

Title: The prayer room :a novel, and, The salt of another earth : a critical study of food and culinary practice in Indian-American narratives of the immigrant experience

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Abstract: This dissertation examines, creatively and critically, the role of gastronomy in Indian- American literature. The creative element consists of a novel entitled The Prayer Room. The critical component is titled The Salt of Another Earth: The Role of Food and Culinary Practice in the Indian-American Narrative of the Immigrant Experience. The Prayer Room tells the story of a married couple, George and Viji Armitage, both immigrants to Sacramento, California, individually tracing each protagonist's immigrant experience. George, a native of Nottingham, finds himself in an anti-climactic version of the America he once idolised, and grows increasingly lackadaisical in his professional and personal lives. Viji, a Tamil Hindu, struggles to gain control over her domestic realm, and makes a personal refuge of her prayer room. Here, she displays pictures and statues of Hindu deities, and portraits of deceased loved ones. She compartmentalises her past successfully enough to manage her present, until the arrival of her English father-in-law, Stan Armitage. Stan's presence challenges the integrity both of George and Viji's marriage, and of their decision to migrate. The critical portion of this thesis analyses, alongside The Prayer Room, two immigrant-centred novels by Indian authors: Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine and Anita Desai's Fasting, Feasting. Each novel features an Indian immigrant protagonist who leaves a native collective for life in the United States and, in the process, experiences a rebirth of the individualism which their collectives have silenced. This reawakening is reflected by each author's treatment of culinary preparation and consumption. The Prayer Room's culinary practice provides distinct commentary on the immigrant experience, but has been influenced by its literary predecessors. The aim of this dissertation is to explore how the commonality and divergence of culinary incidence in the three chosen texts reflect upon the nature of the Indian immigrant experience.

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and callow Englishman George Armitage goes to Ma... Start your review of *The Prayer Room*. Write a review. Jan 13, 2017 Aekta Kapoor rated it really liked it. *The Prayer Room*, her first novel, is full of lovely and accomplished things, including some breathtaking observations of place. This is India as viewed (and heard and smelled) by George: "sweaty silk, water, the curiously thin coins, the empty smell of boiled rice, turmeric, coriander, cumin, coconut oil, cow dung, power cuts, irrigation ditches, billboards, hotels, mothballs, citronella, fire.