

Food as an Upholder of Cultural and Emotional Identity: A Study of Srishti Chaudhary's *Lallan Sweets* and Lily Prior's *La Cucina*

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Abstract

Food remains highly intimate to the man from the ancient till present. It has become a desire for the postmodern man to taste the food adding more spices and making more attractive. The present paper analyses two novels - Srishti Chaudhary's *Lallan Sweets* and Lily Prior's *La Cucina*. Food is a significant and essential day-to-day need for individuals on the planet; it is the necessity of life. It keeps the hungry in the stomach and gives individuals energy to work and play. It causes kids to develop and keep youthful and grown-up major areas of strength for bodies healthy. Food is also needed to survive. An individual would pass on if he goes for quite a while without food. Those are the primary importance of food. Other than as the need might arise for people and necessities forever, food likewise has another importance. It tends to be a medication; it gives an advantage to individuals getting the diseases. Moreover, food likewise uncovers our social and social viewpoints. Its utilization propensities are not just attached to natural necessities yet in addition mark limits between friendly classes, geographic districts, countries, and cultures. Food can recognize social classes among the poor and rich.

Keywords: food, cuisine literature, culture, emotional identity, media

Introduction

"Food" remains an inevitable word in the life of human beings. Food is not just an amalgamation of flavors and colors but above that it remains a connector of the classical and contemporary thereby preserving the tradition and culture of an ethnicity. In spite of the periodic change in the custom of the people food attains various dimensions and evolutions. Sometimes it even created an adverse impact on the health of the people. 'Food will always exist until the existence of human beings'. In the present age the way it is made, depicted, processed and packed clearly shows that it has become more sought after. The way it is cherished, tasted, and commented pave way for the thinking that food now a days has become indispensable in the life of people.

The Media which vehemently broadcasts food related content orients the people of different culture over the foods of different culture. One can cook Italian food in India without going to Italy. The people are wooed by the media of the food that are developed cross culturally. The pictures and the videos that show the outcome of preparations often exaggerate the appearances of the food. The intake of the food of people of the present age is for taste and not for hunger.

The term food “porn” can refer to still or moving images of food and/or eating across various media, including cookbooks, magazines, television, blogs, websites, and social media platforms. If ‘Pornography’ refers to attractive people having sex in an unreal way to provide stimulation, ‘Food Pornography’ means the food delicacies being made to be filmed or photographed in an attractive way to stimulate people. One aspect of food porn is the emphasis on the food, often depicted in adoring and vivid close-up photography. It remains a glamourized visual presentation of cooking or eating.

“Food Pornography” is a term coined by Rosalind Coward in 1984 in her book *Female Desires*. The term is often used positively, to suggest that the food depicted is desirable or is depicted in a way that makes it desirable – the latter of which could depend on the aesthetics of composition or on the person or people preparing or eating the food. Central to food porn is necessary for food to “transcend the realm of being used for survival” (Stephens 18).

Both the novels chosen for study namely *La Cucina* and *Lallan Sweets* are imbued with the preparation and visual presentation of food along with culture, romance, and familial happenings. In the two novels the food is being depicted by its visual-verbal representation and it gives an erotic feel of digestion. The project has been divided into four chapters.

Food as a Cultural Identity in Srishti Chaudhary’s *Lallan Sweets*

From the motichur laddoo that is originally said to hail from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, coconut laddoo from down South, — each region-specific laddoo has its distinct identity and is laced with history and nostalgia. Natural ingredients, as coconut, dry fruits, sesame seeds, jaggery, peanuts, etc., were used for the preparation. “Laddoo” remains deeply rooted in the Indian Hindu since it is offered to Lord Krishna. In the novel *Lallan Sweets*, the Indian way of preparing sweets and consumption by people informs a tradition deeply rooted to a locality. *Lallan Sweets* is the most traditional and popular mithai shop in all of Siyaka, “and by God's grace, we will keep on doing the good work. But those who don't grow get left behind. It's the rule of business. We need to grow, make *Lallan Sweets* larger than ever”. (7)

In *Lallan Sweets* the Indian ‘laddoo’ a ball shaped sweet which is made from a mixture of flour, sugar remains an object of cultural identity.

The ways of Krishna, how he teaches us to be and behave, are many and most nuanced and complicated. All these bal gopal, stealing the makhan tales are but for entertainment. The ream Krishna is in the Gita, and we have been charged with the responsibility of spreading his word in this modern, blasphemous age. People from Australia to America follow us and here our own culture disrespects us (75)

People in India believe the story of Lord Krishna stealing laddoo. In *Bhagavatgita*, Lord Krishna is named as Laddoo Gopal. People from other countries believe what the Indians believe and follow. The Rasiya a group said to be of stationed at Uttar Pradesh of North India felt that the Indian people who are multi-lingual and cultural are separated. In the novel *Lallan Sweets*, the central character Tara’s grandfather Lalaji remains highly conscious

over his tradition of preparing Ladoos-- the ingredients and the recipe. He feels proud to inherit the culture of his ancestors. The conventional Lalaji who wants to let their grandchildren know of the secret ingredients of the Ladoo, set them for a quest towards to the secrecy. The trio who set for the adventure find the magic ingredient finally.

In the novel there is a description of the annual eating competition held in the locality. A person who eats more "Golappa" is rewarded. Tara's boyfriend Nikku eats twenty-three golappas and wins the competition. The people believe that a proper selection and consumption of food make them lead a healthy life.

Lallaji who wants to let his grandchildren the origin of Ladoo wants them to know the rich tradition the sweet has. The Rasiya tradition of North India who worship Lord Krishna, celebrate a festival offering ladoos. They believe that Lord Krishna is fond of Ladoos. Likewise, Lallaji believes that this laddu remain an object that upholds the tradition which he thinks his grandchildren should know of. He tries to establish a divine connection with the lady saying that it must be worshipped before it is taken.

When Tara completes a task, she is given an another. Lallaji who wants his generations know about the rich tradition of his land ask Tara Taj Mahal and take a snap on a full moon day.

The city of love, the city that cut off twenty thousand pairs of hands, the city where the dead are enshrined in a tomb the world had never seen... He turned back to face us, his arms still extended, staring at us. When neither of us reacted, he went on. 'The city that spawned a thousand stories, when it became the seat and throne of the great shahenshah, the king of kings.... (111)

In the novel there is a description of Taj Mahotsav that takes place in Agra where apart from many festivities a grand food festival too takes place. Many Indian foods are kept for tasting where Tara finds laddoo missing. This wonders Tara of how a food which is deeply rooted in the tradition and religion gets ignored in the festivity.

In the novel, the author throws light on the various foods of different religions. As the festivals of religions remain a symbol of dignity so do the food. The Grandfather Lalaji wants his grandchildren uphold the tradition of eating ladoos in an era of cultural decay. He wants the grandchildren realize the love people have for the ladoos prepared in their shop. He says,

I want you to remember that Lallan Sweets, these ladoos that we make, are not all about the magic ingredient. It may make people come to you once, or maybe twice, but people in this town have been buying ladoos from us for decades. And that is because what we do here, we do it with love and care. (286)

Finally, when he finds his grandchildren fulfilling the tasks he has given he feels contented that they have got the maturity to run the sweet shop. He tells

It was about your journey, Children, the time spent on the road, the relationships you formed, the people you met, and the lessons you learnt - not about some silly magic

ingredient! Granted, it is still out there and is like a little slice of heaven - but it's the quest that counts! The quest has proven that you are smart, mature and responsible adults who will run Lallan Sweets better than their fathers ever did. (286)

Food remains deeply rooted in various cultures which is passed over to the generations. Every culture is identified with a trait peculiar to it, still some cultures are often been identified with the food that they have developed. The notion of trans-culture gets fulfilled through tasting by some people the various food that belong to the cultures.

The Link Between the Food and Human Emotions Found in Lily Prior's *La Cucina*

The title of the novel '*La Cucina*' is in Italian which does not necessarily mean that restaurants with this name is in Italy alone. Still, it highlights a tradition informing that Italian cuisine is being served there.

La Cucina is the heart of the fattoria, and has formed the backdrop to the lives of our family, the Fiore, as far back as, and further than, anyone can remember. La Cucina bears the scents of its past, and every event in its history is recorded with an olfactory memorandum. (40)

In the novel Rosa Fiore, has many wonders to convey about her La Cucina restaurant and its history. She even believes that the spirits of her ancestors gather there, enjoying by eating and amusing.

Food is needed for detaining hungry in the stomach. It gives nutrition for healthy body, makes children grow, keeps young and adult bodies strong and healthy; those are the meaning of food (denotation). But in this novel, food does not detain hungry or gives energy and nutrition for body only; it gives satisfaction for the main character's heart, Rosa Fiore. In the novel *La Cucina* there is a symbolic relationship between food and emotion. Food becomes a form of the community of Rosa's emotion. In this opportunity, Rosa experiences moments which makes her feeling uncertain even happy, sad, restless, angry even unsettled. She describes all her emotion in cooking, and creating new recipes every time she experiences emotional situation.

A food which emerges when Rosa feels happy is Caponata and kind of fruits showed the feeling of Rosa when she was happy is strawberries, cherries, oranges, and lemons. Both food and fruits indicate the expression of Rosa's emotion Caponata is one of the food's names. It is a delicious food made from aubergines which are lost their bitter then mix with onion and tomatoes sliced and salted to disgorge their bitter juices. Sfincione is a version of pizza; it is the recipe of Rosa's mother. It made from cacciocavalllo cheese, anchovy fillets, passata, onions, breadcrumbs, sea salt, flour, yeast, lukewarm water, and good olive oil.

Rosa makes this dish at the hour of Rosa's introduction to the world. Rosa herself made this dish to relieve her after the shock of L'Inglese's unexpected vanishing while she simply feels blissful after having intercourse and going through an entire day with him days later. She has searched for him in all the rooms in his estate and hangs tight for him the entire day yet she makes him nothing. He has vanished. She feels miserable and furious. She lost

her sweetheart two times, Bartolomeo and L'Inglese. She knows naturally that the period of her life was finished. She grieves the deficiency of Bartolomeo, she grieves the deficiency of L'Inglese, and she likewise grieves the deficiency of herself. At long last, she comes to the kitchen, where she can communicate and vomits every last bit of her inclination and feeling by making food. She says

Then I kneaded. Oh, how kneading still had the power to soothe my soul like nothing else could. Thump, thump, thump, thump. Pound, pound, pound. Pulse at the temples, sweat beading down the spine. How good this felt. I continued pounding at the dough for a long, long time, until I felt weak and my anger had, temporarily, diminished (196)

Interaction of making the food has three stages, first makes the batter of Sfincione, the second makes the main garnish, and the third makes the last fixing. It shows Rosa's inclination.

Panelle is flavorful chickpea squanders made by Rosa when her Nonno kicked the bucket. She communicates her trouble by making food then she can be quiet and unwind. The most common way of making food and its fixing shows Rosa's inclination. Spice as the fixing with the unpleasant taste demonstrates the issue that she has, an issue which makes her miserable and severe as the taste shows that she feels despondent, she has no bliss in her life. Mixing the fixing continuously and gradually as the method involved with making food demonstrates that Rosa communicates her inclination by making food.

Berries and natural products are new food that will make individuals new because they are extremely delightful. Yet, it characterizes bitterness or sorrow for Rosa. It shows the distress of Rosa that occurred in her life. In this novel, protection of berries and natural products portray her misery in her life, many distress occurs in her life, whether from her family or her adoration. She reiterates "I made jams and preserves of berries and fruits, which then lined the shelves on the walls in the cellar, each one labeled in my own hand and bearing the date of my agony" (46).

The declaration of Rosa's inclination is not just displayed by the cycle of making food, the fixings contain in that food, the taste, fragrance, or the consequence of food itself yet it tends to be displayed in another way. In this situation, Rosa Fiore communicates her inclination "outrage" by butchering the pig. She says, "I slaughtered the pigs, even my pet, Miele, which looked up at me with tiny, doleful eyes, clearly doubting that I had it in me to end his life with my cleaver" (46). There is a symbolic connection between food and feeling which produces one more significance of food other than the primary importance of food itself.

Conclusion

Postmodern culture has been significantly impacted by food pictures and the use of food as representation. Ongoing interest in food studies has opened entryways in scholarly examinations to analyze how the utilization of food symbolism and analogy addresses

complex thoughts and more profound significance in writing. Artistic food studies break down food imagery to consider social personality which incorporates different issues from social situations to sexual longing to orientation relations. In three postcolonial Indian books, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, and Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*, food conveys various implications that effectively drive the activity of the plots, portrays the characters, and considers parts of the Indian culture.

In the original *Lallan Sweets*, the Indian approach to planning desserts and utilization by individuals illuminates a custom well established in a territory. *Lallan Sweets* is the most conventional and well-known mithai shop in all of Siyaka, "and by God's grace, we will keep on doing the good work. But those who don't grow get left behind. It's the rule of business. We need to grow, make *Lallan Sweets* larger than ever". (7)

Both *Lallan Sweets* and *La Cucina* convey with them the presence of food in the existence of individuals of a culture. Rosa imagines that she can't be isolated from the eatery she possesses and enjoys setting up a dish. Cooking stays a pressure buster for her.

In conclusion, the food varieties we read and the words we eat are important for the familiar perusing experience we share as a development. Anything we don't share with different civilizations, we in all actuality do share the experience of eating food, and in educated social orders, we share the experience of devouring words too. Our victory over the world that compromises us happens day to day in our utilization of both food and composed words. Examining the divergent food texts, just proposed by this investigation of fiction and menus, is a fantastic undertaking, however, the developing collection of basic and hypothetical work recommends that the investigation of food composting be turned into its own class. At the point when we utilize basic hypothesis to dissect food composting, we are breaking down something other than food; we are examining our own longings, and the four schools of basic hypothesis talked about in this review permit us a particular proportion of separation from those cravings.

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