regions and climate change has accelerated their spread, harming animals and crops. This issue worsens existing food production issues and increases the use of chemical pesticides, which raises health and environmental problems. Not every hierarchy of people is equally affected by climate change. In developing nations, vulnerable populations are adversely affected, especially those who depend on sustenance farming. Existing inequalities are widened as hunger and malnutrition are made worse by rising food costs and decreased supply. An urgent action is needed to address how climate change is affecting food production. It is essential to make investments in water management, sustainable farming methods, and climate-resilient crops. It is equally important for nations to work together to minimize emissions of greenhouse gases and modify food systems to meet changing environmental demands. Humanity can reduce the hazards to food production and guarantee a more sustainable and safe future by acting effectively.

The dystopian novel *Gold Fame Citrus* by Claire Vaye Watkins takes place in a near-future California that has been devastated by climate change. Due to severe drought, the state is now a desolate wasteland dominated by the Amargosa Dune Sea, making access to water and cultivation impossible. Luz and Ray, a young couple fighting to make it in this dry environment, are followed as they deal with the harsh realities of societal collapse, displacement, and scarcity. The book examines issues of resource inequality, environmental deterioration, and survival while criticizing humankind's unsustainable behaviours and their effects on the environment. *Gold Fame Citrus* is a cautionary story and a meditation on resiliency in the face of ecological devastation, told through rich characters and striking imagery. In Emmi Itäranta's dystopian novel *Memory of Water*, freshwater has become a scarce and highly restricted resource in a world devastated by climate change. Scarcity, cultural decline, and the ethical challenges of surviving in a world that is deteriorating environmentally are all problems covered in the novel. *Memory of Water* is a silent but powerful accusation of exploiting resources and climate inaction that explores humanity's connection with nature and the serious effects of environmental neglect.

Review of the Literature

The review of the literature includes Wheeler and Von Braun (2013) in the journal article titled '*Climate Change Impacts on Food Security*' states that the availability of food and crop output may be impacted by climate change, which could impede attempts to reduce famine. The stability of the food supply may be threatened by short-term fluctuations. Although the effects on specific regions are less obvious, climate unpredictability may make food insecurity worse in areas that are already at risk. Development in mitigation and adaptation efforts is required for an ecologically conscious food system, as food access and utilization may be indirectly impacted.

Tirado et al (2010) in a research article *Climate change and food safety: A review* views on the production, consumption, and transportation phases of the food chain are all affected by climate change in terms of food safety risks. Food safety can also be impacted by variables like temperature, precipitation, harsh weather, ocean warming, and how pollutants are transported. This essay addresses the possible effects of climate change on food



contamination and makes the case for the necessity of international collaboration in the creation and application of adaptation plans.

The objective of this research paper critically analyze and trace the impacts and effects of climate change on food production in *Gold Fame Citrus* and *Memory of Water*.

Impact of Climate Change on Food Production

Climate change is a major factor in the breakdown of food production systems in both Claire Vaye Watkins's *Gold Fame Citrus* and Emmi Itäranta's *Memory of Water*, which depict a future in which environmental deterioration has changed how people relate to resources, survival, and equity. The novels explore the consequences of water scarcity, the loss of agriculture, and the societal divisions that arise when food production is no longer sustainable through their vivid and dystopian settings. These stories emphasize the social, psychological, and ethical aspects of surviving in a world of scarcity in addition to the physical effects of climate change. California is the setting of *Gold Fame Citrus* and it has turned into a desolate desert dominated by the Amargosa Dune Sea due to extreme drought. The agricultural landscape's collapse serves as a metaphor for how vulnerable humans are to stable climatic conditions for food production. Because the lack of water deprives the earth of its life-sustaining force, the climatic catastrophe makes farming impossible. Communities are compelled to rely on artificial food replacements and government-managed supply schemes because crops cannot grow and livestock cannot survive. "There's too much hurt in the world to be avoided. More than enough for everyone." (Watkins 40) The region's socioeconomic structure is also shattered by the interruption of food production, as thousands of people are forced to relocate, giving rise to climate refugees. The unequal distribution of power and resources during times of crisis is highlighted by the societal inequalities that resulted from this collapse. The story presents a sobering image of the results of ecological neglect by criticizing the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources and the arrogance of human ambitions to govern nature.

Memory of Water, on the other hand, examines a future in which food production and access are directly impacted by water scarcity, which has emerged as the defining crisis. The novel, which is set in a future Scandinavia, depicts a society in which authoritarian powers strictly regulate freshwater, rendering conventional agriculture all but impossible. Fields have become arid due to a lack of water for irrigation, and residents have had to rely on rationing and artificial food sources to survive. In addition to restricting the physical production of food, this water shortage also undermines cultural customs related to farming and group meals.

Death is water's close companion. The two cannot be separated, and neither can be separated from us, for they are what we are ultimately made of: the versatility of water, and the closeness of death. Water has no beginning and no end, but death has both. Death is both. Sometimes death travels hidden in the water, and sometimes water will chase death away, but they go together always, in the world and us. (Itäranta 56)

Noria, the main character, takes on the role of tea master, which represents the holy bond between people and water. Even nevertheless, this traditional custom becomes dangerous in a world of severe shortage, since Noria's knowledge of an illegal water spring puts her in conflict with the repressive government. When agriculture and food abundance decline, people and communities lose their independence and become reliant on rations set by the government. The way food scarcity is portrayed in the book highlights the moral challenges of surviving in such a society.



The major societal changes brought about by climate change undermining agricultural production systems are discussed in both works. In *Gold Fame Citrus*, the demise of agriculture represents the breakdown of a formerly prosperous way of life and the loss of a region's identity. A world where plenty is a thing of the past and existence depends on adjusting to harsh and dehumanizing circumstances is reflected in the dependence on artificial foods and constraints. The characters suffer greatly from the psychological effects of such a reality as they struggle with their loss of ties to the land and one another. In *Memory of Water*, the decline of traditional customs and individual liberties is linked to the lack of sustainable food systems. Food and water rationing turns into an instrument of control, exposing a glaring gap between those with and without access. By showing how the fight for food and water worsens already-existing inequities and erodes social cohesion, the novel criticizes the commodification of necessities. Both works also examine the moral and environmental ramifications of how humans interact with nature. The overuse and poor management of natural resources in *Gold Fame Citrus* are the direct cause of the ecological collapse, which serves as a warning against unbridled environmental exploitation. In *Memory of Water*, the totalitarian governments' grip over water and its privatization serves as a reminder of the consequences of putting power and profit ahead of sustainability and equity.

Conclusion

To sum up, *Gold Fame Citrus* and *Memory of Water* present moving and provocative examinations of how food production is impacted by climate change and the subsequent repercussions on society, culture, and identity. They emphasize how urgent it is to solve climate change and reconsider how humans interact with nature through their realistic dystopian settings and intensely human narratives. These texts serve as compelling calls to action, imploring us to create equitable and sustainable systems before it's over by visualizing worlds in which a lack of food and water determines existence.

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Food as a Symbol of Chinese Heritage in *The Joy Luck Club*

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Abstract

*Food plays a crucial role in literature, particularly in the context of cultural diaspora. In diaspora literature, food serves as a bridge between generations, preserving customs, traditions, and heritage. Across various literary works, food imagery is used to explore cultural identity, memory, and the blending of traditions. Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* exemplifies this by using food as a powerful symbol of the Chinese-American experience. Through culinary traditions, the novel highlights the deep bond between Chinese mothers and their American-born daughters, illustrating how food connects the past, present, and future. This paper examines how literature uses food as a narrative tool to explore themes of identity, assimilation, and cultural preservation, with a focus on *The Joy Luck Club* as a key example. The study also considers the broader role of food in English literature, analyzing how it reflects cultural experiences and societal values.*

Keywords: Culture, Food, Identity, Diaspora, Literature

Introduction

Immigrants carry their cultural identity to their new home through elements like food, traditions, and customs. In today's interconnected world, people are increasingly aware of the diverse cuisines that different cultures bring. Food serves as a reflection of cultural heritage and plays a crucial role in shaping social identities. Many immigrants use food as a means to express their uniqueness, allowing them to stand out while also preserving a connection to their roots. Safran Sceats clearly pointed out diaspora as a “product of migration” (84), a numerous characteristic was identified to fulfill to classify as diaspora. Living in a foreign land, keeping relations with Homeland, desire to keep distinct identity within the host society and a hope of return to the land of origin are the most common features of diaspora (Sceats, 84). The concept of Stuart Hall's “Third Cinema” is used to analyses the culture identity of Chinese mothers' and American born daughters. In “Culture identity and diaspora” Hall has pointed out that some immigrant people are stable in their identity whereas some people are unstable in their identity (1). In *The Joy Luck Club*, Chinese mothers are stable in their customs and culture. Though they live in America, they never fail to follow their Chinese culture. They also handed down their Chinese culture by using food as a tool and make American born daughters to realize the importance of traditional Chinese food. The significance of food attracts many contemporary literary critics like Deborah Lupton, Sarah Sceats and E.D. Huntley who have given theoretical tool to recognize the relationship between food and culture. In *Food, Consumption and the Body in Contemporary Women's Fiction*, Sarah Sceats suggest that eating is the primary activity. The main necessity for living and to maintain social relationship with others are food and culinary. As pointed out by Deborah Lupton in *Food, the Body, and the Self*, “the structuralist perspective in general is interested in the ways in which individuals' actions, values, thoughts and identities are



largely structured through social norms and expectations, which are in turn linked to the broader organization and structure of societies”(8).

Food as a Symbol of Chinese Heritage

Culture, religion, language, food habits, dress and rituals play a significant role in understanding and knowing a person in a society. The symbolic meaning behind a ritual, food habits and even a dress for a particular occasion tells a lot about a person. In this paper through food the mothers pass their Chinese cultural identity to their American born daughters. Most of Amy Tan’s novels can apply Stuart Hall’s concept of identity as a politics of positioning and identity as characterized by hybridity and heterogeneity: “Diasporic identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.... Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power” (396). Here in this novel, America gives a better place for all four mothers. They find an invisible strength in American society.

Amy Tan uses food as imagery in her novel, *The Joy Luck Club*. Human beings pass their customs and traditions from one generation to another. Each mother wants her daughter to know the power and advantage of joining the strengths of two cultures. To bring out the ethnicity and culture of Chinese society in America, Amy Tan uses food as a tool to build a bond between Chinese mothers and American-born daughters. Throughout the novel, all mothers insist their American-born daughters follow at least some part of Chinese tradition.

Food imagery connects the past, present, and future in each chapter. According to E.D. Huntley, “Food imagery plays a significant role in each separate narrative of the novel, linking past and present and future, bonding families and generations, expressing community, and providing a linguistic code that facilitates the retrieval of personal histories from oblivion”(58). Many incidents are there about food references like dinner parties, the crab feast, moon festival and the Joy Luck Club. In the history of China, they had undergone many problems like food shortage, starvation, famine and war. Due to this many people are forced to migrate to other countries. Japanese invasion has created a great disaster in this novel. Suyuan was in the situation to leave one of her twin daughters due to war. Lindo’s mother forced Lindo to marry early so that her family can have regular food. Tan brings out multiple views about food as relationship bond, food as scarcity and food as custom. Through these incidents Tan highlights the importance of foods and its necessity for the survival of human life.

In china they have a custom where neighbors join together and share their food and thoughts. All four mothers follow the same tradition in US too. They organize a community the Joy Luck, where all four mothers and daughters join together and prepare their traditional food. In dinning they discuss about their life history and make the daughters to be aware of their customs and heritage of China. The mothers are constantly aware of their daughters’ generation gap so they use dinning as a tool and built a bond among them. Cooking habits are continued in US and they consider cooking as an effective way to entertain each other. Each mother characters are familiar in certain cooking products like An-Mei has a skill to make wonton, Lindo is specialist in preparing red bean soup and Suyuan is expert in cooking sesame soup. Through their cooking skills they demonstrate the strong unity in the community.

Tan not only uses food to bring out the unity but also the conflict among mothers. Though Lindo and Suyuanis best cook, Lindo always want to shower case that she is always better than Suyuan. Linda tells Waverly that Suyuan “can only cook looking at a recipe. My



instructions are in my fingers. I know what secret ingredients to put in just by using nose” (JLC195). The crab party in this novel is an effective scene of mother and daughter togetherness. During Chinese New Year, eating a healthy crab is a sign of good luck. Whereas, June selects a defeated crab in the dinning. ““Put it back,” whispered my mother. “A missing leg is a bad sign on Chinese New Year”” (JLC 240). It shows that June’s mother always wants her daughter a best. The party become an identity compromise and formation ceremony for June and Suyuan.

The scene of Waverly, Lindo and Rich broadcast the table mannerism. Through this scene Tan demonstrate that people from different culture behave in different manner in an occasion. Rich is a son in law, here when he comes to dinning, instead of sipping wine, Rich gulps it down and instead of picking up the small portion of food, he takes big portion of his favorite dish and he ignore the dish that he doesn’t like. He ignored the favorite dish which Lindo cooks: “But before we could do so, Rich said, “You know, all it needs is a little soy sauce.” And he proceeded to pour a riverful of the salty black stuff on the platter before my mother’s horrified eyes” (JLC 197).

Tan uses Rich’s behavior at the Chinese party and Waverly’s motherresponses for that is not only to reveal the conflict of Caucasian and Chinese culture. But also, Rich’s Clumsiness was portrayed in humor sense. At the end of this novel, Rice and Waverly’s family comes to an understanding and they plan to travel to China. Tolerance and accommodation are used to maintain a healthy relationship in the novel. June said that after her mother’s death, her father hasn’t been eating properly. So, she decided to preparetheir Chinese traditional food hot bean- curd meal which she inherits from her mother. Her mother used to teach her that hot objects can heal the health and spirit. Most importantly she prepares this food because her father likes it. While preparing, she enjoys the smell of Chinese authentic flavors like ginger, scallions, and a spicy red sauce that makes her nose tingle as soon as she opens the jar. Through this incident June not only prepare Chinese food, she makes her father to realize that she inherits the Chinese heritage too. Tan uses food as an imagery and makes all stable mothers to teach their American born daughters about their Chinese culture. All mothers take their culture along with them and in search of their identity they immigrate to America due to various reasons. All four mothers are strong and stable in their culture that is the reason to follow a few of their customs in US too. As Stuart said in this novel, mothers are stable about their culture and makes their American daughters to inherit it along with American Culture. Tan uses Chinese identity as a healing factor for all the characters in this novel. In Stuart Hall’s “Third Cinema”, he discussed about culture and identity and said that identity is an unstable one. In this novel, all American daughters are in the state of confusion that to which culture they stick. Through their mothers’ advice, they follow their Chinese culture in America. It makes them to balance both the cultures. Hall discusses two positions of identity and relates it with cultural influence on the identities of immigrants.

Conclusion

Tan’s works state that some Chinese immigrants find themselves in a dilemma trying to adapt the new culture with the culture of their origin. Suyuan, An-Mei, Lindo and Yingying all want their daughters to be proud of their Chinese heritage and practice their values and traditions. When the daughters refuse, the mothers are frustrated. Identity is very often highly shaped by the place a person is born and brought up. In some circumstances, the family plays a crucial role in shaping the person’s identity and in some cases; people are



forced to accept an identity thrust upon them. By the end of this novel, all four mothers' have successfully integrated some part of their Chinese culture in their daughters'.

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A Feminist Study of Food in Select Culinary Narratives

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Abstract

*This study examines the intersection of food, culture, and gender through the lens of modern immigrant women's experiences. It delves into how food functions as a medium to explore women's roles, identities, and challenges in diverse cultural contexts. The selected works include Shoba Narayan's *Monsoon Diary: A Memoir with Recipes* (2003), Amulya Malladi's *Serving Crazy with Curry* (2007), Bharti Kirchner's *Pastries: A Novel of Desserts and Discoveries* (2009), and Sandeepa Mukherjee Datta's *Bong Mom's Cookbook* (2013). This research investigates how food habits and culinary practices reflect women's roles as wives, homemakers, and professionals, highlighting the psychological and emotional dimensions of their lives. It also explores the impact of generational shifts on food culture and the broader implications of multiculturalism, the corporate food industry, and food politics in shaping women's identities. Ultimately, this study provides insights into the intricate relationship between food literature, women's daily lives, and their socio-cultural realities.*

Keywords: Culinary Narratives, Multiculturalism, Corporate Food Industry, Food Politics.

The show of eating food seems to be a piece of breathing take in and breathe in out. It investigates culture and development in this cutting-edge world. This examination breaks down twenty-first-century ladies' food affinities and their inclinations. The Ladies' comparability in wonderful food and party food blueprints and good times are imparted in this examination paper. Regardless, the field of social assessments has begun taking a gander at how an assessment of culinary arrangements with, cooking frameworks, dietary models, recipes, and notwithstanding, shopping records can be scholastically proper. This is because parties live by neighbourly codes wherein people depend upon the rehashed execution of socially fitting culinary practices to acquire insistence inside parties and associations. Feasts set up for merriments, associations, and naming abilities, as well as dependability at home, are markers of a person's socio-social affiliations. Essentially, dietary models and models frequently uncover a person's money-related standing. With everything considered, the food we eat has socio-social importance, which up to this point, was simply inconsistently seen. Along these lines, zeroing in on food inside the field of social assessments is an appearance of unravelling the socio-social significance of food.

This evaluation ought to be noticeable as an improvement of twenty-first-century grants on culinary records. Organizing culinary stories inside the more noteworthy plan of creating as well as ladies' and social evaluations, the examination assessments Shoba Narayan's *Rainstorm Journal: A Diary with Recipes* (2003), Amulya Malladi's *Serving Insane with Curry* (2007), Bharti Kirchner's *Warmed items: A Novel of Treats and Exposures* (2009), and Sandeepa Mukherjee Datta's *Bong Mother's Cookbook* (2013). In any case, the appraisal takes a gander at the more prominent gathering of diasporic culinary stories, it also



offers a general assessment of the sub-kinds of culinary journals and culinary fiction to comprehend what the explanation of subjectivity means by the ordinary separation between life-shaping and fiction.

The concentration further appears to be all right that diasporic culinary stories are ethnographic records, yet likewise, they evaluate the socio-political settings in which they are made. At last, the evaluation needs to fan out culinary stories as spaces that give a culinary epistemology to re-read ladies' relationship with food and the kitchen. This appraisal likewise plans to look at the relationship between ladies, the kitchen, and the appearance of cooking. Cooking as a nearby appearance and the kitchen as a neighbourhood space are determinedly developed and imitated by ladies to challenge typical examinations of "the lady in the kitchen". As ladies enter paid work, the kitchen is at this point not simply a space of home life for ladies; it is one of the many spaces that they have as they continue to look for affiliation and articulation of 'self'.

This evaluation is also amped up for seeing how, by articulating their encounters into stories, ladies have moved the kitchen from a mystery circle into a public one. In this sense, the kitchen in the picked culinary stories quits being a clear genuine space. Close to the day's end, it is a space for inspecting the gendered division of work consistently connected with the kitchen. This evaluation will isolate the envisioned cooking shows in fanning out a split between the expert kitchen as a space for men and the neighbourhood kitchen as a space for ladies. Developing the continuous evaluation by Rebecca Swenson, this examination battles that the picked twenty-first-century culinary records depict ladies' characters as authority-prepared experts, food business visionaries, and food bloggers to challenge the public-private division and the gendering of the kitchen space. Consequently, this examination likewise incorporates the encounters of ladies who have fit kitchens and imparts the need to take a gander at ladies' workers working in open kitchens. So next to dissecting ladies' relationship with food in the picked diasporic culinary stories, this examination demands the class from culinary records to be more careful in its assessment of ladies' encounters. It also suggests that industrialist social orders exploit ladies' excused nearby work, by naturalizing ladies' neighbourhood fill-in as their familial responsibility. Subsequently, as examines finance managers 'multicultural' American culture, the picked stories see ladies' excused work yet strangely highlight the gendered thought about ladies' work. Much more essentially, as an assessment of finance managers, and American culture, this appraisal remembers the essential for centering for the encounters of transient, typical ladies, who are among the most actually shockingly impacted by free undertaking. Thus, the appraisal fights the need to reevaluate financially advantaged ladies' relationship with food while at the same time supplementing the need to narrative ordinary ladies' relationship with food inside money manager 'multicultural' American culture. The chosen culinary records transmit an impression of staggering texts driven by the trailblazer ladies' reliable discussions with their geological and social division. Other than the way that the outcomes of the twenty-first-century business visionary 'multicultural' American culture they survey, yet they moreover support the commoditization of ethnic culture to satisfy western perusers' long-for satisfying ethnic culture. Further, in their endeavour to evaluate the normalization of ladies' relationship with food in the corporate food industry, they similarly unimaginably naturalize ladies' neighbourhood cooking as gendered work. Accordingly, this examination plans to zero in on the different issues introduced in the picked twenty-first-century diasporic culinary stories.

Shoba Narayan's *Whirlwind Journal: A Diary with Recipes* successively records her cooperation explored through the language of food. As a diary, her story underlines the



significance of food in reviewing and rehearsing one's social legacy in another land. It shows how food connects with expert ladies to research their diasporic setting and check their vibe of character in the new land. Additionally, Narayan's work is wealthy in ethnographic subtleties of the socio-social area addresses. Made generally for American perusers, Narayan's work makes heads or tails of extensively the socio-social meaning of the practices and customs performed by her loved ones. Thus, as an ethnographic culinary diary, Narayan's story comparably memorializes her individual lived encounters as well as the encounters of the ladies of her area. Notwithstanding, Narayan's story is restricted by her social events and cis-gendered encounters, in this way frequently repeating class and bearing theories associated with Indian workers.

Sandeepa Mukherjee Datta's *Bong Mother's Cookbook* is a diasporic/ethnographic culinary diary. Datta claims that she prepares Bengali food at her home in New Jersey to give her second-age pioneer young women an illustration of the food she grew up eating. Thus, Datta states that she correspondingly clarifies food to put Bengali cooking on the general associate and addresses social hypotheses associated with the Bengali social class. Produced using her blog of a similar title, Datta's diary shows how with imaginative turns of events, food draws in ladies to rise above passing and spatial distances by articulating their personality through food on electronic stages. In that limit, Datta gives a record of how she involves Bengali food to examine her procedure for getting around a globalized, exactly progressed, 'multicultural' American culture. Regardless, as Narayan, Datta's record is restricted by her social occasion and cis-gendered encounters as a traveller.

Amulya *Disorder's Serving Insane with Curry* is the story of a youthful, upset second-age pioneer lady who utilizes food to convey her personality. Inside this culinary fiction, food arises as a figurative language for giving Devi's tangled character. As Devi battles with her impressions of character and her motivation all through day-to-day presence, food as opposed to ordinary language draws her to figure out her internal battles. Subsequently, taking a gander at a second-age Indian outsider, the story offers an evaluation of 'multicultural' American culture's inability to hold even second-age ethnic explorers in the host country. Besides, Malladi's story also offers an assessment of the gendered division of work that renders nearby cooking significant instead of imaginative. At long last, Devi's endeavour to plan hasty food by sorting out standard recipes with generally speaking decorations gives an assessment of typical considerations of character, home, and multiculturalism in twenty-first-century American culture.

Bharti Kirchner's *Cakes: A Novel of Prepared Merchandise and Exposures* is a work of fiction that portrays the encounters of a second-age pariah lady to track down her sound person. The primary fill-in is an evaluation of twenty-first-century globalized 'multicultural' American culture through the legend Sunya's battle to get a handle on her store bread kitchen with its speciality clients when obliged by a corporate heated great shop chain. The novel likewise gives an evaluation of the idea of "the lady in the kitchen" by testing the standard gendered division between a trained professional and a nearby kitchen. By portraying the expert kitchen of Sunya's bread shop as a space for her to inventively confer her strong person', 'Kirchner further reasons the gendered capacity among expert and neighbourhood kitchens. Kirchner's work thusly is an outline of diasporic culinary fiction that challenges standard thoughts of bearing, culture, character, and home.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Sovereign of Dreams* (2013) records the outcasts' journey for credibility and their subsequent romanticization of ethnic culture to legitimize their case's authenticity. Banerjee's work is in this way basic for its complement on the



encounters of second and third-age Indian outcast ladies in the US of America. The evaluation additionally mulls over Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Escort of Flavors* (1997). It characterizes a limit between Divakaruni, Kirchner, and Malladi's culinary fiction and the three creators' endeavour to choose their legends' destroyed, clashed characters'. The evaluation in addition looks at Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* to show how the class of culinary records portrays food as language for articulating ladies' strong character. Esquivel's record further offers the basic mark of combination expected for focusing on the standard conversations of food. Further, the appraisal investigates Jhumpa Lahiri's succinct story "*Mrs. Sen*" from *Mediator of Diseases* (2000). The appraisal incorporates Lahiri's succinct story for its coordinated portrayal of expert ladies' impression of restlessness from saw contemplations of veritable ethnic culture, character, and food. The examination considers Mrs. Sen's impression of culpability and strain to the commitment experienced by pioneer ladies in the picked culinary journals to feature the pointlessness of their trip for genuine ethnic culture. At last, the examination checks out at Geeta Kothari's self-portraying synthesis "*If You're What You Eat, What Am I?*" The appraisal utilizes this article to see second-age untouchables' vibes of the way of life as they battle to research the complex socio-social scenes of the host country.

The overview shows that while the class of culinary records analyzes the portrayal of ladies' relationship with food in standard conversations, the class of diasporic culinary stories further assesses the effect of variables like private undertaking, globalization, and multiculturalism on ladies' relationship with food. The defence behind this obsession accordingly is to impel the class of diasporic culinary stories as an arising scholarly kind and read ladies' relationship with food in these records to examine their generally ecological components. Utilizing the picked diasporic culinary stories, this evaluation further supports the chance of food as a language for ladies to represent 'themselves'. Furthermore, the study shows how the class of culinary stories (diasporic and others) is a procedure for testing standard verifiable conversations that just occasionally record ladies' encounters. At long last, the evaluation features propensities by which the class of culinary record can be careful in its assessment of ladies' relationship with food.

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A Symbolic Exploration of Food in Select Shakespearean Plays

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Abstract

Food occupies an essential role in the works of William Shakespeare, serving not just as sustenance. It acts as a profound symbolic element that reflects key themes such as authority, social stratification, human longing, ethics, and conflict. Throughout Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies, and historical plays, food functions as a metaphor for political power, class differences, and personal relationships. Opulent banquets often symbolize influence and affluence, while instances of hunger and lack highlight suffering, injustice, and social inequality, especially among underrepresented characters. The symbolism associated with food is also utilized in examining sensuality, avarice, treachery, and the exertion of control—spanning from Falstaff's indulgence to Petruchio's deprivation of food from Katherina. Furthermore, Shakespeare's depiction of food resonates with the cultural and historical backdrop of Elizabethan England, where dietary practices were influenced by social class and seasonal availability. Frequent references to religious ceremonies like the Eucharist and traditional English feasts anchor these symbols in the cultural norms of the time, making them accessible to his audience. In plays such as Titus Andronicus, food illustrates moral decay and vengeance, while in The Twelfth Night, it functions as a source of humour and romantic pleasure. This paper investigates how Shakespeare's intentional use of food imagery enhances character development, propels plots, and reflects the intricacies of human existence. In doing so, it demonstrates how the seemingly ordinary act of eating transforms into a dramatic instrument to critique and illuminate the social conditions of the playwright's time.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Food Symbolism, Elizabethan Culture, Social Hierarchy.

Introduction

The enduring impact of Shakespeare over the past four centuries in theatres, educational institutions, literature, film, and even languages prompts reflection. It is essential to consider what elements in the texts that have persisted offer insights into this vast and diverse reception. This paper aims to explore Shakespearean narratives, characters, and themes and analyze their potential for appropriation into the core of various cultural traditions.

Food as a Symbol of Social Status

There are opulent feasts in Shakespeare's works frequently to illustrate wealth and power. In *Macbeth*, the banquet scene symbolizes King Macbeth's acquired influence and control, yet the emergence of Banquo's ghost disturbs this equilibrium, revealing the precariousness of his reign. The lack or scarcity of food signifies poverty and despair. In *King Lear*, the hunger experienced by the lower classes and exiled characters highlights their suffering and societal inequalities. In plays like *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Falstaff is



depicted as a character who indulges excessively in food and drink, serving as a symbol of extravagance, gluttony, and moral frailty.

Shakespeare also employs food in sensual and romantic scenarios. For instance, in *Twelfth Night*, the connection between sweet treats and the quest for love exemplifies the pleasures and indulgences of courtship. The characters utilize food to influence and dominate others. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio deprives Katherina of food as part of his strategy to "tame" her, emphasizing his assertion of control. In *Timon of Athens*, Timon's banquet transforms into a moment of bitter revenge, where he serves stones instead of food, representing his disdain for false companionship. In *Titus Andronicus*, food takes on a horrifying role in the notorious pie scene, where Tamora is fed the remains of her sons. This act embodies themes of vengeance and the collapse of moral integrity. There are references to bread and wine, which echo Christian Eucharist traditions, subtly appear in various plays, emphasizing themes of redemption, community, and sacrifice.

Shakespeare's portrayal of food mirrors the diet of Elizabethan England, where bread, meat, and ale were staples for the affluent, while the impoverished subsisted on pottage and other basic sustenance. At that time, certain foods carried distinct meanings. For example, apples and figs might symbolize sin and temptation or represent exotic indulgences. There are also allusions to seasonal dishes and celebrations, such as *Twelfth Night* cakes, ground the plays in contemporary English customs and enhance reliability for the audience. So, food often serves as a source of comedy in Shakespeare's lighter works. The characters like Sir Toby Belch (*Twelfth Night*) and the Dromios (*The Comedy of Errors*) employ food-related metaphors and puns, offering humour and entertainment.

Conclusion

In Shakespearean theatre, food rises above its literal significance, providing a perspective through which audiences can examine societal dynamics, human feelings, and ethical conflicts. From opulent banquets to empty tables, food highlights both the grandeur and the suffering within Shakespeare's realms, illustrating the complex nature of human existence.

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Ecological Effects of Food Chain in Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*

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Abstract

The “Omnivore’s Dilemma” by Michael Pollan follows the path of food from its source to the plate of the consumer and provides a thorough analysis of the environmental effects of contemporary food chains. This paper highlights the frequently harmful relationships between agriculture, the environment, and human consumption by examining the ecological effects of the four food chains that Pollan examines: industrial, organic, local, and foraged. The industrial food chain is a prime example of the unsustainable character of large-scale agricultural methods that harm ecosystems and hasten climate change because it relies on fossil fuels, synthetic chemicals, and monoculture farming. Pollan exposes the inconsistencies in the organic food sector, showing how industrial organic farming often replicates the ecological harm and inefficiency of traditional methods. On the other hand, his examination of regional and regenerative food systems specifically Joel Salatin's Polyface Farm showcases how varied, sustainable agricultural methods may improve biodiversity, lower carbon footprints, and restore ecological balance. The foraged food chain deepens humanity's knowledge of its reliance on ecosystems while offering a philosophical critique of industrialization and an encouragement to re-establish a connection with nature, even if it is not scalable for meeting global demands. This study emphasizes the need to reconsider food production systems from an eco-critical lens, promoting moral and ecologically conscious methods that put sustainability and ecological integrity first. Pollan urges a paradigm change toward food systems that are in line with environmental stewardship and intergenerational equality, and his work encourages consumers to understand the hidden costs of the foods they choose.

Keywords: *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Michael Pollan, Ecological Effects, Food Chain,

Introduction

Food is a basic human need, yet the mechanisms that provide it are frequently obscured. Michael Pollan examines four different food chains: industrial, organic, local, and foraged in *The Omnivore's Dilemma* to clarify the intricacies of contemporary food production. Pollan exposes the social, ethical, and ecological ramifications of these structures through this investigation. This study looks at how various food chains affect the environment, highlighting the ecological consequences of industrial agriculture, the contradictions in organic farming, and the potential of foraged and local food systems. This analysis emphasizes the pressing need for sustainable agricultural practices to solve global environmental concerns by taking an eco-critical stance.

Industrial Food Chain as an Ecological Crisis

Monoculture farming, in which one crop, like maize or soy, dominates large areas of land, is the first step in the industrial food chain. Pollan criticizes this technique because of its disastrous consequences for ecosystems, biodiversity, and soil health. Monoculture farming depletes the soil of nutrients, making the extensive use of synthetic fertilizers



necessary. These fertilizers, which come from fossil fuels, contribute to climate change by releasing large volumes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere in addition to degrading soil. Furthermore, an excessive dependence on monocultures lowers biodiversity, making ecosystems more susceptible to illnesses and pests. Pollan's investigation of the industrial food chain demonstrates how reliant it is on chemical herbicides and pesticides. Although these chemicals increase harvests, they also damage aquatic life, taint streams, and disturb natural ecosystems. Runoff from pesticides helps create "dead zones" in waterways like the Gulf of Mexico, where the oxygen content is too low to sustain marine life. These behaviours' negative effects on the environment are frequently externalized, burdening ecosystems and populations. The use of fossil fuels in the industrial food chain is not limited to fertilizers and pesticides; it also includes food processing, packaging, and transportation. Pollan draws attention to the industrial agriculture sector's startling carbon impact, pointing out that food frequently travels thousands of miles before it reaches consumers. This "food mile" phenomenon highlights how unsustainable and ineffective the industrial model is in a society where climate change is a major concern.

The Organic Food Chain

Pollan reveals gaps in the organic food sector through his research. While synthetic inputs are eliminated in organic farming, large-scale organic operations can mimic conventional systems' environmental inefficiencies. For instance, extensive irrigation and monocultures may still be used by industrial organic farms, placing a burden on the environment. According to Pollan, this "big organic" model puts profit ahead of actual ecological sustainability. When compared to conventional agriculture, organic farming has substantial environmental advantages despite these inconsistencies. Healthy soil ecosystems are promoted and chemical runoff is decreased by using organic systems instead of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. Soil fertility and biodiversity are improved by techniques like crop rotation and composting. However, according to Pollan, organic farming's ecological potential could be jeopardized as it becomes more industrialized. A major problem is scaling up organic farming to meet the world's food demand. Pollan contends that although organic methods are more environmentally friendly than conventional ones, they might not be enough to solve the ecological problems brought on by industrial agriculture. The study investigates if a hybrid approach that combines agroecology advancements with organic farming precepts could provide a more sustainable answer.

Sustainable Local Food Systems

Pollan's visit to Joel Salatin's Polyface Farm is a powerful illustration of sustainable farming. The guiding ideals of Polyface Farm are local food networks, biodiversity, and rotational grazing. Salatin's practices use animals to control pests and nourish the land, simulating natural ecosystems. These methods improve biodiversity and soil health while also lowering chemical inputs. One of the main complaints of industrial agriculture is its carbon footprint, which is addressed by local food systems. Customers can drastically lower the energy needed for storage and transportation by purchasing food locally. According to Pollan, local food systems encourage stronger ties between farmers and customers, fostering a feeling of accountability and community. Local food systems have drawbacks, such as accessibility and scalability, despite their advantages. Critics contend that local farming is unable to supply the diversity of foods made possible by global trade or satisfy the needs of urban populations. This section examines several ways to overcome these obstacles, including decentralized food networks and urban agriculture. The significance of re-establishing a connection with nature and comprehending the source of food is underscored



by Pollan's investigation into foraging. By promoting sustainable activities and fostering a greater understanding of the environment, foraging helps to bridge the gap between ecosystems and consumers. Pollan's own hunting and gathering experiences are used to condemn contemporary food systems that put convenience ahead of ecological balance. Although foraging provides insightful information, it is not a scalable way to feed a world population. The drawbacks of foraging are discussed in this section, including the possibility of overharvesting and the labour-intensive nature of the process. Nonetheless, Pollan's foraged food highlights how crucial ecological and cultural awareness are to creating sustainable food systems.

Eco-Critical Food Systems

Industrial food systems have significant negative effects on the environment, ranging from habitat destruction to greenhouse gas emissions, as seen from an eco-critical perspective. Pollan's criticism emphasizes the necessity of structural adjustments to deal with these problems, such as laws that support sustainable farming practices and lessen dependency on fossil fuels. Inequities in global food chains, labour practices, and animal cruelty are further ethical issues brought up by Pollan's writings. This study examines how ethical consumption can be informed by an eco-critical viewpoint, highlighting the significance of responsibility and transparency in food production. The argument for a paradigm change in food production and consumption is more sustainable and just food system can be achieved by society by emphasizing organic, local, and regenerative approaches. *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Pollan is a call to action, imploring readers and decision-makers to acknowledge the connections between ethics, ecology, and food.

Conclusion

The Omnivore's Dilemma is a critical analysis of the moral and environmental implications of food production. Pollan exposes the hidden costs of industrial agriculture and the possibility of more sustainable alternatives by following the path of food from farm to table. This essay makes the case that embracing eco-critical viewpoints can aid in reshaping global food systems to emphasize intergenerational justice, ethical behaviour, and environmental stewardship. Pollan's writings are an essential resource for reconsidering how we feed the globe while preserving its future in a moment of ecological crisis.

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Decadence and Excess in Marissa Meyer's *The Lunar Chronicles*

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Abstract

Themes of excess and decadence are deeply ingrained in Marissa Meyer's The Lunar Chronicles, a futuristic reworking of traditional fairy tales that mirrors both individual individuals and society systems. In stark contrast to the challenges of its characters, especially those from Earth against those from Luna, the moon colony, the series is set in a highly advanced civilization. Food is used extensively to depict the daily lives of residents in New Beijing in the first book of the series, "Cinder." Tea-boiled eggs, a popular street meal in the Eastern Commonwealth, are one noteworthy culinary item. Cress likes to sample tamarind juice and veggie curry, which represent her newly discovered independence and curiosity about the world. This topic is carried over into the last book, "Winter," when references are made to sour apple petites, which are little chocolate-covered apple candy that Winter adores. The present paper enlightens the theme of decadence and excess in the series of Marissa Meyer.

Keywords: Decadence, Traditional, Cultural Expression, Emotional Connection.

Marissa Meyer's *The Lunar Chronicles* is a young adult science fiction series that reimagines classic fairy tales in a futuristic world. The series explores various themes, including decadence and excess, particularly in the context of the Lunar Empire. *The Lunar Empire*, ruled by Queen Levana, is depicted as a society of opulence and excess. The Lunars' obsession with beauty, power, and luxury has led to a culture of decadence, where the ruling class indulges in extravagant parties, lavish clothing, and excessive pampering. Meyer uses the Lunar Empire's decadence as a symbol of the corrupting influence of power and the dangers of unchecked ambition. The Lunars' excesses serve as a commentary on the social and economic disparities of their society, where the ruling class's extravagance is contrasted with the poverty and suffering of the lower classes. The decadence and excess of the Lunar Empire also have a significant impact on the characters in the series. For example:

- Queen Levana's obsession with beauty and power drives her to commit atrocities and perpetuate the Lunar Empire's oppressive regime.
- Cinder, the protagonist, is forced to navigate the complexities of Lunar society, confronting the excesses and superficiality of the ruling class.
- Other characters, such as Kai and Wolf, are also affected by the Lunar Empire's decadence, as they grapple with their moral compasses and the consequences of their actions.

Meyer's portrayal of decadence and excess in *The Lunar Chronicles* serves as a social commentary on various issues, including:

- The dangers of unchecked capitalism and the exploitation of the lower classes.
- The objectification and commodification of women's bodies.
- The corrupting influence of power and the importance of accountability.



Abjection, a concept developed by philosopher Julia Kristeva, refers to the process of rejecting or expelling elements that threaten the stability of the self or society. In Marissa Meyer's *The Lunar Chronicles*, abjection plays a significant role in shaping the narrative, characters, and themes. The Lunar cyborgs, particularly Cinder and her fellow cyborgs, embody the concept of abjection. As hybrids of humans and machines, they are perceived as threats to the purity and normalcy of Lunar society. The Lunars' fear and rejection of cyborgs illustrate the abjecting process, where the cyborgs are expelled from the dominant social order. The Letumosis plague, which ravages the Earth and Lunar populations, serves as another example of abjection. The plague is depicted as a corrupting, degenerative force that threatens the stability of societies. The infected individuals are shunned, feared, and ultimately, abjected from society.

Queen Levana's character is also marked by abjection. Her obsessive desire for beauty, power, and control stems from her feelings of inadequacy and abjection. Levana's use of glamour and manipulation to hide her true self illustrates the abjecting process, where she rejects and expels her vulnerabilities and imperfections. Cinder's journey is also marked by abjection. As a cyborg, she struggles to find her place within Lunar society. Her identity is constantly negotiated and contested, illustrating the abjecting process. Cinder's ultimate acceptance of her cyborg identity and her rejection of the Lunar Empire's oppressive norms represent a reversal of the abjecting process. The series highlights the consequences of rejecting and expelling individuals or groups deemed "other" or "undesirable". Cinder's journey illustrates the importance of self-acceptance and the rejection of societal norms that perpetuate abjection. Power dynamics and oppression: The Lunar Empire's abjection of cyborgs and other marginalized groups serves as a commentary on the dangers of unchecked power and oppression.

In conclusion, abjection plays a significant role in shaping the narrative, characters, and themes of *The Lunar Chronicles*. Marissa Meyer's exploration of abjection offers a thought-provoking commentary on identity, otherness, power dynamics, and self-acceptance. Marissa Meyer's *The Lunar Chronicles* presents a thought-provoking exploration of decadence and excess, particularly in the context of the Lunar Empire. Through the series, Meyer offers a commentary on the social and economic disparities of society, the corrupting influence of power, and the importance of accountability.

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Edible Histories of Food, Identity and Power in Post-Colonial Contexts

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Abstract

The conflict of identity in post-colonialism examines the impacts of colonialism on human life and their psychological demise. Exploring the exploitation through food, becomes a cultural indicator, reflecting the legacies and trauma of colonialist history and the country's struggles and connection with them. In communities mostly affected by colonialism, food becomes more than just a means of survival. It becomes a potential symbol of resistance, Hybridity and assimilation in a society dominated by colonial power. In the post-colonial contexts, the acceptance, consumption, or rejection of certain foods and the preparation methods signify the tension between nativity and colonialism. It depicts the influence and authoritative power of the colonialists that can be traced back to the survival habits of the colonized, which hints at cultural dislocation. Food is densely interlocked with memory, acting as a medium through which native practices are recalled and suppressed histories are reclaimed. Furthermore, the politics of food serve as a metaphor for broader power dynamics in post-colonial societies. By examining the symbolic and cultural significance of food, this study demonstrates its role as a dynamic text that encodes histories of oppression and resilience while offering a lens to understand the redefinition of identities in post-colonial literature.

Keywords: Post-colonial Crisis, Culinary Arts, Identity, Food Politics, Cultural Dislocation.

Introduction

The post-colonial era has been remarkably stamped by consistent struggles for cultural identity and self-representation among the colonies and other societies. Food emerges as a potential symbol in the post-colonial context of Indian literature. It shows the convergence of colonial legacy, Hybridity and cultural resistance. Food has been effectively used as a metaphor to depict the themes of memory, power dynamics and identity conflicts, acknowledging the traumatizing struggles and resilience of a nation fighting with its colonial past. Food and culinary practices provide deep insights into the cultural as well as socio-political struggles of the people in the colonized lands. This paper deals with various perspectives on post-colonialism and food as shown in Indian literature.

Colonial Influence and Indian Food Culture

Colonialism reconstructed India's agricultural landscape, introducing new crops and practices that induced the commoners to alter their traditional practices. The British imposed monoculture farming systems to cultivate tea, coffee, sugar, opium and other products that replaced indigenous staples and disrupted local economies. The commercialization of Indian spices and other crops led to a life dependent on export-based agricultural practices, depriving the local economies of their traditional food sources and customs. This shows how food becomes a tool of exploitation and dominance under colonial rule. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* reflects the tension from colonial modifications of Indian food culture,



where traditional recipes and spices symbolize resistance against homogenization. The novel handles the conflicts that happened in 1947 in India, the aftermath of partition and colonial rule. Saleem is the owner of a pickle factory that preserves pickles and chutney every day in a society of shifting food practices. This depicts his resistance against changing the world by sticking to his roots.

The imposition of the British's preference for bland, unseasoned food over intricate flavours of Indian cuisine becomes a symbol of the cultural and racial superiority being imposed upon the indigenous population. The imposition becomes the erasure of Indian culture by the colonialists and resistance of Indians becomes the resilience of the native community against suppression. The impact of colonial agricultural practices also indicates the extended damage to ecology and cultural erosion. The decline in production and consumption of indigenous millet varieties due to British policies denotes the cultural loss of the Indian community.

Memory, Identity and Resistance

In post-colonial literature, food often plays a pivotal role in the exploration of the memory and identity of the native community against the colonialists. Food is more than a means of survival in Indian literature. It is portrayed as an element that exhibits the preserved cultural memory and past connections with their people and land. In Rushdie's *Midnight Children*, Saleem's nature of preparing and sharing pickles and chutney becomes an act of preserving the cultural heritage. He reflects on how these food practices link him with his family, community and nation. Saleem preserves his life stories and notes along with each jar. This attempts to deliver the message that colonialism had a deep impact on their personal histories, altering the truth and identity of people. It became a form of storytelling where he saw it as a way to document personal and collective histories which may disappear gradually in the upcoming period. Gayatri Spivak's concept of the subaltern details a framework for a better understanding of how food conveys suppressed histories. Preparation or rejection of certain foods becomes a metaphor for marginalized communities recovering their identities. Dalit narratives often depict food as a medium for resistance, challenging dominant caste practices by reusing traditional recipes. Food is an embodiment of cultural survival and resistance against colonial erasure.

Politics of Caste and Food

Food plays a crucial role in the exploration of caste-based discrimination in post-colonial Indian literature. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* portrays a harsh illustration of how food production and consumption are intertwined with the strong social hierarchies of caste and community. The character Velutha, a low-caste man, is opposed to sharing food with the so-called upper-caste people in the novel. It depicts how food serves as a remark of exclusion and discrimination. Colonialism has an upper hand in the matter as it sows the seed of inequality and discrimination in the minds of people. In the act of denying access to his fundamental human rights, Velutha symbolizes the colonized community. Colonial powers ignited the division between castes and intensified existing social hierarchies. It reinforced certain crop practices and labour systems. The plantation system employed lower caste workers without proper wages and much more exploitative conditions. The denial of food to lower-caste individuals serves as a metaphor for the exclusion of marginalized communities from political, social, and economic spaces. In this sense, food becomes a site where discrimination intersects in all possible means. The politics of caste and food in post-colonial Indian literature show the impact of colonialism on social structures.



Through food-related narratives, authors expose the intersections of caste, power, and resistance.

Hybridity and Cultural Compromise

The Hybridity of Indian identity, shaped by centuries of colonial and indigenous interactions, is mirrored in its unique cuisine. Spices, with diverse origins and combinations, denote the cultural layering of India. Post-colonial identities are often characterized by Hybridity. It is the blending of indigenous and colonial influences in a manner that complicates the notion of a pure, fixed identity. Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* shows food as a symbol that indicates the tension between cultural preservation and globalization. Sai is influenced by the developing Western culture and moves far away from her traditional Indian roots. Her struggle to choose between Western-style breakfasts and traditional Indian meals captures the fractured identities in a fast-shifting world. It also shows the conflict between different social classes and cultures. Sai is shown as a character who reflects the legacies of colonialism while adapting to the pressures of modernity. The globalization and commercialization of food for the international markets reflect the same struggle between preserving cultural authenticity and adapting to global changes. Desai depicts this phenomenon by showing how food, as part of cultural identity, becomes a space where individuals are forced to decide their place in a rapidly changing world.

Conclusion

The exploration of food in post-colonial Indian literature reveals its complex role as a symbol of memory, identity, resistance and discrimination. From the concept of Hybridity in *Midnight Children* to the caste politics in *The God of Small Things*, food captures the complexities of colonial legacies and post-colonial struggles in Indian society. This paper highlights colonialism's impacts on Indian food culture which reveals a multifaceted interplay between power, economics and tradition. By exploring these dynamics, literature analyses the legacies of colonial exploitation and encourages acts of resilience to maintain cultural authenticity and tradition.

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Food as a Symbol of Healing and Transformation in Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen*

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Abstract

Food has long been a symbol of healing, renewal, and transformation, offering not just physical nourishment but also emotional comfort. In Banana Yoshimoto's Kitchen, this theme finds a touching expression through the life of its protagonist, Mikage Sakurai. Mikage, a young woman grappling with the weight of deep grief and loss, finds herself drawn to the kitchen as a place of comfort and revival. After losing her grandmother, her last surviving family member, Mikage feels lost and overwhelmed by loneliness. Yet, within the kitchen's warm embrace, she discovers a haven that becomes central to her healing. For Mikage, the kitchen goes beyond being just a practical space and becomes an essential part of her identity. She confesses, "If I had to explain why I was alive, I'd say it's because the kitchen saved me" (Kitchen, p. 45). Immersed in the simple acts of cooking and surrounded by its familiar atmosphere, Mikage begins to process her grief, rediscover herself, and find meaning in life. Through Mikage's journey, Yoshimoto beautifully illustrates the symbolic power of food and the spaces where it is prepared. In Kitchen, the kitchen is not just a setting but a metaphor for strength and emotional renewal, reminding us that in both literature and life, food often serves as a bridge from sadness to hope. This study aims to explore how food symbolizes healing and transformation in Banana Yoshimoto's "Kitchen", particularly through the character of Mikage Sakurai. By focusing on Mikage's connection to the kitchen and the act of cooking, this paper will show how food acts as a source of emotional comfort, helping her process grief, rediscover herself, and find new meaning in life, ultimately justifying the central theme of food as a symbol of healing and personal transformation in the novel.

Keywords: Food Therapy, Transformation, Renewal, Self-discovery.

Introduction

In *Kitchen* by Banana Yoshimoto, food transcends its everyday function, becoming a powerful symbol of healing and self-discovery. The novel follows Mikage Sakurai, a young woman who, after the death of her grandmother, embarks on a journey of emotional recovery. Food plays a pivotal role in Mikage's healing, offering comfort and stability as she navigates grief and loss. Through cooking and sharing meals, Mikage nourishes not only her body but also her soul, finding emotional restoration and personal transformation. This paper explores how food serves as a metaphor for Mikage's journey toward healing and renewal.

Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen*

Kitchen is a contemporary novella by Japanese author Banana Yoshimoto, focusing on Mikage Sakurai, whose life is turned upside down by the death of her grandmother. As she struggles with grief and feelings of displacement, cooking becomes her source of comfort and the anchor that helps her regain stability. Yoshimoto highlights Mikage's relationship with food, reflecting its cultural and emotional significance in Japanese society. As Mikage herself reflects, "I didn't want to cook, but I had to. It was like the kitchen was the only place



I could exist” (Yoshimoto, p. 47). Here, cooking is more than a physical necessity; it symbolizes Mikage’s emotional survival.

Cultural Importance of Food and Japanese Society

In Japanese culture, food is not only a means of sustenance but also a connection to nature, tradition, and one’s emotions. The traditional Japanese culinary philosophy of *washoku* emphasizes balance, simplicity, and respect for seasonal ingredients. Mikage’s emotional journey mirrors these values. Cooking offers her solace, connecting her to the cultural importance of food in Japan. As she states, “It’s not that I like cooking... I think it’s just that cooking keeps me alive” (Yoshimoto, p. 56). For Mikage, cooking becomes a form of survival, akin to the cultural role of food in maintaining balance.

Food and Emotional Healing

A central theme in *Kitchen* is the role of food in emotional healing. During times of sorrow, food becomes a tool not only for nourishment but also for processing grief. Mikage’s cooking allows her to regain some control over her life and reconnect with her grandmother’s memory. “When I cook, it’s like I’m trying to hold onto something that’s already slipping away” (Yoshimoto, p. 62). Food thus acts as an emotional anchor, helping Mikage manage her grief. Her simple meals, though not elaborate, provide comfort and stability, becoming a ritual that aids her healing process.

The depiction of Japanese food culture in *Kitchen* plays a key role in Mikage’s emotional recovery. Traditional meals, emphasizing seasonality and simplicity, become a means for Mikage to find emotional peace and restore balance in her life. Cooking becomes both a spiritual and emotional exercise. As Mikage describes it, “The kitchen is my sanctuary, where I find peace and feel whole again” (Yoshimoto, p. 49). Through food, she reconnects with herself, finding a sense of order and healing amidst the chaos of her grief.

In *Kitchen*, food serves as an outlet for Mikage’s complex emotions such as grief, love, and longing. Cooking is no longer a mere task of satisfying hunger; it becomes a way for Mikage to express emotions she cannot articulate in words. “Cooking gave me the feeling of being able to begin again, to start afresh” (Yoshimoto, p. 67). By preparing meals, Mikage channels her emotions into the food, transforming her grief into something tangible and manageable. Her cooking thus becomes an emotional communication, preserving memories and slowly allowing her to move forward.

Mikage’s Emotional Growth Through Food

As Mikage begins to open up to others, food becomes a medium for building emotional connections. Initially, cooking is a solitary act for Mikage, a means of survival. However, as she shares meals with Yuichi and his mother, Eriko, food evolves into a way to express care and affection. “Food was the one thing I could turn to, the one thing that helped me hold onto myself” (Yoshimoto, p. 75). These shared meals help Mikage rebuild relationships and overcome her isolation. Her journey of healing transforms from one of self-reliance to one that embraces connection and support from others.

Food holds a special place in human culture, not only for nourishment but also for its ability to comfort and heal. In literature, philosophy, and psychology, food’s emotional benefits are explored, highlighting its power to help individuals cope with stress, grief, and anxiety. In *Kitchen*, food goes beyond sustenance, playing a crucial role in Mikage’s emotional healing. This section explores the therapeutic qualities of food, its philosophical significance, and its role in comforting people during emotional distress. In literature, food often symbolizes emotional nourishment and healing. In *Kitchen*, Mikage finds solace in her kitchen, which becomes her sanctuary. The idea that food can heal emotionally is not limited



to Japanese culture but resonates globally, illustrating food's universal role as comfort. Alice Waters, in *The Art of Simple Food*, emphasizes how simple meals can calm and nurture both body and spirit. Her statement, "Good food is simple food," reflects the idea that comfort foods provide emotional stability during times of difficulty.

Hippocrates' Philosophy on Food and Healing

Hippocrates, the father of medicine, famously said, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food," suggesting that food's healing potential extends beyond its role in nourishing the body. It also plays an essential part in emotional and mental healing. Mikage's experience in *Kitchen* aligns with this belief, as cooking becomes an act of self-care that helps her cope with the grief of losing her grandmother. Comfort foods, which often evoke positive memories, offer emotional support, helping to restore harmony to the mind and body. Comfort foods play an important role during emotional distress. These familiar, flavorful foods evoke positive memories, offering emotional support during difficult times. The preparation and consumption of comfort food trigger the brain's reward centres, releasing serotonin and endorphins, which help alleviate stress and lift the mood. In *Kitchen*, Mikage's simple meals, such as rice and soup, provide the psychological comfort needed to cope with her grief. These meals serve not only to nourish her body but also to stabilize her emotions. Food's role in emotional well-being can also be understood through the lens of philosophy, particularly the concept of *eudaimonia* in Aristotle's teachings. Aristotle believed that a balanced life required harmony between mind and body. He advocated for moderation in all things, including food, suggesting that thoughtful consumption promotes emotional and mental balance. In *Kitchen*, Mikage's emotional healing is closely tied to her relationship with food. By finding balance through cooking, she restores her emotional and mental well-being, reflecting Aristotle's belief in the importance of balance for true healing.

Healing through Cooking

Mikage's journey of healing in the *Kitchen* is intricately connected to the act of cooking. Preparing meals allows her to honour the memory of her grandmother and find emotional stability amidst her grief. Cooking becomes a form of self-soothing, helping Mikage process her sorrow while slowly rebuilding her sense of self. The rituals of cooking provide her with a comforting structure, aiding her emotional recovery and offering a sense of continuity during times of loss. In Mikage's emotional recovery, food plays a key role in helping her redefine her identity. The simple, repetitive act of cooking provides space for introspection, allowing Mikage to reconnect with herself. Through preparing meals—an act once shared with her grandmother—she begins to discover a new sense of agency and independence. Cooking becomes a tool for emotional growth, helping her navigate grief while fostering a deeper understanding of her identity. It is through cooking that Mikage embarks on a journey of self-discovery, where food becomes both a refuge and a catalyst for change.

Food and Self-Discovery

Mikage's relationship with food is not only about nourishment but also about understanding her cultural roots and personal transformation. The meals she prepares carry her grandmother's traditions, yet Mikage's act of cooking them alone represents her personal growth. In recreating these dishes, she engages in self-exploration, seeking new ways to define her identity. Food thus becomes an expression of Mikage's evolving sense of self, balancing past influences with the creation of her new future.

Food in *Kitchen* serves as a bridge between Mikage's past and present, allowing her to preserve her grandmother's memory while navigating her emotional healing. The meals



Mikage prepares become an emotional anchor, linking her to the past and helping her move forward. Through food, she honours her memories while embracing the present, understanding that although life changes, certain things—like the comfort of cooking—remain constant. Food thus plays a dual role of memory and renewal, providing Mikage with the peace and strength to embrace her new identity. This study has shown that food in the *Kitchen* operates on several levels: as a symbol of emotional nourishment, a means of introspection, and a channel for personal transformation. Mikage's relationship with food helps her process grief, heal emotional wounds, and eventually reconnect with others. The kitchen, initially a space linked to solitude and mourning, becomes a site of emotional renewal as Mikage embraces her identity, learns to love again, and accepts care from others. Through Mikage's journey, Yoshimoto effectively portrays how food transcends its role as simple sustenance and becomes a profound tool for emotional recovery.

This paper emphasizes the broader implications of food as a symbol of healing, both in literature and in real life. In a world often marked by emotional distress, food offers a universal means of coping, whether through comfort food or the ritual of preparing a meal. Mikage's healing process reflects how food can act as a stabilizing force during times of personal crisis. The study suggests that food, as a symbol of emotional well-being, extends beyond literature and plays a crucial role in how individuals process grief and transformation in their own lives. The work *kitchen* invites readers to rethink the significance of domestic spaces and the often-overlooked rituals surrounding food preparation. It encourages a deeper reflection on how seemingly mundane activities, such as cooking, can hold immense emotional significance, offering healing and self-discovery in ways one might not initially expect.

Conclusion

The act of cooking in the *Kitchen* is far more than a daily chore or necessity; it is a profound ritual of healing, identity formation, and emotional restoration. Mikage's relationship with food exemplifies how simple, everyday actions can evolve into transformative rituals, providing both emotional comfort and spiritual renewal. In a world where grief and loss often seem overwhelming, Yoshimoto's novella reminds us that healing can be found in the quiet, everyday acts of life, where food becomes a powerful bridge from pain to hope. In this sanctuary, Mikage not only finds solace in her grandmother's memory but also the strength to rebuild her life. Ultimately, *Kitchen* highlights the transformative power of food and the spaces in which it is prepared, offering readers a poignant reminder that even in the darkest moments, healing and renewal are possible through simple acts of care and nourishment. In *Kitchen* by Banana Yoshimoto, food serves as a powerful symbol of emotional healing and personal transformation. Mikage Sakurai's journey from deep grief to renewal is intricately tied to her connection with the kitchen and the act of cooking. As Mikage navigates the emotional turmoil caused by the death of her grandmother, she turns to food not only for sustenance but also as a means of emotional survival. The kitchen, in this context, becomes more than a space for food preparation; it becomes a sanctuary where Mikage can confront her sorrow and rediscover herself. This study has demonstrated that in the *Kitchen*, food functions both literally and metaphorically as a tool for healing. Through the act of cooking, Mikage finds comfort, stability and an opportunity for introspection. Her journey reflects the universal therapeutic power of food, which extends beyond its physical nourishment to offer emotional and psychological solace. The paper highlights the cultural and emotional importance of food in Japanese society, particularly as a tool for processing grief and facilitating personal growth. Mikage's cooking rituals are deeply rooted in Japanese



culinary traditions, where food is not only a source of sustenance but also a connection to family and cultural legacy. Food allows Mikage to honour her grandmother's memory while also creating her path toward healing.

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Food and Gender in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* and Mamoni Raisom Goswami's *Moth Eaten Howdah Of The Tusker*

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Abstract:

Food which is a basic need of human beings carries with it cultural and social meaning as well. It is believed that there is a close relation between gendered identities and food habits. This paper is a comparative study of Anita Desai's novel Fasting, Feasting (1999) and Mamoni Raisom Goswami's Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker (2005). Even though the main aim of these writers is to depict the condition of women in a patriarchal society, an attempt will be made to analyse these two novels through the lens of food to find out how the characters interact in the culinary arena. These interactions will serve as crucial insights into their identities, particularly their gender identities. Both Desai and Goswami have presented food as the source of power politics and social control.

Keywords: Gender, Identity, Food, Power Politics, Desai, Goswami.

Introduction

Even though food is a human being's basic need it also carries cultural and social meaning with it. Recent years mark an increased interest in research regarding food and eating as gendered things. Food and eating behavioural patterns are subjective to individuals. Deborah Lupton describes food and eating as,

intensely emotional experiences that are intertwined with embodied sensation and strong feelings... They are central to individuals' subjective and their sense of distinction from others" Scholars have begun to study the role of food in the construction of and resistance to gendered identities in society. Therefore, Arlene Avakian and Barbara Haber are of the view that studying the relationship between food and women can help us in understanding "how women produce, resist, and rebel against gender constructions as they are practised and contested in various sites, as well as illuminated the contexts in which these struggles are located". However, food and food practices are often taken for granted due to their association with women (D'Sylva & Beagan, 2011).

The relationship between women and food was brought forth by a pioneering work by Laura Shapiro in 1986 titled 'Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century'. Shapiro showed how the association of women with food could shed light on both women's history and the history of food. From here on, the interdisciplinary scholarship of women and food studies has evolved and incorporated the specificities of women's lives by taking into account factors like race, ethnicity and class.

Carole Counihan (1998) asserts that there is a "clear significance of food-centred activities and meanings to the constitution of gender relations and identities across cultures". "Many studies demonstrate that men eat first, best, and most" (Counihan, 1998). Class, caste, race, and gender hierarchies are partly maintained and sustained through differential control over food and the varying levels of access to the same (Counihan, 1998,1999). The way that



the rich distinguish themselves from the poor through food and foodways, men are also distinguishable from women (Counihan, 1999). What, how much, and when can one eat are dependent on their gender (Counihan 1999). This creates an unequal footing between them as one is favoured over the other.

Food and Gender in *Fasting, Feasting*

Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* deals with the subject of food and gender. It is full of various examples of the way people are treated differently based on their gendered identities. For instance, the mother is used to being treated as inferior to the man, and she cultivates this idea in the minds of her daughters also,

In my day, girls in the family were not given sweets, nuts, good things to eat. If something special had been bought in the market, like sweets or nuts, it was given to the boys in the family. (p. 5)

Despite being the daughter of an educated father Uma, the protagonist of the novel still becomes a victim of societal constructs about women's education she leaves school without completing her education to foster her younger brother Arun and manage household chores. A. Hariprasanna in her critical study on Anita Desai comments that Desai's novels are concerned with the emotional world of women, revealing a rare, imaginative awareness of various deeper forces at work and a profound understanding of female sensibility. Uma's mannerisms are in complete contrast to society's expectations and she fails to fulfil her parents' desire to marry her off. Thus, she becomes the unofficial maidservant for her family. On the other hand, her brother Arun gets a radically different treatment than his sisters as he is greatly favoured over her (Jackson, 2018). Papa insists on "proper attention" for his son with the assurance of "the best, the most, [and] the highest" for him, not just regarding education, but other needs as well. Papa believes that consuming meat is necessary to develop Arun's strength (Poon, 2006). This reflects Counihan's (1998) assertion that "food symbolically connotes maleness and femaleness and establishes the social value of men and women". However, despite his father's unchallenged and unshaken authority, Arun refused a non-vegetarian diet upon which, he was coerced into consuming cod liver oil. The privileged treatment continued in educational affairs as well. He was sent to abroad for higher studies.

In the second part of the novel Desai takes us to the USA where the culture is very different from India. The only constant thing is perhaps the gendered differential treatment of food. In this part, Desai introduces us to the Patton family where we can see the male child of the family Ron enjoying a privileged position over his sister Melanie. "Ron is devouring, Melanie is vomiting, Ron is stuffing himself, Melanie is distraught." (Rossella, 322). Arun also finds similarities between Melanie and Uma. There is also a similarity between Uma and Arun. They are the two sides of the same coin. Critics think that when we stop listening to Uma's voice, we immediately meet Arun, who observes food. Both are unattractive, bespectacled and forced into a programmed life; neither of them seems interested in sexuality. Both disappoint their parents. Uma feeds the others and Arun struggles to eat as he likes, that is to say, their hunger for life remains unsatisfied. This point is even apparent when he writes from America, "The food is not very good". This led Daniel Rossella to argue that none of the characters in *Fasting, Feasting* is really happy, and, even if they do eat, they live an existence of emotional and spiritual fasting.

Food and Gender in *Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker*

The gendered perception of life can also be seen in the condition of widows. It is believed that without a male guardian or a custodian of her body and mind, a widow is denied an identity in the framework of a patriarchal society. *Moth Eaten Howdah of the*



Tusker beautifully presents the hardships of Assamese women, particularly widows. These women are captives of institutional structures and victims of societal injustices executed in the name of traditions. The story of the novel revolves around the pathetic lives of three widows of the same family: Giribala, Durga and Saru Gossainee. Giribala is the central character of the novel. She is neither a devoted widow like Durga nor curbing her desires like Saru Gossainee. On the contrary, she is the most revolting one. Even before reaching the age of puberty, she is married off and after her husband's death she returns to her parent's house, but here she feels humiliated in her own home, where Durga, who herself is a widow acts as an agent of patriarchal society. Durga caught hold of Giribala's hand and said "Now things have changed. You are a widow." Not only Durga but also Giribala's mother tries controlling Giribala. She directs Giribala to follow the rules of widowhood with utmost sincerity. Giribala confesses to Mark that she tries to fulfil her duty, "Still I try to put flowers and tulsi leaves on his wooden sandals. But if it continues like this, I am afraid I'll turn into a ghost." Her fears become reality in the end she chooses death as more pleasurable than the life of a 'living ghost.' She commits suicide by burning herself in the raging fire rather than living as a ghost in a living grave. Elaine Showalter is of the view that: "Suicide becomes a grotesquely fantasized female weapon, a way of cheating out of dominance. Martyrdom and self-immolation are viewed as aggressive, as a way of inflicting punishment on the guilty survivors." (Showalter 250).

Goswami in this novel indicates how food consumption is gendered and logical socially. Chitrita Banerji in *Eating India* (2007) writes that "The life of the Hindu widow has always been the dark side of eating in India". A widow herself is considered the cause of her husband's death and thus she must suffer the "sin of survival" by giving up many food items and living on boiled or uncooked foods only. In *Moth Eaten Howdah* of the *Tusker* also we can see the widows were forced to live under strict rules, such as constant fasting and raw vegetables for weeks. Giribala resists having cooked meals but on one occasion when she secretly ate mutton cooked at a funeral ceremony she is violently abused by her mother, who "pulled her hair, punched her and clawed at her." (Goswami,145)

Conclusion

Both Desai and Goswami highlight the interconnection between food and gender while narrating the conditions of women in a male-dominated society. The writers show how food becomes symbolic of the character's emotional struggle in coping with life. In both works food is used to reject patriarchal structures. Set in different places and cultures, almost all the female characters are going through similar identity crises, where some are silently accepting their situation and some are revolting. Women in both novels communicate their rebellion against the society's set norms by inflicting pain on themselves as we can see Anamika blazing herself in *Fasting, Feasting* and Giribala in *Moth Eaten Howdah* of the *Tusker*.

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An Examination of Food and Identity in Postcolonial Literature

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Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship between food and identity within postcolonial literature, analyzing how food acts as a medium to delve into the intricacies of cultural identity, colonial history, and the consequences of colonization. Through an examination of significant postcolonial works, this study illustrates how food becomes a site for resistance, negotiation, and transformation, highlighting the deep impacts of colonialism on the bodies, cultures, and identities of colonized individuals. Authors utilize food to reflect on the tensions between traditional culinary practices and Westernized influences, providing insights into the politics of food, nationalism, and identity development in postcolonial contexts. The research emphasizes the diverse functions of food in postcolonial literature as a means for decolonization, remembrance, and the reclamation of cultural agency.

Keywords: Examination, Food, Identity, Postcolonial Literature.

Introduction

Food serves as a source of nourishment and also as a potent symbol within postcolonial literature. It functions as a nuanced metaphor for cultural identity, the dynamics of colonial power, and the negotiation of space between the colonizer and the colonized. In postcolonial narratives, food acts as a framework through which authors explore themes of belonging, resistance, and hybridity. The legacies of colonial history often alter culinary practices, either distorting or reclaiming traditional dishes and food rituals. By exploring the relationship between food and identity, postcolonial literature uncovers how the impacts of colonization linger in the ways food is prepared, eaten, and experienced. This paper examines how food plays a pivotal role in the construction of identity, challenging the dichotomies of colonizer and colonized, and investigates how culinary practices serve as both instruments of oppression and avenues for liberation.

Food as an Identity in Postcolonial Literature

In postcolonial narratives, food frequently delineates boundaries between cultures, emphasizing both assimilation and resistance. Authors use food to illustrate the ramifications of colonialism on indigenous culinary traditions and how these practices are reshaped within a postcolonial setting. Numerous postcolonial texts depict food as a battleground between Western influences and traditional practices. The colonial powers often imposed their food systems and agricultural methods on colonized populations, leading to the decline of native food customs. This transformation is vividly represented in works like *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, where the main character, Antoinette, finds herself torn between colonial English cuisine and the Afro-Caribbean foods of her ancestry. Postcolonial literature frequently illustrates how food serves as a means of reclaiming indigenous identity. The act of preparing or consuming traditional dishes is portrayed as a form of defiance against the cultural erasure imposed by colonization. For instance, in *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, staples such as yam and palm wine are integral to Igbo culture, symbolizing cultural continuity and resistance to colonial advances.



Identity in a postcolonial context is often marked by hybridity, as colonized individuals navigate the cultural space between their original traditions and colonial influences. Food, as a cultural marker, transforms into a site of fusion and discord, reflecting this hybridity. In novels like *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy, food plays a crucial role in conveying cultural hybridity. The characters within the narrative frequently prepare meals that combine traditional Indian ingredients with Western influences, symbolizing their fractured identities in a postcolonial environment. These hybrid dishes serve as metaphors for the characters' struggles with the legacies of colonialism and their efforts to traverse new cultural landscapes. Food serves as a means of preserving memories and reclaiming historical narratives. In Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, culinary practices act as a vehicle for reflecting on slavery and the harrowing experiences of African Americans. The processes of preparing and sharing meals become ways to reconnect with lost histories and sustain cultural connections amid dehumanization and oppression. In postcolonial literature, food often carries significant political implications, particularly regarding nationalism and the construction of a national identity. Culinary practices are portrayed as a method to assert independence and resist colonial control. Food can function as a form of protest, especially when colonial powers seek to dictate the dietary practices of colonized populations. In V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, food symbolizes the complex power relations between the postcolonial state and its citizens. The conflict over maintaining authority over food practices and agricultural systems mirrors broader themes of sovereignty and independence in postcolonial contexts. Postcolonial writers frequently highlight traditional food practices as a way to affirm national identity. The defence of food sovereignty and the preservation of indigenous culinary customs are crucial elements in the reclamation of national identity. For example, in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, the protagonist's return to his Sudanese village signifies a reconnection with cultural roots, including the revival of traditional culinary practices that colonialism had threatened.

Conclusion

In postcolonial literature, food and identity are deeply intertwined, with food serving as both a metaphor and a tangible representation of the experiences of colonized individuals. Understanding the role of food is essential to grasping the effects of colonialism on cultural practices, identity creation, and resistance. By exploring the significance of food within these narratives, we gain insights into the challenges of cultural hybridity, the revitalization of indigenous traditions, and the assertion of political independence. Ultimately, food in postcolonial literature transcends being merely a cultural symbol; it acts as a medium of memory, resistance, and reclamation, providing a profound space for comprehending the repercussions of colonialism and the avenues for cultural resurgence.

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Food as a Sign of Class and Identity in English Literature

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Abstract

Food has long been an essential medium through which social hierarchies, cultural identities, and economic structures are explored in literature. This paper examines the nuanced interplay between food and social class in English literature, emphasizing its interdisciplinary implications. Using textual analysis of canonical and contemporary works highlights how food is a marker of class distinction, a vehicle for cultural expression, and a site for resistance. Food serves as more than sustenance; it is a cultural artefact laden with meanings that reveal the complexities of social hierarchies and individual identities. From the banquets of medieval tales to the modest meals of working-class novels, food in English literature is intricately tied to issues of social class. The study adopts a multidisciplinary approach, drawing on sociology, cultural studies, and literary theory, to illuminate how literary depictions of food interrogate and reinforce class dynamics. This paper contributes to the broader discourse on the cultural politics of food, revealing its role in shaping and reflecting societal values.

Keywords: Food, Social Class, Cultural Identity, Interdisciplinary Studies, Class Distinction.

Introduction

Food, a universal necessity, transcends its physical function to emerge as a powerful symbol in English literature. It serves as a mirror reflecting societal norms, power dynamics, and cultural identities, often intertwined with questions of class and privilege. From Dickens's portrayal of scarcity and excess in *Great Expectations* to Woolf's critical examination of gendered and class disparities in *A Room of One's Own*, food becomes a narrative tool that elucidates the social fabric of its time. Literature provides a unique platform to explore the intersections of sustenance, identity, and agency. In postcolonial works like Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, culinary practices reveal the protagonist's resistance against colonial domination, while in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, the fusion of traditional and modern cuisines highlights the complexities of immigrant identities. Across genres and historical periods, food not only sustains life but also encapsulates the struggles, aspirations, and cultural memories of individuals and communities. This paper delves into the multifaceted roles of food in literature, examining its symbolic, cultural, and economic dimensions. By analyzing key texts through an interdisciplinary lens, it seeks to uncover how depictions of food reflect and critique societal structures, offering enduring insights into the human condition.

Food and Class Distinction

In many literary works, food is a powerful symbol of class distinction. Charles Dickens's "**Great Expectations**" exemplifies this theme vividly. The protagonist, *Pip*, moves between the wealthy and impoverished worlds, and food plays a critical role in delineating these spheres. The phrase "spoke volumes of their social standing" underscores that the characters belong to a lower socioeconomic class. This might highlight societal



themes such as inequality, the dignity of labour, or contentment amidst hardship. In Pip's early life, food is scarce and plain:

A meager dinner of bread and butter, shared with Joe at the forge, sufficed for sustenance but spoke volumes of their social standing."(Dickens 25).

Contrast this with the lavish feasts at Satis House, where "rich meats and exotic fruits, though decaying and uneaten, symbolized Miss Havisham's wealth and stagnation."The scene is set at a forge, which is a workplace for blacksmithing, suggesting a rustic and hardworking environment. The imagery of sharing a "meager dinner of bread and butter" evokes a sense of modesty and frugality, common in lower social classes during historical or rural settings. It also emphasizes the lack of luxury in their lives, as bread and butter are staple, inexpensive items. Bread and Butter represent sustenance and the minimum survival required. Sharing such a simple meal underlines themes of companionship and shared struggles.

Similarly, Virginia Woolf's essay "A Room of One's Own" underscores how food reflects gendered and class disparities. Woolf contrasts the luxurious meals served at men's colleges—

The partridges perfectly roasted, the soles sunk in a deep dish of cream sauce with the austere fare of women's colleges:

...a plain broth and a pudding so insubstantial it seemed to mock the very idea of nourishment.

Woolf writes,

Here was the soup. It was a plain gravy soup. There was nothing to stir the fancy in that. Next came beef with greens and potatoes—a homely trinity, suggesting the rumps of cattle in a muddy market, and sprouts curled and yellowed at the edge, and bargaining and cheapening... (Woolf 18).

The richness of the men's meal contrasts sharply with the simplicity of the women's, symbolizing the systemic inequality Woolf critiques throughout her essay. These culinary contrasts not only illustrate economic inequality but also the broader social structures that perpetuate such divisions.

Cultural Identity and Food Politics

Food is also a conduit for expressing cultural identity, often shaped by class. In Zadie Smith's novel "White Teeth" the culinary practices of immigrant families reflect their attempts to navigate and negotiate their identities in a multicultural Britain. The Iqbals' kitchen becomes a microcosm of their cultural hybridity:

Samad's insistence on cooking traditional Bengali dishes alongside his children's cravings for fish fingers and chips reflects the tensions between preserving heritage and assimilating into a new cultural context. (Smith 150).

Smith uses food as a motif to explore larger themes of assimilation, resistance, and identity. The kitchen becomes a site of tension and a space for connection and negotiation, reflecting the broader experiences of immigrant communities in Britain. Zadie Smith uses food in *White Teeth* as a literal element of daily life and a powerful narrative device to explore identity, belonging, and the dynamic interplay of cultures. Through characters like Samad, the novel vividly illustrates the personal and generational struggles tied to cultural preservation in a multicultural world.

Postcolonial literature frequently engages with food as a symbol of colonial power dynamics. In Jean Rhys's "Wide Sargasso Sea" the protagonist's uneasy relationship with food mirrors her struggle with identity and displacement. Antoinette's preference for local Caribbean fruits over the "bland European dishes imposed by her English husband" signifies



her resistance to colonial domination and her yearning for cultural authenticity. The novel uses Antoinette's relationship with food to reflect larger colonialism and postcolonial resistance themes. Her rejection of European food becomes a subtle defiance against the colonial system and her husband's control. The Caribbean fruits symbolize a richness and vibrancy tied to the land, contrasting with the sterility of European norms.

Resistance and Empowerment

Literature often portrays food as a site of resistance and empowerment. In George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*, the detailed descriptions of meals prepared in the kitchens of Parisian restaurants reveal the exploitation of working-class labour. Food, in this context, becomes a symbol of survival and agency, as workers transform their limited resources into acts of artistry and sustenance. Beyond Orwell, this theme resonates in works like Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*, where food preparation serves as an act of emotional and cultural expression, allowing the protagonist, Tita, to reclaim her voice and identity. Similarly, in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, food becomes a powerful means of asserting agency and reclaiming humanity. Sethe's preparation of elaborate meals for her family transcends the act of cooking; it serves as an act of love, resistance, and cultural preservation against the dehumanizing legacy of slavery. Through the careful preparation of dishes, she creates a sense of normalcy and belonging for her children, offering them a life where they can experience joy, care, and abundance—concepts systematically denied to enslaved people. The communal aspect of these meals is equally significant; it becomes a space where trauma is shared, understood, and alleviated through the rituals of eating together. Morrison illustrates how food, a basic necessity, becomes a site of emotional healing and defiance, as Sethe asserts her right to nurture her family on her terms. This act also connects her to ancestral traditions, underscoring food's role as a vessel for cultural memory and resilience. In the broader narrative, food symbolizes sustenance not only for the body but also for the spirit, embodying a quiet but profound resistance to the erasure of identity and humanity imposed by slavery.

Sociology, Literature and Cultural Studies

The examination of food in literature necessitates an interdisciplinary approach. Sociology provides insight into how food practices construct and reinforce social hierarchies. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital" is particularly relevant, as it explains how culinary knowledge and preferences signal class belonging. For instance, in Kazuo Ishiguro's "The Remains of the Day," the meticulous dining rituals of Lord Darlington's household illustrate the performative nature of aristocratic identity. Cultural studies further illuminate the symbolic meanings of food, especially in postcolonial contexts. The commodification of exotic foods in global markets, as critiqued in Anita Desai's "Fasting, Feasting," reflects the lingering inequalities of colonialism. Finally, literary theory offers tools for analyzing the narrative and symbolic functions of food. Roland Barthes's notion of food as a "sign" in cultural systems underscores its semiotic significance. In Margaret Atwood's "The Edible Woman" the protagonist's rejection of food symbolizes her resistance to societal expectations and gender norms.

Conclusion

The intersection of food and social class in English literature provides a fertile ground for interdisciplinary exploration. By examining the symbolic, cultural, and economic dimensions of food, this paper sheds light on the complex ways in which literature reflects and critiques societal structures. Food in literature transcends its material necessity, becoming a narrative tool to explore human agency, cultural identity, and emotional healing.



It bridges the personal and the political, weaving individual stories into broader socio-historical contexts. As depictions of food evolve, they reflect shifting attitudes toward labour, consumption, and communal values. This continued evolution offers enduring insights into the human condition, making the study of food in literature a rich and compelling field for academic inquiry. Ultimately, the examination of food in English literature underscores its role as both a sustainer of life and a powerful metaphor for the complexities of existence. As the depictions of food continue to evolve, they offer enduring insights into the human condition, making them a compelling subject for academic inquiry.

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Food and Social Class in Eli Brown's *Cinnamon And Gunpowder*

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Abstract

Eli Brown's Cinnamon and Gunpowder explores the intricate relationship between food and social class against the backdrop of piracy and colonialism in the 19th century. The novel follows Owen Wedgwood, a refined chef abducted by the infamous pirate captain Mad Hannah Mabbot. Through Wedgwood's culinary ingenuity, the narrative juxtaposes the exclusivity of haute cuisine – reserved for the elite – within the communal and resourceful meals of the pirate group. Food becomes a medium for negotiating power and bridging cultural divides, highlighting the hierarchical disparities between the colonial elite and the marginalized. Mabbot's demand for gourmet meals aboard a chaotic pirate ship subverts traditional class roles, blending luxury with survival. Brown critiques the commodification of spices, an emblem of colonial exploitation, and elevates food as a tool for connection and resistance. The novel's fusion of culinary artistry and social commentary underscores how culinary practices shape relationships, survival, and societal hierarchies. It emphasises how food transcends class boundaries, serving as a tool for resistance, and reflects shifting power dynamics within different social structures through the lens of Marxist theory and Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Taste.

Keywords: Food, Social Class, Colonialism, Power Dynamics, Culinary Identity.

Introduction

In Eli Brown's *Cinnamon and Gunpowder*, food is not just a means of sustenance but a powerful tool for navigating identity and social class. The novel follows Owen Wedgwood, a talented chef who is captured by the pirate Captain Mad Hannah Mabbot. As Wedgwood is forced to prepare exquisite meals for the pirate crew, the culinary art forms become central to the explanation of class dynamics. Through the contrast of haute cuisine and pirate life, food symbolizes the tensions between colonial elites and marginalized groups, while also highlighting individual power and survival.

Food as a Marker of Social Class:

At the heart of *Cinnamon and Gunpowder*, is the contrast between the two worlds: the refined, hierarchical world of culinary excellence represented by Owen Wedgwood, the English chef, and the raw, lawless world of piracy led by Captain Mad Hannah Mabbot. The very act of preparing food becomes a symbol of social status, with Wedgwood's gourmet meals acting as a marker of elite taste and class. In **Marxist theory**, food is often seen as a commodity that reflects the division of labour and economic structures within society. The novel provides an interesting perspective on this by juxtaposing the luxury cuisine of the British aristocracy with the utilitarian food consumed by the pirate crew, illustrating the class-based differences in access to resources and the social significance of food.

Wedgwood's culinary expertise is a product of his privileged upbringing and the social capital he has accumulated through his work in high-end kitchens. His identity is closely tied to his role as a chef for the wealthy, and his status is defined by his ability to create dishes that demonstrate his cultural capital – a concept central to **Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Taste**. In contrast, the pirate crew's meals are crude and lack the refinement of



haute cuisine, yet they serve some basic functions : survival. For Captain Mabbot, food is a tool for control and manipulation, a medium of asserting power over Wedgwood, and also a way to bridge the divide between her status as feared pirate captain and the society that marginalizes her.

“The proper way is lost to me; my compass spins. I therefore give my entire attention to those works that seem to me most incorruptible: the application of heat, the proportion of seasoning, the arrangement of a plate.”

This reflection by Owen Wedgwood, a renowned chef, underscores his dedication to the culinary arts, which are often associated with high social status and refinement.

Food here operates as a means of social distinction, as Bourdieu’s theory of taste suggests that peoples’ preferences for certain foods or cuisines signal their positions within the social hierarchy. The pirate’s appreciation for Wedgwood’s refined meals is not just a matter of taste but also of cultural capital. The more Wedgwood uses his culinary skills to meet Mabbot’s demand, the more he becomes entangled in a system that forces him to reconsider his own identity and the meaning of this work. The meals he prepares for Mabbot are both an expression of his artistry and a means of survival, as food becomes a form of currency in a world dominated by power and violence.

Food as Identity and Survival:

Food in *Cinnamon and Gunpowder* is more than just a symbol of social class – it is also closely tied to identity. For Wedgwood, cooking is both a profession and a form of self-expression, allowing him to assert his identity even in the midst of captivity. In Marxist terms, his work as a chef reflects the exploitation of his labour within a capitalist system, where his talents are commodified to serve the needs of those in power. However, his ability to continue cooking, even under duress, allows him to maintain a sense of autonomy and control in a situation where he otherwise has little.

Mabbot’s obsession with food, particularly her demand for extravagant meals, reveals a deeper layer of her character. She is a woman who has been pushed to the margins of society and must assert her power through command over others, including Wedgwood. Her manipulation of food reflects her struggle to maintain control in a world that views her as an outsider. The act of consuming the meals Wedgwood prepares becomes a way for her to reclaim a sense of personal identity and power that is otherwise denied to her by her social status as a pirate.

“Some foods are so comforting, so nourishing of body and soul, that to eat them is to be home again after a long journey.”

Relating Bourdieu’s Theory of Taste, here, this sentiment highlights how certain dishes can evoke a sense of belonging and identity - providing comfort and a reminder of home, which is crucial for survival in challenging circumstances.

Food, in this context, serves both as a tool of survival and a means of self-preservation. For Wedgwood, cooking is the only skill he possesses that allows him to navigate the dangerous pirate world. Through food, he finds a way to maintain his dignity and humanity in a situation where he is otherwise powerless. This theme of food as a medium for survival is central to the novel, as it underscores the cultural identity in shaping how individuals interact with and navigate the world around them.

Social Class and Power Dynamics

In the broader context of Marxist theory, *Cinnamon and Gunpowder* offers a critique of the capitalist system, highlighting the ways in which food can both reflect and reinforce class struggles. The novel reveals how food, as a commodity, is deeply tied to the economic structures that dictate the lives of the characters. For Wedgwood, food is a means of survival



and, to some extent, resistance against the oppressive forces around him. However, it is also a symbol of how labour is exploited within a system where the chef's talents are reduced to a mere commodity.

Mabbot's character represents a different aspect of this system. As a pirate captain, she occupies a liminal space between the law and lawlessness, and her relationship with food reflects her desire to establish her own power within this framework. The meals she demands from Wedgwood serve not only to satiate her hunger but to assert her dominance in a world where traditional social structures have broken down. In this sense food becomes a vehicle for exploring the power dynamics between the oppressor and the oppressed, the exploiter and the exploited.

“Dear Mr. Wedgwood, Welcome to the Flying Rose . I hope you have settled to sea comfortably. Your lot may improve in direct proportion to your willingness. I do look forward to more of your fare. Let me lay out my proposal: You will, of a Sunday, cook for me, and me alone, the finest supper. You will neither repeat a dish nor serve foods that are in the slightest degree mundane. In return I will continue to keep you alive and well, and we may discuss an improvement of your quarters after a time. Should you balk in any fashion you will find yourself swimming home, whole or in pieces, depending upon the severity of my disappointment. How does this strike you? In anticipation, Capt. Hannah Mabbot”

Captain Mabbot's letter to Wedgwood illustrates the power dynamics aboard the ship, where his survival hinges on his ability to prepare exquisite meals, reflecting the intersection of social class and authority.

Food and Resistance – A Final Reflection

A powerful example of food as resistance in *Cinnamon and Gunpowder* can be drawn from Owen Wedgwood's determination to maintain his culinary craft despite being a prisoner on a pirate ship. His insistence on creating refined meals with limited resources serves as an act of rebellion against his captor's chaotic world. When Wedgwood uses stale ingredients and improvises with whatever he can find, such as using seawater for seasoning or fashioning substitutes for butter, he resists the dehumanizing conditions aboard the *Flying Rose*. By maintaining the rituals of fine dining, he symbolically preserves his identity and humanity in a setting that seeks to strip it away.

“With great energy I oversaw the unpacking of my provisions and set a scullery maid to heating the oven in preparation for a four-course meal. Despite my anxiety, I was looking forward to this short week away from the noise and bustle of London and had planned to take an early-morning stroll the following day to savor the wildflowers and sylvan air.”

This moment demonstrates how Wedgwood uses cooking not just to survive but to push back against the harshness of his situation. His persistence in creating something artful out of scarce resources is a subtle act of defiance, reclaiming a sense of control and dignity. The act of creating beauty and order in his meals, even under duress, becomes a way for Wedgwood to resist surrendering to the pirates' world. It shows food as a weapon of cultural and personal resistance.

Summation

In conclusion, *Cinnamon and Gunpowder* uses food as a powerful tool for exploring themes of social class, identity and power dynamics. Through the lens of Marxist theory and Bourdieu's Theory of Taste, the novel offers a nuanced critique of the ways in which food can both reinforce and challenge social hierarchies. Food is not simply a symbol of survival



or luxury in the novel - it is a means by which the characters assert their identities, navigate social structures, and resist the forces that seek to control them. Ultimately, the novel shows that food, while deeply embedded in social class and identity, is also a site of conflict and transformation, offering a compelling commentary on the intersection of power, culture, and survival.

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A Critical Exploration of Food and Culture in Postcolonial Literature

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Abstract

This paper investigates the intricate relationship between food and identity in postcolonial literature, analyzing how culinary traditions are employed to negotiate cultural identities, subvert colonialism, and navigate the complexities of globalization. By analyzing the representation of food in a range of postcolonial texts, including novels, short stories, and poetry, this paper highlights the significance of food as a symbol of cultural identity, communal belonging, and traditional heritage, and explores how it is used to negotiate power dynamics, challenge colonialism, and assert postcolonial identities. An analysis of the representation of food in postcolonial literature, reveals the complex ways in which food serves as a site of cultural expression, identity formation, and social negotiation in postcolonial contexts. This research explores the representation of food in postcolonial literature, shedding light on the multifaceted relationships between food, culture, and identity, and demonstrating how these relationships reflect and shape postcolonial realities.

Keywords: Food, Identity, Postcolonial Literature, Globalization, Literary Representation.

Postcolonial literature frequently employs food as a metaphor, leveraging the complexities of culinary culture to explore themes of identity, culture, colonialism, and globalization. Food plays a pivotal role in shaping our senses of self, culture, and community, influencing how we perceive ourselves and our places within the world. It explores the representation of food and identity in postcolonial literature, analyzing how food is used to negotiate cultural identities, resist colonialism, and navigate the challenges of globalization. In postcolonial literature, food frequently serves as a powerful symbol of identity, mirroring a character's cultural roots, socioeconomic status, and personal narratives. For instance, in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, the protagonist Saleem Sinai's affinity for traditional Indian sweets and spices poignantly underscores his connection to his Indian heritage and cultural legacy. Similarly, in Assia Djebar's seminal work *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, the narrator's vivid descriptions of quintessential Algerian dishes, such as couscous and tagine, function as a potent metaphor for her cultural identity and ancestral roots.

In postcolonial literature, food serves as a potent symbol of resistance against colonialism, subverting the historical imposition of colonial culinary traditions on colonized peoples. This phenomenon is rooted in the colonial context, where food was exploited as a tool of oppression, with colonial powers forcibly imposing their gastronomic practices on subjugated cultures. In response, postcolonial writers have strategically employed food as a means of asserting cultural autonomy and resisting colonial hegemony. A paradigmatic example of this literary trope is evident in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's seminal novel *The River Between*, where the protagonist Waiyaki's deliberate refusal to consume European cuisine constitutes a powerful act of defiance against colonial domination. The relentless march of globalization has precipitated a homogenization of culinary cultures worldwide, as multinational corporations aggressively promote a standardized, Western-centric diet that



threatens to erase traditional gastronomic practices. In response, postcolonial literature has emerged as a vocal critique of this trend, lamenting the erosion of indigenous food cultures and illuminating the far-reaching consequences of globalization on local communities and their cultural identities. This phenomenon is vividly illustrated in Arundhati Roy's acclaimed novel *The God of Small Things*, where the protagonist Rahel's deep affection for traditional Indian sweets serves as a poignant counterpoint to the insidious influx of Western fast food, symbolizing the tension between cultural heritage and globalization.

Food assumes a profound symbolic significance in postcolonial literature, functioning as a multifaceted metaphor that encapsulates the intricacies of identity, culture, colonialism, and globalization. Through nuanced representations of culinary practices and traditions, postcolonial writers adeptly navigate the complexities of cultural identity formation, mount resistance against colonialist ideologies, and articulate the challenges of navigating globalization's homogenizing forces. A critical examination of the culinary motif in postcolonial literature offers a richly textured understanding of the interstices between food, culture, and identity, laying bare the intricate power dynamics that shape individual and collective experiences. Food is deeply ingrained in human culture, extending beyond its fundamental role as sustenance to embody a rich symbol of identity, communal bonds, and cultural heritage. Within the realm of postcolonial literature, culinary themes assume a pivotal role in crafting narratives that probe the intricacies of identity, culture, and colonialism. This article undertakes an in-depth examination of the complex interplay between food, culture, and identity in postcolonial literature, analyzing how gastronomic motifs serve as a metaphorical lens to navigate the nuances of cultural identity formation, mount resistance against colonialist ideologies, and traverse the complexities of globalization.

Food also assumes a pivotal role in postcolonial literature as a form of culinary resistance against colonialism, subverting the historical dynamics of gastronomic imposition. In colonial contexts, food was often wielded as an instrument of oppression, with colonial powers forcibly imposing their culinary traditions on subjugated populations, thereby erasing indigenous gastronomic practices. In response, numerous postcolonial writers have strategically employed food as a medium to assert cultural autonomy, resist colonial hegemony, and reclaim indigenous identities. A paradigmatic illustration of this phenomenon is evident in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's seminal novel *The River Between*, where the protagonist Waiyaki's deliberate refusal to consume European cuisine serves as a potent symbol of his defiance against colonial domination. The relentless tide of globalization has precipitated a homogenization of culinary cultures worldwide, as multinational corporations aggressively promote a standardized, Western-centric diet that threatens to efface traditional gastronomic practices. In response, postcolonial literature has emerged as a vociferous critique of this phenomenon, lamenting the erosion of indigenous food cultures and illuminating the far-reaching consequences of globalization on local communities and their cultural identities. This tension is vividly illustrated in Arundhati Roy's acclaimed novel *The God of Small Things*, where the protagonist Rahel's deep affection for traditional Indian sweets serves as a poignant counterpoint to the insidious influx of Western fast food in her community, symbolizing the fraught intersection of cultural heritage and globalization. In the realm of postcolonial literature, food emerges as a potent metaphor that facilitates the negotiation of cultural identities. Postcolonial writers strategically employ culinary themes to explore the complexities of identity formation, cultural heritage, and the impact of colonialism and globalization. By utilizing food as a metaphor, postcolonial writers can navigate the intricate



dynamics of cultural identity. Food serves as a tangible connection to one's cultural heritage, evoking memories and emotions that are deeply ingrained. Through the depiction of traditional cuisine, postcolonial writers can reclaim and celebrate their indigenous cultures, resisting the homogenizing forces of globalization.

Furthermore, food becomes a symbol of resistance against colonialism and cultural imperialism. By asserting their culinary traditions, postcolonial writers challenge the dominant narratives of colonial powers and reclaim their cultural autonomy. This resistance is exemplified in the works of writers such as Salman Rushdie, Assia Djebar, and Ngugi wa Thiongo, who employ food as a metaphor to subvert colonialist ideologies and reclaim their cultural identities. In addition, postcolonial writers use food to explore the complexities of identity formation in the context of globalization. The influx of Western fast food and the homogenization of culinary cultures threaten to erase traditional foodways and cultural identities. In response, postcolonial writers depict the tension between traditional cuisine and Westernized diets, highlighting the need to preserve cultural heritage in the face of globalization. The use of food as a metaphor in postcolonial literature serves as a powerful tool for negotiating cultural identities. Through the depiction of culinary traditions, postcolonial writers reclaim their cultural heritage, resist colonialism and globalization, and explore the complexities of identity formation. As a result, food emerges as a vital component of postcolonial literature, offering a nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics of cultural identity. In postcolonial literature, food is often used as a symbol of cultural heritage and tradition. For example, in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, the protagonist's memories of his grandmother's cooking serve as a connection to his Bengali heritage. Food is also used in postcolonial literature as a marker of social class. For example, in Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, the characters' access to food is determined by their social class, with the wealthy characters having access to a wide range of luxurious foods and the poor characters struggling to access necessities.

Food is also used in postcolonial literature as a form of resistance to colonialism and oppression. For example, in Assia Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, the narrator's description of traditional Algerian dishes serves as a form of resistance to French colonialism. Food also plays a significant role in the diasporic experience, as depicted in postcolonial literature. For example, in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, the protagonist's struggles to navigate the culinary traditions of her Indian heritage in the context of her American upbringing serve as a metaphor for the complexities of the diasporic experience. Food is also used in postcolonial literature to explore the politics of memory and how food can evoke memories of the past. For example, in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, the protagonist's memories of his childhood are triggered by the smell of certain foods. Food is also used in postcolonial literature to explore the performance of identity and how food can be used to perform cultural identity. For example, in Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*, the protagonist's mother's cooking serves as a way for her to perform her cultural identity and connect with her Indian heritage. Finally, food is also used in postcolonial literature to explore the politics of belonging and how food can be used to negotiate belonging in a new country. For example, in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, the protagonist's struggles to navigate the culinary traditions of her Indian heritage in the context of her American upbringing serve as a metaphor for the complexities of belonging in a new country.

Food is also used in postcolonial literature as a form of resistance to colonialism. In many colonial contexts, food was used as a tool of oppression, with colonial powers imposing their culinary traditions on colonized peoples. In response, many postcolonial



writers use food as a way to assert their cultural autonomy and resist colonialism. For example, in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*, the protagonist Waiyaki's refusal to eat European food is a symbol of his resistance to colonialism.

Furthermore, food is used in postcolonial literature to explore the complexities of cultural identity in the postcolonial context. In Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, for example, the protagonist Rahel's love for traditional Indian sweets is contrasted with the influx of Western fast food in her community. This contrast serves as a metaphor for the tension between traditional and modern cultural identities in postcolonial India. In addition, food is used in postcolonial literature to explore the theme of globalization and its impact on local cultures. In Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, for example, the protagonist Biju's experiences as a cook in New York City serve as a metaphor for the globalization of food cultures and the loss of traditional culinary practices.

In conclusion, food plays a significant role in postcolonial literature, serving as a metaphor for cultural identity, resistance to colonialism, and critique of globalization. Through their representations of food, postcolonial writers negotiate cultural identities, resist colonialism, and navigate the complexities of globalization. By examining the representation of food and identity in postcolonial literature, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between food, culture, and identity in the postcolonial context.

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Exploration of Food and Identity in J. Ryan Stradal's *Kitchens of the Great Midwest*

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Abstract

J. Ryan Stradal's Kitchens of the Great Midwest is a masterful exploration of the intersection between food and human experience, using the culinary arts as a storytelling medium to delve into themes of identity, relationships, and cultural evolution. The narrative follows Eva Thorvald, whose journey from a challenging childhood to becoming a celebrated chef is intricately tied to her love for food and the people it connects her to. Each chapter spotlights a specific dish or ingredient, not only marking pivotal moments in Eva's life but also intertwining the stories of those whose lives she touches. Through its richly detailed descriptions of flavours, textures, and aromas, the novel illustrates the emotional power of food to evoke memories and forge connections. The chocolate habanero pepper, for instance, serves as both a symbol of Eva's resilience and a narrative thread linking diverse characters and events. Stradal also uses food to comment on societal disparities, contrasting high-end gastronomy with the simplicity of home-cooked meals to highlight issues of accessibility and privilege. By weaving personal stories with culinary traditions, Kitchens of the Great Midwest transcends its narrative to become a meditation on the universal role of food in shaping identity and community. Stradal's work celebrates the power of food to unite, transform, and tell stories, making it a profound contribution to the literary exploration of human connection through the lens of cuisine.

Keywords: Resilience, Gastronomy, Transform, Disparities.

Introduction

Food and literature are intertwined through their shared capacity to evoke feelings, tell stories, and illustrate the complexities of human existence. From timeless classics to modern narratives, food acts as a significant narrative element, representing identity, relationships, memories, and societal frameworks. J. Ryan Stradal's *Kitchens of the Great Midwest* serves as a prime example of this connection, intricately weaving culinary traditions into a captivating tale about bonding, resilience, and cultural development. This essay examines how literature employs food not merely as a backdrop for character growth and plot progression but also as a reflection of societal standards and a source of emotional depth. One of the most notable works showcasing the intricate relationship between food and literature is *Kitchens of the Great Midwest*, which intertwines culinary experiences into a narrative that highlights the profound connections between identity, family, and cultural progression.

Food and Identity

In *Kitchens of the Great Midwest*, food is deeply connected to identity. The main character, Eva Thorvald, navigates the ups and downs of life through her changing relationship with food. Each chapter presents a different dish or ingredient, symbolizing



critical moments in her life journey. From lutefisk dinners that represent her Scandinavian background to heirloom tomato salads that showcase her culinary talent, food serves as a metaphor for self-realization and personal development. Stradal's depiction aligns with a wider literary tradition where food represents cultural and personal identity. Whether it's the fragrant Indian meals in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* or the complex recipes handed down through generations in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, food remains a powerful symbol of our identities and origins. The novel illustrates beautifully how food creates bonds, overcoming barriers of class, culture, and time. Eva's exclusive pop-up dinners unite individuals from diverse backgrounds, while shared meals within the narrative become occasions for reconciliation and celebration. A particularly moving theme is the chocolate habanero pepper, which not only connects multiple characters but also signifies the universal human experience of growth, resilience, and change. This theme echoes in other literary works as well. This fragmented approach mirrors the way relationships and experiences shape an individual over time. Stradal's decision to narrate Eva's story primarily through the perspectives of others creates a mosaic-like portrayal of her life, emphasizing the communal nature of her journey. By using multiple points of view, Stradal crafts a layered narrative that reflects the diversity of Midwestern voices. Each chapter's distinct tone and style reflect the narrator's personality, enriching the reader's understanding of Eva's world. Furthermore, each chapter centres around a dish or ingredient, serving as both a plot device and a metaphor for personal and cultural connections. For instance, the lutefisk dinner and the chilli pepper chapter reveal cultural traditions and personal struggles, underscoring the interplay between food and identity.

This symbol holds significant power due to the strong identity associated with the central character, Eva Thorvald, in *Kitchens of the Great Midwest*. Her journey, woven through her father's passion for cooking to her emergence as a celebrated chef, is deeply intertwined with food. Each chapter of the book centres around a particular dish or ingredient, reflecting the various phases of Eva's life and the lives she impacts. In essence, these culinary elements signify personal development, the flow of time, and how food connects individuals to their heritage. For instance, the lutefisk dinner vividly illustrates Eva's Scandinavian roots, showcasing how traditional foods link her to her cultural background while she carves out her distinct path in today's culinary scene. The ongoing tie between food and identity strikes a chord with readers, evoking how food serves as a marker for both personal and cultural belonging. Stradal's diverse cast of characters enriches the story, with each individual playing a role in Eva's journey. Key figures such as Lars Thorvald, Eva's father, whose culinary enthusiasm fuels her passion, and Cynthia, a character whose insecurities and biases reveal the intricacies of human connections, are particularly noteworthy. *Kitchens of the Great Midwest* has garnered significant praise for its creative storytelling and heartfelt examination of its themes. Critics commend Stradal for encapsulating the spirit of Midwestern life while exploring universal themes of love, loss, and self-exploration. In literature, food extends beyond its fundamental role of sustaining the body; it serves as a reflection of the social, cultural, and personal intricacies of the characters and stories it inhabits. Whether symbolizing power, conveying affection, or delving into identity, food is a recurring motif that informs and mirrors human experiences, resonating with readers on both emotional and intellectual levels. Through the exploration of food's role in literature, we gain richer insights into how literature reflects life, revealing the intersections of culture, identity, and the human experience. "*Theirs was mixed-race marriage – between a Norwegian and a Dane – and thus all things culturally important to*



one but not the other were given a free pass and critiqued only in unmixed company.” – (Stradal, 2015, p. 2). The novel’s humour and warmth resonate with readers, making it both accessible and profound. Its focus on food culture has inspired discussions about the role of cuisine in shaping identity and community.

In *Kitchens of the Great Midwest*, food is intricately tied to identity. The protagonist, Eva Thorvald, experiences life’s highs and lows through her evolving relationship with food. Each chapter features a distinct dish or ingredient, reflecting key stages of her journey. From lutefisk dinners that signify her Scandinavian heritage to heirloom tomato salads that mark her culinary genius, food becomes a metaphor for self-discovery and personal growth. Stradal’s portrayal aligns with a broader literary tradition where food embodies cultural and personal identity. Whether it’s the aromatic Indian dishes in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* or the intricate recipes passed through generations in Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club*, food remains a profound symbol of who we are and where we come from.

This book by Stradal demonstrates the way food fosters connections among people, leading to relationships and a sense of community. Regardless of whether it’s a casual potluck or an elaborate meal, the experience of sharing food promotes closeness, reconciliation, and understanding in communal settings. A powerful illustration of this is the chocolate habanero pepper, which interweaves various characters and storylines. An all-consuming childhood passion evolves into a significant component of her career, where life continues to intertwine with others as much as possible. The progression from seed to plate symbolizes the metamorphosis of food, which conveys connections and narrates stories. Eva’s path from a childhood marred by tragedy to becoming an esteemed chef captures the theme of resilience. Even after losing her parents at a young age, she channels her love for food into a career that shapes her identity and enables her to connect with others. The chilli peppers represent Eva’s fierce determination and her capability to flourish despite challenges. Her culinary adventures mirror her personal development, with each dish signifying an important moment in her life. Food acts as a metaphor for self-expression and a way to connect across cultural and generational divides. Stradal emphasizes the deep bonds people create over shared meals, portraying food as a common language. The lutefisk dinner shows how traditions influence identity and family ties, while Eva’s pop-up dinners highlight the communal and transformative power of food. The novel contrasts high-end cuisine with homemade meals, highlighting issues of access, privilege, and the commercialization of food culture. For example, while Eva’s exclusive pop-up dinners cater to the ultra-wealthy, this disparity reflects her background and the simplicity of dishes like peanut butter bars. This contrast emphasizes that food both connects and separates people, symbolizing the underlying social dynamics at play. The novel effectively demonstrates how food creates bonds, transcending barriers of class, culture, and time. Eva’s luxurious pop-up dinners gather individuals from diverse backgrounds, while communal meals in the narrative serve as opportunities for healing and celebration. A particularly meaningful motif is the chocolate habanero pepper, which not only links various characters but also represents the common human experiences of growth, resilience, and change.

Stradal’s depiction of the Midwest highlights its understated allure, humour, and tenacity. The novel honours the region’s culinary traditions while also exploring its quirks. The characters exemplify a practical approach to life that reflects the Midwestern ethos of diligence and modesty. The narrative is anchored in a distinct cultural backdrop through the inclusion of local cuisines and customs, enhancing its authenticity. Eva Thorvald emerges as an engaging main character whose love for food shapes her entire existence. Her character



typifies the self-made individual, showcasing ambition, inventiveness, and self-sufficiency. Even with her successes, Eva stays humble, representing the humility often linked with Midwestern culture. Her interactions with food and people demonstrate her profound empathy and insight into the human condition. This theme finds parallels in other literary works. Stradal employs rich sensory descriptions to evoke memories and feelings, enabling readers to engage deeply with the characters' journeys. For Eva, food serves as a language that expresses love and longing, particularly in her estranged relationships. Her heirloom tomato salad, in particular, is the signature dish that encapsulates her journey toward reconciliation and acceptance. It becomes a metaphor representing healing and personal growth. It further illustrates the bittersweet flavor of nostalgia, as characters reflect on their meals that evoke memories of deceased loved ones and past joys. These moments represent how food embodies the full spectrum of human experiences, from happiness to sorrow. *Kitchens of the Great Midwest* employs food to offer social critique, juxtaposing the elite realm of fine dining with the straightforwardness of home-cooked meals. Eva's ascent from modest origins to becoming a renowned chef reflects the challenges and inequalities present in contemporary food culture. While her pop-up dinners signify exclusivity, her bond with traditional, simple dishes highlights the universal appeal of cuisine.

In literature, food often critiques social conventions. Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* illustrates class disparity through the stark differences between the meagre gruel of the workhouses and the extravagant feasts of the affluent. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* portrays food scarcity to illustrate the war's impact on cultural identity and daily existence. Stradal's novel also encourages readers to reflect on issues of privilege and accessibility in the culinary realm. The sensory aspects of food make it an effective medium for stirring emotions. Stradal vividly captures this in his flavorful descriptions, allowing readers to experience Eva's life through their senses. The heirloom tomato salad, pivotal to Eva's career, represents her journey of healing and reconciliation, embodying the emotional richness of her narrative. The ability to evoke feelings through food is a significant feature of literature.

Stradal's work similarly utilizes food to evoke memories and emotions, enhancing the story's depth. *Kitchens of the Great Midwest* expertly weaves together the bittersweet elements of family, identity, and the profound effect of food on our lives. Central to this narrative is Eva Thorvald's journey, which underscores how our passions and struggles mould us in unexpected ways. Through Eva's evolution from an unconventional upbringing to her emergence as a culinary icon, Stradal illustrates how the relationships we build—both temporary and lasting—have lasting impacts on who we are. “When Lars first held [his daughter], his heart melted over her like butter on warm bread, and he would never get it back” (Stradal, 2015, p.7). The novel also pays tribute to the rich diversity of Midwestern culture, where food serves as a universal medium for love, community, and expression. With its touching humour and sincere exploration of life's intricacies, *Kitchens of the Great Midwest* leaves readers with a lasting appreciation for the bonds we create and the ways they nurture us, much like the meals enjoyed together at a table. Ultimately, Eva's tale is a testament to finding one's place in the world while remaining true to the flavours and memories that shape us—a delicious reminder of how food and family can lead us home, regardless of how far we roam.

Conclusion

Kitchens of the Great Midwest celebrates the intricate relationship between food and storytelling, illustrating the complexities of human existence. Through Eva's experiences,



Stradal reveals how culinary customs serve as reflections of identity, connectors of relationships, and platforms for societal commentary. The novel emphasizes the transformative nature of food, illustrating that it transcends mere nourishment to become a means of expressing love, confronting difficulties, and sharing narratives. By placing food at the heart of the story, Stradal underscores its status as a universal language that can bring people together and enhance the fabric of human connection. As we delve into this work, it becomes clear that food and literature engage in a significant dialogue about memory, culture, and the lasting essence of humanity. *Kitchens of the Great Midwest* stands as a tribute to the intricate link between food and literature. It is a richly woven narrative that focuses both on story and cuisine, exploring themes of identity, connection, and social dynamics that nourish both the intellect and the spirit. In this way, it reinforces the universal idea that food transcends its role as mere nourishment, acting as a potent vehicle for storytelling that bridges gaps between the past and the present, the individual and the community, and culture and personal identity. Food in literature fulfills much more than its primary role of feeding the body. It reflects the societal, cultural, and personal intricacies of the characters and stories in which it appears. Whether symbolizing power, conveying love, or delving into identity, food emerges as a recurrent symbol that shapes and mirrors human experiences, striking an emotional and intellectual chord with readers. By examining food's role in literature, we enhance our understanding of how literature reflects life, offering insights into the intersections of culture, identity, and the human experience.

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Cultural and Nutritional Perspectives on Food and Pregnancy in Anne Finger's *Past Due*

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Abstract

Anne Finger is a disability writer and a disability activist with reasons who often employs strands of gender and food concerns to probe issues of otherness, subjectivity, and power. This paper focuses on the traversals of gender and food in occasioning the social and cultural commentaries inherent in Anne Finger's writings. This paper follows literary textual analysis to reveal food preparation, consumption, and socialization themes. It does so to expose how these musculoskeletal structures and the gendered nutritional advice associated with them align with both feminist and disability perspectives. This research examines food's utilitarian and figurative meanings and uses in the context of gendered interactions based on an assessment of Finger's fiction and autobiographical works. This paper grabs people's attention, Finger quite often tells how gender and food-oriented culture affect disability and physical movement through the lens of food as a source of oppression and as care. For instance, characters in a search of affectionate relationships, or characters suffering rape by society embody relationships of agency and dependence. This paper demonstrates how food is employed as a resistance strategy by people inside the body who are marked as other by gender and ability standards. Other than obscene constructions, Fingers' artwork embodies actions of self-determination and survival via culinary customs. Finally, Finger has made a deep and significant contribution to contemporary writing, particularly on problems such as food, gender, and disability.

Keywords: Disability, Feminism, Literature and Culture, Culinary Culture, Gender Identity.

Introduction

Arlene Voski Avakian takes a closer look at cultural, political, and personal issues as important as food, gender, and power issues. One of the disability activists and prominent champion writers Anne Finger, fights for disabled women in her writing. **“Food consumption is an extraordinarily social activity laden with complex and shifting layers of meaning. Not only what we eat, but how and why we eat, tell us much about society, history, cultural change, and humans' views of themselves”** (Avakian 62). The memoir *Past Due* (1990) presents an incredible narrative of pregnancy, disability, and motherhood turning to the cultural and individualized sense of using a portion of food. In this narrative, Finger integrates her pregnant figure with the story of larger social systems that pressure the female silhouette during pregnancy. *Past Due* is an insightful and extensive review of dairy challenges conventional wisdom regarding pregnancy what is expected of women during this period and what they should consume through her use of language to connect personal experience with broader narratives (Simkin et al., 2018). This article analyzes the cultural and nutritional representations of eating during pregnancy by situating Finger's story in larger cultural and medical texts drawn from *Past Due*. Far from just being a source of nourishment, food serves as a cultural impact, a place of emotional work, and a mirror of



medicalized messages about health and self-governance (Das and Addlakha, 2001). Pregnant women in Western societies receive numerous prescriptions regarding the type of food that they should consume, and this has social fears of power, virtue, and motherly obligation. Finger rightly dials with these kinds of norms explaining their impact of shaming and making women feel guilty for going against normative dietary practices. Her work focuses on the gustatory and affective, on the need to listen to our bodies instead of dieting. Finger's narrative, this study also concerns itself with the medicalization of pregnancy (Avakian, 2005) and the existence of a gap between the physiological and the empiric. Noting these frameworks as being developed with ableist premises into consideration the variety of women's needs is absent, especially in the case of the disabled. In this way, Finger calls upon readers to reflect on the homogenization of advice to diet that Western medicine provides, instead, urging the protection of cultural and worldwide differences. Finally, *Past Due* teaches libertarianism and standing up against medical and social despair. Through presenting the food as a limitation on the one hand, and the ability on the other hand, Finger's memoir is a powerful postmodern commentary on the culture that should inspire the culture to embrace pregnancy and motherhood in its multilayered forms. These ideas draw on the cultural, nutritional, and emotional essences of food and pregnancy, which this article discusses.

Review of Literature

Das and Addlakha (2001) analyze the relations of distress, gender, and domesticity to self-hood in Indian homes, which can afford or deny resistance and agency to subjects in the domestic domain. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (2005) argues for the formation of a relationship between the two fields of study- feminism and disability studies, to enable the study of gender, disability, and embodiment while critiquing dominant and integration normative discipline and advancing postmenopausal embodiments, intersectionality, and justice. Mintz (2009) focuses on women with disabilities' autobiographical texts that interrogate norms, identity, and agency, as well as offering possibilities to remap culture. Lennard J. Davis (2013) looks at disability in the socio-cultural-political context to problematize the older approaches and push for disability studies to invade other areas of study as he unpacks identity, power, and representation. Finally, in *Fat Studies and Disability Studies*, although these two forms of marginalization and oppression are major concerns of society, Mollow (2014) pointed out that there is little intersection between the two so they should come together to challenge the fat and disabled citizenship model that is found in society.

Food as Cultural Symbol and Pregnancy

Food is a cultural symbol and it is also a way of expressing your taste in language by loving the food, serving and cooking. The woman, who is the primary attachment figure and has control over the infant's and family's needed environment, supplies, and relatedness, lies at the root of the connection most people make between food and love. Where a mother regulates or trains on "table manners" which means to eat if hungry, or, eat at a specified period, this individual conditions or trains a child on expectations of the world and how to want and expect food in it.. Sceats (2000) testified to the role of women in motherhood vulnerable to serving a food of wish, passion, nurturing, consumption, and eating. She mentioned that "woman too is helpless, doomed to repeat patterns of mothering within a socially constructed role of motherhood" (17). Finger's *Past Due* observed that eating habits of food form an important part of the story - the biological need and as a symbol that represents a cultural attitude to pregnancy and parenting. The story begins with the journey



of Finger's imagination about pregnancy as a "dream of perfection" (Finger 20). She expressed that active routine: "I'd woken up at four that morning. I'd had all-you-can-eat sushi the night before and had drunk glass after glass of water to wash down that salty fish and the hot green wasabi" (3). Much of what Finger points out focuses on the societal demands and opinions regarding, not only what is eaten but also the role of a 'good mother.'. She highlighted maternity advice dietary regulation - a significant aspect of pregnant women's lives in Western cultures can involve consuming a raft of culinary guidelines, reflecting wider cultures of responsibility, rationing, and moral regulation. For example, a campaign replete with images of nutrient-rich foods like green vegetables, whole grain products, and lean meats gives an ideal fictional figure of the self-sacrificing mother who had a food allergy during pregnancy. Finger talks about food hypersensitivity, "I'd had none of my usual premenstrual feelings. About ten days before, I'd been riding the Muni in San Francisco when a boy sat down next to me and began to eat peanuts and the smell made me nauseous" (4). She proved how medicine stolen the lives of disabled women, "How medicine robs women of our belief in our perceptions, that I'm a prisoner of medicalization too. I didn't believe yet that I was pregnant" (4).

As Bentley observes, "medicalization of motherhood" (qtd in Avakian 67). Bentley described the medicalization of motherhood, where pregnancy and birth are increasingly dominated by healthcare professionals who work against women's presence and redefine motherhood as a mere medical process. Her feelings would ensure that her unborn child receives the best. Finger fit of crying, "And I cry every day. I cry over the loss of the beautiful birth I had hoped to have. I cry over the loss of the dream of the perfect child, of the perfect parent I had hoped to be" (Finger 169). She mourns the loss of a hoped-for birth and perfect child every day but especially for the loss of the dream. For that reason, the acceptance of oppression as soon as it becomes a norm in a given society or when the bodies and circumstances of the women, they govern do not meet the adopted standard, Finger's case challenges such cultural standards and norms. She evaluated the marketing and industrialization of the food supply by the late nineteenth century and provided a substantial base for changing guidelines in baby caring and feeding. Less than a hundred years before most products consumed by Americans included soups and stews, bread, dairy, fresh meats, fruits, and vegetables in their season. Finger indites,

When I was pregnant- pregnant for the second time, pregnant and expecting a baby- I became a pure vessel in a toxic sea. I didn't pump my gas; I didn't eat liver- liver is the body's toxic waste dump. The book says, "Remember that pregnancy is a normal, healthy state." But it also says, don't take a hot tub, avoid heavy traffic, don't go swimming in polluted water. Stay away from cigarette smoke, and don't clean the oven. Don't chew sugarless gum. Stay away from food additives. Bottled water is probably a good idea. Pregnancy is a normal state; the world's just out of kilter. (Finger, 49)

This way, she illustrates how they manage their diet to ensure they are moral and how they are punishing themselves for not adhering to these gorge diet guidelines. Finger followed Brewer's pregnancy diet, similar to "the football team diet" (61), aiming for hunger control. She enjoyed pregnancy and enjoyed low-fat foods. Finger's diet plan "If you skip a single meal, you are hungry as much as you want. I *like* being pregnant, I decided. I took back a container of low-fat raspberry yoghurt, and, after a minute or so of consideration, a Jack LaLanne Protein Bar" (61). Finger also looks at how austerity hunger and nourishment are used in the same context within the text. Finger "I was hungry, my throat was dry, but I



knew that I could have nothing to eat” (66). Food also transmutes into a place where pregnant women have no option but to choose whether or not to go for what they desire. Finger finds freedom in her words: “Now you also have to choose not to choose” (37). This kind of freedom that Finger gives with the words that one has to decide not to decide. She introduces ‘the choice’ to disabled women to find the space of freedom and thought. For instance, considerations are often overlooked effaced, or rationalized as drives to be satiated or desires to be sublimated. Desires might mean a capability of bending rigid laws and cultural references to food, which smooths such duality in Finger’s case.

Nutrition Requirements for Pregnancy

This paper explores how medication has redefined the concept of food consumption during this formative stage of reproduction. Through the medium of narrative story, Finger experiences pregnancy as a woman against the institutional setting in which such expert’s knowledge about pregnancy nutrition is often presented as a neutral, almost scientific recommendation that is misleading because it is steeped in a belief system that defines health and risk and who is responsible for what. Bentley pointed out that with “the medicalization of motherhood there were more and more reasons why breast milk became inadequate” (qtd in Avakian 68). This is particularly evident from Finger’s own experiences of the medicalized accounts of these cultures are filled with these gaps and fallacies. Finger “This is my fate, I think, to be caught between doctors who think my body is a wreck and want to slice me open and try vainly to make me “normal” and alternative health people who think that there’s nothing wrong with me that a little brown rice and meditation won’t cure” (61). For example, excessive focus on weight gain during pregnancy may leave women in a quandary: they have to maintain the weight that they are supposed to gain and avoid gaining too much of it as well. This somewhat paradoxical state may induce worry or feelings of inadequacy in pregnant women, which is indicative of broader cultural toxic phantasms of mastery and the body. Finger mentioned “that all my ills, including my desire not to be healthy, were due to karma, and if I didn’t work it out in this life, there was always the next one” (63). To the idea of karma, she blamed all her evil deeds, bodily illness, unhealthy inclination, etc., adding that if they were not attended to; then would certainly be meted out to her and others in the future.

Further, in Finger’s story, it was pointed out that these issues are not compartmentalized but interconnected especially when concerning disability. She discusses the demand for health by going through different health professionals and the fight between disease and death with different kinds of weapons. Finger noted, “Health becomes an elusive commodity sought through visits to health spas, acupuncturists, psychotherapists, homoeopaths, chiropractors, nutritionists, herbalists, and naturopaths. As in Western medicine, disease and death are enemies to be battled, albeit with different weapons” (63). She raises a question on the fact that all female individuals with the capability of pregnancy go through a single diet and health framework as she is a handicapped woman. She argues that medical discourses are ableist and often deny the diverse needs and actualities of expectant women.

Sense and Emotion of Eating

Next to culture and nutrient value, food in *Past Due* has significant feelings and touch sensations for the reader. Finger centres itself on the food she takes – filled with discomfort and contractions. Her description gives an example of how some of the meals like animals produce emotional Opt. Finger connoisseur words: “Hot food was supposed to be good too, and I ate ribs with hot sauce, pizza with extra red peppers, Indian food... I ordered spinach and chicken. “Very hot,” I told him. “Very, very hot.” (91). Finger provides a detailed



representation of how the notions of identity, memory, and food interpenetrate. Structurally, women use food as a coping strategy through which they deal with the various emotions experienced throughout pregnancy since hormonal changes cause dramatic changes in the body. Finger explained the sweet-smelling tea with pain: “The show ended. It was eleven o’clock. It seemed as if my contractions were fading, and Jane started to make me another cup of blue cohosh and pennyroyal tea. But then the strongest contraction I’d felt yet coursed through me. I called into the kitchen, “Forget the tea!” (97). Finger conveys ‘taste’ to the audience with the first experience of being disabled and pregnant in San Francisco, the author shares the problems she faced: “My first taste of what being disabled and pregnant was going to be like happened in San Francisco” (77).

Through close attention to the haptic features of foods, Finger articulates the basic experience of embodiment against the normalized pressures of the slender belly. It is possible to observe the same feeling of disdain: “I am sick of being tired. I am sick of being heavy. I am sick of waiting” (86). Finger described the simplest pleasure connected with having certain sorts of meals, for example, a plain fruit or a rather indulgent dessert, people get a very clear signal of how important it is to listen to one’s body. In this approach, she challenges the myth that pregnant women should suffer and have very little say or very restricted freedom regarding what they eat, which may not be good. The individual seeks their body and life back admittedly being air shut, acknowledging disability as a physical instead of social construct. She wants her life back to accept her disability as a physical impairment and not a social construct and would rather be quadriplegic than paraplegic. Finger intrigues that “The sink is always filled with dirty dishes. I want my body back; I want my life back. For the first time in my life, I feel my disability as a physical reality, not just as a social condition. I would rather be a quadriplegic than be fatigued like this. Well, OK, not a quad, but a paraplegic” (86)

Moreover, Sceats remarked that nurturing in mothering is a method or procedure – the discursively constructed practice of repeated care and feeding – and was in a state of being fundamentally charitable in theory. Sceats pointed out “In all important spheres of mothering, food-giving is a matter of routine; nurturing depends on repeated and regular care and feeding rather than the occasional spontaneous act and is, in theory at least, essentially altruistic” (Sceats 11). Altruism can therefore be defined as a state of having concern for the other party without having to think of one’s self. Mother is the only unselfish and self-sacrificing person in the world. Besides nurturing, she offers her kid love, contempt, encouragement, or terror; all rolled into one. As stated by the archetypes of the ancient mother-ruled culture, maternity represents a conception of unlimited and all-conquering authority. However, the position of women in Western culture is indefinable, is arbitrary; they possess power, but they are powerless in social and home contexts as they are caring, serving, and submissive. This is evidenced by the images of mothers, and mother figures as slaves, on the other hand as food providers, the other.

Conclusion

Anne Finger’s *Past Due* goes against conventional thinking and opens up a broader, more welcoming worldview of one of the most significant life transitions by offering a thoughtful and nuanced analysis of the cultural and nutritional implications of food during pregnancy. Quite typical for her autobiography is the insistence on understanding the other kinds of the female experience or the interdependence of agency, science, and culture. This paper focuses on the role of food, Finger does not only raise questions about pregnancy but also addresses more comprehensive questions of cultural and assimilation impact on



perceptions of food and femininity. Thus, questioning pregnancy and parenting, Finger offers to reconsider cultural and dietary myths as the only options. Thus, while doing so, it also becomes a note for appreciating/diversifying women's experiences and an equally forceful work of protest and active appeal.

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Scarcity of Food and Social Disintegration in the Select Works of Nuruddin Farah

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Abstract

The food crisis in Somalia is made worse with decades of conflict, environmental problems, and global geopolitical concerns. Somalia's economy was formerly based on agriculture, which provided income through fishing, agricultural farming, and animal husbandry. Prolonged violence that began in the 1980s destroyed agricultural systems, uprooted communities, and interfered with the production of food. The 1992 famine and the 2011 East African drought both killed 300,000 people, highlighting Somalia's susceptibility to food insecurity. Somalia's reliance on outside food sources has left it extremely vulnerable, resulting in social instability, disease outbreaks, and starvation. These issues have been made worse by a lack of rainfall, which has made humanitarian assistance vital. Women and children are disproportionately affected by malnutrition. Delays in development, decreased immunity, and higher rates of maternal and newborn mortality result from limited access to vital nutrients. Women frequently forego their dietary requirements to provide for their children, which exacerbates health problems. Stories of families experiencing famine and social problems, such as young people stealing food to survive, create a sombre image of despair. Sustained international attention, assistance for agricultural recovery, and resilient approaches to enhance food security and reduce malnutrition, especially among vulnerable populations are all necessary to address this situation. To restore dignity and nutrition to its people, Somalia's predicament necessitates immediate and coordinated action.

Keywords: Conflict, Famine, Food Insecurity, Malnutrition, Social Disintegration.

Famine and food insecurity are enduring problems which is strongly reflected in Farah's fictional examinations of hunger. Economic instability, violence, and drought are cyclical phenomena that have exacerbated inequality and eroded social institutions while fostering a culture of scarcity. In Somalia, food is in high demand. Agriculture is the core livelihood of the Somali people. Agriculture was the prominent source of occupation. Crop husbandry, animal rearing, and fishing were the main occupations of Somalia's agricultural community. The long-term violence which began in the early 1980s had a significant effect on this situation and drastically changed the basic livelihood of people.

Agriculture made a substantial contribution to food security in those days, commonly grown crops by farmers include vegetables, sorghum, maize, and millet. Small-scale farming was an integral component of the agricultural sector. The problems were made worse by drought and hunger, which led to a large need for humanitarian aid. Somalia was home to a huge population of animals in Africa. Somalia's nomadic masses like camels, goats, and sheep, pay for a large natural wealth of the nation. Several animals were lost because of the conflicts and the disorder of old pastoralist structures, displacement, and looting. People had no chance of cultivation after the commencement of war. This results in a lack of food and livestock. In an interview 'Witnessing Contemporary Somalia from Abroad: An Interview with Nuruddin Farah', Farah said that No farming was done, and nobody was busy. And



therefore as a consequence there was famine, and the famine was not because the rain didn't come or something like that, but because people were not busy farming. Because the young men were recruited into the army and they were fighting.

No farming was done due to the war. People had no other option than to face the consequences of famine in the later period. All men and youths were recruited in the battle so they had no one to cultivate. This made the course of farming completely gone. They had no other option than to just accept the situation and stay alive. This led to the next major disaster of famine. Famine had a huge impact on society. The famine condition in Somalia is dreadful, moving millions of the public to tragic instances. In 1992 Famine 300,000 lives were affected by conflict and famine. In the East African Drought of 2011, 260,000 people died due to food dearth. In the current situation of 2023-24, Somalia still faces a protracted food crisis with almost 11 million people in need of basic livelihood. The shortage of rainfall worsens the catastrophe, leading to food insufficiency and lack of access to drinking water.

Most of the grains and basic food supplies are highly imported to Somalia from Russia and Ukraine. The Ukraine-Russian war has hugely created a high impact on the Somalian people. The Crisis resulted in dislocation, famine, disease epidemics, and malnutrition. Food uncertainty is one of the major complications in the country. Almost 3.7 million people or 22 per cent of the nation's populace grieves from acute food insecurity. Due to the extreme poverty people started stealing food, The thin youth had his mouth full of the food he had stolen, which he was now busy chewing. In his right hand was half of a roll, out of which a piece of meat protruded, like a dead tongue. Eyes as large as his fright, the youth begged in a low voice,

“I am hungry, please!”

“How much did the sandwich cost?” Jeebleh asked.

“Hand him over! Hand him over!” the mob chanted.

“I'll pay for what he's eaten, so you can let him go free.” Jeebleh looked from the well-fed man to the scraggly youth, and then at the agitated mob, and finally at Dajaal, who stayed out of it, but, as ever, was prepared for any eventuality. Jeebleh addressed the fat merchant: “What's your problem? I am prepared to pay for his sandwich.” (Links 280)

Jeebleh saw a young thin man, whose mouth was filled with food. He was begging the nearby man, that he was hungry. This made Jeebleh heartbroken. He couldn't believe his eyes and process what was happening to his motherland. Seeing people beg and rob for food makes him feel pathetic for his country. At last, he paid for the food and freed up the youth. This situation is heart-wrenching to see. In Abdulkadir Mohamed, Maryan Mohamed Ali's article, *“How severe is Somalia's food crisis?”*, a 28-year-old mother says, “I didn't have anything to feed my children. I gave them boiled water with sugar to stop them crying for food, but that only brought a little relief before they start crying and asking for food again.”

Somalia is undergoing one of the most problematic food catastrophes in history over three decades. Huger has hit hard on people after the Civil War. The situation is still worse in rural areas. When Cambora wants to leave the place and go out in search of a good stay and food, Zaak suggests, “Tomorrow, I will be more willing to drive you anywhere you like until you find a good and clean enough hotel, which will serve you quality food and which will meet your approval. And the Lord knows there is no such place in this whole city.”(Knots 46) This gives a brief state of Somali's state after the war.

Baidoa was once called as “the City of Death”. Almost 220,000 people were dying of famine and violence in 1992. Many of the civilians and children were murdered in the streets



randomly. “The city of Baidoa earned the nickname the ‘city of death’ because so many people died here during the famine and civil war in the early 1990s. People still die here. There is so much malnutrition as there is not enough food. I see young men and women in their twenties who look like they’re still children because they have so little food to eat. Throughout the ages, quite a lot of countries and groups have big-heartedly donated to help Somalia and its people to persist, despite the country’s brittle security, political, and environmental dares. Countries like Somalia suffer when the contributors turn their attention somewhere else in critical times.

No hygiene water and proper food finally result in the worst health problems. Malnutrition is the deadly effect of food uncertainty. This dangerous vulnerability rate increases more danger for women and children. The inadequate handiness of dynamic nutrients, vitamins, and minerals results in late infant development and raises threats to maternal health during pregnancy time, including anaemia and difficulty in delivery. Due to a shortage of food supplements, young children lack nutrition and this results in weak immune systems. This increases the defenselessness towards diseases in women and children, which increases death tolls, especially newborns and new moms. The weight of newborn babies is a prominent problem because of insufficient nutrition. Pregnant mothers also face inadequate nutrition in the progression of childbirth. Women give more importance to their children over their nutritious requirements, which aggravates their health problems. The way that Nuruddin Farah examines hunger in his writings is a moving insight into the relationship between social disintegration and physical hardship. Farah’s works address contemporary issues and offer a lens through which to examine the broader impacts of hunger on societal cohesion. In addition to highlighting the terrible realities of hunger, his writings praise the human spirit’s tenacity and dignity. Farah’s observations are still incredibly pertinent today as civilizations battle with challenges of food insecurity and inequality, providing a crucial perspective on the ongoing fight for social cohesiveness and survival.

More than just emergency relief is needed to address this situation. Achieving food security requires funding for sustainable farming methods, empowering regional farmers, and building a strong infrastructure for food transport. To alleviate suffering, the international community must prioritise long-term solutions while continuing to provide emergency help. The resilient people of Somalia are still able to adapt and persevere, but sustained change necessitates concerted international assistance. The country can restore its agricultural base with persistent work and calculated actions, guaranteeing stability, independence, and hunger-free living in the future.

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Food Symbolism in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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Abstract

*This paper will delve into the multifaceted ways in which food symbolism is woven into the narrative fabric of *Things Fall Apart*, with a particular focus on how it signifies cultural values, gender roles, social hierarchy, and the deep connection between land and sustenance within the Igbo community. It will explore the representation of food as both a symbol of unity and division, highlighting the communal rituals of feasts and the significance of agricultural practices, which are central to Igbo life. Moreover, the study will examine how colonial encounters disrupt these food practices, contributing to the larger themes of cultural erosion, alienation, and identity crisis in the post-colonial world. By considering food as a metaphor for cultural integrity, survival, and adaptation, this research seeks to shed light on Achebe's sophisticated narrative technique in blending the personal with the political, and the local with the universal. Ultimately, the paper will argue that food symbolism in *Things Fall Apart* is not only a tool for character development but also a crucial medium through which Achebe articulates the profound impact of colonization on indigenous societies.*

Keywords: Food Symbolism, Igbo Community, Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*.

Introduction

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is renowned for its detailed depiction of Igbo life, where food emerges as a vital element of cultural expression. This paper investigates how Achebe employs food symbolism to depict themes of community, hierarchy, and cultural disintegration. Food in Igbo society represents more than sustenance; it embodies cultural heritage and identity. Key examples include the significance of yam as a "king of crops," symbolizing masculinity, wealth, and success. The yam festivals celebrate communal unity and agricultural achievements, reinforcing the cultural importance of traditional practices. In Igbo culture, yams symbolize wealth, masculinity, and success. Achebe uses the cultivation of yams to highlight the societal roles and expectations placed upon men. Okonkwo's status in the community is tied to his ability to grow a large yam harvest, underscoring the connection between food and societal identity.

Ceremonial feasts, such as those during weddings and festivals, demonstrate the communal nature of Igbo life. Food preparation and sharing strengthen bonds among community members and reinforce cultural traditions.

Food and Igbo Social Structure

Achebe illustrates the hierarchical nature of Igbo society through food practices. Feasting and communal meals serve as markers of status, with the distribution of kola nuts symbolizing hospitality and respect. The preparation and sharing of food highlight gender roles, with women often tasked with cooking while men are responsible for cultivating staple crops. Yams are central to Igbo society and are a symbol of masculinity, wealth, and success.



A man's ability to cultivate a large yam harvest determines his social standing. For example, Okonkwo's rise in status is tied to his ability to grow yams, which signifies his hard work and ambition. Large gatherings, such as the feast of the New Yam, showcase the wealth and generosity of individuals and families. These events reinforce the social hierarchy, as the hosts demonstrate their ability to provide for others. Yam farming is reserved for men, as it is seen as a challenging and prestigious activity. A man's success in yam farming demonstrates his strength and ability to provide for his family. Women are responsible for growing less prestigious crops like cocoyams, beans, and cassava. This division of labour reflects the patriarchal structure of Igbo society, where men hold higher status. The preparation and sharing of food are deeply tied to respect for traditions. For instance, certain rituals, like the New Yam Festival, are accompanied by specific food practices that honour the gods and ancestors. The communal aspect of eating reflects the collective ethos of Igbo society, where individual needs are often subordinated to the group's welfare. As colonial influences disrupt traditional Igbo society, the significance of food and its role in maintaining social order also changes. The arrival of European missionaries and their new systems undermines indigenous practices, including food-related rituals and festivals.

Food in Igbo Community

Food acts as a unifying force in the novel, bringing people together for celebrations, rituals, and conflict resolutions. The communal sharing of food during ceremonies reinforces social bonds and cultural continuity. Meals and feasts in the novel bring people together. For example, yam festivals and feasts are central to the Igbo culture, symbolizing abundance, prosperity, and gratitude to the earth goddess. These events emphasize the collective identity of the community and strengthen bonds among its members. Yam is referred to as the "king of crops," and becomes a unifying force as its cultivation and consumption are central to the community's survival and status system. For men, their ability to grow yams is a measure of their masculinity and status. Okonkwo's success in farming yams reflects his ambition and the high regard in which he is held by his community. The exchange and distribution of food, especially yams, highlight communal dependence and cooperation. Certain foods are integral to rituals, ceremonies, and rites of passage. For instance, kola nuts are used as a gesture of hospitality and respect, often marking the beginning of significant discussions or gatherings. Sharing kola nuts emphasizes harmony and mutual respect within the community.

Food Practices and Cultural Attrition

The advent of colonialism disrupts traditional food practices, symbolizing the broader cultural disintegration faced by the Igbo people. The intrusion of Western customs undermines the cultural significance of traditional rituals, including those centred around food. In Igbo society, food practices are central to communal life and identity. The communal sharing of meals, the importance of yam as a staple food, and the preparation of traditional dishes all symbolize the connection to ancestral heritage. Yams, in particular, are seen as the "king of crops" and a sign of a man's wealth and prowess. The preparation and consumption of these foods are not just about sustenance but also about cultural pride, social status, and the continuity of tradition. The colonial disruption of these practices undermines the social and cultural fabric of Igbo society. Colonialism brings with it new economic structures that force the Igbo people to shift away from their traditional methods of agriculture and food production. The introduction of cash crops like cotton and cocoa, which are aimed at serving colonial needs, led to a reduction in the cultivation of traditional crops like yams. This shift undermines local food security and the self-sufficiency of the community. As Igbo farmers are drawn into the colonial economy, they begin to lose their



ability to produce food for their consumption, affecting their cultural rituals, social customs, and daily lives. The missionaries who come to Igbo villages often bring with them foreign concepts of food and eating, further eroding traditional practices. Missionary teachings reject Igbo food rituals and dietary laws, and in many cases, the missionaries encourage converts to abandon their traditional foods, such as "bitter kola" or "palm wine," as part of their spiritual and cultural conversion. This abandonment signifies the broader cultural erosion, where not only food practices but also the very essence of Igbo identity is replaced by Western norms.

Conclusion

Achebe's nuanced use of food symbolism in *Things Fall Apart* serves as a lens through which readers can understand the richness of Igbo culture and the profound impact of colonialism. This study underscores the centrality of food in shaping narratives of identity, community, and cultural change.

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Exploration of the Relationship between Food and Human Emotion in Elizabeth Gilbert's Memoir *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia*

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between food and human emotion through the memoir Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia by Elizabeth Gilbert. It also examines the role of food in her existential journey. It focuses on how food is naturally connected with the human psyche and how it helps Liz (Elizabeth Gilbert) overcome her stress and depression following a chaotic divorce. Her quest for herself begins in Italy. Italian cuisine occupies a major part in her self-discovery and in balancing her mind rather than learning the Italian language. Throughout her journey, even in India and Indonesia, food plays a significant role in reconstructing her life. This shows food is not just an essential to sustain or for the sack of living but it is an inseparable companion and a healer of human emotions and instinct. This exploration underscores the transformative power of food in addressing deeper human needs, illustrating how culinary experiences can nurture not only the body but also the soul.

Keywords: Food, Human Emotion, Existential Journey, Self-Discovery, Cuisine.

Introduction

Food plays an important part in representing the culture, social interaction, and sensory experience in travelogues, memoirs, and other travel writings. But rather than all the above, eating food deeply occupies human emotion and their living. Eat Pray Love is a memoir and a travelogue written by Elizabeth Gilbert in which she shares her experience in travelling across Italy, India, and Indonesia and shows how she overcame the two evils, depression and loneliness, by self-realization. Elizabeth Gilbert is an American journalist and writer to whom food served as a healer of her inner wounds and connected her to discovering herself. The authentic relationship between food and herself reflects the human emotion that's connected with food. Starting from Italy to Indonesia, her existential journey is sustained and balanced by her culinary experience. Through indulgent meals and the sensory pleasure of eating, she begins to heal from emotional pain, rediscover joy, and embrace self-compassion. This relationship between food and emotion offers valuable insights into the ways that culinary experiences can shape and reflect our inner lives, making food a powerful metaphor for the human condition.

Food and Human Emotion

The self-discovery and emotional healing of Elizabeth Gilbert begins in *Italy*. She finds solace in eating and tasting the cuisine of Italy. In the journey of her pursuits, her emotional relationship with the food she ate is vivid in the first phrase, "Pursuit of pleasure." Italy is well known for its cuisine. She satisfied her body and soul by savouring various foods like *pasta*, *pizza*, *gelato*, and so on. Italian culture emphasizes food as a communal and celebratory act. Through shared meals with friends and locals, Gilbert learns to embrace life's pleasures and let go of the emotional restraint she had imposed on herself. The



sensuous descriptions of pasta, wine, and desserts highlight food as an art form and a way to honour the present moment. This experience goes beyond just appreciating the texture, flavour, and culture of Italian cuisine. She embraced the food as a companion. This is expressed by her when she and her friend Sofie are tasting pizza in *Pizzeria da Michele So Sofie* and I have come to Pizzeria da Michele, and these pies we have just ordered—one for each of us—are making us lose our minds. I love my pizza so much that I have come to believe in my delirium that my pizza might love me, in return. I am having a relationship with this pizza, almost an affair. Through this, it's comprehensive that she deliberately exposes her inner connection with food. This connection between her and food can be seen not only in Italy but throughout her journey to India and Indonesia. This shows how food and human emotion are intertwined and how it helps in the mental and emotional growth of an individual.

Food in Elizabeth's Existential Journey

The motive behind her journey is to overcome her sufferings and to find her inner self. The role of food in her existential journey supports her motive to achieve self-realization. In Italy, when she realizes that her overeating will result in bad health, she accepts and prioritizes herself and satisfies herself by eating. She also reveals that even though overeating is ill for her health, it makes her admire herself. **“Still, when I look at myself in the mirror of the best pizzeria in Naples, I see a bright-eyed, clear-skinned, happy, and healthy face. I haven't seen a face like that on me for a long time.”** The act of eating without guilt allows her to break free from societal pressures around body image and expectations, fostering a deeper connection with her authentic self. This shows Liz is healing from her trauma and it cures her both physically and mentally. She starts admiring her surroundings and begins to pay attention to the little things around her. It is revealed when she shares her food with a street dog. **“I order an assortment of *bruschette*, some *spaghetti cacio pepe* (that simple Roman specialty of pasta served with cheese and pepper), and then a small roast chicken, which I end up sharing with the stray dog who has been watching me eat my lunch the way only a stray dog can.”** In India, at the ashram, she lives a simple and spiritual life where she comes to eat simple, vegetarian, healthy, and light foods. This shows a sudden change in her eating routine. It is also exposed that she learnt to accept and balance her lifestyle. In Bali, Indonesia, finally, Gilbert's relationship with food finds a harmonious balance, reflecting the balance she wants in her personal life. In Bali, food once again becomes a symbol of connection, this time linking her interactions with locals and her developing self-esteem. Her encounters with medicinal herbs and traditional Balinese dishes reflect a synthesis of the indulgence of Italy and the asceticism of India, resulting in a holistic understanding of how food affects the body, mind, and soul. Filip, her soulmate, also says to Liz that he'll cook rice and chicken for her. From the beginning to the end of her expedition herself, food plays an integral role in the spiritual journey.

Conclusion

In an interview by *INDY Weeks*, Liz says that she is very fortunate that in the last ten years of my life all my romantic partners were amazing cooks. This shows her deeper relationship between her emotion and food. She also states *Before* food and sex had anything to do with culture, they had everything to do with nature, and nature is kind of the opposite of culture... But in both cases, our appetites are not very controllable, because the nature in us is more powerful than the culture that says, 'You can't eat that 'cause you'll get fat,' or 'You can't be attracted to that person or it's going to ruin your life'—well, as we've all seen in many lives, both of those things can be unmanageable as well as exciting. This point of view



of her expresses her in-depth understanding of food and relationships. It is obvious that food plays an inevitable role in tackling her depression, and she finds herself on her existential journey in the book *Eat Pray Love*. Liz considers food and relationships as the same and equal and part of nature. Her emotion towards these is reflected in her work. The further works of Elizabeth Gilbert also have a close connection with food, like *Committed*, which is a sequel to *Eat, Pray, Love*, and *At Home on the Range*, which includes her grandmother's cookbook. The portrayal of food and her emotion in the work *Eat, Pray, Love* not only shows the individual connection towards food but the whole human species.

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Alienation, Trauma and Food Memory in Aimee Bender's *The Particular Sadness Of Lemon Cake*

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Abstract

Aimee Bender's novel "The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake" plays a prominent role by dealing with the varied emotions and the trauma carried by the protagonist, tasting food which eventually leads to connecting to the emotions of the hands of the product under the shadow of gastronomic literature. Starting from Archestratus, where the etymology of gastronomy begins in literature and was developed later by the French writer Anthelme. Aimee Bender's novel "The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake" makes us delve into the themes and the forecast of the incredible emotions and trauma the protagonist Rose faces by her ability to taste and the idealization of the sensory power of emotions. The study mainly deals with the aspect of alienation through the device of magical realism and food memory and trauma, food as a repository of personal and collective trauma. The title aligns with the field by emphasising the relationship between food and emotional experiences, a core focus of gastronomic studies.

Keywords: Alienation, Food Memory, Trauma, Gastronomic Studies, Magical Realism.

The etymology of the term 'gastronomy' ranges back to the writer Archestratus who mentioned them in the form of a poem. Later it was highly recognized by the French writer Anthelme Brillat Savarin (Bender, 2010). In literary texts, food as a hope explains the complex relationship between the body, subjectivity and social structure. This study is basically about the relationship between food and culture. This novelist adds a special sense of magical realism where the taste of the food connects with the emotion of the cook. Just like a book connects with the emotion of the author, here in this case we could see the protagonist able to connect with the emotions of the cook. Infusing trauma and magical realism into this gastronomical study magnifies the themes of the novel. The first note about gastronomy ranges back to the 4th century BC, The Sicilian writer, Archestratus. He wrote a book viewing more on the earliest food and wine of the Mediterranean region. Gastronomy deals with food, literature and culture. The ancient books give us an idea about the varied food patterns of a particular age. It not only changes from place to place but whereas from class to class and the varied hierarchical structure of society. Food connects through the emotions of the people. Tracking its streamline only to the culture and its varied heritage, Aimee Bender shows a unique variation in the field of gastronomic literature. The novelist shows a peculiar interest in the emotion that is expressed through the food and the way trauma is scared in the minds of the protagonist. An unusual way of customizing food to be a cause of trauma. Though this is unpredictable, she uses the device of magical realism to make it more amusing and ventilating the emotions. This creates a sense of tension and restlessness among the protagonist to lead a normal life. (Bender, 2010)

Food is not only concerned with the nourishment of the human body. By exploring more deeply one can acknowledge that it deals more with the emotions of the human mind. Every psyche of a human brain is considered to be associated with the food pattern of the



sole body. The eating pattern of an individual is highly linked with the coping mechanism of their emotions. Delving deeper into it there are even neuropsychological mechanisms between eating and emotions. Caffeine stimulates the neurological cells and keeps the brain refreshed and activated for hours. As such, every food source and its potential nutritive source helps in the various working of the body. Now linking it more towards human emotions, we intake food based on our coping mechanism for our emotions. Significantly, an individual's eating behaviour is controlled by both the hedonic and homeostatic systems. This revolves around the concept of emotional eating. This is a pattern of eating, where it is triggered by emotions rather than hunger. Based on the classical conditioning theory, one invariably develops this stimulus through regular conditioning. Some consume food as a process of emotion regulation strategy. This may be done habitually or by a regulatory practice. This is how food is intricately connected to emotions. They deal with various ways differing from person to person. Theories like psychosomatic theory and escape theory work accordingly. But in our study of our selected novel the Particular sadness of lemon cake contrasts with all these theories and the natural way of emotional and food connection. This novel is a parody of all the theories founded by the researchers. Aimee Bender makes the reader enjoy the novel by helping them to escape from the existing theories and creating ways to surreal emotional bondages towards food.

The protagonist Rose Edlestien, has the surreal power of tasting the emotions of the maker of the particular food she eats. Though they may be from a distant place, still she could sense their emotions. While reading this may be considered as a superpower, but when looked deeper into the pain of the protagonist, she could not enjoy any food as their emotions hindered her from tasting the essence of the food. The title of the novel speaks about a particular sadness of a lemon cake, which was made by her mother for her birthday. She was eagerly waiting to eat the cake. When it was done, she ate a piece of cake without any assistance. This was her first episode of tasting weird. Later she could recollect the emotion hidden behind the cake that was the emotion of her mother she experienced during the time of baking the cake. As this was the first episode, Rose was not able to trace the exact thing hidden in the cake. But later she gained some idea about it. This stood as a trauma in Rose's mind. Whenever she tasted any food, more than the real essence of the food, she could experience the emotions of the cook. This made her create an aversion towards food. It was not only a reaction to her mother's food, but also to any food that she tasted. Later, by the end of the novel, Rose finds that this ability has been streamed in their bloodline. Aimee Bender has given a convincing reason to the readers by making us believe that the fact of tasting emotions was experienced by her paternal lineage. Through the help of George, she concludes her problems. However, the novelist ends the novel by giving a positive approach, where the protagonist adapts herself to her untold ability. This is a happy ending novel.

Aimee Bender herself has stated that she has written this novel on the base structure of psychological projection by Sigmund Freud (Freud, 1917). We cannot completely rely on this, but her magical realism has paved the way through this analysis. This is a projection of emotions upon other beings or things or any such. Through this, we could figure out something similar to the base content of the novel. The study of emotional eating has been shifted to magical realism with the ideologies of the novelist. By connecting the psychological aspects, we could easily pave the way to themes and theories which our study is based upon. The very first thing is alienation. Rose alienated herself from her family, from her mother. She did not join her family dinner for many years. She did not consume anything which her mother made. By alienating herself from the family shows us how much



intolerable her situation would be. She hesitated to consume food made by people. She preferred to have canned foods and all such. Through this, the novelist shows us how a person would alienate themselves from their whole family to avoid the pain they undergo while consuming them (Bender, 2010). This has henceforth brought alienation. As stated emotions are deliberately shown out through food. But here we could see that food shows emotions. This is contradictory to the normal emotional phenomena of any such. Psychological projection and emotional eating combine and henceforth bring up this new form of exposure to emotions through food, which has caused the protagonist to alienate herself from the eventual trauma she faces. Rose confronts this alienated behaviour because of her confused state, where she can hardly find out the reason behind all this. This confusion makes the readers empathize with the protagonist in her current state. This is a pitiful state for her because she is not able to meet her daily need to consume desirable food or homemade food. She has not been able to attend family dinners for years. The fear which has clinched her heart makes her hide from the real world which does not suit her. Thus, the novelist brings up a sense of alienation in the reader by influencing her thoughts of magical realism. This has shown us a way to the collective emotional phases which she encounters. This disrupts her consumption of food. She ain't get a peaceful meal. Interrupted by people's various emotions she loses her need for food. This weakens the sense of the protagonist. More likely, Aimee did not speak about the taste she felt but rather notes about the emotions carried through the food. This is a notable theme which is carried by food and emotions. They highly complement each other but also complicate each other. Thus, this makes us understand the alienation effect through magical realism.

The concept of food memory and trauma is also remarkably taken for study. Food memory can be included as it turned out to be a kade her to experience the traumatic condition. There was no negative reflexive mechanism found in the character. This creates a notion of irreversible traumatic condition in the mind of the protagonist. The novel is not based on how the food tasted but on who made the food. Through this, we get to know about the inner world of the various people around them. The non-expressible sense of people's emotions or their thoughts (Freud, 1917). This helps the person to understand their emotions and their thoughts and know about the inmost secret details of the person who made the food. This finding initially made the protagonist undergo all these emotional roller coasters where she finds it hard to cope with all this. Later she finds ways to manage her innate unique ability. This made her empathize more with others, and get to know people more. Here we could see the power of projection identification, where the emotions are shifted to other things. This study helps us to find out more about the psychological aspects of food and emotions. Food memory and trauma have a strong enforces on the novel and the protagonist as they spice up the novel more.

Thus, Aimee Bender through her novel makes the notion of alienation and food memory and trauma to work hard on the themes of the plot. The novelist has used psychological analysis to convince the readers of the aspect of all these sources. The note of Sigmund Freud's finding has henceforth enhanced the context of the plot. The knowledge of psychological interjection and gaslighting through psychological projection makes us see forth the psychological happenings of the protagonist. The distorted family and the poor understanding initially made her cope with the situation but later she finds mean ways to make her life better with all that she has. The concept of emotional eating and the varied concepts in an eating manner becomes a parody here. One cannot prove that abnormal guff in their throat which would make people not believe. Coming again to the gastronomical study,



this paper helps us to analyze the subjectivity of the body the food consumed and the ways food acts as a beacon of emotions. The common notation is that the emotions are let out or managed through a coping mechanism, of food. But here food expresses the emotions of others. This brings a gradual shift in the gastronomical study where one could read or understand the emotions, feelings and thoughts of the others. Tasting one's emotions would give an odd feeling that experiencing negative thoughts is bitter stuff. Every emotion needs an outlet. Every man needs food. These two come together here in one accord.

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Fantasy Culinary Narratives of Food, Culture and Satire in Samit Basu's *The Simoqin Prophecies*

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Abstract

Culinary narratives refer to how food, its preparation, consumption and cultural significance are woven into storytelling. Food is used to symbolize cultural diversity, identity and even magical absurdity. It reflects the traditions, peculiarities and socio-political dynamics of the various groups and creatures. This paper explores the role of culinary narratives in "The Simoqin Prophecies", a novel work in Indian speculative fiction. Basu is an imminent contemporary writer. He is a pioneer of Indian fantasy and reimagines mythological and cultural archetypes with satire, humour and vivid world-building. Food in the novel arises as a complex theme, blending with the relatable and cultural diversity, character dynamics and narrative progression. Feasts and magical dishes enlighten the socio-political complexities of the Game World, while absurd culinary traditions and humorous dining scenes improve its usual tone. This paper examines how Basu's culinary portrayals juxtapose the mundane and the magical, grounding fantastical elements in universal human experiences. Basu enhances narrating as well as redefines the role of culinary narratives in speculative fiction, making a bridge between cultural explicitness and universal humour.

Keywords: Culinary Narrative, Satire, Fantasy, Samit Basu, *The Simoqin Prophecies*.

Introduction

Culinary narratives mean storytelling focused on food and its cultural significance and have always held a special place in literature. From metaphorical explorations of identity and memory to the clear portrayal of feasts that highlight societal dynamics, food exceeds its role as simple sustenance to become a powerful narrative device. In Indian writing, culinary motifs often symbolize the intersection of tradition and modernity, offering insights into heritage, migration and identity. This paper explains speculative fiction, especially in *The Simoqin Prophecies*, and discovers a unique use of food that blends humour, satire and cultural critique within a fantastical framework. Basu is a trailblazer in Indian speculative fiction, reimagines traditional mythologies and infuses his narratives with culinary absurdities that reflect the unconventionalities of the Game World he creates. This paper contends that Basu's culinary portrayals redefine the job of food in fantasy fiction, blending the ordinary and the magical to explore cultural diversity, character relationships and socio-political commentary.

Indian Speculative Fiction and Samit Basu

Speculative fiction in India has traditionally derived from its rich tapestry of mythology, folklore and oral traditions. However, it is largely confined to children's literature or regional storytelling until the early twenty-first century. Writers like Samit Basu ushered in a new era, crafting stories that appealed to global audiences while retaining a uniquely Indian flavour. *The Simoqin Prophecies* published was a breakthrough in Indian fantasy. It parodied epic fantasy tropes while drawing from Indian mythology, Greek epics



and Global folklore. Basu sets apart his ability to mix humor with serious commentary using fantastical elements including food to create a world that is both absurd and relatable.

Culinary Narratives

Food has long served as a metaphor in literature, symbolizing identity, memory and cultural belonging. In Indian writing, culinary narratives are prominent in works like Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*, where spices represent emotional and cultural healing and Madhur Jaffrey's memoir *Climbing the Mango Trees*, which ties food to personal and cultural identity. In speculative fiction, culinary motifs take on new dimensions. They not only reflect cultural traditions but also serve as tools for world-building and plot development. Samit Basu uses these elements innovatively, infusing his narrative with magical feasts, absurd food customs, and satirical commentary.

Culinary Symbolism in *The Simoqin Prophecies*

The Simoqin Prophecies is a melting pot of cultures, and food is a central marker of this diversity. From elaborate royal feasts to bizarrely specific culinary rituals of mythical creatures, the food in *The Simoqin Prophecies* reflects the socio-political structures of its inhabitants. A scene depicting a feast might include dishes that highlight the eccentricities of the elite or the peculiarities of a particular creature's diet, emphasizing cultural idiosyncrasies while advancing the plot. Basu uses food to satirize the grandeur of traditional epic fantasy. Instead of solemn feasts symbolizing unity or victory, his depictions often descend into chaos or absurdity. For instance, the descriptions of enchanted dishes that behave unpredictably mock the overly romanticized portrayal of food in classical fantasy. These scenes not only entertain but also critique societal norms and power dynamics. There was more to the inn than the Fragrant Underbelly. Triog's travels had convinced him that the best thing in life was food, and Too Many Cooks, on the first floor, was the finest restaurant in Kol, patronized by the very rich and famous. Cooks from all around the world scurried around all day in the vast and aromatic kitchen, and customers who had enough money could buy whatever food their hearts desired, be it Avrantic or Durgan biryani and kababs, Xi'ennoodles, Potolpuriroshogollas, Skuan roasts, Oliviyian pastas or the bland fare of Ventelot. (p-29). Food in *The Simoqin Prophecies* often defies logic, blurring the lines between reality and fantasy. Dishes that change flavour based on the eater's mood or meals that influence characters' decisions add layers of unpredictability to the story. These magical absurdities enhance the whimsical tone of the novel while anchoring its fantastical elements in human experiences. According to *the Simoqin Prophecies*, food serves as more than sustenance, it is a cultural artefact. Banquets reveal power structures, alliances, and rivalries. The inclusion of culinary traditions unique to each community enhances the realism of Basu's world-building, making *The Simoqin Prophecies* feel alive and dynamic. Food also plays a crucial role in character development. For example, a character's preferences or reactions to food can reveal their personality or cultural background. Scenes involving shared meals often highlight interpersonal dynamics, from camaraderie to conflict, adding emotional depth to the narrative.

Mundane and Magical

One of Basu's most significant achievements is his ability to juxtapose the mundane with the magical. By blending everyday culinary practices with fantastical elements, he creates moments that feel simultaneously extraordinary and relatable. This approach grounds the fantasy in universal human experiences, making *The Simoqin Prophecies* more accessible to readers. "And upon eating a little ground Muwi root, these wild men and women performed spine-chillingly dangerous stunts eagerly and brilliantly. Muwi masala that was



was responsible for the incredible acts of daring and bravado which had now been immortalized, captured by imp eyes, the feasts swirling in the ink sacs of the Picsquids.” (p-80). Through his innovative use of food, Basu expands the possibilities of speculative fiction. Culinary narratives in *The Simoqin Prophecies* do not merely serve as background details; they are integral to the story’s humour, satire, and cultural commentary. Basu bridges the gap between the culturally specific and the universally absurd, creating a narrative style that resonates with diverse audiences.

Conclusion

Samit Basu’s *The Simoqin Prophecies* demonstrates how culinary narratives can enrich speculative fiction. By incorporating food as a cultural, satirical, and magical element, Basu redefines the role of culinary motifs in fantasy literature. His work not only reflects the richness of Indian storytelling but also sets a precedent for integrating cultural themes into global speculative fiction.

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Flavours as Storytelling Medium in the Works of Amit Chaudhuri

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Abstract

The paper delves into the vibrant culinary journey woven into the literary works of acclaimed Indian author Amit Chaudhuri, where food transcends the plate to become a profound storytelling medium. Chaudhuri's works artfully blend traditional dishes, street foods, and international cuisines, to explore the flavours of the everyday and to create an attractive tale that connects with readers on multiple levels. Chaudhuri's use of food as a literary device allows readers to relish the aromas of many circumstances, evokes nostalgia for childhood meals, highlights communal bonds fostered by shared food, and reflects India's diverse cultural tapestry. Chaudhuri unravels themes of tradition and modernity and emotional ties to cultural heritage by weaving gastronomy in his narratives. His portrayal of food serves as a sensory and symbolic lens to examine India's evolving culinary landscape, illustrating how the fusion of traditions mirrors broader social transformations. The paper highlights how Chaudhuri's works use the everyday act of eating as a gateway to understanding culture, memory, and identity in a modern context.

Keywords: Culinary Narratives, Identity, Modernity, Tradition, Sensory Memory.

Food, a universal language that transcends cultures and borders, holds the power to evoke memories, ignite emotions, and reflect the cultural journey of a society. In the literary world, authors often utilize culinary narratives to enrich their storytelling and provide readers with a multi-sensory experience. Authors use food to evoke memories, set the tone for specific scenes, or provide insights into characters' personalities and backgrounds. Amit Chaudhuri, the acclaimed Indian author and musician, masterfully incorporates culinary elements into his works, adding depth and authenticity to his narratives. The paper explores the significance of culinary narratives in Amit Chaudhuri's literary oeuvre, highlighting how food becomes a lens through which his characters, settings, and cultural nuances come to life.

Amit Chaudhuri, an acclaimed Indian author, possesses a remarkable talent for incorporating culinary narratives into his works. His vivid descriptions of food create a sensory feast for readers, transporting them to the bustling streets of Kolkata and the diverse culinary landscapes of India. Through his literary exploration of food, Chaudhuri not only tantalizes the taste buds but also delves into cultural identities, memories, and the intricate connections between food and personal narratives. The Paper delves into Chaudhuri's culinary narratives, analyzing how he brings the rich tapestry of Indian cuisine to life.

Chaudhuri's culinary narratives offer readers a literary banquet, blending the flavours of Indian cuisine with cultural insights, memories, and social commentary. Through his meticulous descriptions, Chaudhuri immerses readers in the sensory experiences of food while delving into broader themes of culture, identity, and nostalgia. The noise of the traffic, the honking, the frequent sirens in the distance, the chatter of passengers, vied with one another in volume; and behind all this, in a sort of subsidiary way, was the noise of the food



being prepared in the kitchens behind the waiting-room: the sound of the flat, metal ladles striking against the insides of the pots, the smell of spices in the food (ASSA 45)

Exploring Chaudhuri's culinary narratives, readers gain not only a deeper appreciation of Indian cuisine but also a greater understanding of the complex connections between food, culture, and personal narratives. Chaudhuri's literary exploration of food leaves a lasting impression.

In Chaudhuri's novels, food assumes a central role in depicting the details of everyday life. It is through the act of cooking, sharing meals, and partaking in culinary traditions that characters forge connections, strengthen relationships, and establish a sense of community. Whether it is the middle-class households in *A Strange and Sublime Address* or the familial gatherings in *The Immortals*, Chaudhuri portrays the significance of meals as more than just sustenance. Food becomes a means of communication, a conduit for understanding, and a symbol of shared experiences. Flavours refers to the intricate and diverse array of culinary experiences, flavours, and cultural elements that come together to create a vibrant food culture. It draws upon the idea that food is not simply about sustenance or taste but is also a reflection of history, geography, traditions, and social interactions. It also evokes the image of a complex and interconnected fabric, woven together from various threads. Similarly, it encompasses the different ingredients, cooking techniques, flavours, and cultural influences that contribute to the diverse culinary traditions found around the world. The concept of a delving of flavours highlights the interconnectedness and interplay between various elements within a food culture. It recognizes that cuisine is more than just individual dishes; it is a mosaic of flavours, textures, and traditions that tell a story about a particular region, its people, and their way of life.

The works of Chaudhuri demonstrate the talent of his powerful description of food, capturing its textures, smells, and visual appeal in his novels and non-fictional works. His writings provide readers with an immersive experience by putting them right in the middle of these culinary landscapes, whether it is the bustling street food scenes of Kolkata or the diversified gastronomic landscape of Mumbai. Chaudhuri's literary works often incorporate elements of food and culinary narratives as part of the overall storytelling. While food may not be the primary focus, it is used to add depth to the characters, settings, and cultural context within his novels. In his novels, Chaudhuri portrays food as an integral part of everyday life, reflecting the cultural fabric of India and the significance of food in social interactions. His detailed descriptions of meals, cooking techniques, and culinary traditions, bring a sensory dimension to his storytelling and allow readers to immerse themselves in the world Chaudhuri creates.

Chaudhuri's literal portrayal of food takes on metaphorical significance to explore deeper ideas in his works. In *A Strange and Sublime Address*, the process of cooking and the transformation of raw ingredients into a delectable dish can symbolize the journey of self-discovery or the evolution of a character. Food serves as a metaphor for life itself, where the blending of diverse elements creates something greater. While writing *A Strange and Sublime Address*, Chaudhuri, aware of the lineage of various Western representations of Kolkata, interiorizes culinary practices in urban Bengali households where quotidian food experiences reflect a range of human sentiments from strange to cruel, familiar to idyllic, comfort to fear and anxiety. Food experiences bring Sandeep, the protagonist of the novel close to antiquarianism and confirm his fascination for the unchanging life of his relatives in his maternal uncle's house. The episode which gives the novel its title is itself bracketed by the gastronomic desire of children conflicting with the antiquated food habits of Saraswati,



the maid. Abhi, Sandeep's cousin returns home from school hungry and roars to Saraswati for food. When describing food, Chaudhuri pays close attention to the ingredients, cooking techniques, and cultural contexts associated with each dish. He delves into the intricate details, from the way spices are blended to the precise methods of preparation and presentation. This attention to culinary intricacies adds authenticity and depth to his narratives. He captures the bustling atmosphere of the Street Food, the sizzling sounds of cooking, and the enticing aromas that waft through the air. He may describe the golden, crispy texture of a samosa, the tangy tamarind chutney that accompanies it, and the burst of flavours that explode in the mouth with each bite. When exploring traditional recipes, Chaudhuri often describes the process of cooking with meticulous detail. He might delve into the slow simmering of spices, the gradual caramelization of onions, or the precise folding of dough. Through these descriptions, Chaudhuri creates a sensory experience, invoking the taste, aroma, and texture of the food.

Amit Chaudhuri often employs food as a vehicle to convey emotions, memories, and the complexities of relationships. Certain dishes or culinary experiences can trigger nostalgic recollections or evoke a sense of comfort and familiarity. The act of preparing and sharing a meal becomes a form of communication, a way for characters to connect, understand, and bond with one another. He describes the aromas of street food, such as 'Spicy Puchka' (pani puri) and 'Jhal Muri' (spicy puffed rice), as well as the taste of the city's famous sweets, like sandesh and rasgulla. Chaudhuri incorporates culinary elements into his works to add depth, authenticity, and a sense of cultural immersion. By depicting meals, cooking techniques, and culinary traditions, he not only engages readers' senses but also explores the social and emotional dimensions of food, making it an integral part of his narratives. Chaudhuri invites readers on a gastronomic journey, allowing them to savour the flavours, emotions, and cultural nuances of his narratives. Whether it is the bustling streets of Bombay or the intimate gatherings in Bengal, his culinary narratives serve as a testament to the power of food in literature and its ability to connect us to our shared human experiences.

The paper concludes by acknowledging the significance of Chaudhuri's culinary narratives in fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Indian cuisine. His ability to intertwine the flavours with the culture elevates his works to more than mere literature, transforming them into immersive culinary journeys that leave a lasting impression on the reader's palate and imagination. They not only tantalize the reader's taste buds but also offer profound reflections on the intricate connections between food, culture, and personal narratives. By delving into the culinary world of Chaudhuri's works, readers gain a deeper understanding of Indian cuisine and its role in shaping individual and collective experiences.

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Food and Gender in the Select Works of Sudha Murty

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Abstract

Sudha Murty's works unpredictably weave food and gender as pivotal subjects to discover social practices, familial bonds and cultural assumptions. This paper centres around Gently Falls the Bakula and House of Cards, where food arises as a strong image of emotional labour, custom and personality. The readiness, utilization and imagery of food mirror that is profoundly dug in gender roles, featuring the burden put on ladies and their battles to offset individual desires with cultural demands. In Gently Falls the Bakula, food addresses the implicit forfeits and hushed voices of ladies like Shrimati whose cooking commitments are neglected in a patriarchal society. In that order, in House of Cards, Mridula's relationship with food uncovers the intricacies of affection, care, and power elements inside conjugal connections. Food serves not only as food but also as a marker of control and opposition in these stories. This paper focuses on Sudha Murty's nuanced depiction of food as a social charm and a medium to investigate gendered standards. By examining key scenes and character collaborations, the paper highlights how food turns into a focal point for comprehending developing gender jobs and cultural changes in contemporary India.

Keywords: Sudha Murty, Food Studies, Gender, Cultural Identity, Contemporary Writing.

Sudha Murty, an Indian novelist and philanthropist, is identified for her reminiscent storytelling that captures the distinctions of Indian life. Her books often deal with issues such as societal expectations, familial relationships, individual aspirations and gender dynamics. This paper focuses on her novels *Gently Falls the Bakula* and *House of Cards*, which offer rich ground for exploring how food functions as a cultural symbol in gendered contexts. This analysis considers food not merely as a basic requirement but as a social and symbolic practice that influences the identity and role of women in Indian Culture. Murty's works have been analysed from numerous perceptions, including feminist readings and postcolonial theories. Researchers such as Neela Bhattacharya Saxena and Ramesh K. Srivastava have examined Murty's representation of women's roles within the family and society. Food, in Indian literature, is often used as a metaphor for fostering, sacrifice, and domesticity. As tinted by Rajeev S. Patke in his work *Food and Culture in Contemporary Indian Literature*, food often serves as an "articulation of identity" and is integrally linked to gender, with women frequently represented as the main caretakers of the kitchen.

In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, Sudha Murty interweaves a touching narrative of a woman named Shrimati, who scuffles with the expectations placed on her as a wife and daughter-in-law. The book subtly addresses the theme of food and its gendered consequences. Murty portrays the art of cooking as a ritual that is deeply linked to Shrimati's identity and role within her family. The kitchen serves as a domain where Shrimati's value is authenticated, not by her intellectual or emotional strength, but by her ability how prepare food. One key moment in the novel highlights the gendered expectations surrounding food preparation: "She used to work outside and get money, cook for her husband and look after



him like a mother” (GFTB, 75) This line showcases how Shrimati’s food preparation is considered not only as responsibility but also as a reflection of her role within the patriarchal society. Her value is defined by her ability to serve the needy, especially her husband, and food becomes a medium through which she conveys her love and devotion, even at the cost of her dreams and desires. Another pivotal moment in the book is when Shrimati reflects on her life, “The waves were crashing against the rock without rest, and so were her dreams.” (GFTB, 115) This line mirrors the protagonist’s inner conflict and the persistent nature of her aspirations in the face of life’s obstacles. Sudha Murty captures the emotional spirit of the protagonist’s journey. The waves crashing against the rock examine her struggles between personal ambition and familial responsibilities. This metaphor reflects the emotional and psychological chaos she faces as she tries to balance her inner aspirations with her external reality.

In *House of Cards* by Sudha Murty, food plays an important role in reflecting the gender dynamics and societal expectations placed on the central character, Mridula. As a woman in a traditional Indian household, Mridula discovers herself caught between her aspirations and the roles imposed on her by her family and society. The act of cooking and serving food turns into a dominant metaphor in the novel, illustrating the work afforded to women and the societal pressures they face to sustain traditional gender roles. For Mridula, food and cooking are not just responsibilities but symbols of duty and sacrifice. At the beginning of the novel, she is acquainted with the expectations of her new life as a wife, where food preparation becomes a vital part of her individuality. Cooking is not an act of choice or passion, but a burden of societal expectations, edging the kitchen as her ‘kingdom’, where she is likely to accomplish her part without enquiring about it.

As the novel progresses, Mridula becomes progressively conscious of the emotional labour tied to her role in the kitchen. The making of food turns into a form of self-sacrifice, as she slips her identity to meet her family and societal needs. In a crucial instant, Mridula reflects on her inner conflict, “Cooking was not just about preparing food. It was about pleasing everyone, even if it meant losing yourself.” This line captures the emotional weight of her domestic responsibilities. While food is traditionally seen as a form of love and care, for Mridula, it also becomes a form of submission to the patriarchal structures that define her role. The act of preparing food symbolizes her enduring struggle to fulfil the expectations of her family, even at the cost of her desires and identity. “In a male-dominated society like ours, all the important decisions are made by a man, including choices about what his wife wants. Every woman values her freedom to choose much more than her husband’s money or position.” (113 HC)

Through Mridula's experiences, Sudha Murty critiques the gendered division of labour in traditional households, where the role of women frequently to the kitchen and their desires are inferior. The depiction of food and cooking in *House of Cards* is not merely about sustenance, but about the emotional and psychological toll of fulfilling one's role as a woman in a patriarchal society. Murty uses food as a powerful symbol to show how women's identities are often shaped by their domestic responsibilities, and how the act of serving food can be both an expression of care and an act of self-denial. Both in *Gently Falls the Bakula* and *House of Cards*, Sudha Murty uses food as a medium to express identity and power. In both the novels, food symbolizes the labour and emotional investment in which the women protagonists have put themselves into the roles of wives and mothers. Nevertheless, the making of food has also become a site of internal struggle, where personal desires are often restricted in favour of meeting societal requirements. Food in Murty’s works functions as a



two-edged sword: it is both a form of love and a means of control. It is a sign of care and love, but also an invisible chain that puts together women to play traditional gender roles. The act of cooking and serving food is presented as both an act of devotion and a form of subjugation, reflecting the complex dynamics of power within the family.

Murty represents the position of women in the patriarchal structure where their identities are exclusively valued by their domestic roles. As seen in *House of Cards*, the protagonist's realization of her entrapment within the kitchen highlights the restrictive nature of gender roles and the need for women to assert their work beyond the confines of traditional expectations. In *Gently Falls the Bakula* and *House of Cards*, Sudha Murty intricately weaves the themes of food and gender to emphasize the difficulties women face in traditional patriarchal societies. Murty explores the intersection of domesticity, love, sacrifice and self-identity through her characters. Ultimately, Murty's works inspire readers to mirror the broader societal implications of these gendered roles and the importance of redefining women's identities beyond the kitchen.

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Exploring the Role of Gastronomy and Transculturalism in *Chocolat* and *The Hundred-Foot Journey*

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Abstract

*This paper aims to explore how gastronomy serves as a foundation for transculturalism and facilitates cross-cultural exchange and understanding in the novels *Chocolat* by Joanne Harris and *The Hundred-Foot Journey* by Richard C. Morais. This study will analyse Gastronomy as a tool of cultural change, understanding, and exchange because it acts as the essence of fostering transculturalism. It demonstrates that the sharing of traditional foods during various events and gatherings can create a common ground for interaction, uniting people and breaking down cultural barriers within communities. Additionally, the paper examines the concept of "culinary transculturalism," which views food as a universal language that enables individuals from diverse backgrounds to communicate and connect. This study contributes to the blossoming field of gastronomic literature and food studies by highlighting the significance of gastronomy in facilitating cross-cultural exchange and understanding. This study has significant implications for understanding the complex relationships between gastronomy, culture, and identity by promoting cultural diversity and social cohesion.*

Keywords: Transculturalism, Gastronomy, Cross-cultural Exchange, Cultural Understanding, *Food, Chocolat, The Hundred-Foot Journey.*

Introduction

Food plays a crucial role in every person's life. It serves as a universal language that transcends cultural and societal boundaries. It helps us connect, breaking down barriers and celebrating the rich diversity of human experience. Despite the differences in cultures among the people, food acts as a bridge that connects them. From culture to culture around the world, food represents love, nostalgia, emotion, and kindness. Being a means for cultural exchange and reflecting a country's history, values, and creativity, international cuisines help unite people with different cultures, ages, and backgrounds. Food has a unique way of uniting us, reminding us that despite our differences, we all share a love for flavours and the joy of tasting. While food is essential to our lives, gastronomy transforms it into a true art form. It breaks the boundary beyond the mundane conception of food as nourishment; instead, it deconstructs and analyses the subtle interaction between culture, society, emotion, and personal experience which transforms feeding into a multi-dimensional and profoundly significant element of human life.

Taste of Literary Excellence

In the realm of culinary literature, only a handful of writers have successfully blended the intricate, complex flavours of culture, community, and identity. Of those, two very gifted writers who shine through at the top of this list are Joanne Harris and Richard C. Morais, as they excel in weaving together all these elements seamlessly into their writing. Through their



novels *Chocolat* and *The Hundred-Foot Journey* respectively, they have represented a delicious fusion of literature and cuisine, celebrating the diversity of cultures and human experience and the universal language of food.

Joanne Michèle Sylvie Harris is a British author who was greatly influenced by Norse mythology. Harris was a teacher and taught modern languages and French literature at the University of Sheffield. While she was a teacher she published two gothic novels *The Evil Sleep* and *Sleep, Pale Sister*. She is well known for her novel *Chocolat*, which was published in the year 1999. Harris was shortlisted for the Whitebread Novel of the Year award for this novel in the same year. This book was a great success and it was adapted into a movie of the same name. Harris wrote three more novels in the series: *The Lollipop Shoes*, *Peaches for Father Francis*, and *The Strawberry Thief*. Harris also co-authored three French cookbooks along with Fran Warde. She has also published a few more novels such as *Blackberry Wine* (2000), *Five Quarters of the Orange* (2001), *Coastliners* (2002), and *Holy Fools* (2003). In 2007, she published a fantasy novel *Runemarks* based on Norse mythology. The sequels of this novel include *Runelight*, *The Gospel of Loki*, and *The Testament of Loki*. These sequels were written between the years 2011 and 2017. Harris also published a psychological thriller *Gentlemen and Players* in 2006. She has published three novellas, *A Pocketful of Crows*, *The Blue Salt Road*, and *Orfeia*. She wrote her fantasy novels and novellas under the pen name Joanne M. Harris. A few other works of hers include *Different Class*, *A Narrow Door*, *Blueyedboy*, and *Broken Light*. Apart from these, she has also written two collections of short stories. In 2021, *Honeycomb*, a series of fairytales, was published by her. Her works have been published in more than fifty languages. The various genres explored in Joanne Harris's writings showcase her remarkable versatility, limitless creativity, innovative approach, and exceptional writing skills.

Richard C. Morais is a Canadian-American journalist and novelist. He has written many cover stories for Forbes from 1986 to 2009. Morais has written three novels including his famous work *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, which is a New York Times and International bestseller. The book has also been adapted as a movie of the same name. His other novels include *Buddhaland Brooklyn* (2013) and *The Man with No Borders* (2019). He also authored the biography *Pierre Cardin: The Man Who Became a Label*. Morais has won three awards and has been nominated six times for the Business Journalist of the Year award. Morais is currently the editor at Barron's Penta Magazine and he was awarded the Citizen Diplomat of the Year award in 2015 by Global Ties U.S, a private-public organisation. Although Richard C. Morais has published only a handful of works, his influence on contemporary literature is significant, leaving a lasting impression on both readers and writers through his evocative narrative style.

This study offers a critical examination of the themes of gastronomy and transculturalism in Joanne Harris's *Chocolat* and Richard C. Morais's *The Hundred-Foot Journey*. It highlights a detailed analysis of the culinary narratives and gastronomic experiences depicted by the characters, which promote cross-cultural exchange and understanding.

Food as a Universal Language

The main protagonist of the novel *Chocolat* is a chocolatier named Vianne Rocher, facing the challenge of traditional values and customs in the quaint French village of Lansquenet-sous-Tannes. Vianne's chocolate shop symbolises temptation and indulgence, but also serves as a gathering place for various kinds of people. Vianne spreads joy and comfort among the villagers through her rich chocolates and creates an ambiguous border that



temporarily transcends cultural and social lines. "Chocolate has a way of making even the most sceptical of souls feel optimistic," Vianne observes (Harris 54). Her chocolates, then, become a meeting point for the villagers who gather at her shop and share their stories and experiences. The character of Armande, an old woman who takes a personal interest in Vianne and serves as her friend and confidante, serves as an example of how food can unite people. Armande's love for chocolate, as well as her willingness to share her stories and cultural heritage with Vianne, helps break down cultural barriers and create a sense of community. Similarly, food is a huge part of *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, acting as a bridge between several cultural divides. The story revolves around the life of Hassan Haji, a young Indian chef who moves with his entire family to France. He opens a restaurant right across the street from a Michelin-starred French restaurant, which is run by Madame Mallory, a famous French chef. Although their cultures differ and much hostility simmers initially, the two bond over their common love of food.

Hassan opines that "a delicious meal has the power to bring people together, no matter their differences" (Morais 216). This manifests itself in the way Hassan's Indian cuisine forms a community amongst the people who congregate around it, with not a single qualm about the differences among them. Initially, Madame Mallory mocks Hassan's cooking skills; however, she soon appreciates the beauty and diversity of Indian cuisine. Based on their love for food, a mutual connection is built between Hassan and Madame Mallory. In each of the two novels, food and gastronomy act as a universal language through which people find common ground transcending cultures; and get brought closer together through the process. Through the discovery of their love of food, the main characters of *Chocolat* and *The Hundred-Foot Journey* go on to have meaningful relationships, though cultures are vastly different. As Vianne claims, "Food is a way of connecting with others, of sharing love and hospitality" (Harris 201). *The Hundred-Foot Journey* balances this view when Hassan observes, "Food knows no border, religion, or culture. It only speaks the language of love." (Morais 234). Through invoking the universal language of food, the characters in both novels constructed meaningful relations and did find connections, notwithstanding their cultural differences. It is food indeed that can break the cultural barricades and unite people of diverse backgrounds.

Gastronomy and Transcultural Exchange

In *Chocolat* and *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, food connects characters outside conventional cultural barriers and engenders moments of cross-cultural understanding. Food connects characters in *Chocolat* and *The Hundred-Foot Journey* across cultures. In *Chocolat*, Vianne opens her chocolate shop as a social, cultural gathering hub for people from all walks of life. Similarly, Hassan's restaurant in *The Hundred-Foot Journey* comes to symbolize cultural interaction as it brings people from different backgrounds together, bound by the culture of food. The novels highlight that food is the language of every person who transcends backgrounds and cultures. These novels thus create a celebration of the human spirit in their understanding of food, and their language of communication, allowing for human connection and understanding. Both novels include events and happenings where characters come together around food. In *Chocolat*, the village festival becomes one of the important occasions where the community joins hands to share and indulge in food. Vianne becomes the heart of a community celebration during the festival through sweet delights and chocolates that come to symbolize great joy. In *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, Hassan's restaurant and cooking classes serve as the key events for this coming together of people from different backgrounds, sharing the joy of exploring food and cooking Indian cuisine.



Traditional foods play a significant role in both novels, serving as expressions of culture and identity. *Chocolat* features French delicacies like *crêpes*, *crème brûlée*, candied rose petals, florentines, croissants, ganaches, *mille-feuille*, truffles, macarons, and *madeleines*, as well as Armande's traditional Provencal dishes like *ratatouille*, *tapenade*, and *tarte tatin*. *The Hundred-Foot Journey* features Indian chicken tikka masala, samosa, naan bread, gulab jamun, and biryani; in addition, French cuisines like *escargots*, *bouillabaisse*, and *coq au vin* are featured prominently. These food items bring cultural expression and identity that connect characters with their French, Indian, and cultural heritage. Thus the recurring theme running through both novels is the ability of food to bring people together. Because of their love for food, the characters entwine close relationships and find some common ground with each other, even though they come from different cultural backgrounds in *Chocolat*, and *The Hundred-Foot Journey*. Both novels pay tribute to food as a universal language, a powerful celebration of the human spirit and the innate ability to connect, socially integrate, and understand people of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Conclusion

This paper has managed to undertake a critical analysis of gastronomy and transculturalism in Joanne Harris's *Chocolat* and Richard C. Morais's *The Hundred-Foot Journey*. According to the study, gastronomy functions as an important facilitator in the process of cross-cultural exchange. The analysis shows that food serves as the universal language that can bridge the gap between different people and foster more connection and mutual understanding. The common shared interest among the characters which is food stands out in that it is something that goes beyond the fact that they came from diverse cultures that makes them create meaningful relationships and similarities. Vianne's Chocolate Shop in *Chocolat* and Hassan's Restaurant in *The Hundred-Foot Journey* are places where different ethnic groups gather and come together to enjoy the pleasure of food. Equally important, the study emphasizes the significance of conventional foods in the construction of cultural identity and expression. The idea of culinary transculturalism is the central focus of this study in which food becomes the mainstream medium that allows various individuals of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds to connect. This concept is reified throughout the novels by the fact that food is a way in which people unite and therefore community is built. In short, by joining the discipline of gastronomic literature and food studies, the paper gives way to cuisine and its importance in the course of cross-cultural interchange and understanding. To conclude, this study shows that gastronomy acts as a glue that binds people of diverse cultural backgrounds, and has the potential to transcend cultural boundaries, promoting transculturalism among individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

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A Comparative Study of Roasted Pig in Literature and Culture

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Abstract

The paper examines the cultural and symbolic significance of roast pigs in various global traditions, with Charles Lamb's essay A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig serving as a central reference point. Lamb's narrative, elevates the act of roasting a pig from a mere culinary process to a ritual steeped in tradition and meaning. His depiction reflects the evolution of the roast pig as a symbol of festivity and indulgence, transitioning from a necessity for survival to a cherished cultural practice. The study compares Charles Lamb's portrayal with similar traditions worldwide, including pork preparations from Indian regions like Kerala and Goa. These practices reveal how the preparation and sharing of roast pig often serve as a means of fostering community, celebrating abundance, and expressing cultural identity. The paper also explores how these culinary traditions reflect broader societal values, such as regional distinctions, social hierarchies, and ritualistic practices. Through this comparative approach, the paper highlights the universal role of food as a vessel for cultural expression while also showcasing the unique ways in which roast pig holds symbolic meaning across different societies. This analysis helps in understanding the enduring power of culinary traditions to connect people, preserve heritage, and tell stories that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries.

Keywords: Cultural Identity, Social hierarchy, Symbol, Survival, Societal Values.

Introduction

The tradition of roasting a pig holds a significant place in the cultural and literary heritage of many societies around the world. From ancient feasts in the Pacific Islands to its symbolic use in both Western and Eastern literature, the roasted pig transcends its role as a mere dish to a powerful symbol of identity, tradition, and community. This paper examines the representation of roast pig across different cultures and literary works, exploring its significance as a symbol of abundance, sacrifice, and social connection. Roast pig is more than just a culinary practice; it carries deep cultural and symbolic meaning. In Charles Lamb's essay "A Dissertation upon Roast Pig," the act of roasting becomes a humorous and imaginative origin story for a beloved culinary tradition. In Chinese culture, a roasted pig often plays a pivotal role in celebrations such as weddings and the Lunar New Year, symbolizing prosperity, gratitude, and good fortune. This article also studies the Indian culinary traditions involved in pork preparations in Goa and Kerala. These examples highlight how the roasted pig has been woven into the fabric of cultural practices and storytelling across the globe. This paper takes a comparative approach to analyse the role of roast pigs in literature and culture worldwide. By exploring its symbolic and narrative significance in various contexts, this study contributes to the broader field of food studies and highlights how culinary traditions can deepen our understanding of cultural and literary landscapes.

**Roast Pigs in Cultural Rituals and Traditions**

The roasted pig has long held a significant place in cultural traditions worldwide, serving as more than just a culinary delicacy. Its presence in ceremonies, festivals, and communal gatherings reflects themes of abundance, gratitude, and unity. This article delves into the role of roast pig in various cultural rituals, with a focus on its importance in the Chinese Lunar New Year, European harvest festivals, Goan celebrations, and Kerala's unique traditions. It is noted that in Chinese culture, the roasted pig symbolizes prosperity, wealth, and respect for tradition. It often takes centre stage during Lunar New Year celebrations, where families gather to share a meal that embodies their hopes for the year ahead. The pig's golden, crispy skin and its round shape are seen as representations of wealth and wholeness. This dish is also a common offering in temples and family altars, signifying gratitude and reverence for ancestors. As Wong (2016) notes, "The roasted pig is a quintessential part of Chinese festive cuisine, embodying the values of family unity and prosperity" (p. 56). Furthermore, the roasted pig plays a significant role in Chinese weddings and other life milestones, symbolizing harmony and mutual respect between families.

Similarly, In Europe, the roasted pig has been the main part of harvest celebrations for centuries. These festivals, often held in autumn, mark the end of the agricultural season and express gratitude for a successful harvest. In medieval Europe, a whole roasted pig was a communal dish that brought villagers together, reflecting unity and abundance. For example, in Germany, the "Schlacht fest" (slaughter festival) involves the preparation of roasted pork as a shared meal, reinforcing the idea of communal bonds (Schmidt, 2012, p. 67). Similarly, in Spain, the tradition of roasting a pig during "La Matanzas" is deeply rooted in rural agricultural practices and familial traditions. These events highlight the cultural significance of food as a unifying force. In Goa, the roasted pig is a central feature of festive occasions such as weddings, Christmas, and village feasts. A blend of Portuguese influence and local traditions, the Goan roast pig, or "Leitao" is prepared with a unique combination of spices that reflect the region's rich culinary heritage. Fernandes (2018) explains that "the roasted pig is more than a dish in Goan culture; it represents joy, hospitality, and a sense of identity" (p. 89). During Christmas, families often come together to prepare this dish, fostering a sense of togetherness and celebration. In village feasts, the roasted pig is considered part of the festivities, symbolizing the communal spirit and cultural pride of Goan society.

In Kerala, while pork is not as widely consumed as in some other regions, the roasted pig holds a special place in Christian communities, especially during festive occasions like Easter and Christmas. Syrian Christian households often prepare roast pork with local spices, blending global culinary practices with Kerala's distinctive flavours. According to Mathew (2020), "The preparation of roasted pig during Christian festivals in Kerala showcases the fusion of colonial influences with local traditions" (p. 123). This dish is typically the main attraction of a celebratory meal, symbolizing festivity, family unity, and cultural identity. The communal preparation of the roasted pig during such occasions underscores its role as a marker of shared heritage and joy. Despite the regional variations in preparation and significance, certain themes surrounding the roasted pig are universal. It is often associated with abundance, serving as a symbol of gratitude during celebrations. The communal aspect of its preparation and consumption highlights its role in strengthening social bonds. Additionally, the roasted pig frequently symbolizes respect, whether as an offering to deities and ancestors or as a gesture of goodwill among families and communities. The roasted pig's significance in cultural rituals and celebrations highlights its symbolic richness and its ability to unite people through shared traditions. Whether it serves as the centre of Chinese Lunar



New Year feasts, a marker of gratitude in European harvest festivals, a symbol of joy in Goan celebrations, or a festive dish in Kerala's Christian traditions, the roasted pig transcends its culinary role. It embodies values of abundance, unity, and respect that resonate across cultures, making it a timeless symbol of celebration.

Literary Representation of Roast Pigs

Lamb begins his essay with an imaginative tale about how a roast pig was discovered by accident. The story revolves around a Chinese boy named Bo-bo, who sets his father's house on fire, and unknowingly roasts the pigs inside. Upon tasting the burnt pig, Bo-bo discovers its remarkable flavour, marking the supposed origin of the roast pig as a culinary practice. Lamb humorously states in his essay, "The crackling burnt fingers went to his lips, and for the first time, he tasted—crackling!" (Lamb, p. 31). This anecdote, while absurd, serves as a satirical commentary on human innovation and the nature of discovery. It is noted that Bo-bo's story is absurd, and that makes it a fun read. Lamb uses this tale to show how people often make big myths out of simple things, like the origins of food. As Wright (2015) notes, "Lamb's humour transforms a simple dish into a symbol of cultural evolution, allowing readers to reflect on the absurdities of tradition" (p. 72). On the other hand, one of the most striking aspects of Lamb's essay is his vivid description of the sensory pleasures associated with roast pig. He writes with an appreciation, describing the "tender juvenile flesh" and the "ambrosial relish" of the dish (Lamb, p. 41). These evocative descriptions celebrate the simple joys of eating and highlight food's ability to evoke strong emotional and sensory responses.

This sensory focus reflects Lamb's Romantic sensibilities, which often sought to find beauty and meaning in the mundane. Jackson (2019) argues that Lamb's depiction of food as a source of aesthetic pleasure aligns with the Romantic ideal of elevating everyday experiences into profound moments of joy (p. 89). In this way, the essay transcends its humorous premise to become a celebration of life's simple yet profound pleasures. While the essay is humorous on the surface, it also serves as a subtle critique of societal norms and human behaviour. Lamb's portrayal of Bo-bo's accidental discovery and the subsequent obsession with roast pig pokes fun at humanity's tendency to overcomplicate and ritualize simple practices. For instance, Lamb humorously describes how people began deliberately burning down their houses to replicate Bo-bo's discovery, highlighting the absurd lengths to which humans will go in pursuit of pleasure. Lamb when describing his experience of roast pig refers to it as, "the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food- the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna" (Lamb p. 41). In Lamb's essay, the roast pig becomes more than just a dish; it is a symbol of human indulgence and desire. The lengths to which people go to recreate the roasted pig reflect humanity's unrelenting pursuit of pleasure, often at great cost. Lamb's humorous exaggeration of people burning down their homes underscores the irrationality that often accompanies humans. By using the roast pig as a central symbol, Lamb reflects on the absurdities of tradition, the joys of indulgence, and the profound role of food in shaping human culture. As Wright (2015) aptly puts it, "Lamb's essay is a timeless reminder of the power of humour and storytelling to illuminate the deeper meanings behind everyday experiences" (p. 74).

Comparative Analysis of Culinary Traditions

In literature, food often carries more significance than its basic role as nourishment. It becomes a powerful symbol reflecting cultural values, human desires, and societal norms. Charles Lamb's *A Dissertation upon Roast Pig* presents roast pig as a symbol of indulgence, creativity, and the absurdity of human customs. While this culinary symbol is rooted in a



specific cultural context, it can be compared to similar representations in other cultures, such as in Chinese, Goan, and Malayalam literature. These culinary symbols share themes of indulgence, tradition, and human connection but are interpreted in ways unique to each culture, offering insight into their respective societies.

In Lamb's essay, the roast pig is discovered by accident when a Chinese boy, Bo-bo, sets his father's house on fire, roasting the pigs inside. This humorous and absurd tale not only entertains but also critiques the human tendency to elevate simple, everyday practices into cultural rituals. The story's absurdity highlights how humans often elevate trivial matters to great significance in their cultural practices.

In Chinese culture, roast pig also holds significant symbolic meaning, often associated with celebration and prosperity. In Chinese literature, the roasted pig frequently appears in scenes of feasts or festivals, representing abundance and fulfilment. For example, in *The Dream of the Red Chamber* by Cao Xueqin, food is central to the depiction of wealth and social status. "A banquet featuring roast pig symbolizes family harmony and prosperity, emphasizing the cultural importance of food in bringing people together and celebrating life's pleasures" (Xueqin, p. 103). Here, the roast pig is not just a dish but a representation of social connection and the joys of life.

In Goan literature, food also serves as a symbolic tool to reflect cultural identity and the blending of traditions. Goan cuisine, influenced by Portuguese colonialism, features rich, flavourful dishes that represent the region's unique fusion of Indian and European cultures. In *The Goa Inquisition* by Norbert D'Souza, food, including roast meats, symbolizes both indulgence and the tension between colonial influence and local traditions. The roast pig, particularly during feasts, marks both religious and cultural milestones. "The preparation and consumption of roast pig in Goan literature go beyond mere sustenance, representing cultural pride and resistance to colonial forces" (D'Souza, p. 45). It is a symbol of asserting local identity in the face of external pressures.

In Malayalam literature, food symbolizes the connection between tradition and modernity. Kerala's culinary heritage, with its emphasis on spices and flavours, is often reflected in works like *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. Although the roast pig is not a central symbol in Kerala literature, the significance of food is prevalent. Traditional dishes like *Sadhya*—a feast of rice and various curries—are prepared during festivals such as Onam, representing cultural pride and the preservation of traditions. "The communal act of sharing food in Kerala literature, much like in Lamb's essay, underscores the importance of food in fostering human connection and celebrating life's milestones" (Roy, p. 120). Across these diverse cultural contexts, the symbolism of roast pig and other culinary traditions reflects shared themes of indulgence, tradition, and the role of food in human connection. However, each culture imparts its unique meaning to these culinary symbols. In Lamb's *A Dissertation upon Roast Pig*, the absurdity of the story critiques humanity's tendency to elevate the trivial. In Chinese culture, the roast pig symbolizes prosperity and social harmony. In Goan literature, it represents cultural identity and resistance, while in Kerala, food signifies a deep connection to tradition and familial bonds. These culinary symbols offer a rich understanding of how food reflects the values and desires of different societies, while also highlighting the universal human need to find meaning and joy in the act of eating.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on the important role that roast pig plays in both literature and culture, serving as more than just a food item. In Charles Lamb's *A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig*, one can see how the act of roasting a pig evolves from a simple necessity to a symbol of



indulgence, tradition, and cultural significance. By comparing Lamb's depiction with similar practices in regions around the world, the research emphasizes how food traditions represent abundance and familial connections. While each tradition is shaped by its unique cultural context, they all highlight common themes of social connection and ritual. Ultimately, this analysis demonstrates the lasting power of culinary traditions to preserve cultural heritage, bring people together, and convey shared human experiences across different cultures and periods.

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Impact of Gender Inequality on Nutritional Outcomes

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Abstract

Food is a primary source of life. It is not only a basic necessity of life. It has diversified into categories like food culture, which encapsulates the different geographical areas that cherish their meals and food customs that reflect the beliefs of specific cultures. According to the WHO (2025), Gender inequalities and gender norms restrict women's access to resources and services, such as land, knowledge, and food, leading to poverty and food and nutrition insecurity. Vulnerable women, particularly in female-headed households, face limited access to nutrition information and resources, making them more susceptible to food shortages, food insecurity, and malnutrition. The gender gap in food insecurity continued to rise in 2022, with 27.8 percent of women experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity compared to 25.4 percent of men (FAO SOFI 2023). Malnutrition in mothers can initiate a deprivation cycle, impacting child mortality, disease, educational performance, and work productivity. Educational attainment in women significantly influences child survival rates. The present study aims to assess the gender distinctness in food habits, culture of food, and sensory appeal of the food and food preferences. Convenient Sampling was used to select the sample from the study area. A survey was conducted in online mode using a close-ended questionnaire through google form. Data was coded, analysed and presented in frequency tables and inferential statistics through SPSS version 23. Thus, the study concludes that still there is a need of awareness and intervention to reduce the factors which are associated in gender inequality.

Keywords: Food, Inequality, Gender identity, Nutrition insecurity, Awareness

Introduction

Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys who are socially constructed (WHO, 2025). According to the United Nations Children's Fund, from the conception of a child in the mother's womb gender insight begins, and impact develops across every stage of life through infancy, childhood, adolescence, and beyond (UNICEF, 2022). Men and women have different preferences toward food choices, eating behavior, divergent tastes, and nutritional choices. Generally vegetarian diets are classified into different categories and women prefer vegetarian diet than non-vegetarian diet. Vegetarian and vegan diet purely includes plant products such as cereals, fruits, vegetables and excludes all animal and animal based products. Consideration to plant based diet reduces and maintains the natural resources. (Modlinska, Klaudia, et al., 2020). Feminine choice towards food includes whole grains, vegetables, and fruits for healthier choices. Whereas men prefer meat, egg, milk, and other food products which are high in protein (Feraco *et al.*, 2024). Based on food consumption mechanism many factors like Physical, Physiological and Psychological affect the satiety of food. Hormonal factors affect the amount of food consumption, leptin is an essential hormone which regulates the body weight, promote satiety and suppress hunger



levels in body. Higher amount of leptin secretion is identified in women than men due to higher adiposity in women which inhibit food intake and energy expenditure (Rakha Allah *et al.*, 2022). Stunting, Wasting and underweight are the key indicators of malnutrition. According to National Family Health Survey – 5 these key indicators reduced to the level of 38.4% to 35.5%, 21.0% to 19.3%, and 35.8% to 32.1%. Women and Girls children are commonly affected by these key indicators than men and boys. Thus recommended amount of energy, protein, and micronutrients are included in daily diet. Lower socioeconomic status, inadequate dietary pattern, global poverty and poor access to clean water threaten malnutrition among household working women. Maternal malnutrition results in low birth weight, growth retardation in children will leads to infant morbidity and mortality rates (Jabbour, Jana *et al.*, 2023). Acute hunger is the most critical contributing factor of undernutrition. The prevalence of undernutrition is higher among marginalized sections of Indian society (Kshatriya, Gautam K *et al.*, 2016).

Gender inequality highlights women have limited access to food and resources in some countries. International Organizations and United Nations Women, International Labour Organisation, United Nations Children’s Fund, World Health Organisation, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights prioritize and promote gender equality in all aspects. Systematic Programmes, Policies, and Standards are provoked to uplift the rights of women and ensure their full potential. This study aims to identify the major differences of food related practices among the male and female categories. The main objective of the study is to assess the gender differences in food habits and food preferences and to identify the nutritional disturbances due to gender disparities.

Methodology

The study contains a specific group of participants selected from the students of Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram. In Inclusive criteria: late adolescence and early adulthood of both boys and girls at the age of 18-28 years of students were selected. Students were studying from UG degree to higher studies like Ph.D. Participants were required to complete their online survey in classroom with proper support and guidance if any clarifications from the students. Convenience sampling technique was a quick and inexpensive method of non-probability sampling. This enhances the researcher to select the participants to their accessibility and availability. Statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Software to analyse the data frequencies.

Results and Discussion

The study includes a total of 140 participants, 70 females and 70 males in a average age of 23 years. These below data shows the Socio-demographic profile, dietary pattern of different gender follows.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N=140)

Variables	Female (n=70)	Male n=70
Age		
≤ 20 years	35 (50.0)	30 (43.0)
≥ 21 years	35 (50.0)	40 (57.0)
Currently Living Status		
Living with family	25 (36.0)	27 (38.5)
Living with friends	9 (13.0)	23 (33.0)



Living in hostel	36 (51.0)	20 (28.5)
Current Educational Status		
Undergraduate	45 (64.5)	54 (77.0)
Post Graduate	22 (31.5)	15 (21.0)
Higher Education (Ph.D.)	3 (4.0)	1 (1.0)
Family Income		
10,000 and Below	19 (27.0)	22 (31.0)
10,001 and Above	51 (73.0)	48 (69.0)

The above table represents the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. The table divides the socio-demographic profile into age, living status, educational status, and family income. The collected data from 50 percent of females and 50 percent of males comes under the age group of less than or equal to 20 years and greater than or equal to 21 years. Among females, 50.0 percent fall under less than or equal to 20 years of the age group, and 50.0 percent fall under greater than or equal to 21 years of the age group. Among males, 43.0 percent fall under less than or equal to 20 years of the age group, and 57.0 percent fall under greater than or equal to 21 years of the age group. The living status is classified into the respondents living with family, friends, and a hostel. The majority of living status of females, 51.0 percent in a hostel, 36.0 percent of respondents lived with their family, 13.0 percent of respondents lived with their friends, and male respondents, 38.5 percent living with their family, 33.0 percent of respondents living with their friends, and 28.5 percent in a hostel.

The respondents' educational status was analyzed for their knowledge about food choices and preferences linked with their nutritional outcomes. The majority of the female participants 64.5 percent completed their undergraduate, 31.5 percent made progressed to postgraduate and only 4.0 percent progressed to a Ph.D degree. The majority of the male participants 77.0 percent completed their undergraduate, 21.0 percent made progressed to postgraduate and only 1.0 percent progressed to a Ph.D degree. The majority of female family income was seventy-three percent for the category of 10,001 & above and twenty-seven percent of female respondents' income was below 10,000. On the other hand, the majority of male respondents' income was sixty-nine percent for the category of 10,001 & above, and thirty-one percent of male respondents' income was below 10,000.

Table 2: Food Preferences and Food Habits of the Respondents (N=140)

Variables	Female (n=70)	Male n=70
Timeline of consuming food per day		
Two times per day	10 (14.0)	15 (21.0)
Three times per day	55 (79.0)	30 (43.0)
More than three times per day	5 (7.0)	25 (36.0)
Type of cuisine		
Indian foods	65 (93.0)	60 (86.0)
Other than Indian foods	5 (7.0)	10 (14.0)
Type of diet		
Vegetarian	30 (43.0)	25 (36.0)
Non-vegetarian	40 (57.0)	45 (64.0)
Food Plate		



1 cup of rice with curry (or) pickle	10 (14.0)	10 (14.0)
1 cup of rice with curry and two vegetables	19 (27.0)	15 (21.0)
1 cup of rice with curry, two vegetables and Buttermilk with Fruit	41 (59.0)	45 (64.0)
Likeness towards Vegetables		
Green leafy vegetables	25 (36.0)	5 (7.0)
Roots and Tubers	30 (43.0)	40 (57.0)
Other vegetables	15 (21.0)	25 (36.0)
Consumption of veggies per week		
1-3 days per week	40 (57.0)	25 (36.0)
4-6 days per week	30 (43.0)	45 (64.0)
Consumption of Fruits per week		
1-3 days per week	52 (74.0)	48 (68.5)
4-6 days per week	18 (26.0)	22 (31.0)
Consumption of Meat per week		
1-3 days per week	45 (64.0)	60 (86.0)
4-6 days per week	25 (36.0)	10 (14.0)
Consumption of Milk and Milk Products per week		
1-3 days per week	46 (66.0)	35 (50.0)
4-6 days per week	24 (34.0)	35 (50.0)
Consumption of water per day		
1 litres and below	15 (21.0)	5 (7.0)
1 litres and above	55 (79.0)	65 (93.0)
Likeness towards Beverages		
Tea/Coffee	15 (21.0)	20 (29.0)
Soft drinks	30 (43.0)	30 (43.0)
Buttermilk/Tender coconut water	19 (27.0)	15 (21.0)
Fresh fruit/vegetable juices	6 (9.0)	5 (7.0)

Compared to 43.0 percent male respondents, 79.0 percent of female consume the food three times of meals per day. Male respondents' consume the food in a frequency of 36.0 and 21.0 percent for more than three times a day and two times per day. Female respondents consume the food in a frequency of 14.0 and 7.0 percent for two times per day and more than three times a day. Compared to male 86.0 percent the female respondents 93.0 percent have a higher preference to Indian foods. Only 14.0 percent of male respondents' and 7.0 percent of female respondents have interest to try continental or chinese cuisine. The majority 57.0 percent of females and 64.0 percent of male respondents' prefer non-vegetarian foods, whereas 43.0 percent female and 36.0 percent of male respondents' prefer vegetarian foods. The Food plate is analysed to identify whether the respondents' consume balanced diet. There is a deeper understanding about food plate; sixty four percent of male respondents consume a cup of rice with curry, two vegetables and Buttermilk with Fruit per meal, whereas fifty nine percent of female respondents consume a cup of rice with curry, two vegetables and Buttermilk with Fruit per meal. Moderate understanding of 27.0 percent and 21.0 percent of female and male respondents consume 1 cup of rice with curry and two. Low level of understanding on food plate for both females and males at the frequency of 14.0 percent. Preference to vegetables consumption is more important, majority 57.0 percent of males and 43.0 percent of females like roots and tubers, likeness towards other vegetables like plantain,



flowery vegetables, brinjal etc, are slowly reduced to 36.0 percent for males and 21.0 percent for females and only females respondents 36.0 percent have a high range of preference towards green leafy vegetables than 7.0 percent of males respondents. Not only the preference but also the frequency of consumption of vegetables per week also identified. Majority 64.0 percent of males consume veggies 4-6 days per week, whereas 43.0 percent of females consume veggies 4-6 days per week. Some of them reduced their intake due to low availability of veggies, food preference is declined for some participants. Females (57.0 percent) and males (36.0 percent) consume veggies 1-3 days per week.

A higher percentage of participants consume fruits 1-3 days per week, and the gender distribution is split between 74.0 percent females and 68.5 percent males. The minimum percentage of participants consume fruits 4-6 days per week, and the gender distribution is split between 26.0 percent females and 31.0 percent males. The majority of male respondents 86.0 percent consume meat within 1-3 days per week compared to the females 64.0 percent. Only 36.0 percent of females and 14.0 percent of males consume meat within 4-6 days per week. A higher proportion of females (66 percent) consume milk and milk products per week, compared to males (50 percent). Conversely, 34.0 percent of females and 50.0 percent of males consume milk and milk products per week.

Water is a vital nutrient that keeps the body hydrated. Males 93.0 (percent) consume a higher proportion of water one litres and above than females (79.0 percent). Conversely, 21.0 percent of females and 7.0 percent of males consume about below one litre of water. Likeness towards healthy and unhealthy beverages is evaluated using a frequency of consumption of hot and cold drinks. Soft drinks are consumed frequently to a maximum range of 43.0 percent for both males and females and tea and coffee in a frequency of 29.0 percent for males and 21.0 percent for females. A healthy version of beverages boosts energy level and maximizes physical performance. Only few participants consume buttermilk or tender coconut water. The majority of females (27.0 percent) and males (21.0 percent). The least amount of females 6 percent and males 5 percent participants consumes fresh fruit or vegetable juices.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes the importance and awareness of food habits and food preference will remain same for female and male. Not all women depend on men. Educational Practices and modernization in culture get rid of the inequalities in food preferences. Timeline consumption of food per day, likeness towards different meals, veggies, fruits, milk and milk products and healthy beverage practices is higher in women than men. This directs the new beginning to be a pathway for following healthier and better habits of lifestyle.

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An Exploration of Food Symbolism in Kate Grenville's *The Lieutenant*

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Abstract

This article focuses on Food literature which is an interdisciplinary field that explores the symbolic, cultural, and emotional significance of food in literary texts. It inquires on how food serves as a metaphor for identity, power dynamics, and societal structure while also engaging with themes of hunger, survival, and pleasure. The relationship between food and literature provides valuable insights into how characters interact with their environments, shaping and being shaped by the consumption of food and their relationship with it. Kate Grenville's The Lieutenant is a historical novel set in 18th-century Australia. This novel consists of the themes of colonization, identity, and cultural interaction. The author intricately portrays the experiences of the protagonist, Daniel Rooke, an English lieutenant stationed in Australia who grapples with the ethical challenges posed during colonization. This novel reflects on issues of language, belonging, and the complex relationships between European settlers and the Indigenous population. The paper examines Grenville's use of food to illustrate the tensions between the hegemonic, complicit and marginalized cultures and identities, and as a tool of both survival and asserting dominance. It highlights how food practices in the novel expose the colonial project and the marginalization of Indigenous people and on the other hand, moments of solidarity and understanding. The paper demonstrates that Grenville's depiction of food practices in The Lieutenant reveals deeper layers of cultural conflict and resistance, offering readers a nuanced understanding of the emotional and ethical complexities of colonial encounters. Thus, the paper states that "Food" in The Lieutenant acts as both a literal and metaphorical device through which the themes of survival, cultural exchange, and the violence of colonialism come to the forefront, enriching the reader's understanding of Grenville's exploration of culture and identity.

Keywords: Colonialism, Identity, Food Practices, Kate Grenville, *The Lieutenant*.

Introduction

Food literature encompasses a type of writing that delves into themes, narratives, and experiences related to food. This category can include food preparation, consumption, cultural significance, and emotional connections. Often, food literature investigates broader aspects of human life, such as identity, culture, relationships, history, and social interactions, through the lens of food. A notable characteristic of this genre is the significant presence of food, either in a tangible or symbolic sense, which may involve detailed descriptions of dishes, recipes, and culinary traditions, emphasizing food as both a cultural phenomenon and a material substance. This paper examines culinary advancements in literature, utilizing food as a topic, a medium, a setting, a point of contention, a political cause, an aesthetic expression, and an essential element in literature. Frances Bacon Maxim asks what if we think of the tasting, chewing, and digesting "Some books are to be tasted, others to be



swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested”. (Gitanjali G. Shahani) It examines food in literary text, food text as literature, and literature as food for the mind. It examines how food studies intersect with critical racial studies, queer theory, postcolonial studies, and other subjects that have influenced its fundamental themes. It investigates the possibilities for applying its methodologies in various literary and cultural texts.

In Australia, there are two types of Indigenous people: Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people. During Australia’s early colonial years, the British government sent the majority of European settlers there as prisoners. On the other hand, some individuals who decided to leave their homes in Britain were known as free settlers. Without a doubt, the arrival of European settlers changed Australia’s political, economic, and social systems. Native Australians suffered greatly after European settlers’ arrival, losing both their land and their culture. This resulted in an extended time of trouble and violence, the effects of which may still be seen in Australia today. This country combines elements of European and Indigenous culture to create a distinctive identity and culture. In Australian literature, Kate Grenville is a highly regarded personality who has had a significant influence on modern literary landscapes. Her collection of work explores topics rooted in Australian history, identity, and the long-lasting effects of colonisation on Indigenous communities in a nuanced manner. Grenville’s novel *The Lieutenant* which takes place in early colonial Australia, is one of her most important literary contributions. Food becomes a means of communication between Lieutenant Rooke and the Indigenous people. Sharing food represents an attempt to overcome cultural divides and promote mutual understanding.

In the book, the themes surrounding cultural exchange via food and the symbolic meaning of food highlight how it facilitates cultural interaction between Aboriginal Australians and European colonizers. Alongside exploring how culinary practices mirror and maintain colonial hierarchies, the bond between Daniel Rooke and Patyegarang shows that sharing meals can bridge cultural divides. It reflects the tension between the traditional Aboriginal diet and European food items.

Food as Cultural Identity

In *The Lieutenant*, food acts as a significant marker of cultural identity. Along with their language, customs and beliefs, the British colonizers introduced their culinary practices, which mirror their perspective on the world. Their provisions of hardtack, salted beef, and rum symbolize the challenges and limitations of life in the colonies, as well as the resource-heavy, industrial tendencies of British society. Conversely, the Indigenous Cadigal people are portrayed as having a profound connection to their environment through their dietary practices. Their intake of fresh fish, shellfish, local fruits, and vegetables reflects a deep and sustainable bond with the earth. This contrast underscores the broader cultural divide between the Indigenous inhabitants, who live in harmony with the land, and the colonizers, who exploit and transform it. Grenville emphasizes the inability of the British to adapt to their new surroundings by showcasing these dietary differences. The Indigenous people’s knowledge of local resources illustrates their strong relationship with the land, while the colonists’ reliance on imported food signifies a disconnection from it. Beyond the issue of nourishment, differing worldviews and relationships with nature also play a role in this divergence.

Food as a Medium of Cultural Exchange

Food facilitates communication and cross-cultural interchange, especially between Lieutenant Daniel Rooke and the Indigenous people. Moments involving food frequently connect Rooke’s interest in language and his quest to comprehend the Cadigal culture.



Overcoming linguistic and cultural obstacles, and sharing food turns into a gesture of kindness and respect for one another. Also, Rooke's participation in meals with the Indigenous people is one moving example "But a man could not travel along two different paths." (Grenville 63) He can observe their traditions and build connections because of these common experiences. Here, food serves as a unifying factor between two different civilizations. Offering Rooke food represents hospitality and trust to the Cadigal people, while Rooke's acceptance and consumption of their food represent his willingness to learn about and comprehend their customs.

Food as Power and Control

Food also acts as a symbol of power and control within the colonial environment of *The Lieutenant*. To maintain order among the soldiers and settlers and reinforce their hierarchical system, the British government supplies food rations. The rigid class distinctions within the colony are evident in the unequal allocation of resources, where officers receive superior rations while regular soldiers and prisoners are provided with the bare minimum. Rooke reflected, "Out here, with his thoughts his only company, he could become nothing more or less than the person he was. Himself. It was as unexplored a land as this one." (Grenville 78) In contrast, the Cadigal people regard food as a communal and treasured resource within their culture. This fundamental difference in how the two societies perceive food highlights the broader conflicts between them. To assert their dominance, the British attempt to "gift" food to the Cadigal people, which is illustrated in the book. Despite their seemingly generous intentions, these actions stem from a patronizing perspective that diminishes the Indigenous people's sense of independence. Conversely, Rooke's genuine wish to share and dine with the Cadigal people illustrates a more equal approach and underscores his shift away from the colonial mindset.

Conclusion

Kate Grenville explores the themes of cultural identity, cross-cultural interaction, power dynamics, and survival in *The Lieutenant* by subtly addressing the subject of food. Grenville emphasizes the broader cultural and ideological chasm between the Indigenous Cadigal people and the British colonizers by contrasting their dietary practices. Food serves as a medium for connection while simultaneously highlighting the underlying tensions of colonialism, acting both as a conduit and an obstacle. Rooke's evolution from a detached observer to an empathetic participant in the narrative is mirrored in his shifting views on food and its impact on his relationships with the Cadigal people. Through these examples, Grenville underscores how, in the face of structural injustice and exploitation, food possesses the ability to bridge cultural divides and foster empathy. At last, the exploration of humanity, connection and the enduring consequences of colonialism in *The Lieutenant* has been enriched by the motif of food.

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An Eco-critical Perspective on the Global Food System

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Abstract

The global food system faces a significant challenge in feeding the growing population while ensuring food security, nutrition, climate change, and environmental sustainability. As a foundational aspect of human survival, food production, distribution, and consumption have profound ecological, socio-political, and economic implications. This paper adopts an eco-critical perspective to examine the ecological impact of modern agricultural practices, industrial farming, and global food trade. It explores how these factors intersect with issues of food sovereignty, cultural traditions, and environmental health, with a particular focus on sustainability and the need for a more harmonious relationship between humans and the natural world. The modern development of food systems has been shaped by a complex transition from traditional societies to agricultural practices, and this shift has often distanced humans from their natural environment. By emphasizing food literacy and eco-critical analysis, this work aims to inspire a reconnection with the ecological foundations of food production, fostering more sustainable practices for the future. This paper seeks to offer insights into how the global food system evolves toward greater ecological balance, cultural sensitivity, and social justice, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable and equitable world.

Keywords: Global Food System, Organic Food, Modern Agriculture, Nutrition Literacy.

The global food system is a complex and interconnected network that includes production, distribution, consumption, and waste management. This system currently encounters a range of challenges, such as environmental degradation, climate change, and food insecurity. In today's society, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of sustainable food production and eco-friendly practices. Organic farming techniques are being adopted more widely for food cultivation. The historical environment sheds light on various ecological realities. The goal of food literacy is to enhance people's understanding of the relationships between food production methods and their effects on both environmental and human health. Food literacy plays a vital role in overall health by educating individuals about the nutritional content of their diets and its impact on their well-being. By grasping the nutritional value of different foods, people perhaps develop balanced diets and make healthier choices. Additionally, food safety education is essential, as it provides knowledge on proper food preparation, handling, and storage to prevent foodborne illnesses. Learning to cook is one of the most effective ways to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Beyond supporting physical health, a nutritious diet also contributes to mental well-being. It helps avert chronic health issues such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity, which are often linked to poor dietary choices. Therefore, implementing programs that foster food literacy from an early age significantly influences the early life development of healthier and more sustainable eating habits as established. Children are pivotal agents of change, these



initiatives also drive the transformation of their food systems. As they gain confidence in their decision-making, they become empowered to shape their dietary choices and, consequently, their families' economic situations in the future. The modern diet, characterized by the consumption of commoditized goods, has led to both human and environmental crises. To mitigate these issues, it is essential to implement stricter regulations on harmful foods, enhance agricultural practices, and promote food education. While there exists a disparity between pre-industrial and contemporary societies, agriculture represents a pivotal shift in human interaction with the natural world. The prevalence of commoditized goods has contributed to various environmental and human challenges, oversight of unhealthy food and beverage options, improved farming techniques, and comprehensive food education.

Dietary choices have broader implications for the environment. As awareness of the relationship between diet and sustainability grows, individuals are increasingly reevaluating their food choices and considering their wider impacts. By understanding the origins of food and reflecting on consumption habits, people contribute to a more sustainable future. The cultivation of water-intensive crops such as rice and coconut presents significant challenges, including deforestation, soil erosion, and water scarcity. Additionally, livestock farming adversely affects ecosystems by destroying habitats and diminishing biodiversity. This situation underscores the urgent need for action to address global food crises, as highlighted by eco-critics. Eco-critical literature serves as a valuable framework for analyzing food and food studies, particularly as it underscores the urgency of addressing global food crises. While numerous challenges related to food persist globally, this blog specifically emphasizes the diminishing connection individuals have with the origins of their food.

Eco-criticism not only identifies environmental issues but also proposes potential solutions. This approach is particularly relevant when applied to the current food system. By examining food, nature, natural history, and associated practices such as agriculture and hunting, people enhance their understanding of nutrition. Many contemporary discussions surrounding food security often focus on the challenge of nourishing the growing global population, many of whom live in poverty, without exacerbating environmental degradation. It is essential to develop and implement sustainable, long-term solutions to achieve food security. In this analysis of various food systems, this paper addresses key points in the discourse on food security, not to advocate for or against any particular viewpoint, but to investigate how narratives are utilized to raise awareness of these issues and propose viable solutions.

The challenges posed by modern agriculture significantly affect contemporary food systems. A major contributor to these challenges is industrial agriculture, which is characterized by unsustainable practices. The use of chemicals and pesticides devastates beneficial soil organisms, such as earthworms and microbes, which are vital for maintaining soil organic matter, nutrient cycling, soil structure, and water retention. While high-yield crops may increase production, this focus often leads to a narrow understanding of food and agricultural knowledge, neglecting the broader implications for nutrition. High-yield crops, which are genetically modified, with increased productivity in yield, and size of the fruit or vegetables. Hybrid foods enhance both flavour and nutritional value, offering health benefits attributed to their elevated antioxidant levels found in fruits. Traditional food has the quality and is high energy but modern food highly increases the risk of various cancers, including rectal, pancreatic and lung cancer, raising significant global health concerns.



Herbicides enhance agricultural productivity and contribute to food security, they also pose considerable risks to both human health and the environment. Application of herbicides in forests, urban areas, and agricultural lands leads to both immediate and prolonged adverse effects on humans, animals, insects, fish, and wildlife. Additionally, the overuse and misuse of these chemicals result in the emergence of herbicide-resistant weeds, the accumulation of residues in plants and soils, crop toxicity, and detrimental impacts on non-target species. The close interaction between humans and their environment heightens the risks associated with agrochemical exposure. To address these challenges, it is crucial to enhance public understanding and education regarding pesticide safety, which involves dispelling myths and encouraging informed decision-making.

In the end, people are challenged to rethink the food system, urging a shift toward one that values ecological health and the deep interconnection of all life. Better moving to agroecological methods that support biodiversity, preserve soil vitality, and reduce reliance on harmful chemicals. It also promotes localizing food production and consumption, fostering stronger community ties and reducing environmental transportation. In essence, reshaping the global food system is not merely an agricultural concern, but a profound transformation of the values and relationship with the planet. It demands a united effort to build a fairer, more justifiable, and sustainable world for all.

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Food Beyond Nutrition and Travel Experience in the Select Novels of Emily Barr

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Abstract

The intricate and diverse connection between food and literature significantly influences narratives, characters, and cultural settings in literary works. Food, as a fundamental aspect of human existence throughout history, is depicted in literature to highlight different societal, cultural, and personal experiences. The culinary dimension of travel is rich and multifaceted, profoundly enriching the overall experience, as participating in traditional feasts offers a glimpse into community life. Not only does food sustain travellers, but it also unveils the essence of local cultures, traditions, and ways of life, offering a sensory exploration that goes beyond mere sustenance. The relationship between food and psychology during extended travel is complex and deeply personal, as food might serve as a source of comfort and cultural connection, it also presents opportunities for growth and exploration. Emily Barr's novels are primarily known for their psychological insights and character-driven narratives, the inclusion of food-related themes adds another layer of complexity and realism to her storytelling. These culinary elements contribute to creating vivid settings and developing character traits in her novels. The paper focuses on the significance of Food as a recurring element in the select novels of Emily Barr that serves the character's relationship with food, concerning both the physical and psychological dimensions.

Keywords: Travel Experience, Food, Sustenance, Nutrition, Culture, Emily Barr.

The relationship between food and travel is profoundly intertwined, with each aspect enhancing the other's significance in various meaningful ways. In essence, food and travel together create a tapestry of cultural, sensory, social, and personal dimensions, making the journey more enriching and memorable. Emily Barr, a British novelist known for her travel novels, often explores themes of self-discovery, relationships, and cultural experiences. Her works indeed feature elements of food and literature, which play significant roles in shaping the narratives and characters' journeys. Food is a recurring element in many of Emily Barr's novels, serving as a mere sustenance for her characters. It often represents, the cultural immersion of the characters frequently encountering local cuisine during their travels, serving as a gateway to understand foreign cultures and traditions. Through these experiences, travellers develop a more nuanced perspective on food and its role in shaping individual preferences and lifestyles.

The experience of trying unfamiliar foods and drinks during travel may lead to personal growth and self-discovery. By conquering the initial reluctance to sample new foods may broaden one's comfort zone and boost confidence. While travelling, people often adapt to different culinary traditions, as food remains a crucial aspect of survival. Travelers may prioritize their time and resources and discover new aspects through the choices they make.



The process of self-discovery may lead to explicit priorities, both in the course time and after the journey. The novel *Backpack* by Emily Barr illustrates Tansy's experiences abroad that challenged her perceptions and encouraged her to embrace life anew, appreciating the exceptional quality of the food enjoyed over the course of the trip. Her complete immersion in every facet of her journey is unmistakably reflected in the lines, "Yet, time and time again. I have been proved wrong. This journey matters more than ever" (*Backpack*, 318).

The travel environment itself may impact food consumption on limited access to fresh produce or healthy options during long journeys. Travel may also affect the relationship with food psychologically, the stress of travel leads to poor food choices and nostalgia for home-cooked meals while away from familiar surroundings serves a significant part in the lives of travellers. The novel *Stranded* by Emily Barr recounts the story of Esther, who was excited to visit Perhentian Kecil Island in Malaysia with other travellers, one of those fabled magical Island with a jungle in the middle, surrounded by the edges of perfect beaches and huts to sleep in. Samad, who was in charge of people who visited the isolated island, returned leaving others, in search of the lighters to cook food. He gave assurance to people that he might return within one hour, but as the travellers discovered that Samad didn't return within the stipulated timing, anxiety began to niggle. They were frustrated in such a way that they preferred death by animals in the forest rather than staying on the treacherous deserted beach. Every day they survived, even thrived, was a day closer to the day a boat came and picked them up, and even if that never happened, they believed that food makes a difference. It denotes the fact that the hardest period proves the only survival need is food. They shared hope without realising the situation turning worse day by day.

The journey instilled in them an appreciation for every small aspect of their lives, even the most basic sustenance, like fruits and available water, brought them happiness. Upon their return to the homeland, they realised that they scabbled for food to survive on the island, whereas, on the plane, they merely sat still while mass-produced meals were conveniently served on trays. The adaptation of food across various regions is a fascinating aspect of human culture. As people travel and migrate, they bring their culinary traditions with them, often blending them with local customs to create unique and diverse food practices. The emotional comfort of certain dishes or cooking techniques may evoke memories and emotions, connecting characters to their pasts or providing solace in unfamiliar environments. Social bonding on shared meals and culinary experiences often facilitates connection between characters, fostering friendships and romantic relationships and it is reflected in Tansy's statement from Barr's novel *The Life You Want*, "I can recapture the smell of frying food and seawater, just by recalling his words. I'll always have my TEFL certificate. We can still go to Pondicherry. We could go to Hong Kong, the three of us. Or Singapore. We could go back to Thailand and set up a home there" (*The Life*,71). The flavours, aromas, and textures of food create strong sensory memories. The taste of a dish may transport us back to a specific moment and place, evoking the sights, sounds, and emotions we experience. In essence, food becomes a rich tapestry of our travel experiences, embedding itself in our memories and enriching our journey in countless ways.

Individuals who embark on journeys to discover their self-identity often place substantial importance on food as a means of self-care. By prioritizing their personal needs over their problems, they strive to uncover their best selves and one such type of sentiment is vividly portrayed in the passage of Barr's *Atlantic shift*. After parting ways with her husband, Evie, the protagonist sets out on a journey to her sanctuary, embracing the opportunity for personal growth. People who prioritize self-nurturing might find food as an essential



diversion and it is exquisitely depicted in the lines, “I am absolutely fine. In fact, I am rather enjoying the excuse to lounge around. If you can’t watch bad television and eat junk food when your husband had just moved out, when can you? It is the novelty of it all that is confusing me” (Atlantic, 15). When individuals dedicate themselves to self-nurturing, they often gravitate toward activities that bring comfort, relief, and a sense of well-being. Food, with its sensory delights and capacity to evoke positive emotions, becomes a natural choice. Eating may transform into a mindful and enjoyable experience, serving as a temporary escape from stress and worries. For those who prioritize self-nurturing, food acts as a vital diversion, offering a comforting routine and a means to care for themselves both physically and emotionally. Accepting food in all its forms demonstrates an open-minded and appreciative attitude towards nourishment and culinary experiences and it involves embracing a wide range of foods, from everyday meals to gourmet delights, and reflects a willingness to savour and enjoy whatever is available, free from judgment or preconceived notions. In the novel *Girl Who Came Out of the Woods*, it is vividly depicted in the lines, “Then I ate the cold pasta, because I knew I was going to need some energy and even though that food was barely edible it was more edible than anything else in the room” (The Girl, 60).

The relationship between food and travel enhances cultural understanding, creates lasting memories, fosters social connections, and contributes to personal growth, making our journeys more enriching and enjoyable. Food and travel are deeply intertwined, each enriching the experience of the other in numerous ways. It provides a richer, more holistic experience, making each journey truly unforgettable.

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Food in R. K. Narayan's Select Works

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Abstract

*R.K. Narayan's literature masterfully mixes food and dining culture with the everyday lives of his characters, making it a symbol of culture, relationships, and nostalgia. Through his vivid descriptions of South Indian food, busy kitchens, and roadside food stalls, Narayan captures the simplicity and richness of small-town life in his fictional village of Malgudi. Food serves as a tool to explore familial bonds, social customs, and societal changes, while also providing moments of tension and conflict. From the artistic sweet-making of Jagan in *The Vendor of Sweets* to the comfort of curd rice in *The English Teacher*, Narayan's works show how food connects people and preserves traditions. This article looks into the sensory and symbolic role of food in Narayan's stories, showcasing its timeless significance in Indian culture and literature.*

Keywords: Food, R. K. Narayan, Select Works, Indian Life.

Introduction

The imaginary city of Malgudi, a feature of R.K. Narayan's novels, is another icon of Indian literature in the English language. For Narayan, food represents a recurring motif and an emblem of cultural identity, relationships, and tradition. Narayan is praised for his vivid representation of meals and culinary practices which illustrate the warmth and simplicity of Indian life, thus pointing to the subtle connection between food and human emotions. In this piece, the writer is going to go through the way the writer uses meals to progress with his characters and the quality of life in India's small towns.

Food as a Reflection of Indian Life

R.K. Narayan's fictional town of Malgudi comes alive through its lively culture and steady routines. Food plays a key role in this setting representing the beat of everyday life. Malgudi's cuisine stays true to the simplicity of South Indian cooking. Narayan's novels paint pictures of hot idlis and crunchy dosas. The stories often mention fragrant filter coffee served in steel cups. His detailed descriptions of traditional Indian meals, cooking techniques, and communal dining capture the essence of a bygone era. Many readers will feel that these scenes speak to their own familial traditions and cultural heritage. To Narayan, food also serves to highlight the traditions and welcoming nature of Malgudi's people. Banana leaves used as plates and the communal sharing of meals highlight the collective spirit of Indian society. Through these depictions, Narayan celebrates the unpretentious yet profound role food plays in everyday life. Narayan frequently depicts food as a medium of love, care, and connection. It brings people together, symbolizing the nurturing aspects of relationships. Take the book "The Vendor of Sweets" as an example. Jagan, the main character, sells sweets for a living. His dedication to making sweets shows what he believes in and how he sees life. The sweets he makes mean more than just tasty treats. They stand for his link to old ways and his trying to get close to other people. When moms, wives, and daughters cook meals, it shows how much they care and how devoted they are to their families. Food turns into a way to express feelings that people often don't say out loud. At the same time, it serves as a bridge for social interactions, whether it's a guest being welcomed with snacks or a



neighbour sharing a meal during a festival. Food is often used as a pretext to comment on societal changes and traditions. *The Guide* shows how the changing food choices of its characters mirror the wider cultural shifts in India after independence. The clash between traditional South Indian dishes and modern, Western-inspired meals symbolizes the struggle between old and new lifestyles. Narayan also touches on caste and class dynamics. The type of food consumed and the rituals surrounding it often reveal the social hierarchy of Malgudi. For instance, Brahmin characters are depicted following strict dietary rules, while others are shown eating more diverse cuisines. These distinctions subtly critique the rigid structures of Indian society while highlighting the inclusivity and adaptability of its culinary traditions.

Humour and Conflict

R. K. Narayan has a special ability to find humour in ordinary life and ordinary food habits. Many of his stories feature comic episodes involving cooking or eating, revealing human quirks and flaws. In *Malgudi Days*, for instance, a character's overzealous appetite or a cook's culinary mishaps often lead to humorous situations that lighten the narrative. Sometimes, food also becomes a source of conflict, reflecting deeper tensions. A spilt cup of coffee or a burnt meal might escalate into a family argument, but Narayan uses these incidents to explore relationships with warmth and wit. These lighthearted moments, centred on food, make his characters relatable and endearing.

Cultural Identity and Nostalgia

Very often, one can see the characters of Narayan lost in nostalgia, evoking memories of simpler times. His detailed descriptions of traditional Indian meals, cooking techniques, and communal dining capture the essence of a bygone era. Many readers will feel that these scenes speak to their own familial traditions and cultural heritage. For Narayan, food is more than a cultural artefact; it is a way of preserving identity amid rapid modernization. The rituals of cooking and eating anchor his characters in their roots, providing stability in an ever-changing world. This nostalgia is most evident in works like *The English Teacher*, where food serves as a comforting link to home and familial love. Many characters of Narayan have become unforgettable because they were obsessed with food. Jagan, the sweet vendor in *The Vendor of Sweets*, is one such character. His meticulous preparation of sweets reflects his dedication to tradition and his inner conflicts. The sweets he makes are imbued with symbolic meaning, representing his attachment to cultural values and his struggle to adapt to his son's modern lifestyle. Narayan's depiction of food and food-related events linger in the reader's memory. A communal feast during a festival, a simple breakfast shared by a family, or the bustling energy of a roadside eatery—all these moments are brought to life with rich sensory detail. These scenes not only enhance the narrative but also celebrate the joy and togetherness that food brings.

Conclusion

Food is more than a survival option for Narayan. For him, it is a powerful narrative device that reflects culture, relationships, and emotions. Through his evocative descriptions, Narayan captures the essence of Indian life, highlighting the simplicity and richness of its culinary traditions. Even simple things like a cup of filtered coffee can mean a lot in the relationships of characters in the novels of Narayan. Similarly, the meticulous preparation of sweets in a small-town shop becomes very significant in the life of the particular area. Narayan's portrayal of food resonates with readers, reminding them of the universal power of meals to bring people together. Through his stories, Narayan has made Indian readers proud of their culinary culture and he has also opened the wonders of Indian cooking traditions in front of the foreign readers.



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Food, Literature and Culture in the Diasporic Narratives of Leila Aboulela's *The Kindness Of Enemies*

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Abstract

*Food is a profound expression of emotion and holds a pivotal role in Anglo-Arab literature, serving as a lens to explore themes of memory, identity, displacement, and hybridity. In the diasporic context, food becomes deeply intertwined with culture and memory, highlighting its essential role in preserving the essence of a community's identity. In *The Kindness of Enemies*, Leila Aboulela portrays food as a multifaceted symbol, representing hospitality, resistance, belonging, and preserving cultural identity amidst cultural upheaval and oppression. This paper examines the significance of food in both the historical and contemporary contexts presented in the novel. Acts of generosity, such as villagers offering plates of food and roses, symbolize communal care, emotional connection, and cultural solidarity. At the same time, extravagant spreads convey societal hierarchies and power dynamics. The novel also addresses the stark realities of war through depictions of food scarcity on the battlefield. For Shamil's army in the historical narrative, the declining supply of food and the challenge of feeding wounded soldiers exemplify the harsh physical and emotional toll of conflict. Food in *The Kindness of Enemies* is a powerful narrative device, connecting characters to their histories and cultures while reflecting the complexities of human relationships. By studying the intricate intersections of food, culture, and memory, this paper explores the uses of culinary motifs in Aboulela's novel to illuminate broader themes of identity and cultural negotiation.*

Keywords: Anglo-Arab Diaspora, Hospitality, Memory, Food Supply, Culinary Practice.

Introduction

Food and literature are profound avenues of cultural expression, intricately linked to identity, memory, and community. In the Anglo-Arab diaspora, individuals often navigate the complexities of cultural displacement and dual identities. Within this context, food and literature act as essential bridges, facilitating the connection, preservation, and negotiation of heritage. Food reflects the realities of communities and individuals striving to balance tradition with modernity, the native with the foreign, and individual identity with collective memory. As Michael A. Di Giovine and Ronda L. Brulotte note in *Introduction: Food and Foodways as Cultural Heritage*, food plays a vital role in everyday life and cultural heritage: "Yet how we eat, and what we eat, and when we eat, and with whom we eat, all uniquely vary from place to place, group to group, time to time—thanks to longstanding geographic, economic, social, and cosmological differences throughout the world. Within these discrete social entities, food binds people together; it is individually consumed, entering into our singular bodies, but often communally grown, processed, and prepared. To feed a village, it takes a village—or, in this age of globalization and industrial food, many villages—and, as such, food is often a primary marker of individual and group identity. Food is therefore



extremely effective; its taste on our tongues often incites strong emotions, while the communal, commensal experience of such sensations binds people together, not only through space but time as well, as individuals collectively remember past experiences with certain meals and imagine their ancestors having similar experiences. When this occurs, food is transformed into heritage.” (Di Giovine and Brulotte 1) Beyond its physical presence, food carries stories, histories, cultures, and emotions. It evokes memories of home, symbolizes resilience, and signifies belonging, particularly amid cultural dislocation. Literature captures these sensory and symbolic dimensions, reflecting migration, nostalgia, and cultural hybridity. From the colonial histories embedded in the spice trade to migration's geopolitical realities, food emerges as a lens for exploring broader systems of power and exchange.

In Arab diasporic literature, food holds a central role in portraying the lives of individuals negotiating identity and belonging. Writers like Diana Abu-Jaber, Fadia Faqir, Leila Aboulela, and Hanan al-Shaykh highlight food's capacity to evoke memories of home, address tensions between cultural preservation and adaptation, symbolize solidarity and hospitality, and challenge patriarchal norms. These narratives often empower women by showcasing culinary traditions as acts of agency and cultural continuity.

Belonging and Food in *The Kindness of Enemies*

Leila Aboulela's *The Kindness of Enemies* uses food as a narrative tool to explore themes of culture, belonging, and adaptation. Through a dual narrative structure, the novel intertwines the lives of Natasha, a contemporary academic researching Imam Shamil, and the historical experiences of Shamil himself. Food emerges as a poignant symbol throughout both timelines, reflecting the tangible and emotional challenges of conflict, displacement, and cultural dislocation. The importance of food during battle and war becomes a measure of soldiers' ability to continue resisting and fighting for their people. The scarcity of food reflects the tangible challenges of conflict and the emotional and cultural toll on a community. “Week after week, with less food and more wounded, a jagged airy sensation was felt all around when their outer defences came down and left them exposed” (Aboulela 21). The diminishing food supply parallels the weakening morale and strength of Shamil's forces, symbolizing the broader hardships of displacement and struggle. Jamal el-Din, the son of Imam Shamik, was taken captive by the Russians as Shamil failed to win the battle. Though the hospitality and treatment of the hostages were fair, it failed to bridge the emotional and cultural gap created by his separation from his father.

Alienation and cultural dislocation experience in unfamiliar environments are depicted through the lines, “Exhausted from the assault of newness: of space, sounds and smells betraying him, food not being food and speech not being speech. All this strangeness demanded his attention, all these new people in his life drew him out, pushed or goaded or cajoled him.” (Aboulela 54). Food being a source of comfort and connection becomes unrecognizable, exacerbating feelings and estrangement. The sensory strangeness felt by the individual depicts the cultural displacement and difficulty of belonging in a foreign context.

“*Our resistance is stubborn*, Shamil had dictated, “but we are obliged, in winter, to send our wives and children far away, to seek safety in the forest where they have nothing, no food, no refuge against severe cold. Yet we are resigned. It is Allah's will. He ordained that we should suffer to defend our land. But England must know of this... We beseech you, we urge you, O Queen to bring us aid.” (Aboulela 61)

Jamal el-Din had written the letter to Queen Victoria. This plea captures the dire circumstances of Shamil and his companions, stating the need for aid during the difficult times for the soldiers and their families. The essential role of food and shelter in survival and



in expressing desperation and resilience has been symbolized in the letter. Once, five prisoners from the Russian campaign attempted to escape by smuggling a letter in a loaf of bread. Here, food is used as a vessel for resistance signifying ingenuity and hope amidst captivity. Smuggling a letter in a loaf of bread transforms an everyday item into a tool of defiance. Food becomes a symbol of survival, freedom, and rebellion against oppression. While on the battlefield, the supply of food and ammunition is running low for the soldiers, demonstrating the brutal realities of warfare, and the larger struggle for autonomy and identity.

The primal and nurturing bond between a mother and her child is reflected in the characters, Princess Anna and Lydia, where feeding becomes an act of love and connection. It symbolizes the role of Anna as a caregiver and the emotional bond in sustaining life. “I have to eat for Lydia’s sake,” thought Anna. No food and drink meant no milk.” (Aboulela 92). Though Anna forced herself to eat for the sake of Lydia, food became a medium for survival and sustaining life in others. The tension between Anna’s physical discomfort and her determination illustrates the deeper emotional and cultural dimensions. After being taken captive by Shamil’s men, Anna lost her daughter Lydia during their journey up the hills. Ghazi Muhammed, Shamil’s son, said they would be given new clothes and warm food. One of Shamil’s wives, Chuanat, was able to recognize the physical state of Anna after losing her child, exhausted and hungry. “She was hungry but the meal provided disgusted her. Goat’s cheese that smelt too strong and bread baked in such a way that it had an outer layer of thick grease covering the crust... Even the tea tasted odd, smoky and strong.” (Aboulela 121). The alienation of Anna during her captivity, and the strangeness of food reflect her disconnection from her child, culture, and emotions. All kinds of them were set out, with different coloured icing and flavours: lemon, chocolate and raspberry. My mother, to make life in Khartoum less austere, had at one time started her own cake business. She baked at home and then delivered by car but it was not easy.” (Aboulela 134)

Natasha’s memory of her mother’s cake business ties food to nostalgia, family history, and survival. The cake represents a source of livelihood and emotional support for her family. Instead of proper food, her attachment to tea and cake reflects the warmth of her childhood, home, and belonging. The tension that prevailed during her mother’s business as recalled by Natasha, when once her father was furious over her mother as she failed to cook food for lunch due to shortage of gas supply. The societal pressure on women’s role and the cultural importance of proper meals marks care and respect. One of the chapters in the novel is titled “When the Sugarcane Grows”, symbolizing renewal, resilience, and cultural roots. Sugarcane, being a crop tied to sweetness and vitality, serves as a metaphor for sustenance, hope, and the ability to endure hardships. It subtly connects to themes of labour, family, and cultural memory, as seen in Natahsa’s reflection on her mother’s cake business.

Leila Aboulela employs food as a multifaceted symbol in her narratives, encapsulating themes of memory, belonging, and cultural identity. Her works, including *The Kindness of Enemies* and *Minaret*, exemplify the intricate connections between food and the human experience, particularly within the context of Anglo-Arab literature. Aboulela intricately weaves food into her characters’ lives as a conduit of memory and identity. Whether it is Natasha recalling her mother’s cake business in *The Kindness of Enemies* or Tamer cherishing peanut salad in *Minaret*, food accompanies these characters to their pasts, serving as a repository of personal and cultural memories. Hospitality, a cornerstone of Arab culture, grasps rich representation in Aboulela’s narratives. The preparation and sharing of meals signify generosity, respect, and communal ties. The insistence on serving untouched



and freshly prepared food reflects the deep-seated cultural reverence for sustenance and its symbolic role in maintaining dignity and honour. For Aboulela's diasporic characters, food often embodies the tension between assimilation and authenticity. Forced to adapt to English food in hostels or resort to bribing maids for kebabs and kofta, her characters struggle with the erosion of cultural identity. These moments highlight food as a site of resistance as preserving culinary traditions becomes a defiance of cultural homogenization. The juxtaposition of traditional Sudanese dishes with modern fast-food chains underscores the challenges and negotiations faced by diasporic individuals in navigating cultural hybridity.

Najwa's delight in watching Tamer eat her meals in *Minaret* and Anna's determination to eat for the sake of Lydia in *The Kindness of Enemies* underscore food's role as a medium of nurturing and connection. These instances become an act of devotion and continuity, reinforcing the deep interconnections between food, family, and identity. From Shamil's army struggling with dwindling supplies to Nur's friends anticipating home-cooked meals in *Minaret*, food underscores the precariousness of survival amidst adversity. It represents both the literal sustenance needed to endure hardships and the cultural sustenance that preserves identity and solidarity. The act of sharing food becomes an assertion of humanity and cultural continuity irrespective of the circumstances. Aboulela's focus on the preparation and consumption of food emphasizes the gendered dimensions of culinary traditions. The connection between motherhood and cooking, as seen in Nur's longing for his mother's meals, underscores the vital role women play in maintaining cultural heritage through food. The proliferation of fast-food chains in her narratives symbolizes the encroachment of globalization on cultural practices, while the characters' selective cravings and adaptations highlight the evolving nature of culinary traditions.

Conclusion

Through her evocative depictions of food, Leila Aboulela illuminates the profound intersections of literature, culture, and identity. Food in her novels transcends its role becoming a powerful symbol of memory, belonging, and cultural resistance. It captures the complexities of diasporic life, the enduring bonds of family and community, and the resilience of cultural traditions in the face of displacement and modernity. Aboulela's work portrays deeper meanings of everyday acts like cooking and eating, transforming them into profound explorations of human connection and cultural heritage. Her narratives affirm that food is a vital thread in the tapestry of identity, history, and belonging, underscoring its central role in the literary and cultural discourse of the Anglo-Arab experience.

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Food as the Language of Women in the Novels *The Mistress Of Spices* and *Like Water for Chocolate*

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Abstract

For a long time, the domain of most women starts and ends in the kitchen. Every kitchen seems to be the secret chamber of women. It has witnessed their silent sobbing, deep anger, unuttered dreams, hidden happiness and secret funds too. The kitchen shelves are their inner self. The spices and culinary items are their emotions. Women are dealing with one of the most important arts given to humanity. By redefining what these spaces are and what they mean to the women who use them, instead of how they are used, women can turn the oppression on its head. Marvalene Hughes says, “Women cooking is not coterminous with oppression, routine or drudgery, but can be an expression of love, nurturance, creativity and sharing.” Women always make sure that cooking is their way of protecting their loved ones. As we all know “The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach”.

Keywords: Language, Food, Personal Life, Protection, Symbol, Identity.

Introduction

Women always take the liberty of setting up a kitchen according to their flexibility. They innovate logic for a quick and easy completion of cooking tasks in the kitchen. For them making food and keeping the kitchen tidy goes hand in hand. So, the kitchen will often mirror their preference, expectation and mindset. From utensils to spices, they reflect and mark their individuality, intelligence and control. Women’s character can be observed through their kitchens. Some women get to choose this as their domain and some are forced to turn this as their hideout. This paper will deal with two women and their method of utilising food for communicating their identity, emotions and desires. Tilo and Tita share a contrasting nature and attitude but choose spices and cuisine as their language to communicate with the world.

Magic of Spices

Tilo is the protagonist of the novel, *The Mistress of Spices* which is written by an Indian-American writer Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Being an Indian, Divakaruni has experienced the cultural and social value of spices and cooking. So, her protagonist mastered the knowledge and ability to speak with spices. She suggests the right spice to cure both mental and physical ailments of people like cinnamon to find a friend and turmeric for wrinkles. Tilo helps the people especially Indian immigrants in America. Tilo has been personally trained by the First Mother on the island along with many other women. She owns a shop ‘The Spice Bazaar’. in Oakland. Tilo is a daring and rebellious woman to takes big steps even after knowing the arduous consequences that she has to bear. “I do not wish them to take power over men; but over themselves” (Wollstonecraft 78). Tilo is a woman of decisiveness. Tilo doesn’t want to settle with what she is having or what she has to have. Instead, she attempts to live an extraordinary life. “Because death is easier to bear than the ordinary life, cooking and washing clothes and bathing in the women’s lake” (34). As in the work of Mexican novelist Laura Esquivel, *Like Water for Chocolate* which throws light on



the supernatural capabilities where the protagonist Tita can transfer her emotions to the food she cooks, Tilo can cure the problems of Indian immigrants by stirring the mystical properties of spices through her spells. Both authors set their plot in the essentially feminine space of the kitchen and spices. The conventionally trivialized women's role in cooking becomes an aspect of reclaiming feminine identity.

Food as a Medium of Expression

In *Like Water for Chocolate*, the food represents a powerful medium through which the protagonist, Tita, expresses her emotions, often causing a strong physical reaction in those who eat it. It serves as a magical element that reflects her love, sadness, and other intense emotions throughout the story. Tita has a deep connection with food and cooking thanks to Nacha, Tita's primary caretaker. Her love for cooking also comes from the fact that she was born in the kitchen. Barriers and limits are part of life. Tita and Tilo have their limits too. Tilo has to give up her worldly desires to gain power over the spices. She cannot live as other young girls do. For Tita, her mother Mama Elena plays a crucial role in forbidding all her joys in the name of family tradition. She forces Tita, the youngest child of the family to stay single and take care of the family members, particularly Mama Elena. Tilo loves Raven, an American and Tita loves Pedro. Tilo and Tita have a cold war with themselves when they meet their love of life. They have been tormented between their role and inner desire. Love is strongly prohibited for them. The First Mother warns Tilo not to fall in love with Raven. But Tilo pursues her love at the cost of losing her magical power. In Tita's life, her mother lets Rosaura, Tita's elder sister get married to Pedro. The authors have used love as a real challenge to stimulate their hidden emotions to emerge.

Food as an Armour

Tilo and Tita use their skills to protect their loved ones. Tilo's customers exemplify each mortal sorrow in an alien country; Jagjit, Haroun, and Mohan represent racial problems in an alien country. They have been attacked and humiliated in various places by the natives. Tilo prepares Kale Jira powder to save Haroun from the upcoming disaster which she envisioned at reading his palms. She takes Raven's help to visit Haroun at his house to give the spice Kale Jira. She steps out of the shop for Haroun though it is prohibited. She shows selfless love for those immigrants and always prefers the well-being of others. Tita has also undergone a lot of pain due to Pedro and Rosaura's marriage. Unfortunately, she has to prepare their Chabela wedding cake with endless tears. When people taste the cake, they have slipped into a sense of immense loss. "Then she cried without tears, which is said to hurt even more like dry labour" (230). Though Tita is punished unjustly, she has taken ultimate measures to nurse and protect Pedro's child Roberto. As Rosaura couldn't feed Roberto, Tita's cooking saved the infant from dying.

Conclusion

Both Tilo and Tita's power as well as weakness have always been one. It's like a double-edged sword. They have experimented, failed but finally learnt to channel their skills properly. Tilo finally breaks all the confinements and owns the power of spices as well as Raven's love. Her attempt to sacrifice her life in the fire shows her sincerity and passion for spices. Again, she prefers to be a woman of social consciousness. Tita stops Esperanza, the youngest daughter of Pedro and Rosaura from undergoing the same pain as Tita in the name of family tradition. Esperanza and Alex's marriage becomes a milestone in Tita's life and for the first time, she openly shows her feelings for Pedro. After having a passionate consummation, both leave the physical world and join in the path of eternal love. Tita has left her cookbook for Esperanza to follow her legacy.



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Food, Feasts, Banquets and Culinary Symbolism in Fairy Tale Traditions

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Abstract

A fairy tale is a concise narrative rooted in folklore, typically featuring elements of magic, enchantments, and mythical or fantastical creatures. Historically, they were didactic, designed to impart moral lessons and caution against vices. Readers or listeners explore these lessons through the actions and consequences faced by the characters. They often reflect the values, beliefs, and norms of the society in which they were created, preserving cultural heritage for future generations. Food, feasts, and banquets play a significant symbolic and narrative role in fairy tale traditions. Food in fairy tales often carries a dual nature- representing nourishment and allowing stories to explore contrasts like abundance and scarcity, virtue and vice, or safety and peril. In modern adaptations, vibrant illustrations amplify the allure of food in fairy tales. This research paper explores the culinary symbolisms embedded in fairy tale traditions, deconstructing the hidden metaphors, motifs, moral lessons, and cultural values conveyed through fictional, imaginary, and supernatural characters within an imaginative world. This research paper unveils culinary symbolisms from different fairy tales such as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, The Little Match Girl, Rapunzel, Hansel and Gretel and Beauty and the Beast. They serve as symbols of deception and trickery. They reflect social values such as the hierarchical system in our society in the ancient era. It also portrays how the protagonists undergo rites of passage for which food serves as an implicit medium of transformation. Thus the culinary symbolisms elevate fairy tales beyond mere stories, solidifying their place as cultural artefacts that continue to inspire, educate, and resonate across time.

Keywords: Culinary Symbolism, Food, Feast, Fairy Tales.

Introduction

A fairy tale is a concise narrative rooted in folklore, typically featuring elements of magic, enchantments, and mythical or fantastical creatures. With a rich and diverse history, fairy tales have evolved from oral traditions across cultures, and variations of these stories exist worldwide. Fairy tales serve multiple purposes. Historically, they were didactic, designed to impart moral lessons and caution against vices. Readers or listeners explore these lessons through the actions and consequences faced by the characters. Originally shared through oral storytelling, these tales entertained children and adults at gatherings and cultural events. They often reflect the values, beliefs, and norms of the society in which they were created, preserving cultural heritage for future generations. Moreover, fairy tales offer children a safe space to understand complex emotions, fears, and societal expectations in an imaginative context. Food, feasts, and banquets play a significant symbolic and narrative role in fairy tale traditions. These elements convey key themes, highlight character traits, and mark pivotal moments in the plot. Laden with deeper meanings, often drives the story



forward. This research paper explores the culinary symbolisms embedded in fairy tale traditions, deconstructing the hidden metaphors, motifs, moral lessons, and cultural values conveyed through fictional, imaginary, and supernatural characters within an imaginative world. This research paper unveils culinary symbolisms from different fairy tales such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Little Match Girl*, *Rapunzel*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Beauty and the Beast*.

Significance of Food in Fairy Tales

Fairy tales use food as a powerful symbol because it is universal and deeply relatable, resonating with readers of all ages, particularly children. Food, being essential for survival, comfort, and celebration, embodies primal human desires such as hunger, temptation, satisfaction, and deprivation. This makes it an effective tool for conveying moral lessons, as it provides an anchor for abstract ideas and complex themes. Food in fairy tales often carries a dual nature- representing both nourishment and danger—allowing stories to explore contrasts like abundance and scarcity, virtue and vice, or safety and peril. In modern adaptations, vibrant illustrations amplify the allure of food in fairy tales. Exaggerated depictions, such as oversized cakes, golden apples, and candy houses, captivate young audiences by sparking curiosity and imagination. These magical portrayals blur the line between reality and fantasy, engaging children's senses while deepening their emotional connection to the narrative. Furthermore, food-based challenges within these tales encourage critical thinking and problem-solving, making the stories entertaining and intellectually stimulating. Feasts and banquets in fairy tales are not merely grand meals but also turning points in the story revealing deeper truths about characters and different societies. They are rich in symbolism, serving as metaphors for social hierarchies, power dynamics, celebrations, prosperity and transformation. The terms 'feast' and 'banquet' are often used interchangeably, but they have nuanced differences in their meaning and context. Feast refers to a large meal associated with celebrations, marking special occasions or rituals. A banquet is a formal meal organized for a specific purpose such as honouring someone or a ceremonial occasion or formal gathering. Feasts can be either formal or informal but banquets are always formal. Feasts focus on celebration. It might commemorate religious events, harvests, or personal milestones. Historically associated with community gatherings, celebrations or rituals. Banquets focus on honouring or recognizing achievements, hosting dignitaries or celebrating significant societal or cultural occasions. They are more closely tied to nobility, royalty or upper-class events symbolizing prestige and grandeur. Feasts are generally less structured, emphasizing enjoyment, sharing and abundance. In contrast, banquets are highly structured with a planned menu, courses and possibly accompanying formalities like toasts, speeches or entertainment. Whether through the simplicity of shared feasts or the grandeur of royal banquets, food plays a central role in driving the plot, shaping characters, and conveying cultural values. It creates a sensory bridge between readers and the fantastical world of fairy tales, allowing them to explore timeless themes imaginatively and engagingly.

Food for Temptation and Trickery

In fairy tales, food often symbolizes temptation and deception, drawing characters into dangerous situations. This fusion of the ordinary with the extraordinary creates compelling narratives that warn readers against impulsive desires and blind trust. In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the poisoned apple epitomizes temptation and the perils of superficial beauty, akin to the biblical forbidden fruit.

She took a lovely apple which had one green cheek and one rosy cheek. It looked so tempting that anyone who saw it must long to eat it. Then she put poison into the red cheek of the



apple while leaving the green side free of poison... Snow White longed to eat the rosy half of the apple and bit into it. No sooner had she done so than she fell dead. (Southgate 40) While apples traditionally signify health and vitality, here, it becomes a "weapon of death." Disguised as an old woman, the Evil Queen offers the apple, luring Snow White into a death-like sleep. This symbol teaches young readers to be cautious and discerning, especially with strangers, reinforcing the lesson: "Beware of trusting appearances." In *Hansel and Gretel*, the edible cottage of bread, cakes, and sugar embodies false promises and exploitation. Lured by hunger, the children succumb to temptation without recognizing the hidden danger. The witch uses the sweet facade to trap the children, intending to eat them. "The old woman, although her behaviour was so kind, was a wicked witch, who lay in wait for children, and had built the little house on purpose to entice them. When they were once inside, she used to kill them, cook them, and eat them and then it was a feast day with her" (Grimm 3). Here, food, meant to nurture, becomes bait for destruction. This tale imparts the moral: "All that glitters is not gold."

In *Little Red Riding Hood*, the basket of food represents care and familial duty but also serves as a narrative device for temptation and distraction. She met with a wolf, who had a very great mind to eat her up, but he dared not, because of some woodcutters working nearby in the forest. He asked her where she was going. The poor child, who did not know that it was dangerous to stay and talk to a wolf, said to him, "I am going to see my grandmother and carry her a cake and a little pot of butter from my mother. (Perrault 5)" The wolf exploits Little Red Riding Hood's innocence, luring her off the path and into danger. This story warns against straying from responsibilities and trusting strangers, using food as a subtle but effective metaphor for manipulation.

In *Rapunzel*, the story begins with Rapunzel's mother craving rampion from the witch's forbidden garden. Her unchecked desire leads to a fateful bargain: Rapunzel's captivity. "If it is all as you may have as much rampion as you like, on one condition- the child that will come into the world must be given to me. It shall go well with the child, and I will care for it like a mother" (Grimmstories1). The rampion symbolizes nourishment but also the dangers of uncontrolled cravings, echoing the forbidden fruit of Eden. The witch's garden, a forbidden space, underscores the consequences of crossing boundaries. This tale warns that unchecked desires can lead to life-altering outcomes. Through these narratives, food in fairy tales transcends its literal meaning, symbolizing temptation, deception, and the duality of nourishment and danger. Each story imparts timeless lessons on the importance of caution, awareness, and self-restraint.

Food as Status

In fairy tales, banquets and food often symbolize social status, power, and transformation, reflecting societal hierarchies and character development. In *Cinderella*, the royal banquet represents elite social circles, highlighting the rigid class divisions. The royal banquets are often inaccessible to people of lower status, like Cinderella. The banquets are extravagant events that are reserved for those who are deemed worthy or of noble birth, and their exclusivity highlights the societal divisions of class and wealth. "Cinderella, would you not like to go to the ball"? Alas! said she, 'you only jeer me; it is not for such as I am to go such a place'. 'You are quite right', they replied. 'It would make the people laugh to see a Cinderwench at a ball'" (Perrault 1-2). While Cinderella's stepsisters and stepmother, the symbols of privilege, attend the grand event, Cinderella's exclusion underscores her marginalization. However, her magical transformation and eventual participation signify the possibility of transcending class barriers, with the banquet embodying societal acceptance



and personal worth. In *Beauty and the Beast*, the opulent dining scenes symbolize shifting power dynamics and equality. Initially, the grand feasts highlight the Beast's noble status, Belle's humble origins and her initial status as a prisoner. Over time, shared meals bridge their differences, reflecting the breakdown of social barriers and fostering mutual respect, transforming their relationship beyond traditional hierarchies. In *The Little Match Girl*, the vision of the roasted goose starkly contrasts the wealth of the privileged with the protagonist's poverty. The lavish meal symbolizes comfort, abundance, and unattainable aspirations, critiquing societal inequality and evoking empathy for the marginalized. It poignantly underscores the harsh realities of privilege and exclusion in a stratified society. Illustrating the deep divide between those who indulge in such luxuries and those who can only dream of them. The roasted goose, therefore, becomes a haunting reminder of privilege, exclusion, and the consequences of social stratification.

Food as Rites of Passage

In fairy tales, food often catalyzes transformation and rites of passage, facilitating characters' transitions between life stages through significant challenges and changes. This research paper explores the symbolic role of food in representing transformation and rites of passage across various fairy tales. In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the poisoned apple embodies temptation and transformation. Snow White's naive acceptance of the apple leads to her death-like sleep, symbolizing a rite of passage from innocence to maturity. Her eventual awakening signifies rebirth, aligning with themes of growth and self-awareness. The apple becomes the catalyst for her journey toward love, wisdom, and a rightful place in the kingdom.

In *Cinderella*, the royal banquet represents the protagonist's transition from a marginalized servant to an esteemed member of high society. Through the magical intervention of her fairy godmother, Cinderella's transformation allows her to attend the banquet, symbolizing her crossing societal boundaries. The grand feast underscores her acceptance into a higher social order, culminating in her ultimate transformation into royalty. Additionally, the pumpkin, magically turned into a carriage, holds rich symbolic meaning, highlighting the themes of change, magic, and hope. This transformation emphasizes the idea that even the simplest elements of life can become extraordinary when opportunities arise, inspiring belief in the possibility of change.

In *Hansel and Gretel*, the tale illustrates a rite of passage as the siblings move from dependence and vulnerability to independence and empowerment. Abandoned in the forest, they face a hostile world, forcing them to adapt and grow. Their use of breadcrumbs to mark their path represents a childlike innocence, which fails when the crumbs are consumed by birds, representing the need for maturity. The encounter with the witch and her edible house symbolizes temptation and false security, but this peril ultimately becomes a transformative trial. Gretel's decisive act of defeating the witch signifies her growth into an empowered individual, capable of safeguarding both herself and her brother. This story underscores the journey of growing up through adversity and highlights perseverance and ingenuity in overcoming life's challenges.

In *Little Red Riding Hood*, the basket of food entrusted to her symbolizes responsibility and the journey toward maturity. Her venture into the forest represents a rite of passage, as she leaves the safety of childhood to face the moral complexities of adulthood. The wolf's deception and the dangers of straying from her path reflect the challenges of temptation and trust. By the end, Little Red Riding Hood evolves into a more cautious and responsible individual, embodying the timeless lesson that growth comes through experience.



In *Beauty and the Beast*, food signifies transformation and rites of passage through shared meals that reflect the evolving relationship between Belle and the Beast. The enchanted banquets initially highlight the Beast's attempt to reconcile his monstrous exterior with his noble intentions, symbolizing his hope for redemption. For Belle, participating in these meals marks her journey from fear to understanding, teaching her to see beyond appearances. The act of sharing food fosters emotional connection and mutual growth, underscoring the themes of compassion, redemption, and the transformative power of love. Similarly, In the story of *Rapunzel*, when the prince met Rapunzel in the tower, they shared meals and moments that symbolise the nurturing of love, hope and a new understanding of life beyond her confined world. Through these tales, food emerges as a powerful symbol of transformation and rites of passage, illustrating characters' growth, resilience, and the lessons learned on the path to self-discovery and maturity.

Conclusion

Food symbolism in fairy tales weaves together universal themes of temptation, transformation, and societal dynamics. Food, feasts, and banquets transcend their literal functions, becoming powerful metaphors that shape character arcs, convey moral lessons, and reflect cultural values. The inclusion of food in fairy tales resonates deeply with readers, evoking primal human emotions like desire, hunger, and satisfaction. Feasts and banquets, in particular, symbolize social hierarchies, power dynamics, and pivotal moments of transformation, illustrating the journey of characters from one phase of life to another. Thus, the research reveals that the symbolic role of food in fairy tales is both intricate and profound, highlighting its capacity to communicate complex ideas in an accessible and engaging manner. By analysing these culinary motifs, we uncover layers of meaning that elevate fairy tales beyond mere stories, solidifying their place as cultural artefacts that continue to inspire, educate, and resonate across time.

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Food as Resistance and Change in Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats*

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Abstract

Ruth Ozeki's "My Year of Meats" explores the complex relationships between food, culture, and identity, offering a profound critique of industrial food production and cultural imperialism. This article examines how Ozeki uses food as a storytelling device to celebrate cultural diversity while interrogating the politics of globalization. Central to the narrative is the Japanese television show My American Wife!, which serves as a platform for exploring the commodification of American culinary traditions and their influence on Japanese culture. Ozeki juxtaposes the corporate-driven, homogenized portrayal of the meat industry with the authentic, diverse experiences of American families, challenging stereotypes and societal expectations. The novel also delves into personal identity through the lens of food, portraying its profound role in shaping memories, asserting agency, and resisting oppression. Characters like Jane Takagi-Little and Akiko demonstrate how culinary practices can empower individuals, bridge cultural gaps, and foster resilience in the face of adversity. Moreover, Ozeki's emphasis on organic and sustainable farming highlights the ethical and environmental stakes of food consumption. By blending intimate character narratives with broader socio-political themes, "My Year of Meats" encourages readers to reconsider their relationship with food and its far-reaching cultural and societal impacts.

Keywords: Food, Cultural Identity, Change, *Ruth Ozeki, My Year of Meats*

Introduction

Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats* masterfully explores the intricate interplay of food and culture, delving into the profound ways in which culinary traditions shape identity, reflect societal values, and serve as a battleground for global and personal politics. Through its narrative, the novel provides a lens to examine the connections between food production, cultural hegemony, and the deeply personal meanings ascribed to what we eat.

Food as a Cultural Mark

At the heart of *My Year of Meats* lies a cross-cultural exchange facilitated by a Japanese reality television show, *My American Wife!* The show aims to introduce Japanese audiences to the "ideal" American lifestyle through depictions of meat-centric family meals. Here, food becomes a tool for cultural transmission, albeit filtered through a corporate agenda. This agenda—dictated by BEEF-EX, the American beef export industry—prioritizes the commodification of culture over authenticity. The show's protagonist, Jane Takagi-Little, subverts this narrative by highlighting diverse American families whose lives do not conform to stereotypical norms. Through these episodes, Ozeki underscores the diversity inherent in American culture and its culinary practices. For example, Jane's choice to feature a lesbian couple and their organic farming practices directly challenges both American and Japanese societal expectations, highlighting the ways food production and consumption intersect with identity and values. Ozeki's novel goes beyond the surface of cultural exchange to expose the darker realities of industrial food production. The meat industry, portrayed through the omnipresent influence of BEEF-EX, becomes a symbol of globalization's homogenizing



force. The novel critiques the uncritical adoption of Western dietary practices by Japanese society, emphasizing the broader cultural and ecological consequences of such shifts. Food in *My Year of Meats* is not merely sustenance but a site of power dynamics. The American beef industry's attempt to impose its product and ideology on Japanese consumers mirrors a form of cultural imperialism. Ozeki's nuanced portrayal of this dynamic invites readers to question who controls the narratives around food and what is at stake when traditional diets and agricultural practices are replaced by industrialized systems.

Personal and Cultural Identity

The novel also explores food as a deeply personal marker of identity. For Jane, who straddles American and Japanese heritage, food becomes a way to navigate her dual identity. Her mixed background enables her to critique both cultures while appreciating the beauty and complexity of their culinary traditions. Jane's journey reflects the broader immigrant experience, where food serves as both a connection to one's roots and a means of adapting to a new environment. Similarly, food acts as a vessel of memory and emotion. Akiko, a Japanese housewife trapped in an abusive marriage, finds empowerment through her evolving relationship with food. Initially compelled to prepare the recipes featured on *My American Wife!* as a form of submission, Akiko eventually reclaims food as a source of agency. Her decision to reject meat and embrace vegetarianism symbolizes her resistance to both her controlling husband and the oppressive cultural norms that dictate her role.

Resistance and Change

Ultimately, *My Year of Meats* suggests that food can be a powerful tool for resistance and change. The novel's celebration of organic and sustainable farming practices offers a counter-narrative to industrialized food production. By emphasizing the importance of mindful consumption, Ozeki aligns herself with movements advocating for food justice and environmental sustainability. Through its vivid depictions of meals and culinary practices, the novel also highlights how food can foster understanding and connection across cultural boundaries. The act of cooking and sharing meals becomes a form of storytelling, capable of bridging divides and creating a space for dialogue.

Conclusion

In *My Year of Meats*, Ruth Ozeki uses food as a multifaceted symbol to explore the intersections of culture, identity, and power. The novel's critical lens on industrial food production and its celebration of diversity in culinary traditions invite readers to reflect on their relationships with food. By exposing the politics behind what we eat and elevating the personal and cultural significance of food, Ozeki crafts a narrative that is as thought-provoking as it is deeply human. The novel reminds us that food, in all its complexity, is not just a reflection of who we are but also a tool for shaping the world we want to create.

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Food and Migration in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*

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Abstract

Food often serves as a powerful metaphor in literature, symbolizing identity, memory, and cultural belonging. In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's "The Mistress of Spices", food becomes a conduit for exploring themes of migration, identity, and the longing for connection in a diasporic context. This paper examines how the novel intertwines the symbolic and literal roles of spices to navigate the complexities of cultural dislocation and the quest for belonging. Through the protagonist, Tilo, and her mystical connection with spices, Divakaruni portrays the struggles of immigrants as they balance their heritage with the challenges of assimilation. The spices act as a bridge, connecting individuals to their roots while helping them heal emotional wounds born from displacement and alienation. This paper also explores how food becomes a shared language that fosters community and solidarity, while simultaneously revealing the personal and cultural conflicts inherent in the migratory experience. By analyzing the intricate relationship between food, memory, and identity, this study highlights Divakaruni's nuanced representation of migration as a transformative journey, enriched by the flavours of resilience and self-discovery.

Keywords: Food Symbolism, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *The Mistress of Spices*

Introduction

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* is a captivating exploration of identity, migration, and cultural belonging through the lens of magical realism. Set against the backdrop of the Indian diaspora in the United States, the novel intricately weaves the mystical and the mundane, using food—specifically spices—as a powerful metaphor for the immigrant experience. Divakaruni wrote this novel to delve into the challenges faced by immigrants as they navigate the complexities of cultural dislocation, assimilation, and the longing for connection in an unfamiliar world. Through the protagonist, Tilo, a mystical mistress of spices, the narrative examines how food becomes a conduit for preserving cultural heritage, healing emotional wounds, and fostering solidarity among displaced individuals. The novel poignantly addresses universal themes of identity and resilience while showcasing the unique struggles and triumphs of diasporic communities.

The objective of this paper is to analyze the symbolic and literal roles of food in *The Mistress of Spices*, with a particular focus on how spices serve as bridges between the past and present, the personal and communal. By exploring the interplay of food, memory, and identity, this study aims to highlight Divakaruni's nuanced representation of migration as a transformative journey that is enriched by the flavours of resilience, cultural heritage, and self-discovery.

Literary Review

In their analysis of diasporic literature, critics such as Rajini Srikanth (2007) highlight how Divakaruni uses food as a symbol of cultural continuity and a tool for negotiating identity in foreign spaces. Srikanth argues that the spices in the novel serve as conduits for



memory, enabling characters to reconnect with their cultural heritage while navigating the alienation of migration. Similarly, Rituparna Roy (2010) emphasizes how food functions as a communal language in the novel, fostering solidarity among marginalized individuals within the diasporic community.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, employing textual analysis to examine the symbolic and thematic significance of food, particularly spices, in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*.

Food and Migration in *The Mistress of Spices*

In *The Mistress of Spices*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni masterfully intertwines the symbolic and literal roles of spices to delve into the emotional and cultural struggles of diasporic identity. Food, particularly spices, serves as a narrative medium that connects individuals to their cultural roots, addresses their sense of alienation, and fosters healing in the face of dislocation. The protagonist, Tilo, acts as a mediator, using her mystical bond with spices to navigate the complexities of migration and cultural belonging.

The spices in the novel symbolize the characters' connection to their heritage and act as conduits for preserving cultural identity in a foreign land. Tilo, as the Mistress of Spices, explains the deep-rooted significance of each spice, saying: "Spices are the guardians of memory. They carry the whispers of ancestors, the stories of lands left behind." For immigrants who feel disconnected from their homeland, spices serve as anchors, providing a sense of familiarity and continuity amidst the disorienting experience of migration. For example, when Lalita, a young Indian woman forced into an arranged marriage in the U.S., struggles with her loss of autonomy, Tilo uses fenugreek to restore her inner strength. This reflects how spices help maintain ties to cultural values and personal identity.

The novel portrays spices as therapeutic tools that heal emotional wounds born from displacement and alienation. Tilo observes the pain of Haroun, a cab driver who feels invisible and undervalued in America. She uses cinnamon to reignite his lost hope, stating: "Cinnamon, the spice of warmth and friendship. It will seep into the cracks of his heart and make him whole again." This act highlights the transformative power of food as a metaphor for emotional and spiritual nourishment. The spices not only soothe Haroun's struggles but also reinforce the idea that food can mend the fractures caused by cultural dislocation.

Tilo's shop becomes a symbolic space where the diasporic community gathers, seeking both literal and metaphorical sustenance. The spices act as a bridge, fostering a sense of solidarity and belonging among immigrants. For instance, when Geeta's grandfather struggles to accept her Americanized lifestyle, Tilo uses turmeric to heal their generational divide. She remarks: "Turmeric, bright as the sun and the colour of forgiveness. It will smooth the bitterness between old and new worlds." Through this moment, Divakaruni emphasizes the role of food as a shared language that transcends cultural barriers and reconciles personal conflicts.

While spices offer comfort, they also reveal the tension between maintaining one's heritage and assimilating into a new culture. Tilo's journey illustrates this struggle. As she begins to fall in love with Raven, a Native American man, she feels torn between her role as the Mistress of Spices and her desire for personal fulfillment. She reflects: "Can a Mistress belong to one world and love another? Can I let the spices bind me to my duty and still taste the forbidden fruit of freedom?" Here, the spices symbolize the duality of her identity—the pull of tradition versus the longing for self-discovery. This internal conflict mirrors the



experiences of many immigrants navigating the delicate balance between cultural preservation and assimilation.

The novel portrays migration as a transformative journey, enriched by the flavours of resilience and self-discovery. Tilo's connection to the spices evolves as she learns to embrace her desires and agency. When she finally decides to relinquish her mystical powers to live a human life, she declares: "I will no longer be the Mistress of Spices, but a woman who chooses her path, with spices as companions, not masters." This statement signifies her acceptance of a hybrid identity, blending her cultural heritage with her newfound sense of individuality. The spices, once symbols of duty and restraint, become emblematic of freedom and self-expression.

Through the symbolic and literal roles of spices, Divakaruni highlights the emotional and cultural complexities of the migratory experience. Spices function as metaphors for memory, identity, and healing, bridging the gap between heritage and the challenges of assimilation. By using food as a narrative tool, Divakaruni portrays migration not just as a struggle but as a transformative journey, where individuals find resilience and community through the shared language of food. This nuanced representation underscores the power of spices to connect, heal, and empower, enriching the diasporic experience with flavours of belonging and self-discovery.

Conclusion

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* skillfully employs the symbolic and literal roles of spices to explore the intricate relationship between migration, identity, and belonging. Through the mystical figure of Tilo, the novel portrays the struggles of diasporic individuals as they navigate cultural dislocation, alienation, and the challenges of assimilation. Spices transcend their culinary function to become metaphors for memory, healing, and resilience, offering comfort and connection to characters longing for a sense of home. In *The Mistress of Spices*, Divakaruni masterfully uses food as a metaphor to highlight the complexities of diasporic identity. Spices symbolize the flavours of both struggle and hope, acting as bridges between the past and present, and between cultural heritage and new beginnings. This study reveals how Divakaruni's nuanced portrayal of migration captures the universal human quest for belonging, illustrating that, like spices, the essence of identity is enriched by the blending of diverse experiences.

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Food as a Universal Symbol in Marsha Mehran's *Pomegranate Soup*

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Abstract

Food Literature has been an important interdisciplinary field in the literature. Depictions of food in the literature have been a practice for a long time throughout the evolving process of literature. Food takes multiple forms to signify the context of the literary work. It is used as a symbol to identify oneself in the context of social, cultural and gender areas. Food symbolism in literary texts signifies the thoughts of the characters, intensifies the situations, takes the plot forward, and aids a character in building identity. This paper analyses Marsha Pomegranate Soup through the lens of food as a symbol to connect people across the country. It emphasises the ideology of food transcends all the barriers and discriminations that are created by the people. The paper applies the common sense theory that focuses on symbolic meanings attached to sharing meals. The concept of hybridity underlines how interconnectedness is achieved by the tendency of people to satisfy their sensory experiences. Food is a powerful symbol to connect people across cultures and characters in the novel. It serves as a way for people from one culture to show their emotions, practices and process of preparing recipes to people who belong to another culture. It acts as a bridge for connecting people across the globe and cherishing the recipes of the other land. It shows how the people by accepting the food recipes of the other culture are also unconsciously accepting their cultural practices and traditions leading to harmony among the people.

Keywords: Food, Universal Symbolism, Marsha Mehran, *Pomegranate Soup*.

Introduction

Food literature encompasses various aspects from multiple fields in the life of the people. In literature, food symbolism conveys various meanings for the readers to understand the context of the situations in depth. Food as a symbol represents the things and situations that happen around the people in the world. It indicates the status, mood and practices of the people. It acts as a tool in moving the plot forward and understanding the situations in the novel. Food as symbolism conveys multiple meanings to the readers. It reflects the mood of the characters, influences their thoughts and behaviours, intensifies the situations, becomes the voice for the characters, and builds identity for the characters. Food becomes an important base for bridging the gaps among the people. It can unite the people and strengthen the relationship between two people. Kai-Sean Lee says, "Food provides nourishment, pleasure, and an intimate connection that bridges the taster to their spaces and places of eating" (2).

Food as a Universal Symbol

In the novel, *Pomegranate Soup*, food is a symbol for strengthening and uniting the people of two different cultures. It is the differences in culture and the culinary practices in preparing food recipes that bring a distinction and distance among the people. Culture can be



defined, as Helen Spencer-Oatey says, “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (2). When two different cultures come together in one place, the people from both cultures undergo the phase of xenophobia and struggle to accept the people who belong to another country or culture. The protagonist belongs to Iran and migrates to Ireland.

Hybridity is the concept which accepts the traits and practices of two different cultures that lead to the formation of new things. Dr. Manisha Shah says, “The notion of hybridity and its acceptance with all its positive impacts challenged the existing binaries and symmetries of East/West, black/white, colonizer/colonized, majority/minority, self/other, interior/exterior”(82). The significance of hybridity, according to Dr. Manisha Shah is that it “embraces blending, combining, syncretism and encourages the composite, the impure, the heterogeneous and the eclectic” (82).

Food plays an important role in integrating people. Claude Fischler says, “Commensality produces bonding. In apparently all cultures, eating the same food is equated with producing the same flesh and blood, thus making commensals more alike and bringing them closer to each other” (533). The food one eats has vital significance for a person. “The perception that ‘you are what you eat’ seems universal. It holds that, when absorbing a food, a subject absorbs at the same time salient features of the food” (533). The theory further adds “If eating a food makes one become more like that food, then those sharing the same food become more like each other” (533).

MarjanAminpour, the protagonist moves from Iran to Ireland along with her sisters, Bahar and Layla. Marjan is an expert in growing plants and tempting the seedlings to grow. She always had a small herb garden wherever she went. Marjan and her sisters are arranging and organising things to open Babylon Café in Ballinacroagh, Ireland. They paint the whole shop, and “unload the boxes of spices, jars of grape leaves, and bags of pistachios, almonds, and dates” (19).

Thomas McGuire is a local businessman in the town of Ballinacroagh. He and most of the inhabitants of the town exhibit aversion towards just-arrived Iranian immigrants in their town. Another reason for his hatred towards the Aminpour sisters is that Thomas McGuire attempted several times to buy the old pastry shop but failed. The old pastry shop is now renovated by the Aminpour sisters into Babylon Café which infuriates him. The citizens of the town could sense a mysterious smell suspended in the air. The smell provoked the inhabitants to think unceasingly about Iranian immigrants. The thoughts of the townsfolk about the strange smell and taste of the Persian recipes can be described in the words of Kelvin E. Y. Low, who says, “Sutton’s idea of ‘gustemology’ comprising an ‘understanding of a wide spectrum of cultural issues around taste and other sensory aspects of food’” (4).

The Aminpour sisters and the townsfolk of Ballinacroagh endure xenophobia. The inhabitants of the town are reluctant to accept the Iranian immigrants who have come to Ireland. Marjan maintains her distance from other people. She views the life of the people in the town through the kitchen window. She keeps herself isolated from others but influences and cures people through the food and drinks she serves in the café.

Estelle Delmonico, a widow is the owner of the shop. Thomas McGuire made attempts to convince Estelle Delmonico but failed to convince her to sell the shop. Thomas could not stand the fact that the immigrants occupied the shop that he desired to buy from Estelle Delmonico. Dervla Quigley, who lives near Babylon café reports the daily happenings in the café and people who enter the cafe to Thomas.



Marjan and her sisters are saddened by the reality that nobody visited their Babylon Cafe on Monday. The next day, Layla leaves the café for her first day in school. The first customer to visit the café is Father Fergal Mahoney. While crossing the café, Father Mahoney was hit by the savoury aroma of the recipes, which enticed him to visit the café. Marjan places the platter on the table and he is fascinated by the aroma and texture of abgusht. He forgets about all the meetings that he has to attend and relishes the recipes.

During the inaugural week of the Babylon Café, there was only a handful of customers. As the days passed, towards the end of the month, the number of people visiting the café increased in multiple numbers who were enamoured by the taste of Persian recipes. Marjan, who is happy with the increase in the number of customers, cooks Gush-e fil to celebrate the happy moment. The people, who had odd feelings in the beginning, gradually started to dissipate a sense of oddity when they looked at the Aminpour sisters. Dervla sees people stopping by the café regularly. She informs me about it to Thomas McGuire. Unable to tolerate the unfamiliar aromas, both Dervla and Thomas engage in a conversation on how the unfamiliar odour is a danger and threat to them.

The regular customers who visit the Babylon Café are Father Mahoney, Mrs. Boylan, Evie Watson, and Fiona Athey. The café also receives food orders from the people for meetings. The priest visits the cafe every day for lunch and sometimes for evening tea. Fiona Athey says to Marjan about her days as an actress and Father Mahoney as a comedian. After having food in Marjan's café, Father Mahoney decides to continue his ambition of becoming a comedian.

After Layla was harassed by Tom Junior, Marjan cooks "*fesenjoon*, the invigorating pomegranate, chicken, and walnut stew that was Layla's all-time favourite comfort food" (170). She cooks fesenjoon as it has a healing capacity. Layla's incident affects Bahar, who after some days, walks out of the house leaving a note behind. Everyone in the town gathers in the café to find Bahar. Father Mahoney leads the search party. Evie, Fiona, Emer, and Malachy join to search for Bahar.

Thomas is proud of Tom Junior because of whom the café has been closed. The café has not been closed since the day it was opened. Tom Junior, who underwent spiritual fasting for three days realises how his father has manipulated everyone for his unfulfilled dream. Bahar, who left the café leaving a note behind, stays in Castlebar and joins with others on the tour. The tour guide instructs everyone to climb the mountains. Bahar reaches the top of the mountain and feels "the higher she climbed, the more lucid her thoughts became" (211). She comes to terms with her past and personal struggles. She reaches the cafe and reconciles with her sisters.

Thomas McGuire enters the Babylon café after smelling "the cooking pomegranate as soon as he stormed past the Babylon Café" (213). He is drunk and stumbles into the café. The drunken state of mind makes him vulnerable and he lets out his emotions and repressed feelings. His outlet of emotions makes him a transformed person and marks a new path for him. He meditates on how Ballinacroagh has changed after Babylon café was opened by the Aminpour sisters. The Babylon Café has become a symbol of identity that represents Ballinacroagh town. The café has created a positive influence on the town. He understands that he should come out of his comfort zone narrow his mind and explore new things just like Ballinacroagh has evolved.

The sensory experiences of the people were stimulated when their senses came in contact with food recipes. It is one of the main reasons for the frequent visits and increases in the number of customers. Barabara Kirshenblatt Gimblett says, "As a sensory experience,



taste operates in multiple modalities – not only by way of the mouth and nose but also the eye, ear and skin” (2). Father Mahoney felt different after he had Marjan’s recipes. He “did not know what had happened to him exactly, but he knew that he was a very different man from a half hour ago” (79). People are enamoured by the smell, taste and texture of the food and they cannot resist themselves from visiting the café.

When the Babylon café was started, people were not ready to receive them. The aroma and savour from the café lured the people towards the café. Father Fergal Mahoney, Estelle Delmonico and Fiona Athey are the first of the few people who supported Marjan and her café. Gradually, more people visit and enjoy the recipes cooked by the Aminpour sisters. John Hutnyk says, “When hybridization is the mixing of elements from many diverse societies whose peoples are seen as sets of potential consumers of a global product, the process that in music is called equalization tends to be applied to the differences between cultures.” (96)

Conclusion

Food is not just a source of nourishment and survival. It can lure the senses of the people. It is this natural ability that melds people together irrespective of the differences that are present among the people. The urge to satisfy the senses, particularly, the taste buds brings them together. Sharing of food creates bonding among the people. Food, which is one of the representations of the culture, transcends the cultural differences that exist among the people.

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Food and Cultural References in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*

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Abstract

Food is an integral part of cultural expression. In “The Mistress of Spices”, the spices serve as both a literal and metaphorical vehicle for the cultural identity of India. In the novel, the protagonist, Tilo, is a Mistress of Spices who uses the power of spices to heal and guide people. The spices themselves are symbols of the rich history and traditions of India, each carrying its own significance and cultural depth. Food and spices are deeply intertwined in the context of Indian culture with family, community, and class identity. Spices are not just ingredients but cultural markers, representing the regions, histories, and customs of those who use them. Food becomes a way of understanding the characters, their journeys, their connection to their roots, and their attempts to navigate the complexities of identity. As much as food reflects cultural heritage, it also plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals relate to their heritage and how they navigate changes in their lives. Ultimately this paper is an attempt to beautifully capture the significance of food as not just a means of sustenance, but as a powerful force that connects individuals to their cultural and personal identity.

Keywords: Food, Culture References, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *The Mistress of Spices*.

Introduction

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's works are a significant contribution to contemporary Indian Literature, particularly when representing the experiences of Indian immigrant women. Her writings shed light on the emotional, cultural, and social struggles that women face when adapting to a new lifestyle in a foreign land. Her writing not only explores the intricacies of identity and belonging but also highlights the complex dynamics between traditional Indian values and the demands of life in America. Divakaruni's ability to articulate the immigrant experience has helped broaden the understanding of what it means to navigate between two cultures. By focusing on Indian women in particular, she gives voice to a marginalized group, capturing their resilience and the challenges they face in their pursuit of independence and self-actualization. Moreover, Divakaruni's success as an author has paved the way for other women writers from diverse backgrounds to share their own stories, contributing to a richer, more inclusive literary landscape. Through their novels, these writers help bring attention to the unique struggles and triumphs of women worldwide, making their voices heard in the global literary community.

Food and Culture References in *The Mistress of Spices*

In *The Mistress of Spices*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni indeed provides a unique perspective on food, using it not just as a means of sustenance but as a symbol deeply connected to culture, identity, and even magic. The food in the novel represents the rich and diverse culinary traditions of India, which is also a complex relationship between the spiritual



and the physical. Through the use of spices, Divakaruni not only highlights the authenticity of Indian cuisine but also weaves in the idea of food as a powerful, almost mystical element. In this novel, the protagonist, Tilo, a magical "mistress of spices," uses the healing properties of spices to aid those who seek her help. The spices in her shop are imbued with magical properties, and they serve as metaphors for how Indian culture uses food to maintain balance and harmony in life. The food becomes a vehicle for healing, both physically and emotionally, allowing Tilo to guide people through their struggles. Indian cuisine is known for its intricate combination of spices, which have been used for thousands of years not only for flavour but also for medicinal and spiritual purposes. This rich tradition is well documented in ancient Sanskrit texts, and spices like turmeric, ginger, and cumin are valued for their therapeutic properties. Beyond their nutritional and healing benefits, food plays an important role in various cultural rituals, beliefs, and practices. For instance, the use of red chillies and salt to ward off the evil eye is a common practice in Indian culture, showcasing the belief in the protective and mystical power of everyday ingredients. This practice is deeply tied to the cultural and spiritual world, emphasizing how food and its preparation are not merely acts of sustenance but are often linked to broader social, spiritual, and magical realms.

Divakaruni brings these themes to life, illustrating the depth of the Indian culinary tradition and its mystical, transformative qualities. The novel invites readers to see food not only as nourishment but as an embodiment of culture, history, and magic. The protagonist Tilo, embodies the intersection of tradition and transformation as she navigates her role as a mystical figure who commands the power of spices. Each chapter of the novel is intricately tied to a specific spice, with the spices serving as both literal and symbolic elements that reflect the emotions, struggles, and personalities of the characters. This clever integration of spices into the narrative allows Divakaruni to use them as metaphors for the deeper psychological and emotional layers of the story. Tilo, trained as a "mistress of spices," can harness the magical and healing properties of the spices she sells in her store, which becomes a central aspect of her identity and her connection to the world around her. The spices themselves are not mere ingredients; they take on a life of their own and act as conduits of transformation, offering insight and even changing the lives of the people who seek Tilo's help. The spices mirror the inner turmoil or desires of the characters who come to the shop, symbolizing the deep emotional currents that shape their lives. For example, Tilo uses ingredients like turmeric, cinnamon, and saffron, each with its significance, to guide her customers through personal conflicts, illnesses, and emotional struggles. These spices become extensions of the characters' desires, fears, and needs. Just as spices in Indian cuisine are often used to balance flavours and restore harmony. The way the spices are blended with the emotions and personalities of the characters demonstrates Divakaruni's deft use of magical realism, allowing readers to experience the rich cultural and emotional landscape of the Indian immigrant experience in America. Tilo's journey is also about her transformation, as she must navigate the conflict between the mystical world she inhabits and the real world of human relationships, desires, and limitations. As Ceisel (2018) suggests, each chapter in this novel is linked to a particular spice and adds a unique rhythm and symbolism to the narrative. The spices, therefore, are more than just magical tools; they are essential to understanding the characters' inner lives and the larger themes of the novel, such as identity, belonging, and the healing power of culture and tradition.

Divakaruni used all the spices familiar in the Bengali cuisine. Biter, sour, sweet, salty and pungent are the five main tastes that are taken care of in a traditional Bengali lunch.



“They all hold magic, even the everyday American spices you toss unthinking into your cooking pot.” (Divakaruni 3) Food can also be associated with memory. Food is seen as an effective trigger of memories. When we eat a particular food, the taste and the smell bring back some memory. Some happy and some sad. Even the place or the setting can also be associated with some memories and emotions. Food is also considered a part of religion (Gronow, Jukka 1997). “The art of putting together food is a magical thing and if it is done right it has the power to soften the most hardened heart. My mother always said that when you work with what you love, you work with magic. However, if the ingredients are incorrectly administered, or if you work with bad intentions, it can bring the most disastrous results” (*The Hundred Shades of White*)

Food plays a significant role in Literature, often serving as a representation of the culture of a particular place. Culture is a vital part of a person's life, shaping their values, traditions, and identity. It defines an individual as a whole, influencing their upbringing and worldview. India, known for its rich and diverse cultural heritage, exemplifies this connection. As Indians, we cherish our deep-rooted traditions and customs, which have been passed down through generations, even as we adapt to modern lifestyles. As a human being matures from childhood to adulthood, the preference for food changes as one grows. Like baby foods that are made easy to digest the fables and folktales that have lighter subjects have a greater impact in exhibiting the culture of a particular place. People moving to other parts of the world generally carry a lot of spices and masalas to stock them up for months.

Food and considered as an intrinsic part of their ethnic culture and one piece of their culture that they can easily carry with them to the new country. Hence, food is used to convey the culture that slides smoothly into the system. As one grows, food changes from liquids to solid food as the grown-up adult would chew and digest solid food without any need to break it down; fiction serves as wholesome food that is broken down by the system of mind into smaller fragments (Lewis C.S 2022). Food and by extension recipes passed down through generations, contain complex cultural influences. These nuances are unique to geographical locations. For example, even within the country of India, rice-based South Indian cuisines significantly differ from flour-based North Indian types. (Nair, Preethi 2010)

Conclusion

Divakaruni uses spices as a powerful metaphor for cultural heritage and identity. The way Tilo connects with her customers through spices highlights how food can transcend its physicality to become a bridge between people, their past, and their sense of belonging. It emphasizes how traditional practices, like the use of spices, act as a grounding force for immigrants, especially women. These practices preserve cultural roots while helping navigate the challenges of life in a foreign land.

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ABSTRACTS

Intersection of Food, Family and Identity in Miriam Toews’ *A Complicated Kindness*

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Abstract

Miriam Toews’ A Complicated Kindness intricately intertwines food with themes of family, identity, and cultural heritage, exploring the protagonist Nomi Nickel’s emotional and psychological journey. This paper delves into the role of food as a symbol of comfort and rebellion within Nomi’s Mennonite upbringing. Traditional dishes represent familial bonds and cultural continuity while simultaneously reflecting the constraints of the rigid community from which Nomi seeks to escape. In contrast, Nomi’s indulgence in junk food emerges as an act of resistance, a deliberate rejection of the rules and expectations she feels stifled by. The absence of food, particularly after the departure of Nomi’s mother, highlights the emotional void left by the breakdown of familial ties. The paper also examines the significance of beverages marking the shift from childhood innocence to the rebelliousness of adulthood. Through a culinary lens, this study argues that food in A Complicated Kindness plays a pivotal role in Nomi’s quest for self-discovery and autonomy, illustrating the tension between tradition and personal freedom. The narrative reveals how food serves as a metaphor in portraying the protagonist’s complex negotiation between her inherited heritage and her desire for independence.

Keywords: Food Symbolism, Family, Identity, Miriam Toews, *A Complicated Kindness*.



Cultural and Familial Dynamics of Food, Identity and Power in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

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Abstract

This paper investigates the intricate relationship between food, family, culture, ignorance, class, and power in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel "Purple Hibiscus". Through the lens of the protagonist, Kambili, it examines the role of food in shaping identity, emphasizing traditional Igbo cuisine, mealtimes, and food-related rituals. The analysis posits that food functions as a profound cultural symbol, reflecting family dynamics and power struggles. Within the Achike family, food becomes a tool of control and dominance, illustrating broader societal hierarchies and class disparities. The study delves into how food is weaponized to assert authority over Igbo traditions, underscoring the tension between cultural preservation and power imbalances. Furthermore, it highlights the intersections of food, culture, and class, demonstrating how these elements mediate familial relationships and social structures. By situating food as a narrative and symbolic device, this paper provides critical insights into the nuanced interplay of cultural identity, class differences, and power dynamics within the novel. Ultimately, the research affirms the centrality of food as a medium through which Adichie articulates the complexities of identity, familial connections, and societal hierarchies.

Keywords: Class, Family Dynamics, Food, Identity, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*.



Food as Identity and Resistance from Kitchen to Empowerment in Elizabeth Acevedo's *With the Fire on High*

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Abstract

*Food Studies in contemporary literature has transcended the concept of sustenance to become a powerful symbol of identity, power, and human connection. Recent interest in food studies provides a panoramic vision by exploring the cultural, social, political, and emotional dimensions of food in literature. Elizabeth Acevedo's "With the Fire on High" exemplifies the profound role of food as an invisible guide for the protagonist, Emoni, in overcoming societal challenges and finding her voice in a world that often marginalizes her. Through cooking, Emoni carves out a space where her creativity and individuality shine, redefining her identity beyond the confines of stereotypes and expectations placed on an Afro-Italian teen mother. Her Kitchen becomes a Sanctuary, where she processes her struggles and channels her emotions into culinary creations that hold deep personal meaning. The novel uses food as a literary device that not only reflects Emoni's growth and self-discovery but also symbolizes her resistance to societal limitations. This paper explores the multifaceted meaning of food in *With the Fire on High*, emphasizing how food serves as a transforming and metaphorical instrument in Emoni's life.*

Keywords: Food Studies, Identity, Empowerment, Elizabeth Acevedo, *With the Fire on High*, Afro-Italian Representation.