Healthy Diet and Literature: Representation of Children’s Food in Enid Blyton Stories

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Abstract
Food, an indispensable part of children’s lives and subsequently children’s literature, provides multifaceted dimensions to a narrative. The paper tries to explore the introduction of a healthy western cuisine to the Indian audience through the books of Enid Blyton. As many have noted, Enid Blyton in her books provide a rather healthy diet and also manages to make it appealing to the children. Her characters do not gorge themselves on junk food, but eat balanced, nutritious food. This multidisciplinary dialogue between literature and health shapes the perceptions of the young generation towards a healthier lifestyle. Enid spelt backwards is dine, a happy coincidence to generations upon generations who grew up reading Blyton’s stories. Her books, with an enduring appeal that reigns the bookshelves, is subtly centered around cultural caricatures through culinary delights irrespective of the story. An a la carte of high teas, picnic lunches and midnight feasts-commonplace in the Enid Blyton menu-vivified tastefully, result in traditional British cuisine being synonymous with fine dining. Thus, the food becomes an aspirational motif to young readers, who are attracted to not just the imperial culinary traditions, but also to the British lifestyle, of which the delicious food is only a subset. The paper explores this interplay between food and the literature, paying careful attention to how a healthy diet is prioritised in Blyton’s stories.

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