

UMT | SLA
School of Liberal Arts
INTERNATIONAL
URiSE
SYMPOSIUM 2026

ABSTRACT BOOK

Two-Day International URiSE Symposium 2026 Culture, Food and Literature in the New Millennium

 **March 25-26, 2026**

Organized by

School of Liberal Arts
University of Management and Technology, Lahore

In Collaboration with



ABOUT THE URISE SYMPOSIUM 2026

Food has always served as a storyteller across cultures, carrying recollection of memories, and traces and nuggets of history. The art of culinary and cuisine has shifted its expression rapidly with time not just on the menu, but in media, literature and as an emerging wave of cultural globalization. Food evokes a sense of place or heritage among people beyond linguistic and cultural boundaries. Culinary traditions - beyond domestic, regional and diasporic spaces - have shaped not just the kitchens but also literature, media and cultural imagination over time. In many societies, food as a culinary heritage is highly and deeply entangled with festivals, rituals and regional identities becoming a site of intersection for personal and collective histories.

In the twenty-first century, a new wave of global gastronomic rendezvous has transformed both culinary customs and literary imaginations under the growing visibility of diverse culinary cultures. Chinese, Japanese and Korean food traditions – each with their own philosophies of preparation, presentation, and seasonality - have travelled widely, influencing restaurant cultures and home kitchens around the world. Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi and Nepali cuisines, with their regional variations and spice traditions, continue to inspire reimaginings across diasporic communities in Europe, North America and Southeast Asia. The culinary landscape of the United States, already shaped by centuries of immigration, has further absorbed these global flavours, producing fusion cuisines that speak to new identities. This fusion is not merely a culinary fad, but it also symbolically highlights and inspires the idea of global culinary cultural exchange beyond sharing, adapting and reimaging recipes, introducing new olfactory and gustatory memories in hybrid cultural spaces.

Note: Selected outstanding submissions will receive publication opportunities. High-quality research papers may be considered for peer review in [*Linguistics and Literature Review*](#) or [*Journal of Communication and Cultural Trends*](#), while exceptional critical essays or creative-critical works may be invited for publication in [*The Literary Fulcrum*](#).

MESSAGE FROM THE PATRON/PROVOST, UMT

Prof. Dr. Asghar Ali Zaidi
Patron – URISE Symposium 2026
Provost
University of Management and Technology, Lahore



It gives me immense pleasure to extend my warm greetings to all participants of the URISE Symposium 2026, organized by the School of Liberal Arts at the University of Management and Technology. This symposium stands as an inspiring example of how interdisciplinary scholarship can open new pathways for understanding culture, literature, and society.

The URISE initiative (Undergraduate Research, Innovation & Scholarly Endeavor) was launched with the vision of cultivating a vibrant research culture at UMT. Inspired by global models such as the MIT Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), URISE aims to empower students by integrating them into real-world research environments under the mentorship of experienced faculty and scholars. The URISE Symposium embodies this vision by creating a space where emerging researchers and established scholars can share ideas, develop collaborations, and contribute to global academic discourse.

The theme of this year's symposium, "Culture, Food, and Literature in the New Millennium," highlights the evolving role of culinary traditions in shaping narratives of identity, migration, memory, and cultural exchange. In a rapidly globalizing world, food serves as a powerful lens through which we can understand the interconnectedness of societies and the dynamic nature of cultural expression.

I commend the organizers, faculty members, and students of the School of Liberal Arts for their dedication in organizing this international event and for promoting meaningful academic engagement. I also extend my gratitude to the distinguished speakers and participants from across the globe who have joined us in this scholarly endeavor.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR/DEAN, SLA

Prof. Dr. Nadia Anwar
Chair – URISE Symposium 2026
Dean, School of Liberal Arts
University of Management and Technology, Lahore



It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Two-Day International URISE Symposium 2026 – *Culture, Food, and Literature in the New Millennium* – hosted by the School of Liberal Arts (SLA), University of Management and Technology, Lahore. This symposium is an important step towards fostering interdisciplinary dialogue at the intersection of literature, culture, and food studies.

Food is a repository of memory, identity, and cultural exchange. Across societies and historical periods, culinary traditions have played a crucial role in producing narratives of belonging, migration, and heritage.

The School of Liberal Arts has always been committed to cultivating critical inquiry, intellectual curiosity, and meaningful scholarly engagement. Through initiatives such as URISE (Undergraduate Research, Innovation & Scholarly Endeavor), we continue to encourage students and faculty to participate actively in research-driven conversations that transcend disciplinary boundaries. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our distinguished speakers, international participants, organizing committee, and student volunteers whose dedication has made this symposium possible. I also congratulate the presenters whose insightful contributions form the foundation of this abstract book.

I hope that the discussions initiated here will inspire new research pathways, collaborations, and creative explorations of food, culture, and literature in our interconnected world.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Prof. Dr. Asghar Ali Zaidi	Patron
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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dr. Katarzyna
Cieplinska
University of Warmia
and Mazury in
Olsztyn, Poland



Ms. Muneeza
Shamsie
Editor of *In The New
Century: An
Anthology of
Pakistani English
Literature*



Dr. Kamila Koziol
University of
Warsaw, Poland



Prof. Dr. Nilsa
Rodríguez-Jaca
Culinary Institute of
America, New York



Dr. Dalia Mostafa
Abdulrahman
Cairo University,
Egypt



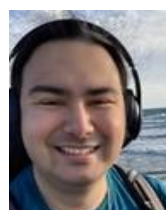
Dr. Rhayan
Gatbonton Melendres
University of
Philippines,
Philippines



Ms. Xuejun LIU
City University of
Hong Kong, Hong
Kong SAR, China



Ms. Raazia Sajid
Author of *Biryani and
Tahchin*



Mr. Kevin McKiernan
University of
Minnesota (Twin
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ABOUT LAHORE

Lahore is not just all about bricks and mortar but it is an alive, pulsating city, rich with its own flavor of colorful festivals, traditions deeply influenced by the indomitable generous and hospitable spirit of the Lahoris. "One who hasn't seen Lahore, goes the ancient Punjabi saying, hasn't been born!"



Lahore is the Queen of Cities; others are like a golden ring, she the diamond. In the 12th Century a poet imprisoned in Persia yearned for Lahore as for a woman: I want, some velvet form which emanates the fragrance of Lahore.

For ages Lahore has been a brilliant symbol of a gracious way of life. It has been the abode of great people, both in spiritual as well as worldly realms. It has the imposing reflections of its Muslim builders wearing ambitions and cosmopolitan tastes. The complex variety of Lahore which has grown from the wilderness, when Changez Khan's orders destroyed its suburbs, to the 20th Century developments, is distinctive character of the city in various places and provides testimony to its cultural heritage. Lahore, having been the seat of many imperial dynasties, possesses interesting historical reminiscences. There is a fascinating and colorful panorama of extraordinary mosques, mausoleums, forts, gardens and the like. The grandeur of Lahore cannot be solely attributed to its buildings, gardens, monuments and other historical places. Rather it is its atmosphere and ambience, its moods of joy and sorrow, fairs and fun, pains and pleasures, and above all the colorful life of its people which actually render impetus to the spirit and sole of Lahore.

<https://lahore.punjab.gov.pk/>

ABOUT UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY, LAHORE

UMT is a project of the institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Trust. ILM was established in 1990 by leading educationists, professionals, and industrialists with an aim to enhance the organizational and individual effectiveness. Guided by the noble mission of helping others in actualizing their limitless human potential to its finest shape, ILM sought to respond to the challenges of information-based economy, globalization, and ever-increasing complexity.



The University of Management and Technology has evolved into a premier institution of higher learning in the country. It is recognized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) as a 'W4' category (highest rank) university. For more than two years, UMT was also at the top as per HEC ranking in General Category (medium-sized) of private sector institutions in the Punjab.

UMT – now an independent, not-for-profit, private institution of higher learning – received her degree-granting charter first as the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) in 2002 through an Act of the Assembly of the Punjab. Later, on 16 June 2004, IMT became University of Management and Technology through the passing of a similar Act by the Punjab Assembly. In September 2007, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan, upgraded the category of UMT to 'Category W'.

<https://www.umt.edu.pk/about-umt.aspx>

ABOUT SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

In our present world, humanity has a heavy burden on its shoulders. The reason is obvious: the contours of knowledge shift in the blink of an eye in a world where social media and the internet play a major role in shaping awareness and Artificial Intelligence challenges the very essence of human intellect. Our primary burden in the academia now is to develop and nurture the ability to analyze and make sense of these rapid transformations. This is to be done by reflection, research, and intellectual enquiry. A liberal arts degree aims at grooming a young intelligentsia that is informed and intellectually sophisticated, an intelligentsia that possesses a robust historical consciousness and a developed sense of its global bearings. The liberal arts are concerned with essential humanistic skills and talents that are harder to quantify – such as effective verbal communication and strong writing ability, critical thinking, analytical acumen, creativity and eye to detail. Traditionally, they include all non-vocational, non-applied disciplines including areas such as literature, languages, philosophy, history, cultural studies, and theoretical sciences. The School of Liberal Arts (SLA) at the University of Management and Technology is a unique emergence on Pakistan's educational horizons that promises to create a new generation of informed thinkers, writers, and professionals in multiple fields. The SLA offers several degree programs: BS in Liberal Arts, BS in English, BS in Computational Linguistics, MPhil in Applied Linguistics, MPhil in English Literature, and PhD in English Literature and Linguistics. The Institute has on its faculty many highly qualified instructors, some of them with postgraduate degrees from prestigious universities of the world. With the support of Computer Assisted Learning (CAL), fully equipped Language Labs, specialized software, and hands-on activities, SLA practices cutting-edge pedagogical techniques. A host of scholarly activities are an integral part of the SLA culture – these include seminars, cultural days, performances, lectures by world scholars, exhibitions, and workshops to name a few.

<https://sla.umt.edu.pk/About-sla.aspx>

ABSTRACTS OF KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Beyond the Global Template: Rethinking Korean Cuisine Abroad through the Polish Case

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Abstract

In recent years, the global popularity of Korean cuisine has been shaped largely by digital media, where dishes circulate across platforms and come to define what "Korean food" is. This process produces a simplified, standardized image of Korean cuisine that only partially reflects the everyday food practices of people in Korea, where regional cuisines, seasonal rhythms, and diverse cooking techniques continue to play a major role. This paper examines how Korean cuisine is promoted, interpreted, and adapted outside Korea, with a particular focus on the tension between globally standardized Korean food culture and local culinary realities. I argue that a more sustainable and culturally grounded approach to the globalization of Korean cuisine requires greater engagement with local food traditions and techniques in host countries. Using Poland as a case study, the paper highlights convergences between Polish and Korean culinary cultures, including foraging practices, fermentation and pickling techniques, and the centrality of shared food staples in seasonal cooking. These shared culinary logics provide fertile ground for rethinking how Korean cuisine can be adapted in ways that strengthen local food systems, reduce reliance on imported ingredients, and foster meaningful cultural exchange rather than simple replication of digital templates. By foregrounding local–global interactions in the culinary sphere, this study contributes to broader discussions on sustainability, authenticity, and cultural translation in contemporary food cultures.

Preserving Tradition: Fish and Rice Fermentation (Burung Asan at Nasi) Practices and Culinary Heritage in Candaba, Pampanga, Philippines

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Abstract

Fish and rice fermentation, locally known as *burong asan* and *nasi*, represents a longstanding culinary and food preservation tradition in Candaba, Pampanga, Philippines. This practice is intimately linked to the region's fishing and rice-cultivation heritage, particularly within the Candaba Swamp ecosystem. In this locality, fermentation typically utilizes freshwater species such as tilapia, mudfish, and gourami, and occasionally shrimp, reflecting the richness of the area's inland fisheries. The preparation involves combining cooked rice with fish and salt, followed by fermentation in clay jars for approximately eight days, during which natural microbial activity facilitates protein breakdown and the development of characteristic sour and savory flavors. This artisanal knowledge is transmitted intergenerationally and serves as a significant cultural marker for the community. This study documents the production, culinary utilization, and consumption practices of *burong asan* and *nasi* in Candaba. It further examines the demographic profile of local makers—including age, gender, training sources, and knowledge transmission patterns—and explores the distribution and marketing strategies employed by these producers. Additionally, the research highlights the roles of various stakeholders, including local producers, government entities, and the wider community, in sustaining and promoting this distinctive gastronomic heritage. By providing a comprehensive account of both the practice and its socio-cultural dimensions, this study contributes to the understanding of traditional food systems in the Philippines.

Breaking Bread, Building Bridges: Traditional Food, Migration, and Belonging in Children's Literature

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Abstract

Food carries stories. In contemporary children's literature addressing migration and displacement, traditional cuisine emerges as a powerful cultural text that preserves memory, negotiates belonging, and offers emotional security amid rupture and transition. This paper examines how food functions as a culturally embedded "safe space" for identity formation in picture books featuring migrant, refugee, and second-generation immigrant children. Drawing on a comparative analysis of recently published picture books from diverse global contexts, the study explores how culinary traditions operate on multiple narrative levels. Food practices transmit heritage knowledge through recipes and cooking rituals, create sensory bridges to homeland and family history, and mediate cross-cultural encounters within multicultural settings. Countering narratives that frame food as an obstacle to integration, these texts depict culinary continuity as a site of resilience, adaptation, and cultural confidence. The analysis challenges assimilationist frameworks commonly associated with migration narratives. Instead, the selected texts align with pluralistic models of cultural integration, presenting traditional food as something to be shared and celebrated rather than concealed or abandoned. Familiar "lunchbox moments," often marked by othering or shame, are reimagined as opportunities for dialogue, curiosity, and mutual recognition. By foregrounding themes of belonging, nostalgia, hospitality, and intergenerational connection, this paper demonstrates how children's literature positions food as a meaningful cultural practice through which young readers encounter questions of identity, displacement, and cultural memory across borders.

Where's the Sambal Belacan?: Navigating Food Culture Between the United States, Singapore, and Japan

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Abstract

What does it mean to be a man from nowhere? I was born in Singapore to an American father and a Peranakan/Sri Lankan Tamil mother. I moved to New Jersey when I was one, marking the start of my rambling. My work on Japan and my personal connections in Singapore and around the United States have me leading a wandering existence. This presentation is an attempt to synthesize my thoughts on the ways in which various food cultures have not only affected my lived experiences but directly relate to my work on Japan and beyond. While spicy curry saves me in a flavorless Tokyo, the same dish can alienate me in Singapore, where people always ask if an ang moh (white person) can take the spice. These small interactions bring my life as a multi-ethnic individual into focus, and my scholarship tries to navigate the many contradictions and possibilities that emerge from these interactions. From my work on Japanese and Brazilian cinema of the 1960s to my own personal life, I try to identify the transnational flows that do not depend on Europe as a point of origin.

China's Gastrodiplomacy in New Millennium

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Abstract

When cuisine and politics intersect, the latter often transcends the cold narratives of power, treaties and conflicts. Dating back to the Napoleonic era, gastrodiplomacy has matured over around two centuries into a sophisticated instrument adeptly employed by statesmen today. With China's growing global influence in cuisine, its gastrodiplomacy has gained significant attention. The selection of venues, tableware, and dishes reflects China's diplomatic acumen and innovative spirit. Since the beginning of the millennium, gastrodiplomacy has gradually expanded beyond formal state banquets to people-to-people exchanges. This talk will delve into China's approach to gastrodiplomacy, examining its implications and future prospects from the perspective of international relations. Gastrodiplomacy, or the "bite of diplomacy," is the strategic use of food as a soft-power tool to promote cultural understanding and political goodwill. When gastronomy becomes diplomacy, meals function as symbolic sites where national identity and intent are communicated. Globally, countries such as Thailand, South Korea, France, and Japan have used cuisine to shape positive international perceptions. China's gastrodiplomacy illustrates this practice through carefully selected venues, tableware, and dishes that embody harmony and cultural continuity. From 1949 to 2000, it remained largely confined to formal state encounters, reinforcing ideological and ceremonial norms, while in the new millennium it has expanded to people-to-people exchanges and cultural initiatives. Thus, food emerges not merely as culture but as a subtle diplomatic language negotiating identity, power, and connection.

Food Studies in the Hispanic World: A Delectable Story

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Abstract

The study of food and culture in the Hispanic world and in the foodways of Latino/a in the United States are new topics of intellectual inquiry and scholarship in the Liberal Arts and Food Studies. In the past, Hispanic scholars' teaching and research interests centered around the study of literature, music, art, and other cultural expressions. In the last few years, we have witnessed a growing interest in using Food Studies to inform the study of culture and literature in the Spanish-speaking world. Many Hispanic scholars are now teaching, researching, and writing about their country's gastronomy, culinary arts and the representation of food in literature to understand the role of food production, consumption, and memory in the construction of a cultural identity and national discourse.

Memory, Food and Transcultural Belonging in Migrant Literature

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Abstract

In the literature of migration, food frequently functions as one of the most intimate and affective forms of storytelling. This keynote focuses on two major waves of Polish emigration in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, examined through the works of selected authors born in Poland who later settled permanently in the United Kingdom and wrote in English, publishing their books successfully within the UK literary market. Drawing on my primary field of research—Polish emigration literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries—the talk explores how culinary memory and taste operate as narrative strategies through which displacement, nostalgia, and transcultural experience are articulated. The first part addresses the World War II wave of Polish emigration and the literary production of writers associated with *émigré* circles in Britain. In their English-language fiction and autobiographical writings, food emerges as a powerful symbol of loss and cultural continuity. Remembered tastes of childhood, closely associated with parental care, traditional dishes, and festive meals function as emotional anchors, sustaining attachment to the family home in conditions of long-term exile and political displacement while being reframed for an Anglophone readership. The second part turns to the large-scale migration following Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004. In texts written by contemporary Polish-born authors living and writing in the United Kingdom, food narratives reveal a notable shift in tone and function. While nostalgia remains present, culinary motifs increasingly register mobility, hybridity, and everyday negotiation between inherited foodways and the multicultural culinary landscape. Referring to what is depicted by many authors – the nostalgia for the childhood or fascination with new tastes as transcultural experience, situated at the intersection of literary, migration, and food studies, the talk argues that culinary memory offers a particularly sensitive lens for understanding evolving forms of migrant identity and cultural adaptation.

ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTERS

Immigrant Narratives Craving Representation During the Pandemic Through Food Fusion in *I Leave It Up to You* (A Novel)

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Abstract

Jinwoo Chong's *I Leave It Up to You* explores Joja restaurant where a Korean immigrant family blends traditional cuisines amid COVID's employment collapse in immigrant eateries, the narratives often overlooked by food studies scholarship. This research paper examines the kitchen scenes through Homi K. Bhabha's cultural hybridity theory, illustrating family meals and early morning food preparation as "third spaces" sustaining Korean identity without assimilation into American culture. These spaces not only function as sites of cultural preservation but also reveal how food practices such as preparing tuna crates, amberjack sushi, and family stews bridge relationships within the family and the broader immigrant community, offering insights into, adaptation, resilience and negotiation of identity in diasporic life. A thematic interpretation demonstrates Joja as a gastro-diplomatic site for emotional healing, generational reconciliation and economic survival during pandemic collapse after the protagonist's recovery from a coma. Food fusion operates as a powerful form of cultural resistance, preserving heritage through communal meals and restaurant rituals amid crises. This study draws on cultural hybridity theory to address a critical gap in culinary scholarship by reframing immigrant eateries as crucial diaspora resilience spaces, contributing fresh perspective to food literature on pandemic-era multicultural gastronomic practices and immigrant culinary narratives.

Food as a Cultural Metaphor in Advertisements: Exploring the Stylistic Features of Gastro-narratology in Culinary Stories

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Abstract

The study explores the technique of Gastro-narratology and rhetorical strategies in Pakistani food advertisements. Roy & Banerjee (2020) highlight their work on gastro-narratology and how culinary stories in ads convey cultural identity, tradition, and values. Through a multimodal analysis of selected Pakistani food ads, this research reveals how narrative techniques, imagery, and linguistic choices evoke cultural heritage, tradition, and national pride. The research analyzes how the food brands employ narrative structure, culinary storytelling in cultural and social context to create persuasive tone and influence audience's behavior in adopting those food items. While examining the narrative structure and stylistic features of recipes, it also exposes how these ads tell stories and convey implied traditional ideologies. The study reveals that these advertisements often leverage cultural values, nostalgia, and sensory appeals to promote their products. The findings suggest that the language and imagery used in these ads play a significant role in shaping consumers' perception and preferences, particularly in the context of Pakistani cuisine to persuade audiences. It is concluded that the interplay between food, narrative, and culture is a powerful tool for constructing food as a cultural metaphor through ads.

Consuming the Other: Food, Representation, and Western Desire in the Contemporary Film

Shehzad Ali

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Abstract

The present research aims to analyze how Western cinema represents Asian food as a discursive site through which cultural difference is constructed, commodified, and safely consumed, in the movies *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), *The Hundred-Foot Journey* (2014), and *Eat, Pray, Love* (2010). All the three movies portray Eastern, or specifically, Asian cuisine, initially presenting it as something foreign, alien, and an object of disgust. However, at the same time, it is exoticized, commodified, and consumed by the Western palate. According to Stuart Hall's concept of representation, food in these films does not represent Asian culture as it is but constructs Asia as knowable, consumable, and different through cinematic discourse. Food does not remain a neutral cultural element but becomes a signifying practice. Bell Hooks (1994) argues that the West consumes the Other to escape boredom, feel transformed, and reaffirm dominance. Hence, in a way, food reiterates the notions of power and ideology, transforming Asian cultures into objects of spectacle, desire, and pleasure while obscuring histories of colonialism, power, and inequality.

Food, Gender, and Domestic Space: A Postcolonial Feminist Reading of Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupé*

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Abstract

In South Asian societies, domestic labor—including cooking and food preparation—has historically been gendered, undervalued, and normalized as women's work. Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupé* critically engages with these dynamics, using food and domestic spaces as central to shaping women's identities and reinforcing patriarchal norms. Drawing on Chandra Talpade Mohanty's postcolonial feminist framework, this paper examines how culinary labor in *Ladies Coupé* reflects broader socio-cultural structures that define and constrain women's roles within households. Mohanty's critique of the "ideology of the housewife" and her emphasis on "contextualized analysis of domestic labor" reveal how cooking, caregiving, and maintaining domestic order function as both exploitative and socially enforced work. The novel illustrates how the kitchen operates as a site of gendered control, regulating women's time, bodies, and identities while valorizing self-sacrifice and emotional labor. In contrast, the ladies' train coupé provides a space for women to share experiences, reflect on domestic obligations, and assert agency, demonstrating possibilities for negotiating social and cultural constraints. By situating food and domestic space, within a postcolonial feminist lens, this paper demonstrates that *Ladies Coupé* presents domestic labor as both a mechanism of patriarchal control and a medium through which women examine and assert their identities, highlighting the intersections of gender, labor, and cultural context in contemporary South Asian women's writing.

Recipes as Cultural and Historical Memories in Shadab Zeest Hashmi's Poetry and Aamer Hussain's Short Fiction *Sweet Rice*

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Abstract

This paper examines the recipes in the selected poems of Shadab Zeest Hashmi from *Baker of Tarifa* (2010) and Aamer Hussain's short story *Sweet Rice* as cultural and historical memories. Theoretically, the study draws on food studies and cultural memory and conceptually it is based upon insights taken Meredith E. Abarca's *Culinary Mestizaje: An Afro-Latino Collective Sensory Memory*, C. T. Mohanty's *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* and Anita Mannur's *Culinary fictions: Food in South Asian diasporic culture*. Methodologically, the study is qualitative in nature and relies on textual analysis. The study argues that recipes in the selected texts function as strategies and tools to present personal memories, collective history and cultural identity. Hashmi through recipes and food imagery transforms culinary knowledge into cultural archive that preserves historio-cultural consciousness of Andalusian Muslim civilization and diasporic belonging. In her poems, recipes evoke histories of lost and erased glorious Muslim culture. Aamer Hussain's *Sweet Rice* depicts a culturally charged dish as an aide-mémoire that triggers childhood memories, migration, and the erased history of South Asian Muslim Woman's culinary contribution and identity. The exploration of the recipe of sweet rice and *Naimatkhana* the cookbook and its transformation and publication give agency to both Sheerin the protagonist and Muhammadi Begum, the erased female chef of Subcontinent. The paper demonstrates that in both texts, recipes serve as embodied historical practices that communicate cultural knowledge across time and space. This study also highlights the role of recipes as carriers of culture, history, and memory in South Asian literary expression.

**Food-Fed Discourses of South Asian Women Writers: A
Critical Reading of Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*,
Desai's *Feasting Fasting* and Suleri's *Meatless Days***

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Abstract

This study examines South Asian women's food-fed discourses where food, spices and culinary practices bring to surface the complicated issues of gender, power, memory, nostalgia and domesticity. The critical reading of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) and Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days* (1989) contends that food in these texts serve as a discursive medium which articulates the patriarchal norms, cultural expectations, and women's lived experiences. Theoretically, the study is grounded in feminism and food studies/gastropoetics and conceptually it is built upon ideas from Anita Mannur's *Culinary fictions: Food in South Asian diasporic culture*. Methodologically, the study is qualitative in nature and relies on the technique of textual analysis. The study analyzes the culinary practices and rituals as gendered and embedded within South Asian households. Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* presents culinary knowledge as a source of cultural continuity and healing yet concurrently it binds the female protagonist to sacrifice and restraint. Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* employs food as an instrument of patriarchal control and exposes gender and power hierarchies prevalent in Indian society. Suleri in *Meatless Days* reconfigures food-fed memories to narrate loss, migration, maternal presence and feminine sexuality while transforming them into sites of historical and personal reflection. These food-fed discourses articulate South Asian women's identities, resistance, agencies and gendered subjectivity.

Food, Nostalgia, and Exilic Perspectives in Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron* and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*

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Abstract

This paper examines the representations of food, nostalgia and exilic perspectives in Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron* (2000) and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003). Theoretically the study is grounded on diaspora and food studies and conceptually it draws insights from Anita Mannur's *Culinary fictions: Food in South Asian diasporic culture*. Methodologically, the study is qualitative in nature and relies on the technique of textual analysis. It debates that food and culinary practices in both texts function as emotional ties between displaced subjects and their homelands. Shamsie in *Salt and Saffron* employs food and cooking to connect family history, class distinctions, and cultural inheritance. Food evokes nostalgia that is shaped by memory and loss. Her culinary references function as symbolic markers of belonging and characters' identity negotiation. Similarly, Lahiri in *The Namesake* incorporates culinary rituals which serve as acts of remembrance for migrant characters who sustain cultural continuity through food while combating assimilation, generational change and identity negotiation. The study establishes that food-based nostalgia in these texts mirrors the complex emotional and cultural belonging and negotiations. Shamsie and Lahiri through culinary memories reveal identity construction in diasporic conditions.

A Corpus-Based Sentiment Analysis of 21st Century Social Media Food Trends

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Abstract

In the context of the New Millenium age, social media platforms have become the emerging rostrum for culinary storytelling, where the end users share food trends, nostalgic experiences associated with food, and reflections to cultural identity. Specifically, this study focuses on the textual content from the digital platforms, analyzing captions, hashtags, and comments to examine the emerging trends in culinary representation. By analyzing sentiments in online network posts, the study demonstrates how these trends function as digital storytelling tools, expressing emotions, and memoirs. Accordingly, using a corpus-based approach, sentiment analysis will be conducted on a curated dataset of social media posts to explore positive, negative, and neutral expression in contemporary culinary trends. The study aims to exhibit how social media mediates and transforms culinary practices into a platform of storytelling, offering insights into cultural identity, expression, and nostalgia in the new digital age. Notably, this study is significant in comprehending that social media is not merely a source of entertainment but also a platform for conveying cultural identity and a sense of belonging through food trends. Furthermore, this study will provide valuable insights to researchers, marketers, and content creators by revealing the patterns in social media food trends that reflect emotional and cultural engagement.

Culinary Geographies of Resilience and Sensory Memory in the Island of a Thousand Mirrors

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Abstract

Nayomi Munaweera's *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* employs culinary geographies, sensory details, place, and memory to map the fractured ethnic identities and postcolonial displacements of Sri Lanka's civil war-torn landscape. The present study posits the dimension of food, memory, nostalgia, and resilience in the context of war. The selected text offers vivid depictions of Sinhala curries featuring red rice, coconut fish, and ripe mangoes, contrasting Tamil traditions, delineating contested territories from rural heartlands to urban diasporas, and embodying shared island heritage amid genocidal strife. The novel is replenished with multisensory prose—aromas of fermented toddy, loamy earth, ocean laps, and spiced puddings that vivify idyllic pre-war idylls turned bloodied battlegrounds, heightening the dissonance between harmony and violence while anchoring the protagonists, Yasodhara and Saraswati, to vanishing homelands through nostalgic feasts that reclaim fragmented selves. This study is theoretically anchored by the critical trajectories of food geographies, food memory, with sensuous geographies that harbor resilience at the individual and collective level, bridging Sinhala-Tamil narratives in a palimpsest of resilience and loss.

The Grotesque Panda: Dietary Humor and the Carnavalesque Body in the Animated Film *Kung Fu Panda*

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Abstract

The present study scrutinizes the dietary humor in the animated film *Kung Fu Panda* (2008) through the lens of Mikhail Bakhtin's Carnavalesque. The Carnavalesque is investigated to analyze the binaries of conventional elite order of Chinese Kung Fu and Po's grotesque body and eating habits in the animated film *Kung Fu Panda*. Furthermore, the study delves into the austere Chinese Kung Fu's rituals and how a fat, lazy, food obsessed protagonist debunks the narrative of a perfect kung fu body and becomes a Dragon Warrior. The grotesque panda with his clumsy food mania and humor challenges the elitism of Master Shifu and the Furious Five. The present qualitative inquiry utilizes textual analysis to examine food and body related scenes in the film *Kung Fu Panda*. Moreover, it inspects Po's character in challenging Kung Fu hierarchies and empowering transformation that excels rigid stereotypes through food and grotesque body. Finally, the paper contends that *Kung Fu Panda* redefines agency through dietary humor, providing insights into how popular media can interrupt hegemonic narrative of ideal hero body in contemporary discourses. The study is significant in the sense that it adds to the existing knowledge of food studies, humor studies, cultural studies and children media studies. Furthermore, it has scope as previously the film was mostly analyzed through cultural and postcolonial lens yet the role of dietary humor in empowering the marginal remained unexplored. The study suggests future researchers further dive into dietary and bodily humor presented in films and animations. The research aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on number 5 and 10 that support reducing social inequalities.

Deciphering Kitchen as a Mnemonic Space: Investigating the Symbolic Multiplicities of Food Codes in Wilson's *The Heart-Shaped Tin: Love, Loss, and Kitchen Objects*

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Abstract

The research investigates kitchen as a site of nostalgia where material objects transmit familial and communal memories through different spatio-temporal contact zones portrayed in Bee Wilson's *The Heart-Shaped Tin: Love, Loss, and Kitchen Objects*. This study employs Pierre Nora's theory, les lieux de mémoire or sites of memory, to analyze the material, symbolic and functional facets of memory. Further, Mary Douglas' conception of food as a cultural code is used to inspect the symbolic significance of food structures influenced by societal norms, and hierarchies embedded within the social strata of communities. The study also analyzes the kitchen as a poly semantic space inducing multiple interpretations of human interactions with foods, utensils and furniture arrangements. Wilson, a British writer, accentuates the unravelling of conscious memories through her sudden encounter with a forgotten kitchen item, a heart shaped tin, which serves as an emblem of her past emotions: her wedding, divorce, mother's dementia and subsequent resurgence. The author uses multiple symbols including cooking recipes, dinner set, the chocolate bottle, toasted bread of Spain and Italy, Queen Elizabeth I's sieve holding portrait, drinking horns used in Nigeria and Bumbai, Burial plates and Kutani Crane range's Japanese floral aesthetics which signify intergenerational emotions, forgotten civilizations, multiple interpretations of the same food or kitchen item across varying cultural contexts serving as a code of wisdom, honor, and status outlined by communal standards. The study is significant as it explores personal and collective memories implicated through multifaceted food cultures and symbols which contend the objective historicity.

Framing Identity through Food in Pakistani Television Advertising: A Discourse-Based Exploration

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Abstract

Television advertisements are more than just product promotions — they shape how people see themselves and others. In Pakistan, food commercials on TV often use both language and imagery to reflect and shape cultural identity, social roles, and consumer behavior. Yet there's still a gap in understanding how these everyday ads contribute to broader narratives of identity and belonging. This study explores how food-related television advertisements in Pakistan frame ideas of identity, using Entman's Framing Theory as a lens and drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for deeper textual and visual interpretation. By selecting a focused sample of prime-time food commercials, this research will identify recurring themes — such as traditional values, gender roles, aspirational lifestyles, and social cohesion — and examine how these are conveyed through both words (slogans, dialogues) and visuals (color, gestures, settings). Building on this foundation, the study situates Pakistani food advertising within a wider socio-cultural and media landscape shaped by globalization, urbanization, and shifting family structures. Food commercials are treated not merely as marketing texts but as cultural artifacts that circulate shared meanings about home, tradition, modernity, and national identity. The research pays particular attention to how these advertisements negotiate tensions between the local and the global, often blending indigenous food practices with cosmopolitan aesthetics to appeal to diverse audiences. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative approach, combining close textual analysis with visual semiotics to unpack how power relations and ideologies are embedded in advertising discourse. By examining narrative structures, character representation, and symbolic imagery, the research reveals how food advertisements normalize certain identities while marginalizing others, particularly in relation to class, gender, and generational roles.

Eating Identity: How Food Narratives Shape Memory, Belonging, and Culture in Contemporary English Literature

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Abstract

This research acts as a vital site for building identity, memory and culture by focusing on the functions of food narratives in contemporary English literature. The study examines that contemporary selected writing develops emotional attachment to heritage, community and home by the acts of cooking, eating and remembering the taste of food beyond the treatment of food which can be taken as mere descriptive detail. Food emerges as an incorporated form of memory when examined through literary contexts usually shaped by migration, globalization and cultural dislocation. It helps individuals to balance personal and collective identities. By investigating memory studies and cultural studies, the paper provides a detailed textual analysis of how the thoughtful identification of emotional survival and cultural identity is modified by everyday practices. This research highlights how the theoretical debates on identity and culture is humanized by contemporary literature by taking and considering food as lived experience. Finally, the paper argues that identity can be understood by food narratives as sensory and emotionally grounded experience not only as social construct. In twenty-first century, English literature, food can act as a powerful narrative force.

Reconstructing the Self through Culinary Memory in Michelle Zauner's *Crying in H Mart*

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Abstract

From being a permanent part of our daily life to a significant element that defines our identity, food has multiple layers to unravel. One simply doesn't enjoy or relish food but also uses it as a tool to communicate with others. The spices, herbs, and the way one cooks food carry with them the cultural identity of a particular nation. These cultural codes have been studied in this research to understand how one reconciles with the lost cultural heritage. Michelle Zauner's *Crying in H Mart* is a poignant portrayal of how one's personal and cultural identity is shaped over time through culinary memory. Hubert Hermans's Dialogical Self Theory examines how conflicting voices shape individuals' personalities over the years. In a space where cultural integration becomes a difficult task, an individual's struggle is reflected through his or her relationship with food, as it is the representative of each distinct culture. The female protagonist is seen to be reconciled with their cultural heritage and personal relationships through the medium of food. However, communicating with others is a significant aspect in reshaping one's identity. Ronald Barthes' idea of Semiotic Codes will help understand how food descriptions work, just like language, and enable characters to communicate their cultural and personal identity. This research work will focus on how food descriptions and characters' interaction with food shaped the landscape of their personality and life stories.

Food as Cultural identity in South Asian Literature

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Abstract

Food is a powerful tool to express the identity of any culture. It plays a vital role that portrays culture, identity and reflects any group's culture. This paper examines food cultural influence through South Asian literature. Food through literature articulates cultural identity and memory. Drawing on post-colonial theory and cultural studies, this study emphasizes culinary practices, food rituals that help in preserving cultural identity and collective histories. This paper examines the role of food as a medium of cultural memory in selected works of South Asian English literature. Food throws light on the culture of a specific region, and it helps to dissect various cultural aspects and features. It keeps the culture alive of a certain region. Any region could regain and maintain its culture and identity through food. In contextual studies, literature shows regional differences as well as similarities. Food enables us to fix certain memories and nostalgic experiences. By going through various culinary experiences, South Asian English Literature comprises identity, emotional attachments and cultural values. Through literature it is alive rather than fixed or blurred. Food is a backbone of the regional values and morals. Every region has its culture that speaks through food.

Culinary Nostalgia and diasporic counter discourse in Hala Alyan's *Salt Houses*

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Abstract

Migration, either forced or undertaken voluntarily, often fragments identity, memory, and belonging, but, within diasporic spaces, food emerges as a storyteller in hindsight. This research examines how culinary practices are accentuated not only as a cultural residue, but also as narrative techniques. This research moves beyond the conventional reading of food just as nostalgic symbolism, it underscores that food articulates migrant's storytelling. Grounded in Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of center and periphery, the paper contends that official histories operate as centripetal forces, consolidating power by erasing displaced narratives. In contrast, food serves as centrifugal force. It evokes a heteroglossic memory from the periphery, which transmits a sense of home to generations who have never seen the lost homeland. A place where longing is passed down to generations who have never witnessed the lost homeland. By contextualizing food based cultural expression within framework of exile, post-memory, and transnational identity, this study reconceptualizes food as a catalyst in exilic deterritorialized displaced consciousness rather than merely a passive stylistic metaphor. It ultimately proposes that transnational literature imparts taste and smell as sensory archives. It fortifies history, yearning, and longing that language cannot sustain. In *Salt Houses*, each generation inhabits a different periphery, distant from Palestinian center. Here, culinary remembrance operates as an alternative archive. So, the food redefines domestic space into a site where fractured histories are preserved, not in maps, but in remembrance.

The Televised Dastarkhwan: Gender, Spatial Authority, and Culinary Discourse on Masala TV

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Abstract

This paper examines how Pakistani culinary television plays a critical role in shaping contemporary cultural identity by transforming the domestic kitchen into a mediated space of authority, memory, and cultural exchange. Focusing on Masala TV as a key site of everyday cultural production, the study analyzes the onscreen personas of three influential chefs, namely, Zubaida Tariq, Chef Zakir, and Zarnak Sidhwa, to trace evolving gendered and spatial dynamics within the modern Pakistani household. Through close analyses of televised performances, instructional language, and kitchen layouts, the paper contends that cooking emerges as a component of discursive frameworks that regulate domestic knowledge and social behavior: for instance, Zubaida Tariq embodied inherited culinary memory, presenting recipes and household remedies as forms of maternal authority rooted in "tradition" and continuity. In stark contrast, Chef Zakir, a male chef, introduced culinary discourse that centered around a "professionalized" experience, that imported restaurant expertise (as commercial kitchens remain dominated by Pakistani men) into the home, reshaping masculine authority within a historically feminized domestic space. Zarnak Sidhwa's emphasis on Western baking and culinary fusion further expands the televised kitchen into a cosmopolitan arena, reflecting evolving middle-class aspirations and global cultural exchange. By regarding Masala TV as an archive of culinary memory, this paper demonstrates how televised food practices affect and shape the balance of heritage, modernity, and globalization. The televised *dastarkhwan*, therefore, is revealed as a site where food, memory, and media collectively shape contemporary South Asian, and specifically Pakistani social imagination.

Mapping Transnational Tastes: A Quasi-Ethnographic Study of Korean Culinary Localization in Lahore's Walled City

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Abstract

This collaborative study investigates the burgeoning presence of Korean culinary heritage within the dense socio-spatial fabric of the Walled City (*Androon Sheher*) of Lahore. We explore this phenomenon as a "geographical stitch"—a transcultural process where the visual aesthetics of Seoul are physically enacted and internalized within the historical courtyards of Lahore. Operating at the intersection of digital media influence and local adaptation, our research employs a quasi-ethnographic framework—utilizing structured surveys and semi-structured interviews—to gauge the lived impact of the "Korean Wave" on a community defined by its own ancient food traditions. We examine how the "digital appetizer" provided by K-Dramas and K-pop (mediated desire) has translated into physical "gustatory consumption" in the alleys of Lahore. Our findings reveal profound points of sensory recognition: specifically, the olfactory parallels between fermented Korean staples and local *achaar*, and the structural similarities between the communal architecture of the Banchan spread and the traditional Lahori *Dastarkhwan*. By analyzing the perspectives of first-generation home cooks, professional culinary students, and youth consumers, we argue that the entry of Korean food is not a displacement of local heritage, but a sophisticated process of "gastronomic mending." The importance of this study lies in its challenge to the narrative of cultural "erasure." Instead, we demonstrate that the residents of the Walled City negotiate their hybrid identities through global flavors, proving that the *Sheher* is not a closed relic of the past, but a vibrant site of transcultural commensality where the map of "home" is being redrawn, one plate at a time.

Consuming Femininity: Food, Gender, and the Sexual Politics of Appetite in *The Bloody Chamber* and *Meatless Days*

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Abstract

This paper examines how food functions as a political and cultural mechanism through which gender identities and sexual norms are constructed, regulated, and naturalized in contemporary literary narratives. Drawing on Carol J. Adams's concept of the absent referent and the sexual politics of meat, the study argues that literary representations of food are deeply implicated in sustaining gendered power relations, particularly through the symbolic alignment of masculinity with consumption and femininity with restraint. Focusing on Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* and Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days*, the analysis demonstrates how the boundary between women and food is frequently collapsed through metaphors of appetite, flesh, and consumption. In *The Bloody Chamber*, the female body is eroticized and rendered consumable, where desire operates through images of excess, meat, and devouring masculinity. By contrast, *Meatless Days* constructs femininity through absence and restraint, where women's identities are shaped by silence, moral discipline, and symbolic meatlessness. Together, these texts reveal how food operates as a cultural tool that controls gendered bodies, regulates female desire, and reinforces normative gender stereotypes. Concepts such as consumable femininity, gendered appetite, and culinary objectification are employed to show how eating practices in literature are not merely domestic or aesthetic, but political - encoding assumptions about power, sexuality, and respectability. By foregrounding food as a narrative language, the paper demonstrates how literary texts participate in producing and policing gender norms within the cultural imagination of the new millennium.

Cross-Cultural Factors Affecting Fast-Food Consumption in Pakistan: A Comparative Study of Local and International Brands

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Abstract

In Pakistan, where both local and international fast-food franchises coexist and have an impact on customer behavior, globalization and cultural exchange have greatly influenced the modern eating customs. The cross-cultural adaptation of fast food and its effects on Pakistani customers' dietary habits, consumption patterns, and perceived health outcomes are examined in this study. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative consumer surveys with qualitative evaluations of advertising and menu modifications from well-known local chain OPTP as well as international brands like KFC and McDonald's. Kress and van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design (2006) and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA, 2003) are used to investigate how textual and visual advertising strategies influence customer attitudes, tastes, and cultural acceptability of fast food. By examining consumption frequency, brand loyalty, cultural preferences, and understanding of nutritional and health implications, the consumer survey enables a comparison of how local and global fast-food options impact eating habits. According to preliminary research, Pakistani consumers are influenced by Western-style menus and multinational fast-food advertising, frequently putting convenience and flavor ahead of nutritional considerations. The study considers the cultural negotiation between traditional diets and contemporary eating habits while highlighting possible health consequences, such as elevated chances of obesity and lifestyle-related disorders. Also, the study advances knowledge of how cross-cultural food influences shape modern eating habits, public health issues, and consumer culture in a rapidly globalizing society by analyzing fast-food consumption in Pakistan.

Cha, Chai and Chai Tea Latte: The History, Cultural Diversity and Journey of Chai

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Abstract

The journey of cha to chai and eventually to the contemporary chai tea latte reflects a rich history shaped by cultural exchange, colonial influence, and evolving social practices. Chai holds a central place in South Asian society, where it is often regarded as a symbol of hospitality and everyday social interaction, commonly served at dhabas and within domestic spaces. Beyond its social role, chai has also been associated with perceived health and soothing benefits. The origins of tea can be traced to ancient China, where, according to legend, Emperor Shennong discovered the tea plant (*Camellia sinensis*). Through early trade networks, tea reached Portuguese aristocracy and later entered England when Catherine of Braganza, daughter of the King of Portugal, popularized tea at the English court during the reign of King Charles II. In South Asia, chai was introduced and institutionalized through the colonial apparatus of the British Raj, which relied on plantations, indentured labor, and exploitative trade systems. This paper offers a brief exploration of chai's historical journey and its cultural diversification, tracing its transformation from a traditional beverage into a global phenomenon. It examines various forms of chai, including green tea, black tea, spiced tea, doodh patti, karak chai, and the Westernized chai tea latte. While debates surrounding originality and authenticity persist, chai remains an integral part of daily life, deeply embedded in cultural rituals, social practices, and personal routines across different societies.

Cooking in Exile: Food, Colonial Intimacy, and Migrant Identity in Monique Truong's *The Book of Salt*

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Abstract

This paper examines Monique Truong's *The Book of Salt* (2003) as a literary meditation on food as a site of migrant memory, colonial intimacy, and identity formation in the new millennium. Centered on Bình, a Vietnamese cook working in interwar Paris, the novel foregrounds culinary labor as both survival and storytelling within transnational and colonial contexts. Food in the text operates not merely as sustenance but as a language through which displacement, desire, and power relations are negotiated. Drawing on postcolonial theory, food studies, and migration studies, this paper argues that cooking becomes a form of embodied knowledge that allows Bình to navigate racialized labor, queer marginality, and colonial hierarchies. The kitchen emerges as a liminal space where global histories, French imperialism, Vietnamese displacement, and European modernism, intersect in intimate, everyday practices. Through taste, smell, and repetition, food preserves cultural memory while simultaneously revealing the fractures of exile. By situating *The Book of Salt* within contemporary conversations on food and literature, this paper demonstrates how Truong reimagines culinary labor as an archive of global modernity—one that records histories often excluded from dominant literary and historical narratives. Ultimately, the novel positions food as both a material and symbolic medium through which marginalized subjects articulate belonging, resistance, and selfhood in a transnational world.

From “Cheap Food” to Cultural Capital: The Gastropolitical Paradox of Street Food in Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper examines the complex gastropolitics of street food as a “powerful semiotic device” capable of signaling rank, rivalry, identity, and exclusion. In the Pakistani context, street food has historically been relegated to a low social status, categorized as a “taste of necessity” associated with the informal economy and the urban poor. Paradoxically, within the framework of the Experience Economy, as conceptualized by Pine and Gilmore, street food has been transformed into a primary driver of cultural capital and economic value. Street food remains low-cost, everyday food for working-class communities, often stigmatized as unsafe or informal. At the same time, the idea of street food especially as presented through media and tourism is elevated as authentic culture, heritage, and even luxury experience. This creates a paradox where the food itself is cheap, but its symbolic value is high, and access to that symbolic value is unevenly distributed. Drawing primarily from street food vlogs and documentaries on YouTube, this study analyzes how digital narratives showcase the roadside stall as the site of “the real deal” for foreign tourists. For these travelers, food functions as participation rather than mere consumption, serving as an “experiential anchor” that facilitates an affective, authentic connection with the host culture.

Shared Tables At Sea: Bawarji and Wokou Piartes and Cross-Cultural Food Traditions in the Era of Modern Globalization

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Abstract

This paper explores maritime piracy through its cultural and historical importance in South Asia and East Asia, focusing on Sindhi Bawarji and Japanese Wokou pirates through the perspective of communal eating, food and memory. Based on maritime narratives, chronicles and travelogues, it examines how pirates practiced sharing meals and were dependent on several coastal raids. This illicit way fostered culinary traditions and mustered identity at the sea and showed solidarity among the pirate communities. Embedded in maritime history, these food practices offer a strong transcultural mode for understanding how food moves through countries, cultures, memory and regions. This research further examines how historical food practices have come along this far into the realm of contemporary globalization. The shared culinary traditions and experience is seen through mixed influence among countries. As Pakistan is influenced by Japanese cuisine, especially, since Sushi has become a famous delicacy in many restaurants. This cross-cultural connection through food enhances the continuity of communal eating, acceptance, introduction to unique flavors and memories. By analyzing the pirate's illicit methods of raiding to contemporary globalization of food traditions, the paper argues that culinary practices are about migration, taste, preserving memory and cultural exchange. Drawing on the maritime style of communal eating and mobility which resonates with the digital times of culinary identities and global circulation of food.

**Before Climate Change Had a Name: Embodied Survival,
Environmental Injustice and Climate Crisis in *Animal's
People***

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Abstract

It re-reads *Animal's People* by Indra Sinha as a pioneering South Asian literary expression of the climate crisis, as the novel anticipates the modern arguments of environmental injustice, food insecurity, and embodied vulnerability. Although the text is primarily viewed as a fictional response to the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, this paper situates it within a broader spectrum of environmental crises in South Asia that have been influenced by industrial toxicity, unbalanced development, and climate precariousness. Based on the notion of slow violence introduced by Rob Nixon, this paper suggests that, in the case of *Animal*, it is not a single event of mass destruction that causes environmental disaster, but rather a state of existence characterized by broken bodies, polluted environments, and unstable food chains. This is the story of climate change as it is being felt in South Asia today, through contaminated water, declining soil fertility, global warming, and the erosion of livelihoods among marginalized groups. As part of the ecological critique of the novel, the paper focuses on food and hunger, utilizing Amartya Sen's theory of hunger and entitlement to reveal the intersection of environmental damage and economic disparity. In *Animal's People*, the lack of contaminated soil and the interrupted supply of food show that ecological crises restructure daily survival. Such representations are closely related to modern South Asian realities, where climate change exacerbates agrarian distress, malnutrition, and food insecurity. Lastly, drawing on the concept of posthuman by Donna Haraway and climate history by Dipesh Chakrabarty, the paper will analyze how *Animal* ridicules normative human identity as a critique of anthropocentric and developmentalist modes of thought. The novel is a gesture towards a multispecies-conscious and historically responsible climate ethics, destabilizing the human animal boundary.

Everyday Myths: How Food Narratives Shape Cultural and Religious Belonging

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Abstract

This paper investigates how everyday food-related discourse serves as a site for constructing, negotiating, and contesting religious and cultural identities in the contemporary era. Drawing on Roland Barthes' theory of myth, it examines how ordinary consumables; beverages and commonly consumed products, become symbols that naturalize ideological meanings, moral hierarchies, and collective anxieties. In public narratives, certain foods are framed as markers of cultural belonging or instruments of influence, while rival items emerge as acts of symbolic resistance, reinforcing alternative notions of community and identity. Through qualitative analysis of media narratives, social commentary, brand messaging, and social media interactions, the study identifies recurring patterns in which consumption is moralized, coded as loyalty or defiance, and deployed to demarcate in-group and out-group boundaries. These discursive myths present socially constructed fears, intentions, and allegiances as self-evident truths, shaping perceptions of cultural threat and identity affirmation. This paper demonstrates that in the twenty-first century, ideological conflicts increasingly permeate everyday cultural practices, revealing how ordinary narratives around consumption function as modern myths that structure social imagination, anxiety, and intergroup relations

Flavors of Belonging: A Qualitative Analysis of Food Nostalgia and Gen Z Migrant Identity

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Abstract

A delicate mix of spices that serves rich flavors is devoured in all parts of the world, but your taste buds settle for the food that carries a cultural touch or a sense of maternal care in it. Gen Z is often described as a highly emotional generation and their love for delicious food and cultural cuisine is widely present in-migrant communities. This paper suggests that their feelings for authentic food are much deeper than previous generations when the food nostalgia hits. This study examines that the previous generations had a greater capacity of adapting to foreign landscapes more easily than Gen Z. Drawing on qualitative analysis of social media food discourse and digital video narratives; this paper demonstrates that emotional satisfaction is achieved only if it has some roots in your origin. The food nostalgia has become a narrative through which Gen Z identity is constructed and their label as the moody generation is reinforced in terms of their food choices. This research explores that digital media intensify homesickness and cultural resistance when they come across the short form of culinary discourse. It is the cultural cuisine that continues to evoke memories of home. By framing food as a mood in the global village, this research highlights Gen Z attachment to their food as a matter of identity preservation in a globalized community. It contributes to the understanding of the complex emotional and cultural struggle experienced by migrant Gen Z.

Food: An Expression of Culture and Tradition in Elif Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul*

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Abstract

A delicate mix of spices that serves rich flavors is devoured in all parts of the world, but your taste buds settle for the food that carries a cultural touch or a sense of maternal care in it. Gen Z is often described as a highly emotional generation and their love for delicious food and cultural cuisine is widely present in-migrant communities. This paper suggests that their feelings for authentic food are much deeper than previous generations when the food nostalgia hits. This study examines that the previous generations had a greater capacity of adapting to foreign landscapes more easily than Gen Z. Drawing on qualitative analysis of social media food discourse and digital video narratives; this paper demonstrates that emotional satisfaction is achieved only if it has some roots in your origin. The food nostalgia has become a narrative through which Gen Z identity is constructed and their label as the moody generation is reinforced in terms of their food choices. This research explores that digital media intensify homesickness and cultural resistance when they come across the short form of culinary discourse. It is the cultural cuisine that continues to evoke memories of home. By framing food as a mood in the global village, this research highlights Gen Z attachment to their food as a matter of identity preservation in a globalized community. It contributes to the understanding of the complex emotional and cultural struggle experienced by migrant Gen Z.

Edible Heritage: How Food and Storytelling Help Pass Down Culture

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Abstract

In South Asian households, food carries meanings beyond just necessity, taste or nutrition value. It serves as a means of connecting with cultural values, sharing stories, remembering the past, and an element of cultural transmission across generations. This paper explores the concept of edible heritage through an in-depth approach to everyday cooking practices, family-specific recipes, and oral food narratives within the sites of migrant domestic communities. Its focus is on kitchens as shared and meaningful spaces, and it explores how cultural knowledge is shaped through daily routines like eating, cooking, and talking about food. Home-cooked food, special occasion dishes, and festival meals all represent significant stories of life moments. Conversations during the process of cooking food, at the dining table, and while having meals are centered on memories of past life from generation to generation, home, and migration. The core of the connection comes from relationships between children and their elders, such as mothers, fathers, or mother-like and father-like figures. Recipes are taught through repetition, observation, and conversations rather than noted instructions. The aroma of the food plays a special role in evoking emotions among generations. Taste is also a fundamental aspect that helps the generations feel connected to their cultural roots. In dispersed settings, distance from the homeland brings a sense of distance to culture, and so food becomes a way to keep traditions alive. This paper suggests that food and storytelling both help preserve culture in significant ways. Edible heritage continues to preserve identity and a sense of belonging across generations through everyday meals and shared memories over food.

Food, Culinary Memories, Gender and Cultural Identity in South Asian Literature

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Abstract

This thematic panel intends to discuss the role of food as a narrative medium of memory and gendered identity in South Asian Anglophone Literature. South Asian writers employ food, recipes, culinary practices and rituals and domestic labor as literary strategies to voice the issues of cultural belonging, identity, inheritance, continuity, loss, nostalgia, patriarchal control, resistance, historio-cultural variations and contestation across national and diasporic contexts. The panel convenes three interrelated papers that examine food not only as a metaphor or a symbol but as an embodied archive and culinary memory that preserves lived histories and cultural knowledge of South Asia. Theoretically the panel discussion will be informed by feminist literary criticism, food studies/gastropoetics and cultural memory and foreground the gendered dimensions of culinary storytelling. It will highlight the domestic spaces as sites of cultural and memory transmission and identity formation. It will address the marginalization and erasure of women's culinary practices and their emergence in narrative forms and storytelling and challenge to dominant historical and cultural discourses. The panel will shed light on the mentioned themes through selected poems, fictions and memoirs from South Asian and diasporic contexts and will highlight how food and cuisines and culinary practices in these narratives negotiate diasporic conditions and identities, nostalgia, hybridity, and continuity. Together, the presenters will demonstrate that food in literary writings functions as a performative and symbolic practice and a medium through which identities are continuously constructed, negotiated, contested and reimagined. The panel aims to cultivate an interdisciplinary dialogue on the literary significance of food, recipes and culinary rituals as markers of identity in South Asian cultural expression.

From Traditional to Instagrammable Feast: Pakistani Gastronomy and its social media Aestheticization

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine food and spices as significant cultural manifestations and forms of social practice. It explores the evolution of Pakistani cuisine has evolved through the years of traditional culinary representation to its aestheticism today on the platform of social media, especially Instagram. It addresses the development of food image when it came to literature, the description of food that triggered imagination to digital displays characterized by stylized serving, cinematic color scheme, selective cutlery, setting, and attractive captions. The paper uses the Neuroaesthetics theory by Semir Zeki to examine the impact of visually appealing food representations on the creation of emotional and sensory reactions in the people. To comprehend the role of digital food imagery in the form of a goal-oriented art that is aimed at evoking pleasure, desire, and awe, this analysis is further based on Aesthetic Emotionalism, a theory of Leo Tolstoy and R. G. Collingwood. The rebranding of traditional Pakistani meat foods into Western-style meat items like steak is the subject of the paper, which has given attention to the visual spectacle of flaming spices, dramatic presentation, and performance cooking that changes the perceptions and consumption of food. The analysis of Instagram food content and restaurant branding, through visual and thematic analysis shows that digital gastronomy can affect eating habits, cultural perception, and consumerism, especially in younger and non-traditional audiences. Finally, the present paper suggests that the concept of social media has made Pakistani food a sort of virtual art, a place where aesthetics, emotion, and technology intersect and culinary culture in the digital era is being redefined.

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