

Food as a touchstone in the interpreter of maladies essay sample



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Terry Eagleton states that ' food is what makes up our bodies , just like words are what constitute our minds ; and if body and mind are hard to distinguish , it is no wonder that eating and speaking should continually cross over in metaphorical exchange'. This proclamation that identifies food as the glue that holds together a complex web of relationships is , indeed, easily perceived in this short story in particular. I rummaged through two main levels that food can be studied from. The first angle revolves around food as an excellent representation and reminder of the Indian culture and the Pakistanian culture. Mr. Pirzada and Lilia's father are separate embodiments of their own cultural identities . Nevertheless, food emerges as a supernatural power that gathers those two different identities. It becomes a cure of the bleeding self , the distorted identity, and the shattered communal ties. In 1971, Mr. Pirzada comes to dine. During the same historical context, however, the Indo-Pakistan War emerges.

Therefore, food turns out to be a permanent medication that removes the historical contamination and the homesickness that the characters suffer from. In the same way, food fulfils the function of a morphine for Mr. Pirzada who is far away from his wife and his seven daughters. The second corner from which food can be seen is its psychoanalytical tie with the main characters . In other terms, food is an exteriorizer of inner thoughts and an element that reveals the characters' multidimensional psychologies. For instance, when Mr. Pirzada and Lilia's family eat together, they usually spoil jokes and laugh together.

Mr. Pirzada often stays until midnight playing scrabble, drinking tea, and joking about the spelling of English words with Lilia's parents. As things get

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more and more complicated , food becomes an indicator of the harsh outside conditions and the inner anxieties of the characters . That is why Lilia's mother only cooks boiled eggs and rice during the twelve days of the war. Hence, food gets worse whenever the outside conditions are worsened. Overall, food plays an instrumental rule in Lahiri's collection of short stories . It is , indeed, an interpreter of maladies. It is a ' body that feeds other bodies' as stated by Terry Eagleton.