

Title:

“Edible Identities: Culinary Narratives and Cultural Memory in Contemporary Fiction”

Proposal:

This research investigates how food functions as a symbolic and narrative device in contemporary literature, focusing on its role in expressing identity, memory, trauma, and resistance. The study will examine three recent works from distinct cultural contexts: *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake* by Aimee Bender (2010, USA), *The Book of Palestinian Food* by Reem Kassis (2017, Palestine), and *The Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada* by Yogita Pradhan (2020, India).

These texts, though differing in form—fiction, food memoir, and ethnographic narrative—each use food to communicate emotional truths, social histories, and cultural struggles. Bender’s novel uses magical realism to explore how taste becomes a medium for emotional perception and familial disconnection. Kassis’s work blends recipes with personal and national history, reclaiming food as a vessel of Palestinian identity under occupation. Pradhan’s exploration of Dalit kitchens reveals how caste and food intersect, exposing deep inequalities while preserving oral culinary traditions.

This project will analyze how food operates as both a sensory and political language—linking the personal with the communal, the domestic with the historical. Using an interdisciplinary framework that combines food studies, memory theory, and postcolonial and caste-based critique, the research will explore how culinary expression in literature becomes a form of resistance, survival, and storytelling.

By placing these texts in dialogue, the study aims to highlight how food in literature becomes a shared yet contextually unique site of meaning. It contributes to global conversations on how marginalized voices use culinary narratives to assert presence, history, and identity.