

## **Culture And Fusion Food: A Study on Amulya Malladi's 'Serving Crazy With Curry'**

**Hrudhya Sasi. T**

*Research Scholar, Ethiraj College for Women  
Chennai- 600008*

**Dr.J.Mangayarkarasi**

*Head & Associate Professor, Research Supervisor, Ethiraj College for Women,  
Chennai - 600008*

---

**ABSTRACT:** *Food is central to our sense of identity. More specifically, it helps in creating a cultural identity as well as forming an individual identity. Food culture is a popularly used mechanism to communicate one's cultural heritage and ethnicity. This study aims to look at Amulya Malladi's literary work "Serving crazy with curry" depicting the life of the protagonist, Devi Veturi who always had the odds of failure in every way possible. A conflict between the protagonist's mind and its reflections on the food she serves is explored in this novel. The novel addresses the struggle of Devi, who has conflicts in having an identity in her family and society and as an Indian immigrant. Her food reflects her emotions and psychological well being through which she re-identifies herself. She often explores a culinary fusion mixing western cooking practices in traditional Indian food, a depiction of her quest in finding a cultural identity as a migrant and fitting her own ways of living her life amidst the traditional and stereotypical roles she's expected to play by her family. Connecting the dots of food being central to identity formation and Devi's journey in using culinary arts to re-identify herself, this study uses latent content analysis exploring the novel from a cultural perspective using the theories of cultural hybridity in forming an identity. The theoretical framework of the study is cultural hybridity by Homi Bhabha that explores the fusion food that Devi serves blending different cultures with her Indian roots that shapes an identity for her as a person.*

**KEY WORD:** *Cultural hybridity, Cultural identity, Food culture*

---

### **1.1 Identity**

Identity is "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others" (Markovsky 2). It is a combination of physical and behavioural traits that define a person and the self-knowledge that represents a person's idiosyncratic characteristics. The incarnation of identity is used in two senses, social and personal. The construction of identity happens through a combination of social factors, such as membership rules, characteristic attributes, and expected behaviours that define social categories. Personal identity is shaped by socially distinguishing features that individuals take pride in or view as unchangeable but socially consequential. This is influenced by a range of factors, including social interactions, cultural norms, and individual perceptions of self and others. The process of identity construction is not static and can evolve over time in response to changing social dynamics and personal experiences (Fearon 4, 33).

### **1.2 Food and cultural identity**

Food is multi-dimensional, it shapes us, our identities, and our cultures and the society we live in. A cuisine is associated with food and its style of cooking specific to a tradition or geography and is a form of intangible culture. It is traditional yet contemporary, and also lives at the same time, inclusive, representative and community-based (Howard). The relationship between culinary practices and culture is complex but it creates a cultural identity through the traditions and practices. A country's most representative or iconic food even turns into being the national food of the country, an expression of their culinary identity like Nasi Lemak in Malaysia and hamburger in the United States.

Along with the food, the customary practices, traditions and the culture of the people is what shapes a cuisine to be an identity. The insistence on slow meals is a great part of Italian culture that roots from two backgrounds: 1) Food is meant to be experienced 2) Spend more time at the table with the ones who they eat with, both encouraging the people to enjoy the culinary experience, have meaningful conversations and spend quality time. Even the wait service at restaurants in Italy is longer to hearten dinners to spend time that reflects

their culture ( Ronga). Likewise, the Japanese cultural identity is associated with aesthetics and symbolism that is used to present the food (Evans). However the preparation of the traditional food is simple but exquisite highlighting the quality, purity, and locality, leaving the ingredients to shine for themselves (McGregor). Traditional food keeps the dining etiquette alive.

### **1.3 Immigrants and culture**

According to the data released by Migration Policy Institute in 2020, Indian immigrants account for approximately 6 percent of the U.S foreign born population (Hanna). The construction of immigrant identity and its impact on cultural integration is a complex process, influenced by several factors. (Ortiz) and (Khana) both emphasise the role of discourses and practices in shaping immigrant identity, with the latter highlighting the importance of positive and supportive discourses in the host society. Immigrants' identity can be defined as how they perceive themselves in relation to groups or social categories in the host society or in the country of origin (Amit). However, (Scheffler) points out the potential for conflict and discord when immigrants' traditions clash with those of the host nation. (Rothe) further explores the impact of these factors on mental health, underscoring the need for a broader understanding of cultural identity in the context of immigration.

### **1.4 Serving crazy with curry**

Cooked by the bestselling author, Amulya Malladi, 'Serving Crazy with Curry' is food fiction where culinary affairs is used as a purge by Devi Veturi, the protagonist of the delicacy, to recover from her long depression and find her ability. Keeping food central in the novel, Amulya writes about the bigger picture of an expat identity crisis. The main characters in the story are, Saroj, Devi's mother, Avi, Devi's father, Shoba, Devi's sister, Girish, Shoba's husband and Vasu, Devi and Shoba's grandmother. Devi's life is an affair of multiple failures like betrayal, secrets, lies, lovers, unmatched expectations, loss of a job that leads her to attempt suicide, which again fails. After her failed suicide, Devi does two things, she completely stops talking to put an end to communicating with her family and she starts cooking to rediscover and reinvent herself but her food started communicating more than she did. The kitchen was always Saroj's domain and she never allowed her mother or her daughters to try cooking as she was afraid that they would ruin her perfectly managed kitchen. This suicide attempt by Devi, got her an entry into her mother's kitchen where creativity and cooking has no limits. The novel talks about how Devi creates an identity for herself through the food she serves and it is also a cookbook filled with recipes that Devi experiments with. Brining culture, identity, food and communication in one space, this novel is a great way to understand diasporic food-fiction.

### **1.5 Objective**

- To identify and analyse the cultural hybridity in the culinary fiction, 'Serving Crazy with Curry' by Amulya Malladi

## **2. Review of literature**

### **2.1 Globalisation and colonisation's effect on food culture**

Culinary traditions are a gateway to understand the influence of colonialism, bridging the gap between a distant land's practice in one's cultural food providing a tangible link to the past (The Historical Influence of Colonialism On Indian Cuisines). India being a melting pot of civilizations, has historical influences and cultural exchanges in its rich cuisine. Settlements from different parts of the world, colonisation, floating trade and business leaves the trace of Persian, Mughal, Portuguese, and British cultures in Indian food culture (Nikhil Chawla). For example, the use of aromatic spices like saffron and cardamom in Indian dishes is a practice introduced by the Mughals in India. The popular Indian dish, Vindaloo's roots can be traced back to the Portuguese settlement in Goa. Immigrants carry their culinary practices and food customs to the place they move. They import, integrate and incorporate it into their adapted lifestyles but also they gradually adopt the food of the host regions.

Displaced food cultures have turned into accepted food cultures with the advent of globalisation changing who eat what they eat and how they eat. Ethnoscapes bring cultural diffusion where displaced culture diffuses and assimilates as a local culture. Confusing as it can be, globalisation has become corporate's way of glocalisation to sell their product localised to suit local food cultures. The biggest example is McDonalds selling a Chicken Maharaja Mac in India localised to the best including its name (Globalisation and Food Cultures). Globalisation makes the diverse flavours and cuisines open to everyone because the more and more the world gets connected, food's tie to one space and origin stops and paves way for it to expand and spread across cultures and be a part of any cuisine as desired but this is where authenticity takes a toll. What is Japanese is called Asian to bring more dinners seated at the table for what it is not taking the food away from its cultural

DNA. A massive shift is seen from local to global food making it hard to associate with one's own food culture that leads to the need of cultural preservation in times of globalisation (Food Culture and Globalization).

## **2.2 The evolution of fusion food**

A cuisine is often seen as an evolution based on contributions of the different peoples who have influenced the food at some point of time and this is an inevitable never-ending process (Oussedik). A fusion exists in every cuisine in itself but fusion cuisine is also in existence. Fusion cuisine is fusion of ingredients, flavours, components, recipes, styles, and/or food philosophies put together as results of cultural intermixing. Popular fusion foods originate as a culmination in search for novelty in a cuisine resulting in a relatively new phenomenon, that is nouvelle or modernist expression of the cuisine (Spence 101). Popular fusion dishes are results of syncretic cuisines like chicken tikka masala was a subtle merging of British and Indian styles, the Hawaiian pizza, a Californian wonder, chicken manchurian curated by a Chinese chef working in India which eventually gave birth to many more Indo-Chinese fusion dishes, Chop Suey is fusion of Chinese cuisine in the US and most-loved Tex-Mex is a cuisine that emerged as an outcome of invasion and the list goes on with new inventions spurring each day. Bringing novelty to dishes is yet another reason why food experimentation has become a fashion resulting 'on trend' given the widespread and growing increase in interest in this area.

The risk behind experiment arises when 'disconfirmation of expectation' happens and the fusion dish doesn't turn out to be loved by everyone as expected, for example the smoked salmon ice-cream not appreciated by any of the dinners served at The Fat Duck in Bray by chef Heston Blumenthal. Fusion foods have turned into 'con-fusion foods' with fusions that are "inevitable clashes between incompatible flavours and textures, and fomenting a chaotic overlapping between different foodspheres and 'food identities'" (Santo).

Food traditions are a part of a person's cultural identity that mirrors their food identity, a discourse of food as a "living" form of culture that is still practised and continues to evolve. Food cultures define the ways in which specific cultures and subcultures prepare a food to pass down the ethnicity and traditions of the culture through it that is extremely popular for its authenticity and is celebrated in the culture which can be further understood with the example of UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity that lists iconic food cultures like Baguette bread culture in France, Al-Man'ouché, an emblematic culinary practice in Lebanon, Tea culture in China, Hawker food culture in Singapore, Turkish coffee and many more (Lush). The concept of fusion food often breaks the food traditions to create novelty in the dish that sometimes pay off but have chances of ending up in unexpected ways as well.

## **2.3 Tracing research gap**

Discussing the perspectives on food fiction, (Khushu-Lahiri 47) talks about it as an emergence from the shadow of domesticity leading to the astounding volume of food-related fiction published in recent years. She proposes that fiction on food is a part of a feminist narrative and an artistic tool for an author to assert and negotiate their identity. She looks at the novel 'Serving Crazy with Curry' from a perspective where food is an extended part of the protagonist's personality which talks volumes that she could not. (Daya 475) discusses fiction on food from a servility perspective where serving the food is seen as a tool for gaining independence and as a means of negotiating migrant identities. The researcher sees food central to cultural identity and Indian food has a symbolic resonance inside and outside India that is reflected in the popular food-fictions.

To understand Devi Veturi's psychological background and its reflection on her character as the protagonist of the novel 'Serving Crazy with Curry', the self-defence, self-realisation and self-acceptance perspectives are read. (Ramalakshmi 4935) in her work defines cooking by Devi in the novel as an act of sublimation through the lens of Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic theory. Cooking keeps Devi away from her suicidal thoughts and acts as a defense mechanism, and as her cooking enhances, she feels encouraged, gains a sense of control, finds her purpose and battles her anxiety and innerconflicts caused due to her personality. (Lavanya 7) traces the self-acceptance Devi gets by 'Serving Crazy with Curry' where each crazy dish that she makes, takes her a step closer to the family, reunites her and creates a bond that makes her understand herself and accept herself for the person she is. She understands that perfection is not the ideal goal and takes responsibility for her failures. (Ranaweera 53) discusses that self-realisation makes Devi understand her "inherited" culinary skills from her mother.

Emphasising on the presence of hybridity in Devi's cooking. (Ranaweera 57) states that "The food Devi creates is invested with more modern, hybridised and cosmopolitan traits". This leaves the space to analyse the food-fiction from the lens of cultural hybridity and investigate deeper to understand the complex notion of hybridity that Devi puts together in her culinary affairs.

### **3. Theoretical framework**

The study adapts the theoretical framework of cultural hybridity. Originated from biology, this term was conceptualised as a theory and was introduced into linguistics and racial studies in the 19th century (Rahaman). It is the phenomenon that arises when different ideas and artefacts of culture come together as a product of migration and globalisation. It creates a new social orientation with the aspects of different cultures. Hybridity should be understood as a communicative practice to have a critical edge on it (Kraidy 336). The post colonial perspectives on hybridity are both heavily contested and affirmed. Several theorists like Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, García-Cañalini, Gayatri Spivak have addressed the theoretical formulation of hybridity. Homi Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity is popularly known for its interstitial and liminal space. "This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibilities of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha 4). He discussed partial culture in his essay "Cultures In-Between" that talks about contaminated yet connective tissues between cultures simplified as the 'in-between' culture commonly understood with the concept of thirdspace. Bhabha refers to interstitial space as an environment in which cultural transformation takes place. Liminality is the in-between space characterised by indeterminacy, ambiguity, hybridity, potential for subversion and change. Reading the interstitial and liminal properties in the literary work, this research highlights the presence of cultural hybridity in the text and the depth of it through the lens of Homi Bhabha's theoretical perspective.

### **4. Methodology**

Using qualitative methodology, this research reads the presence of cultural hybridity in the literary work and interprets it considering pre-understanding during planning and analysis as stated by (Bengtsson 8). Content analysis helps the researcher identify common themes and ideas present in the text. A latent content analysis is the method used to conduct the qualitative analysis reading the deep structure of the text to understand 'What is intended to be said' (Bengtsson 9). This research is conducted through 4 stages: 1) Deconstruction 2) Recontextualisation 3) Categorisation 4) Compilation. By reading the allegories in the literary work using the framework for latent content analysis, this research identifies and interprets cultural hybridity. Allegory makes the literary work more relevant with higher standards of interpretation. The novel, 'Serving Crazy with Curry' depicts an expatriate nostalgia in which the protagonist uses cooking to reinvent an identity for herself. The cooking is deconstructed from Homi Bhabha's theoretical perspective of cultural hybridity reading the interstitial and liminal space as stated by (Camilleri 1). It highlights the reproduction of dominant culture in an alien setting in a post-colonial point of view but this research reads the space from an expatriate perspective considering the similarities in the effects on the situation as stated by (Carvalho 2). To deconstruct and interpret hybridity in the cooking, the recipes that follow a fusion are chosen as units for analysis. The author, Amulya Malladi has quoted five recipes in the novel as Devi's own experiment in curating a new dish with influences of diverse cultures is analysed using the described methodology below.

### **5. Analysis**

#### **5.1 Fusion food and hybridity**

Amulya Malladi's depiction of Devi Veturi, the protagonist curating her fusion recipes, provides a framework for analysing hybridity through the blending of culinary fashions and traditions. The select fusion recipes in the literary work have been analysed below.

##### **5.1.1 The Anti-Saroj Chutney**

Interstitial

The author writes about Devi, the protagonist's view on the 'classic chutneys' in Indian context exploring the ingredients, mint, coriander, chilli and tamarind that are rooted to Indian culinary traditions. She expresses her dislike and says that she does not want to make or eat any of these 'classics' for samosas which is often served with a mint chutney made by her mother and that paves the way to the innovation of her 'Anti-Saroj Chutney', a fusion of western ingredients with traditions of Indian culinary art.

Devi skims through her mother's culinary space and identifies ingredients that she would consider to make a part of her fusion cooking. Dried apricot, largely produced in Turkey, part of most Middle Eastern and North African cuisines but also a part of one famous Indian dish, qubani ka meetha is caught by Devi's eyes first. Then she finds a bottle of red caviar, a staple in Russia which her mother stores but does not eat and the author questions who would eat it expressing her dislike for it. Then she finds a bottle of chipotle, a Mexican delight with mild but earthy spiciness which later makes its way into Devi's fusion dish. Ginger and garlic,

popular in most Asian and specifically Indian dishes, is a part of Devi's mother's pantry but Devi has second thoughts on garlic for the chutney. Ginger adds the sharp tangy note and a fragrant zest and makes its way immediately after being spotted. Devi then spots mint, her mother's classic chutney's ingredient that she tears from a herb pot to prepare her exquisite chutney.

Liminal

On the journey to becoming an experimental fusion dish, Devi starts with the first ingredient that she spotted, the apricot but gave it a twist to begin with. Classic chutney has ingredients soaked in water but the twist Devi gave was, she soaked the apricot in sugar water to give her chutney a sweet note. She adds the apricot, ginger, mint, chipotle peppers for smoky flavour and salt along with the water she soaked the apricot in to grind it with flavours as diverse as smoky, fiery and tangy, quite contradictory to one another to be a part of the same dish as yet but Devi's experiment blended it into a pulp and not watery portions like every other classic making this chutney a cutting-edge dish in the liminal space. "The Anti-Saraj Chutney" (Malladi 78), a fusion of ingredients from different cuisines surpassed her mother's mint chutney and Devi even named it after her remembering the angst she has in saving her life.

### **5.1.2 Cajun Prawn Biryani**

Interstitial

The author writes about Devi, the protagonist's experience tasting shrimp at a restaurant in New Orleans which reflects in her culinary expedition. The shrimp was prepared with a number of spices like rosemary, thyme, basil, oregano, etc. which stands strong in Devi's memory and makes its way to being a part of her prawn biryani. Biryani is one of the most popular dishes around the world, however the origins of biryani are highly contested in India and it is made with different recipes in every culinary tradition in the country. Different meat, variety of rice, spices, ingredients and the procedure of cooking will vary within one state itself but it is one of the most celebrated dishes whatever the recipe might be throughout the country. The marination of the prawns by Devi is quite different from any of the recipes done in India traditionally which has an influence of the Louisiana barbecue shrimp and the spices that were used in the dish. She uses the cajun spices which gets its name from the relation to the group who are descendents of French speaking immigrants who predominantly live in Louisiana, United States. There is a common assumption that anything spicy or flavoursome is cajun but the Louisiana spices or popularly known as Cajun spices is what that makes a dish cajun with the spices' roots in the rural French, Spanish and African cuisines but every cuisine has its own spin using the same spices often featuring a wholesome amount of paprika. A fusion of different sorts happens in this cooking where it's not just the ingredients that are fused but different signature cooking styles culminated together by Devi as a culinary experiment with the prawns cooked in Louisiana style and the rice cooked in traditional ways savoured with Indian styled garnish.

Liminal

The marination of the prawns is done with mashed garlic, rosemary, basil, oregano, thyme, sage, paprika, black pepper, white pepper, cayenne, onion powder and Worcestershire sauce. The fusion of Louisiana spices on the prawn with the biryani rice pressure cooked with traditional Indian spices used for a biryani like crushed cloves, cardamom, cinamon, bay leaf tossed in ghee. The marinated prawns are sauteed and added to the rice along with garlic, topped off with fresh coriander, adding a complete Indian touch to a Louisiana delicacy. The ingredients are completely an influence of the Louisiana shrimp that Devi tastes in New Orleans where a journey of Cajun and Creole culinary traditions can be explored. Owing to which, Devi names the dish Cajun Prawn Biryani after the Louisiana or Cajun flavoured shrimp that stayed in her memory which she made as a celebratory dish for getting her driver's licence back.

### **5.1.3 Angry at Vasu Grilled Chicken in Blueberry Curried Sauce**

Interstitial

The author expresses, Devi, the protagonist's grief of her mother not using vegetables and fruits that are not of Indian origin. Devi is interested in cooking dishes with a western flavour breezing over Indian culinary staples and this experiment is now with blueberries, native to North America, fused in a curried sauce that owes its origin and popularity to India but with a twist including cayenne peppers native to Central and South America. Grilled chicken is a cultural icon of the Peruvian gastronomy originally where the chicken is marinated with just salt and grilled. The barbecuing technique is already a fusion by the Americans of African and Caribbean culinary traditions used for grill, tandoor and barbecue based on how the meat meets the heat to



be cooked. The influences of western culinary traditions along with Indian ingredients makes her dish take a place in the interstitial aspect; it does not confine itself to any cuisine and becomes an experimentation.

Liminal

The marination of the chicken is a little in between the authentic preparation and also the contemporary preparation. Devi uses white wine and pepper along with salt which is definitely closer to the authentic dish rather than the contemporary ways of marinating the chicken with multiple spices and flavours. For the curried sauce, Devi moves away from the authenticity and begins her fusion style cooking with western influences over Indian culinary traditions. This recipe amalgamates ingredients of different grounds as curried sauce has green chillies, ginger and garlic sauteed with tomato paste common in many curry dishes in Indian cuisines but brings the flavour of white wine vinegar and blueberries which is not quite common and makes the dish an experimental fusion. This recipe in specific brings out that it is not just food and culture that is reflected in her cooking but also her emotions and feelings influence her recipes. The amount of cayenne peppers that she adds to the curried sauce and green chillies she added to the sides, the raitha was her way of creating a dish influenced by her emotion, anger which she expects will make it difficult for others at the table to eat and this reflection of her anger is even embarked on the name of the dish as 'Angry at Vasu', Vasu being her grandmother. Her experiments are not just fusion of cooking styles and recipes, it blends her emotions to the food she cooks.

#### **5.1.4 Girish's Favourite with a Twist**

Interstitial

The author starts with Devi, the protagonist's nonchalant attitude towards making the Indian delicacy, soojiladoo. The Sooji Ladoo is a South Asian, specifically Indian sweet with its popularity in Maharashtra and Rajasthan made using sooji or also known as semolina which has its roots in the Arabic, Aramaic and Akkadian culinary fashions. The ladoos are enhanced with nuts and raisins rolled on the top or stuffed inside or sometimes even rolled along with the sooji mixture. Devi decides that she'll help her mother roll the ladoo because she was forced to help in making the sweet and chooses hazelnuts for her experiment, popular in Turkey and a part of several desserts around the world. It's a breakfast cereal in most places and sometimes an ingredient in confectionery but Indians popularly know hazelnut in two foods, a popular chocolate in a form of a ball with a full nut in the middle and crushed hazelnut rolled on the top and a chocolate spread, both associated with chocolate and both belonging to an Italian origin.

Liminal

Devi's experiment is only with the rolling of the ladoos in this recipe. The mixture is prepared in an authentic way by Devi's mother and even Devi's experiment is not too out of the box. It is very common to add nuts and raisins in a ladoo recipe but Devi has her own spin on the recipe where she chooses the nut that is not commonly used in an Indian delicacy. The hazelnut is crushed along with the raisins and is stuffed inside the traditional soojiladoo mixture made with sooji tossed in ghee along with grated khoya, a popular enhancer in Indian sweets, water and sugar spiced with cardamom powder. The choice of the nut is the space for this dish to be an innovative fusion recipe and turn out as a twist to what Indians normally savour based on which Devi names the dish mentioning the twist.

#### **5.1.5 Mama's Rasam with my Pastry**

Interstitial

A classic south Indian comfort food, rasam is popular in every household made in different formulas using different ingredients as a base like tomato, daal, peppercorn, etc. A rasam powder is made and stored, of the grounded spices that adds every flavour that the rasam needs. Devi, the protagonist's mother prepares a rasam powder that leaves her in awe of how all the spices, the peppercorns, cinamon, cumin seeds added in perfect quantities without any hard and fast rules or recipes but just experience whipped up to perfection. The powder makes the rasam what it is, so flavoured and comforting. Every household has its spin and tricks to make the rasam delicious but it is all grounded to the traditional and authentic way of making it but no recipe ever infused the idea of pastry with rasam. This flaky dough, the pastry originated in ancient Egypt and is very common in Mediterranean cuisines but the European culinary, fashioned it by adding sugar and it is now extremely popular in France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. A fusion between pastry and rasam is an experiment that brings different grounds together, pastry being made from flour and butter, very flaky, crumbly in nature whereas rasam is a soupy and watery blend of Indian spices.

## Liminal

On the journey to creating an innovative dish fusing pastry and rasam together, Devi starts by preparing the pastry dough in its conventional technique with no experiments in it. She kneaded together plain flour with chilled butter adding in water and froze it before rolling it out for her dish. Devi then moves to making the rasam, yet again in its conventional technique just as her mother does, starting with soaking tamarind in water and squeezing the pulp for the rasam, preparing the tadka spiced with mustard and curry leaves in hot oil. She then prepares the tomato and rasam powder mixture and then adds in her tamarind pulp making it a typical authentic comfort food. But the fusion of different forms starts here. She pours the rasam in ceramic bowls and tops it with pastry rolled and cut into circles that is then baked to perfection making it quite different from the plain old rasam but very unique that it does not confine into a form and should be called the way she names it, a dish that is has rasam with pastry.

## 5.2 Exploring identity

The author sketches Devi, the protagonist's character with immigration identity angst and generational conflict. Devi's failures at many points in life questions her identity and leads her to attempt suicide which again fails. She does not confine herself into traditional Indian culture as she is an immigrant born and brought up in the West, but her family is quite opposite as their identity is associated with Indian culture and heritage which burdens her to marry and become a traditional Indian wife. Caught up in the middle of being brought up in the West, heavily influenced by the culture and practises there, she experiences and expresses identity distress and fluctuation. After her suicide attempt, she is forced to rediscover herself and a culinary experience is how she chooses to does that. Held back from the kitchen all her life by her mother, who holds culinary skills as her power and the kitchen space as her power arena in the dwelling, cooking is new to Devi where experimentation and creativity can be limitless as she finally gets to express the person she is through what she cooks. This experience of getting a chance to rediscover herself and build her identity through cooking shows the intensive effect of western culinary practices flavouring all her recipes but surprisingly does not let go of her Indian traditional cooking. "Her food tasted different from her mother's, but she had learned to cook from Saroj and that made Devi feel closer to Saroj in a way she never had before" (Malladi 133). Yet again caught up between practises of the west and tradition in her roots, reflected in her recipes spiced up as twists to Indian classic depicting who she is but considered as a culinary sin according to her mother. As she cooks her recipes, the space to learn more about her widens with each recipe being a depiction of all the influences that has made her who she is. "Was she creating her own identity by cooking her own kind of food? She didn't know" (Malladi 134) The culinary experience helps her reinvents herself and her recipes unveil hybridity expressed as fusion, connoting her identity that has a cultural influence of the west.

## 6. Conclusion

Amulya Malladi's sketching of the character Devi, the protagonist in her work 'Serving Crazy with Curry' shows expatriate nostalgia. Devi has identity conflicts being an Indian settled in the west, lines blurred between both cultures but a fascination towards the modern. Disappointed with herself, she attempts suicide but she's saved by chance. To recover and rediscover herself, she starts exploring the culinary space in her house which was a forbidden fruit. Devi's mother took complete control over the kitchen and kept its sanctity towards Indian culture. "Saroj banned everyone from using her kitchen. She never said it out loud, but everyone knew anyway." (Malladi 70) Devi curates five fusion recipes in the book that are nuanced with different culinary traditions to perfection but quite different from her mother's take on cooking. Devi mimics a part of her mother's cooking style, showing that she does not completely ignore her Indian heritage but is quite fascinated by the other cultures and mimics it as well blending it together creating a novel recipe. To connect the impressions of Devi to the traditional recipes of her mother that she attempts, the author highlights the terms 'classic' or 'regular' in most of the recipes. Reading the recipes curated by Devi through the lens of cultural hybridity by Homi Bhabha, her space to experiment with influencing elements of different cultures and to create something new has paved the way for fusion cooking which can further be explained with the example of mimicry. Devi recreates culinary practices inspired and influenced due to many reasons in her recipes but the outcome is something new yet carries traces of the influence. Devi's emotions and feelings are also a part of her cooking, an expression of who she is that is blended in the recipe, even titled as the dish's name and made a part of the fusion. Therefore the food she makes and serves is much more than fusion of culinary traditions, it is a fusion of her emotions with the food indicating her desires. "When she was angry, the food was spicy, when she

seemed happy, there was dessert, and when she looked bored, the food tasted bland” (Malladi 77) Every recipe that Devi curates has a fusion induced in a different form showing the complex notions of diversity that can be adapted while being hybrid. Curating recipes with a varied choice of ingredients, techniques and styles reflecting elements of influencing cultures, depicts hybridity through which she reinvents an identity, a real expression of who she is culminated with diversity and emotions making Devi feel satisfaction and success.

### Works Cited

- [1]. Amit, Karin, and Pnina Dolberg. “Who Do You Think I Am? Immigrant’s First Name and Their Perceived Identity.” *Comparative Migration Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, Mar. 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-023-00328-1>.
- [2]. Bengtsson, Mariette. “How to Plan and Perform a Qualitative Study Using Content Analysis.” *NursingPlus Open*, vol. 2, Jan. 2016, pp. 8–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.npls.2016.01.001>.
- [3]. Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Psychology Press, 1994.
- [4]. Burke, Peter. *Cultural Hybridity*. John Wiley and Sons, 2013.
- [5]. Camilleri, Frank, and Maria Kapsali. “On Hybridity.” *Performance Research*, vol. 25, no. 4, May 2020, pp. 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2020.1842022>.
- [6]. Carvalho, Elisa De. *Migrants and Expatriates: Double Standards or Coloniality*. June 2023, [web.uniroma1.it/disse/sites/default/files/DISSE\\_DeCarvalho\\_wp7\\_2023.pdf](http://web.uniroma1.it/disse/sites/default/files/DISSE_DeCarvalho_wp7_2023.pdf).
- [7]. Chawla, Nikhil. “How Food Shapes and Reflects the Cultural Identity of a Region or Country - the Daily Guardian.” *The Daily Guardian*, 18 June 2023, [thedailyguardian.com/how-food-shapes-and-reflects-the-cultural-identity-of-a-region-or-country](http://thedailyguardian.com/how-food-shapes-and-reflects-the-cultural-identity-of-a-region-or-country).
- [8]. Daya, Shari. “Eating, Serving, and Self-realisation: Food and Modern Identities in Contemporary Indian Women’s Writing.” *Social & Cultural Geography*, vol. 11, no. 5, Aug. 2010, pp. 475–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2010.488749>.
- [9]. Evans, Savannah. “Food as Culture: Cuisine, Food Customs, and Cultural Identity - SLO Food Bank.” *SLO Food Bank*, [www.slofoodbank.org/food-as-culture](http://www.slofoodbank.org/food-as-culture).
- [10]. Fearon, James D. *What Is Identity (as We Now Use the Word)*. 1999.
- [11]. Gastros, Global. “Food Culture and Globalization · Global Gastros.” *Global Gastros*, 1 July 2017, [globalgastros.com/food-culture/globalization](http://globalgastros.com/food-culture/globalization).
- [12]. “Glocalisation and Food Cultures.” *Geography @ NumptyNerd*, [www.numptynerd.net/globalisation-food-cultures.html#:~:text=Globalisation%20of%20Food%3A%20key%20terms&text=Displaced%20food%20cultures%20may%20become,and%20creates%20new%20syncretic%20cultures](http://www.numptynerd.net/globalisation-food-cultures.html#:~:text=Globalisation%20of%20Food%3A%20key%20terms&text=Displaced%20food%20cultures%20may%20become,and%20creates%20new%20syncretic%20cultures).
- [13]. Hanna, Mary, and Jeanne Batalova. *Indian Immigrants in the United States*. [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/indian-immigrants-united-states-2019#:~:text=Today%2C%20Indian%20immigrants%20account%20for,from%20China%20and%20the%20Philippines](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/indian-immigrants-united-states-2019#:~:text=Today%2C%20Indian%20immigrants%20account%20for,from%20China%20and%20the%20Philippines).
- [14]. “The Historical Influence of Colonialism on Indian Cuisines.” *Slurrrp*, 23 June 2023, [www.slurrrp.com/article/the-historical-influence-of-colonialism-on-indian-cuisines-1686558185475](http://www.slurrrp.com/article/the-historical-influence-of-colonialism-on-indian-cuisines-1686558185475).
- [15]. Howard, Sabrina. “Food and Cultural Identity.” *Appetite for Change*, [appetiteforchangemn.org/food-and-cultural-identity/#:~:text=This%20means%20that%20food%20traditions,or%20worse%E2%80%94to%20cultural%20identities](http://appetiteforchangemn.org/food-and-cultural-identity/#:~:text=This%20means%20that%20food%20traditions,or%20worse%E2%80%94to%20cultural%20identities).
- [16]. Khan, Fouzia Rehman, and Mehwish Malghanib. “Discursive Identity of Immigrants: A Review.” *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, vol. 15, no. 7, pp. 483–94.
- [17]. Khushu-Lahiri, Rajyashree, and Shweta Rao. “‘What’s Cooking?’- Cookery and Creativity in the Mistress of Spices, *Serving Crazy With Curry* and *Book of Rachel*.” *Crossings a Journal of English Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, Sept. 2009, pp. 47–60. <https://doi.org/10.59817/cjes.v2i1.395>.
- [18]. Kraidy, Marwan M. “Hybridity in Cultural Globalization.” *Communication Theory*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 316–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00272.x>.
- [19]. Lavanya, S., and S. Sangeetha. “Self-Acceptance Through Serving Food in Amulya Malladi’s *Serving Crazy With Curry*.” *Language in India*, vol. 19, no. 1, Jan. 2019, pp. 7–12.
- [20]. Lush, Emily. “UNESCO Food Culture: 30 Amazing Culinary Traditions Around the World.” *Wander-Lush*, 9 Nov. 2023, [wander-lush.org/food-culture-unesco](http://wander-lush.org/food-culture-unesco).
- [21]. Malladi, Amulya. *Serving Crazy With Curry: A Novel*. Random House Digital, Inc., 2004.
- [22]. Markovsky, Barry, et al. “Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes.” *Contemporary Sociology*, vol. 19, no. 1, Jan. 1990, p. 147. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2073535>.
- [23]. McGregor, Angus. *Food and the Japanese Identity*. [www.angusmcgregoruncgportfolio.com/essays/food-identity/food-and-the-japanese-identity](http://www.angusmcgregoruncgportfolio.com/essays/food-identity/food-and-the-japanese-identity).
- [24]. Oussedik, Sylvia. *Food and Cuisine, Part of the Migration Process*. [www.iemed.org/publication/food-and-cuisine-part-of-the-migration-process/#:~:text=Immigrants%20travel%20with%20their%20culinary,to%20their%20countries%20of%20origin](http://www.iemed.org/publication/food-and-cuisine-part-of-the-migration-process/#:~:text=Immigrants%20travel%20with%20their%20culinary,to%20their%20countries%20of%20origin).
- [25]. Rahaman, Valiur. *Liminality, Mimicry, Hybridity and Ambivalent in Literary Speculations of Homi K. Bhabha: Homo Bhabha’s Literary Theory*. GRIN Verlag, 2010.
- [26]. Ramalakshmi, S., and M. Sagaya Sophia. “Sublimation – a Study of Defense Mechanism Through Amulya Malladi’s *Serving Crazy With Curry*.” *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2022, p. 4935.
- [27]. Ranaweera, R. L. a. Nipuni. “‘Like Mother, Like Daughter?’ Perspectives on Mother to Daughter Succession in Diasporic Culinary Fiction by Women.” *OUSL Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1, Aug. 2022, p. 49. <https://doi.org/10.4038/ouslj.v17i1.7499>.
- [28]. Rodríguez, Ortiz Roxana. “Cultura E Identidad Migratoria En La Frontera México- Estados Unidos. Inmediaciones Entre La ComunidadMexicoamericana Y La ComunidadTransfronteriza Immigrations Culture and Identity in the Mexico-United States Border. Vicinity Between the Mexican American Community and Cross-border Community.” *Biblat*, vol. 3, Jan. 2010.
- [29]. Ronga, Sophia. *The Culture Behind the Italian Slow Meal*. [berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/the-culture-behind-the-italian-slow-meal](http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/the-culture-behind-the-italian-slow-meal).
- [30]. Rothe, Eugenio M., and Andrés J. Pumariega. “Immigration, Cultural Identity, and Mental Health.” *Oxford University Press eBooks*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1093/med/9780190661700.001.0001>.
- [31]. Scheffler, Samuel. “Immigration and the Significance of Culture.” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 35, no. 2, Mar. 2007, pp. 93–125. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.2007.00101.x>.
- [32]. Spence, Charles. “Contemporary Fusion Foods: How Are They to Be Defined, and When Do They Succeed/Fail?” *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, vol. 13, Oct. 2018, pp. 101–07. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2018.07.005>.
- [33]. Stano, Simona. “‘Con-fusion Cuisines’: Melting Foods and Hybrid IdentitiesS.” *Proceedings of the World Congress of the IASS/AIS*, Dec. 2015, <https://doi.org/10.24308/iass-2014-165>.



- [34]. Wilkins, Karin Gwinn. *Redeveloping Communication for Social Change: Theory, Practice, and Power*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2000. Amit, Karin, and Phina Dolberg. "Who Do You Think I Am? Immigrant's First Name and Their Perceived Identity." *Comparative Migration Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, Mar. 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-023-00328-1>.
- [35]. Bengtsson, Mariette. "How to Plan and Perform a Qualitative Study Using Content Analysis." *NursingPlus Open*, vol. 2, Jan. 2016, pp. 8–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.npls.2016.01.001>.
- [36]. Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Psychology Press, 1994.
- [37]. Burke, Peter. *Cultural Hybridity*. John Wiley and Sons, 2013.
- [38]. Camilleri, Frank, and Maria Kapsali. "On Hybridity." *Performance Research*, vol. 25, no. 4, May 2020, pp. 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2020.1842022>.
- [39]. Carvalho, Elisa De. *Migrants and Expatriates: Double Standards or Coloniality*. June 2023, [web.uniroma1.it/disse/sites/default/files/DISSE\\_DeCarvalho\\_wp7\\_2023.pdf](http://web.uniroma1.it/disse/sites/default/files/DISSE_DeCarvalho_wp7_2023.pdf).
- [40]. Chawla, Nikhil. "How Food Shapes and Reflects the Cultural Identity of a Region or Country - the Daily Guardian." *The Daily Guardian*, 18 June 2023, [thedailyguardian.com/how-food-shapes-and-reflects-the-cultural-identity-of-a-region-or-country](http://thedailyguardian.com/how-food-shapes-and-reflects-the-cultural-identity-of-a-region-or-country).
- [41]. Daya, Shari. "Eating, Serving, and Self-realisation: Food and Modern Identities in Contemporary Indian Women's Writing." *Social & Cultural Geography*, vol. 11, no. 5, Aug. 2010, pp. 475–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2010.488749>.
- [42]. Evans, Savannah. "Food as Culture: Cuisine, Food Customs, and Cultural Identity - SLO Food Bank." *SLO Food Bank*, [www.slofoodbank.org/food-as-culture](http://www.slofoodbank.org/food-as-culture).
- [43]. Fearon, James D. *What Is Identity (as We Now Use the Word)*. 1999.
- [44]. Gastros, Global. "Food Culture and Globalization · Global Gastros." *Global Gastros*, 1 July 2017, [globalgastros.com/food-culture/globalization](http://globalgastros.com/food-culture/globalization).
- [45]. "Glocalisation and Food Cultures." *Geography @ NumptyNerd*, [www.numptynerd.net/globalisation-food-cultures.html#:~:text=Globalisation%20of%20Food%3A%20key%20terms&text=Displaced%20food%20cultures%20may%20become,and%20creates%20new%20syncretic%20cultures](http://www.numptynerd.net/globalisation-food-cultures.html#:~:text=Globalisation%20of%20Food%3A%20key%20terms&text=Displaced%20food%20cultures%20may%20become,and%20creates%20new%20syncretic%20cultures).
- [46]. Hanna, Mary, and Jeanne Batalova. *Indian Immigrants in the United States*. [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/indian-immigrants-united-states-2019#:~:text=Today%2C%20Indian%20immigrants%20account%20for,from%20China%20and%20the%20Philippines](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/indian-immigrants-united-states-2019#:~:text=Today%2C%20Indian%20immigrants%20account%20for,from%20China%20and%20the%20Philippines).
- [47]. "The Historical Influence of Colonialism on Indian Cuisines." *Slurp*, 23 June 2023, [www.slurp.com/article/the-historical-influence-of-colonialism-on-indian-cuisines-1686558185475](http://www.slurp.com/article/the-historical-influence-of-colonialism-on-indian-cuisines-1686558185475).
- [48]. Howard, Sabrina. "Food and Cultural Identity." *Appetite for Change*, [appetiteforchangemn.org/food-and-cultural-identity/#:~:text=This%20means%20that%20food%20traditions,or%20worse%E2%80%94to%20cultural%20identities](http://appetiteforchangemn.org/food-and-cultural-identity/#:~:text=This%20means%20that%20food%20traditions,or%20worse%E2%80%94to%20cultural%20identities).
- [49]. Khan, Fouzia Rehman, and Mehwish Malghanib. "Discursive Identity of Immigrants: A Review." *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, vol. 15, no. 7, pp. 483–94.
- [50]. Khushu-Lahiri, Rajyashree, and Shweta Rao. "What's Cooking? - Cookery and Creativity in the Mistress of Spices, Serving Crazy With Curry and Book of Rachel." *Crossings a Journal of English Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, Sept. 2009, pp. 47–60. <https://doi.org/10.59817/cjes.v2i1.395>.
- [51]. Kraidy, Marwan M. "Hybridity in Cultural Globalization." *Communication Theory*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 316–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00272.x>.
- [52]. Lavanya, S., and S. Sangeetha. "Self-Acceptance Through Serving Food in Amulya Malladi's *Serving Crazy With Curry*." *Language in India*, vol. 19, no. 1, Jan. 2019, pp. 7–12.
- [53]. Lush, Emily. "UNESCO Food Culture: 30 Amazing Culinary Traditions Around the World." *Wander-Lush*, 9 Nov. 2023, [wander-lush.org/food-culture-unesco](http://wander-lush.org/food-culture-unesco).
- [54]. Malladi, Amulya. *Serving Crazy With Curry: A Novel*. Random House Digital, Inc., 2004.
- [55]. Markovsky, Barry, et al. "Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes." *Contemporary Sociology*, vol. 19, no. 1, Jan. 1990, p. 147. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2073535>.
- [56]. McGregor, Angus. *Food and the Japanese Identity*. [www.angusmcgregoruncgportfolio.com/essays/food-identity/food-and-the-japanese-identity](http://www.angusmcgregoruncgportfolio.com/essays/food-identity/food-and-the-japanese-identity).
- [57]. Oussedik, Sylvia. *Food and Cuisine, Part of the Migration Process*. [www.iemed.org/publication/food-and-cuisine-part-of-the-migration-process/#:~:text=Immigrants%20travel%20with%20their%20culinary,to%20their%20countries%20of%20origin](http://www.iemed.org/publication/food-and-cuisine-part-of-the-migration-process/#:~:text=Immigrants%20travel%20with%20their%20culinary,to%20their%20countries%20of%20origin).
- [58]. Rahaman, Valiur. *Liminality, Mimicry, Hybridity and Ambivalent in Literary Speculations of Homi K. Bhabha: Homo Bhabha's Literary Theory*. GRIN Verlag, 2010.
- [59]. Ramalakshmi, S., and M. Sagaya Sophia. "Sublimation – a Study of Defense Mechanism Through Amulya Malladi's *Serving Crazy With Curry*." *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2022, p. 4935.
- [60]. Ranaweera, R. L. a. Nipuni. "Like Mother, Like Daughter? Perspectives on Mother to Daughter Succession in Diasporic Culinary Fiction by Women." *OUSL Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1, Aug. 2022, p. 49. <https://doi.org/10.4038/ouslj.v17i1.7499>.
- [61]. Rodríguez, Ortiz Roxana. "Cultura E Identidad Migratoria En La Frontera México- Estados Unidos. Inmediaciones Entre La Comunidad Mexicoamericana Y La Comunidad Transfronteriza Immigrations Culture and Identity in the Mexico-United States Border. Vicinity Between the Mexican American Community and Cross-border Community." *Biblat*, vol. 3, Jan. 2010.
- [62]. Ronga, Sophia. *The Culture Behind the Italian Slow Meal*. [berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/the-culture-behind-the-italian-slow-meal](http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/the-culture-behind-the-italian-slow-meal).
- [63]. Rothe, Eugenio M., and Andrés J. Pumariaga. "Immigration, Cultural Identity, and Mental Health." *Oxford University Press eBooks*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/med/9780190661700.001.0001>.
- [64]. Scheffler, Samuel. "Immigration and the Significance of Culture." *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 35, no. 2, Mar. 2007, pp. 93–125. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.2007.00101.x>.
- [65]. Spence, Charles. "Contemporary Fusion Foods: How Are They to Be Defined, and When Do They Succeed/Fail?" *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, vol. 13, Oct. 2018, pp. 101–07. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2018.07.005>.
- [66]. Stano, Simona. "Con-fusion Cuisines": Melting Foods and Hybrid IdentitiesS." *Proceedings of the World Congress of the IASS/AIS*, Dec. 2015, <https://doi.org/10.24308/iass-2014-165>.
- [67]. Wilkins, Karin Gwinn. *Redeveloping Communication for Social Change: Theory, Practice, and Power*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.