

FOOD FOODSCAPES AND NOSTALGIA

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Much of the cultural representation of the South Asian diaspora concentrates on the importance of food in the construction of community identities. Equally, scholarship from the emerging field of diasporic studies has also examined how constructions of food and food-narratives, analysing how diasporic communities are able to create distinctively hybridised identities through the creation of **hybridised foods**.

This paper, however, argues that the 'hybrid' model is not a satisfactory way to conceptualise the relationship diasporic communities have with their food. Diasporic communities do indeed produce hybridised food, but in most cases the desire is for authenticity. In other words, and to use an example from Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, when Ashima uses Rice Crispies to recreate street-food from Kolkata, what she is trying to do is to create a taste that can match her nostalgia for the food and the home she has left behind. Rather than hybridisation as the driving force, I would suggest the conception of a **radical nostalgia** which creates distinctively diasporic identities.

Using examples from cinema such as *Bend it Like Beckham* (2002), *Jadoo* (2013), *Today's Special* (2009), and fiction of writers like Jhumpa Lahiri and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, I examine how, through attempting to re-create food from their "homelands", South Asian diasporic communities are not so much creating a hybrid cuisine, but rather are wielding a potentially powerful weapon - nostalgia - to challenge the authority of the post-imperial/neo-colonial nation-state.

A decorative background featuring a repeating pattern of stylized leaves in various colors (orange, yellow, teal, grey) with a fine, mesh-like texture. The leaves are scattered across the entire page.

*Alaa Gobi,
Mangoes
& a
Small
Aubergine*

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