PART I

Reading Food in Literature, the Arts and across the Media

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Food Performativity and Transnational Identity in Selected Diasporic Women's Writings

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Abstract
Studying the intersection of food and identity is essential, especially when it interlaces with diasporic cultures. Through the process of immigration and acculturation, food acquires new shapes, meanings and accents, influencing, informing and even transforming our relationship with the world. Incorporating concepts from diasporic discourse such as culinary citizenship, third space and performativity, this paper demonstrates how the use of food narratives and practices in literary works plays a vital performative role in conveying the experiences of individuals living away from home, dealing with displacement and navigating their evolving transnational identities. Food is a cultural zone where different identity determinants intersect and engage in debate. This paper explores how some women writers from different diasporas use food for two primary functions: 1. to negotiate their female characters' identity in displacement and produce the possibility of replacement, all while navigating the complexities of preserving or reconstructing their cultural identity; and more critically; 2. to enlighten their intended readers about the existing challenges, pains, prejudices and tensions in the assimilation process. In this context, food strategically performs as a discursive and multilayered agent, establishing diversity awareness, challenging exclusionary attitudes and stimulating cross-cultural interactions. Food performativity is both constitutive and reflective of transnational identity construction across political borders – a point not to end here but to begin.

Keywords: *food narratives, diaspora literature, food performativity, food and identity, transnational identity*

Introduction

One thing is certain about food: it has never been just about sustenance (Eagleton 1998). Beyond its basic function, food serves as a powerful signifier, representing deeper emotional and psychological imagery as well as broader personal and cultural expressions (Mannur 2010). In our transnational world, marked by rapid migration and mobility, food has become an even more prominent personal and political marker, especially in literary studies, where "food has long served as a cultural marker of complex and oft-conflicting desires, affiliations and identities" (Coghlan 2020: 1). Recent scholarship has underscored the significance of studying the intersection of food and culture, particularly in the context of diasporic communities (Ho 2005; Xu 2008; Mannur 2010; Dalessio 2012). Through the process of immigration, food takes

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on new forms, meanings and nuances, shaping and transforming our relationship with the environment and identity determinants such as race, class and gender. Critics like Wong (1993, 2000), Ho (2005), Xu (2008), Dalessio (2012) and Mannur (2010) have highlighted the role of culinary narratives in diasporic literature, particularly within various ethnic-Asian American communities, and explored its connection to identity formation and representation. In this context, food exerts discursive power and agency, facilitating cultural exchange and challenging the notion of a singular, fixed identity, while also revealing its potential for transformation.

Food is performative in that it functions as a relational construct, continuously and dynamically shaped by the subjective practices that imbue it with meaning. This idea aligns with the theory of Judith Butler (2006) about "gender performativity", where she argues that gender is performative because it is socially, culturally and politically constructed and enacted through repeated behaviours assigned to male and female categories. Similarly, food is performative, conveying and reinforcing specific messages within a social network while reflecting identity conflicts—particularly at the intersections of gender, race, class and more—often most evident in immigrant kitchens (Halloran 2016).

In its broader sense, diaspora refers to individuals of a particular culture or ethnicity who have voluntarily or forcibly relocated to different geographical regions (Grossman 2018; Cohen 2022). Diasporic discourse is part of an ongoing transnational network characterised by continuous negotiation between roots and routes. People in the diaspora use various narratives and strategies to navigate the challenges of assimilation in a new homeland while maintaining a nostalgic connection to their original one (or an imagined homeland) (Brah 1996). Among the shared traditions of a diaspora, food and culinary preferences have emerged as significant narratives accompanying people, practices and cultures, and telling their stories as they move across the globe (Halloran 2016). Food narratives play a crucial performative role in conveying the experiences of individuals living away from home, dealing with displacement and navigating their evolving identities in a new land. These narratives serve as cultural zones where different identity determinants intersect and engage in dialogue. This perspective raises questions at the intersection of food, culture, migration, home and identity—concepts that are constantly evolving and in flux.

Building on these questions and with diaspora as its backdrop, this paper examines how some women writers use food narratives to navigate their female characters' identities in displacement, creating the possibility of transformation (Ingold 2015). These writers, hailing from different diasporas, share two key objectives: first, to portray their immigrant characters as "others" who grapple with the complexities of cultural identity through their food

choices and preparation, while managing the tensions between assimilation and cultural preservation; and second, to use food narratives to inform and educate their readers about the challenges, pains and prejudices faced by immigrants and minorities in their host countries (Ho 2005; Xu 2008; Mannur 2010). Thus, food serves as more than just a literary metaphor or symbol; it acts as a medium with productive and transformative power, capable of bridging differences and fostering a sense of connection. As Anita Mannur's concept of "culinary citizenship" suggests (2010: 29), food not only represents but also shapes identity and culture. Mannur situates her discussion of food and identity within the complex intersections of class, ethnicity, sexuality and gender, explaining how these factors influence how South Asians articulate their experiences of preparing and consuming food as expressions of their ethnic and diasporic lives.

Similarly, writers from various diasporas view food and culinary discourse as one of the safest and most profound ways to express their emotions and assert their identities in a new environment. In transnational literature, food narratives illustrate the blending of cultures by portraying characters who navigate the tension between recreating their ethnic dishes and incorporating new cuisines (Ristaino and Li 2022). When closely examining stories of women immigrants, two common reactions emerge. Some characters struggle with the challenges of assimilation and, in response, seek to maintain a strong connection to their homeland through food. These narratives often recount the bitter experiences of displacement, highlighting the constant conflict between preserving ethnic cuisine and confronting the Western antithesis, where attempts at harmonious fusion and blending of flavors often fail. Conversely, other characters adopt a more strategic approach to adaptation and assimilation, where food serves as a casual and safe medium for cultural exchange, connecting immigrants with the mainstream audience. In this context, the fusion of cuisines and ingredients becomes a transformative strategy for survival and inclusion. This blending of migrant and Western elements creates a hybrid identity, symbolized by a dish where dual or multiple homes merge, resulting in a transnational identity (Sherman 2020). The following section presents the voices of various diasporic women and their efforts to assimilate into American society through their culinary practices.

Different voices and tastes from the diaspora

Jhumpa Lahiri's stories provide excellent examples of the two reactions previously mentioned. She writes about her Indian-Bengali female characters and their deep connection to food in America, where they constantly grapple with preserving their cultural identity while adapting to a new environment and navigating their complex, often ambivalent positions. Food becomes a way for these characters to express their gendered, racialized and class-based

identities in the hope of finding connection and belonging in their new home. However, it can also highlight feelings of isolation, difference and intolerance. In her acclaimed novel *The Namesake* (2003), the story begins with Ashima Ganguli attempting to recreate the taste of her favorite Indian snack. For Ashima, this snack represents more than just a craving—it is an expression of her nostalgia, homesickness and desire to revive lost memories of home. Yet, in the diaspora, replicating authentic national or ethnic dishes is nearly impossible due to the unavailability of traditional ingredients. As a result, authenticity is expressed through the continuous recreation and reinvention of dishes with whatever ingredients are accessible, allowing individuals to assert their identities. As the novel progresses, Ashima gradually overcomes her sense of alienation, realizing that surviving in Western society requires finding a balance between two cultures—a journey that aligns with the meaning of her name, Ashima, which signifies "limitless, without borders" (26). She evolves by embracing aspects of the American lifestyle while maintaining a connection to her roots, ultimately embodying a transnational identity that is "without borders, without a home of her own, a resident everywhere and nowhere" (276). Ashima's culinary hybridization becomes a form of "culinary citizenship" as she adapts to cooking familiar dishes using unfamiliar ingredients, such as making *halwa* from cream of wheat, *sandesh* from ricotta cheese (276) and roasting a Thanksgiving turkey seasoned with garlic, cumin and cayenne (64).

Similarly, Mrs. Sen, one of the main characters in Lahiri's short story collection *Interpreter of Maladies* (2000), expresses her struggles with cultural assimilation and loneliness through her food preparation. She, too, longs to recreate the tastes of home, hoping to be transported back in time and place and to experience the comfort associated with these familiar flavors. Lahiri meticulously describes the effort Mrs. Sen puts into her cooking, revealing the character's internal conflict and the weight of gendered and racialized expectations she carries. Through detailed descriptions of Mrs. Sen's kitchenware and cooking practices, Lahiri emphasizes how the character's racialized identity and unique gendered agency—often misunderstood—are expressed. Unlike Ashima, Mrs. Sen is unable to adapt to her new environment. Her disorientation in her new home is symbolized by her obsession with obtaining a specific type of fish to prepare her Bengali dish and her struggle to learn to drive. She clings to the traditions and customs of her homeland through the way she cooks, dresses and interacts with her husband. Mrs. Sen might be viewed as "a snapshot of a woman in the early years of her life as a struggling immigrant" (Madhuparna 2006: 195), with the potential for gradual change towards assimilation and hybridity, similar to what we see in Ashima. By exploring the complexities and emotional conflicts tied to food preparation, Lahiri seeks to dismantle stereotypes and help her Western readers understand

the confusion and sense of disconnection that come with being caught "in-between" (Bhabha 1994), offering a nuanced portrayal of the realities faced by immigrant women [1].

In her memoirs, *The Language of Baklava* (2005) and *Life Without a Recipe: A Memoir of Food and Family* (2017), the Arab-American novelist Diana Abu-Jaber records her experience as a second-generation immigrant in America and her struggle to earn the approval of both sides of family members (her Arab father and European mother) through cooking and eating. She uses the language of food to explore her cultural identity and her aspiration to integrate into American society. By combining traditional recipes with personal stories, she addresses her emotional and moral needs, noting on the first page of the "Foreword" that: "Food always turned out to be about something much larger: grace, difference, faith and love." (1)

Diana shows the cultural clash through the contrasting culinary traditions of her family. Her German grandmother's methodical baking, with its emphasis on precision and adherence to rules, contrasts sharply with her Jordanian father's passion for spices and improvisation. These differences not only reflect the emotional trauma influencing her but also the development of her fluid and expressive "culinary citizenship". In her recollections of home and family and her journey toward self-discovery, food preparation becomes a platform where her marginalized Jordanian father in America can assert his masculinity and cultural heritage, while her mother's resistance is expressed through her refusal to partake in these meals. Diana strategically incorporates elements from both culinary traditions, creating a unique blended cuisine that represents her transnational identity—a concept that defies rigid definitions, as suggested by the title of her second memoir.

The recipes serve to appropriate and embody the traditions and values they represent, reflecting Abu-Jaber's efforts to adapt to contemporary social and personal circumstances in America. Simultaneously, she reflects on the inherent appeal for American readers in immigrant stories that depict the process of reshaping their identities under the pressures of assimilation:

> I believe the immigrant's story is compelling to us because it is so consciously undertaken. The immigrant compresses time and space- starting out in one country and then very deliberately starting again, a little later, in another. It's a sort of fantasy- to have the chance to recreate yourself. But it's also a nightmare, because so much is lost. (2005: 1)

What Abu-Jaber tries to highlight in retelling stories of her family is that, in practice, the people of the host country fail to recognize that, no matter how hard the immigrants try to be assimilated and included, they are still seen as "perennial outsiders… due to their accent, name, skin colour, or style of dress" (Halloran 2016: 7). Abu-Jaber recalls a family picnic in the front yard of their

home in Syracuse, which provokes a discriminatory reaction from their non-immigrant neighbours. On the school bus, one of Diana's schoolmates tells her that eating in the front yard is unacceptable:

> My parents saw you out there the other night. I heard them talking with the neighbours. They said it was an "unholy disgrace". See, okay, the thing is, you better know that in this country nobody eats in the front yard. Really. Nobody… If your family doesn't know how to behave, my parents will have to find out about getting you out of this neighbourhood. (2005: 82)

In response, the diverse immigrant families in the neighborhood organize a larger front-yard picnic and invite their white American neighbors to sample international cuisine. Diana humorously renames her father's grilled chicken recipe from that event as "Distract the Neighbours Grilled Chicken" and describes it as a "delightful, simple dish that will fill the neighborhood with a gorgeous scent" (2005: 79). Beyond using food as a personal bridge between contrasting cultures and traditions, Abu-Jaber offers her recipe as a means of partial belonging, encouraging readers to view the world through a new perspective and to foster understanding, connection and empathy towards cultural diversity. Through her culinary sign system, Diana redefines her hybrid identity, demonstrating how the personal can assert agency in the political realm and challenge marginalization. She constructs and embraces her complex transnational identity, reflected in the rich layers of passions and contradictions surrounding food, akin to the diverse flavors and aromas of baklava (Halloran 2016).

Like Abu-Jaber, Iranian women in the diaspora use food strategically to counteract negative media stereotypes in the West and, more importantly, to foster a sense of inclusion. They blend recipes and food stories with their personal narratives, weaving together themes of migration, nostalgia and cultural identity. Unlike other Asian diasporic writings, Iranian women writers (and Middle Eastern writers more broadly) aim to present a more positive image of their original culture to Western audiences, especially in the wake of 9/11. This effort is strategic, focusing less on personal assimilation struggles—as seen in Mrs. Sen's character—and more on addressing the political challenges of negative Middle Eastern portrayals in the West. The strained relations between Iran and the US since 1979, the post-9/11 designation of Iran as part of an "axis of evil", debates over Iran's nuclear program and a deep emotional nostalgia for a lost homeland following the 1979 Islamic Revolution all influence the life stories of Iranian women in their new home [2] (Fotouhi 2015; Naghibi 2009, 2016).

In her two memoirs, *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America* (2003) and *Laughing Without an Accent: Adventures of a Global Citizen* (2008), Firoozeh Dumas uses humor to explore cultural differences and the

challenges of adapting to American life through food. She provides a dual perspective of a girl navigating between two cultures, learning to understand and mediate between them. In *Funny in Farsi*, Dumas shares amusing anecdotes about her family's encounters with American cuisine and their confusion over fast food, hot dogs and bologna, often leading to funny and heartwarming moments [3]. She describes her family's attempt to assimilate by blending Iranian flavors [4] into their Thanksgiving celebration, illustrating their efforts to preserve their cultural heritage while also embracing American traditions. Dumas uses these humorous stories to showcase Iranians' ability to adapt and their desire to assimilate under challenging circumstances, suggesting that sharing food and laughter are effective ways to build trust and bridge cultural differences.

Rhetorically, Dumas (2003) uses food and humor as a means to lightly critique serious political tensions or threats while engaging her American readers. With a playful tone, she addresses the sources of prejudice and hostility she and her family have encountered in broader American culture. As she writes:

> With each passing day, palpable hatred grew among many Americans, hatred not just of the hostage takers but of all Iranians. The media didn't help. We opened our local paper one day to the screaming headline "Iranian Robs Grocery Store". Iran has as many fruits and nuts as the next country, but it seemed as if every lowlife who happened to be Iranian was now getting his fifteen minutes of fame. Vendors started selling T-shirts and bumper stickers that said "Iranians Go Home" and "Wanted: Iranians for Target Practice". Crimes against Iranians increased. People would hear my mother's thick accent and ask us, "Where are you from?" They weren't looking for a recipe for stuffed grape leaves. Many Iranians suddenly became Turkish, Russian, or French. (117)

This is one of many instances where Dumas (2003) employs humor to address issues she cannot confront directly. Through her storytelling, she invites her audience to understand what it means to reconstruct herself from a demonized identity as an Iranian immigrant in America. For example, when she writes, "I believe peace in the Middle East could be achieved if the various leaders held their discussions in front of a giant bowl of Persian ice cream, each leader with his own silver spoon. Political differences would melt with every mouthful" (75), she emphasizes that food can play an active role in uniting people and reminding them of their shared humanity. At the same time, she appeals to American readers to accept her for who she truly is, countering Western misconceptions. By transforming a bowl of saffron ice cream into a symbol of cross-cultural diplomacy, Dumas uses food as a platform for negotiation and a performance to encourage a more nuanced understanding of transnational identity. Her works are critically acclaimed for introducing American

audiences to the more humane, sweet and humorous facets of Iranian culture, highlighting the challenges of being an Iranian immigrant and embracing a hybrid identity.

Among various ethnic communities in the diaspora, Chinese (and Asians more broadly) are often the most persistently racialized through their food and eating habits (Pazo 2016; Liu 2022). In the Chinese diaspora, food reflects complex multi-generational experiences, family or communal bonds, a sense of group identity and cohesion, as well as cultural heritage, rituals, nostalgia and stories of displacement. Diasporic writers like Amy Tan and Leslie Li use food as a medium to depict the cultural and generational clashes between first-generation immigrant mothers and their second-generation daughters in America. However, like other diasporic writers, they also aim to provide a more nuanced and less stereotyped view of Chinese experiences, engaging Western readers with relevant social and cultural issues while fostering greater interest and empathy.

In her seminal novels *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) and *The Kitchen God's Wife* (1993), Amy Tan depicts mothers who use food and storytelling to pass down Chinese traditions and connect with their American-born daughters. Food in Tan's novels symbolises the mothers' gendered and racialized identities, their competence, knowledge, power and love: "That's the way Chinese mothers show they love their children, not through hugs and kisses but with stern offerings of steamed dumplings, duck's gizzards and crab." (1989: 202) At the same time, it reflects the American-born daughters' complex cultural identities. These second-generation children are often drawn to American-coded foods due to the pressure to conform to the broader American social context. They face a constant struggle with the cultural dissonance between their two worlds and a desire to "belong to the cultural terrain of the United States and to rid [their] body of the stigma associated with otherness" (Mannur 2010: 153).

The Kitchen God's Wife is rich with scenes of celebratory dinners, feasts and meals in America, as narrated by Winnie, the Chinese immigrant mother, and Pearl, her American-born daughter. Pearl's commentary on food highlights the generational cultural conflicts, while Winnie's food narratives aim to bridge this divide. Winnie intertwines her experiences in China and her later life in America with food stories, helping her daughter understand the hardships she faced in both countries. As Huntley (1998) notes, "as the novel continues to follow Weili through her transition from a young girl to a young wife, food outlines the cultural and geographical contexts of her life" (93). Typically, first-generation immigrants often resist the culinary styles and eating habits of their new country. For instance, Winnie tries American food for the first time at a party:

> I tried them all, three kinds of taste. The first was a soft dumpling, named for its colour, brownie—so sweet it made my teeth ache. The second was the necklace

> food lining the tree, popcorn. It was very dry and scratchy, and my mouth watered, trying to find a flavour. And then I ate a little cracker with something awful on top. Hula ate one too, thinking mine had been rotten by mistake. No mistake. That was the first time we ever ate cheese. (385-86)

On the other hand, traditional Chinese food is often not favoured by American-born daughters. When Winnie attempts to teach Pearl how to cook, Pearl responds: "It's boring. Too much trouble. I'd rather eat McDonald's hamburgers instead." (137) Driven by a desire to assimilate into mainstream American culture, the second generation exhibits a pronounced "food shame" [5] regarding their traditional dishes and a strong attraction to Western foods. In this context, Chinese food is depicted as a sporadic source of ethnic anxiety for the daughters.

However, in Winnie's stories of war, hunger, poverty, homelessness, abuse and grief, food acts as a crucial agent for fostering connections among family and friends, creating "a third space of enunciation" (Bhabha 1994: 37) where two cultures can intersect and negotiate. Bhabha (1994) describes this third space as a realm where multiple cultures interact, leading to the emergence of new identities. In this hybrid space, Winnie is able to find herself and reconcile with her daughter (Liu 2022). This reconciliation is facilitated through the performativity of food images, which include detailed accounts of food shopping, preparation, cooking and consumption. The depiction of Chinese New Year and the significance of various food items—reflecting their shape, taste and symbolism—serves as an example of cultural transfer that Winnie aims to share with her daughter, similar to the mothers in *The Joy Luck Club*. Tan uses food not only as a narrative device to advance the plot but also as a means to explore the depth and complexity of the characters' experiences. It becomes a powerful tool for illustrating their cultural identity and the challenges of preserving it in a new environment. Additionally, Tan highlights the diverse nature of the immigrant experience and the different ways each generation navigates towards their Asian-American identity. Food serves as a link between past and present, tradition and modernity, and mother and daughter in both novels.

In the foreword to her memoir, *Daughters of Heaven: A Memoir with Earthly Recipes* (2005), Leslie Li states: "Food—its cultivation, preparation, the people who cook it, those who consume it, the rituals surrounding it and the events that demand its abundant presence—is the core of this book, much like rice and vegetables are fundamental to any Chinese meal." (xiv) The memoir is richly infused with vivid food imagery and recipes, making it more culinary focused compared to Tan's novels. It offers a profound exploration of Leslie's experiences as a Chinese American girl growing up in the Bronx, where she struggled with "shame to be Chinese" (12) and worked to conceal her ethnicity from her peers. Despite these challenges, her journey of self-discovery leads to

a reconciliation with her hybrid identity. The rituals and foods of Chinese New Year help Leslie bridge the gap between her family's experiences and her cultural identity. She notes that the good wishes are not just spoken by guests but are also conveyed through the food they eat:

> "Happiness to everyone" wasn't said but served in the form of shark's fin soup. Then came "Happy Spring Festival", also unspoken but more than implied in the shape of spring rolls. […] It preceded a concoction made with dried oysters, or *haosi*—a word that means "something good is bound to happen"—black mushrooms, *bok choy* and *fat choy*, a black hairlike seaweed whose auspicious name not only signifies wealth but also provides half of the Chinese New Year greeting. Taken together the ingredients comprise a dish appropriately called gung hay fat choy. (28)

The Chinese New Year reunion meal in America symbolizes her family's sense of connection and nostalgia, sparking memories and fostering a vision of a future where they can preserve their cultural ties while overcoming feelings of displacement and isolation. Food thus serves not only as a cultural marker but also as a catalyst for self-discovery and a means to honor her family's shared history. The act of preparing and sharing these meals becomes a ritual that strengthens her identity (Pazo 2016). Leslie's acceptance and expression of her hybrid Chinese-American identity are reflected in her recipes.

Both Tan and Li navigate the interplay between their two cultures, shedding light on the nuances of Chinese traditions and the challenges of cultural identity and migration. Beyond depicting struggles and triumphs, they aim to provide Western readers with a realistic and empathetic view of Chinese immigrants. Food serves as a versatile tool in their narratives, representing trauma, resentment and conflict, as well as comfort, connection and cultural pride.

Conclusions

Lahiri, Abu-Jaber, Dumas, Tan and Li each explore the diasporic experiences of their female protagonists and their pursuit of cultural hybridity, as conceptualized by Homi Bhabha's idea of the "third space" or "in-between space" (37). This space represents a contact zone where characters can recreate or express their transnational identities. These writers provide a nuanced understanding of food as a dynamic socio-cultural marker that enables their characters to connect with their heritage and engage across cultures.

Lahiri illustrates how food serves as a means for diasporic Indians to remember and recreate their lost homes. Abu-Jaber and Dumas offer a sensory exploration of food, allowing readers to experience the sights, smells and tastes that counteract misconceptions about Arabs and Iranians in the West. Tan and Li, representing the Chinese diaspora, delve into the complexities of immigrant

life, focusing on issues of belonging, assimilation and mother-daughter relationships in a new environment.

While most characters successfully perform their "culinary citizenship" through food, Mrs. Sen is an exception. It is noteworthy that these writers and their characters, despite their diversity, share a common social class, which aids their transnational integration and success. Their relative financial stability and access to education shape their perspectives and narratives. Future research could explore how food narratives intersect with social and economic status, particularly how working-class individuals navigate identity within new cultural and economic contexts.

Overall, these narrative voices use food to bridge gaps in their new homes, highlighting shared humanity while acknowledging differences. They craft a palatable narrative where the bitterness of displacement and assimilation pressures blend with the sweetness and vibrancy of adaptation. This results in a transnational hybridity that challenges the notion of a fixed national identity, embracing "in-betweenness" as an ever-evolving construct. The aim is to spread the scent of connection and the taste of inclusion.

In conclusion, this paper proposes that identity is an adaptive and evolving socio-cultural construction, particularly in our transnational era. It is crucial to build new interpretations linking food to various identity structures, such as race, ethnicity, gender and class. Food functions as a discursive and multilayered space where literature intersects with extra-literary conditions to foster diversity awareness, challenge exclusionary attitudes and encourage cross-cultural interactions. Food performativity thus plays a foundational role in identity construction across political borders, serving as a starting point for further exploration.

Notes

[1] Other novels by women writers that delve into various socio-cultural aspects of Indian diasporic life through the lens of food include Meera Syal's *Anita and Me* (1996), Anita Desai's *Feasting, Fasting* (1999), Amulya Malladi's *Serving with Curry* (2004) and Amit Majmudar's *The Abundance* (2013). In these works, food serves as a crucial element for exploring diasporic themes such as home, family ties, strategies for acculturation, generational divides, socio-economic challenges and the concept of hybridity.

[2] For more examples of diasporic Iranian women's life writing, see *Diasporic Iranian Women's Life Writing*, a 2020 doctoral dissertation by F. Abla, at Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

[3] Several studies have been done on the significance of humour and satire in Dumas' works. As one example, see Hai, A. (2018). "Laughing with an Iranian American Woman: Firoozeh Dumas's Memoirs and the (Cross-)Cultural Work of Humor". *Journal of Asian American Studies* 21(2): 263-300.

[4] Vivian Nun Halloran's *The Immigrant Kitchen* (2016) offers a fascinating lens to examine the role of Thanksgiving in the immigrant experience. The book is a rich

tapestry of stories that explore how food, ethnicity and diaspora intersect in the lives of immigrants. It provides a pivotal analysis of how this holiday serves as a microcosm of the immigrant experience, their performance of assimilation and negotiation of cultural differences.

[5] The term is borrowed from Leslie Li's memoir (11), analysed in this paper.

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