

Annotated Bibliography

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Link to Proposal

Research question: Does globalization change Indian culture more than Indian culture changes globalization?

Secondary question: Is the spread of “curry” and butter chicken in the United States a form of authenticity, adaptation, or, at some point, appropriation and homogenization?

Heldke, Lisa M. “But Is It Authentic? Culinary Travel and the Search for the ‘Genuine Article.’” *The Taste Culture Reader: Flavor, Food and Meaning*, Ed. Carolyn Korsmeyer, Oxford, 2005. *Gustavus Adolphus College*, Nov. 11, 2015, <https://archives.gac.edu/digital/collection/ir/id/1257/>

Type of source: Scholarly/academic source (philosophy and food studies essay, PDF)

Sentence summary of the argument: Lisa Heldke argues that the popular obsession with “authenticity” in food culture often conceals a colonial attitude because it treats other cultures as resources for personal adventure, status, and consumption. She critiques the idea that authentic food must be perfectly repeatable and unchanged, explaining instead that cuisines are living, porous, and constantly evolving. This argument matters for Indian food in the United States because adapted dishes are often dismissed as “fake,” even while “authenticity” is used as a power move to judge immigrants, restaurants, and culinary legitimacy.

Three key points:

1. Heldke explains that the pursuit of authenticity can become a “Holy Grail” search for perfect copies of how “they” make food, turning cultural differences into a consumer
2. She argues that “authenticity as replicability” is conceptually flawed because cuisines do not have fixed borders or a single pure essence.
3. She shows that the idea that food cannot remain authentic once it enters the United States is an unnecessary trap that encourages purity tests and freezes cultures in place.

Why this source is useful to my project: Heldke’s critique of “authenticity as replicability” provides the theoretical foundation for analyzing American “authenticity policing” around curry and butter chicken. Her argument helps connect modern food judgments directly to colonial patterns of power that still shape contemporary foodie culture.

Why this source is limited: Heldke's essay is highly theoretical and is not focused exclusively on Indian food in the United States, so I will need additional sources to provide specific historical and cultural examples from American restaurant culture.

Credentials/ethos: Lisa Heldke is a well-known philosopher in food ethics and food studies, and her work is widely cited in discussions of authenticity, cultural consumption, and "food adventuring."

Three quotations that support the summary:

- "The pursuit of authenticity can turn into a kind of quest for the Holy Grail..." (9–10).
- "Authentic food has...to be the same over and over and over" (10). "Cuisines...[are] porous, malleable, permeable and changeable..." (10).

Khan, Khadija. "Moti Mahal vs Daryaganj: Who Invented Butter Chicken? Delhi HC to Decide." *The Indian Express: Journalism of Courage*, 25 Jan. 2024, <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-law/moti-mahal-daryaganj-who-invented-butter-chicken-9126175/>

Type of source: Non-scholarly source (news explainer)

Sentence summary of the argument: Khadija Khan's explainer covers a legal dispute over who can claim to have invented butter chicken, showing how food history becomes a tool of branding, ownership, and prestige. The article demonstrates that popular dishes are tied not only to taste and tradition but also to money, reputation, and public storytelling. For my project, the dispute shows that "authenticity" is often a strategic claim used to control cultural capital, especially when a dish becomes globally recognizable.

Three key points:

1. The article frames the conflict as a fight over who gets to be recognized as the "inventor," showing how food origins can become legal and marketing property.
2. It shows that competing narratives can exist even within Indian culinary history, which complicates the idea of one singular and unquestionable authentic origin.
3. It provides a concrete example of how a dish's identity is shaped by institutions such as the courts and the media, not just by tradition alone.

Why this source is useful to my project: Khan's article gives me a strong real-world example of authenticity operating as a form of power. The butter chicken dispute illustrates that the dish's

global dominance is connected not only to flavor and popularity but also to control over narrative, legitimacy, and branding.

Why this source is limited: Because the article focuses on the dish's origin story and ownership claims within India, it does not directly analyze how butter chicken functions in American restaurant culture.

Credentials/ethos: *The Indian Express* is a major Indian newspaper, and this article is presented as a reported explainer grounded in legal context, public claims, and the broader cultural significance of the dispute.

Three quotations that support the summary:

- “The Delhi High Court is set to decide who ‘invented’ butter chicken...”
- “Moti Mahal has long claimed...invented butter chicken...”
- “Daryaganj...started advertising itself as the ‘inventor’...”

McCart, Melissa. “Famed Dishoom Is Officially Opening in New York.” *Eater: New York*, 6 Aug. 2025, ny.eater.com/coming-attractions/401619/dishoom-nyc-opening-manhattan-indian-restaurant-jks-restaurants-ambassadors-clubhouse

Type of source: Non-scholarly source (restaurant journalism and cultural trend reporting)

Sentence summary of the argument: Melissa McCart reports that Dishoom, a highly influential London restaurant brand built around a curated “Bombay café” concept, is expanding to New York City. She places the opening within a broader trend in which Indian restaurants are gaining prestige and visibility in Manhattan dining culture. This article supports my argument that Indian cuisine is not simply being consumed in the United States; it is also reshaping what counts as stylish, global, and desirable food in American cities.

Three key points:

1. The article shows Indian cuisine's growing cultural power in New York City, especially in mainstream prestige dining spaces.
2. It describes Dishoom's concept of 1960s Bombay comfort food and storytelling, which is itself a form of adaptation designed for a global audience.
3. It suggests that Dishoom's arrival builds on groundwork laid by earlier Indian restaurants in New York, showing that Indian food is actively reshaping American food culture.

Why this source is useful to my project: McCart's reporting provides current American evidence that Indian cuisine is gaining influence in the United States rather than simply being diluted by it. That tension helps me answer both sides of my main question about who changes whom more deeply: globalization or Indian culture.

Why this source is limited: Because this is a journalism piece focused on trends and restaurant culture, it does not deeply analyze colonialism or long-term historical developments unless I connect it to my scholarly sources.

Credentials/ethos: *Eater: New York* is a major food and dining publication, and Melissa McCart is an experienced food editor and reporter whose work tracks major restaurant developments and cultural shifts in dining.

Three quotations that support the summary:

- "Famed Dishoom Is Officially Opening in New York..."
- "...opening in 2026..."
- "Dishoom's arrival underscores how...have paved the way for international Indian restaurant openings."

Rana, Navreet Kaur. "The Perpetual Quest for 'Authenticity' in Indian Cuisine: An Answer through History and Folklore." *Digest: A Journal of Foodways and Culture*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2022, pp. 25–54, <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/digest/article/view/34627/37858>

Type of source: Scholarly/academic source (foodways and folklore research essay)

Sentence summary of the argument: Navreet Kaur Rana argues that "authenticity" is frequently used as a marketing label without real attention to a dish's history, context, or evolution. She proposes that authenticity should be understood through the logic of a dish's "birth," including its time, place, history, and folklore, rather than through rigid ideas about age or "traditional ingredients." Rana also directly links modern Indian cuisine to colonialism and globalization by showing how ingredients such as tomatoes, chilies, and potatoes entered South Asia through colonial trade.

Three key points:

1. Rana shows that the word "authentic" often functions as a sales term detached from actual historical understanding.
2. She argues that authenticity is not a strict binary but a more holistic concept shaped by why and how dishes evolve.

3. She uses colonial ingredient history, especially the Columbian Exchange, to challenge purity tests about what counts as “real” Indian food.

Why this source is useful to my project: Rana’s article provides a strong framework for arguing that adaptation is not automatically inauthentic. Her historical analysis also helps show that authenticity policing often ignores the fact that colonialism had already transformed Indian food long before American consumers began debating what counts as “real.”

Why this source is limited: Rana focuses more on authenticity debates within and around India than on the American restaurant context, so I will need to pair her work with U.S.-focused sources such as Ray and McCart.

Credentials/ethos: Rana’s article is published in *Digest: A Journal of Foodways and Culture* and is grounded in historical, folkloric, and foodways research methods, which gives it strong scholarly credibility.

Three quotations that support the summary:

- “This paper thus aims to divorce...authenticity...from...age and familiar ingredients...” (26).
- “Authentic...has become an overused keyword for selling...” (25).
- “...if age and familiar ingredients are the criteria...then...potatoes, tomatoes...chilies are inauthentic...introduced...by colonial forces” (26).

Ray, Krishnendu. “Taste, Toil and Ethnicity: Immigrant Restaurateur and the American City.” *Ethnologie française*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2014, pp. 105–115. DOI 10.3917/ethn.141.0105

Type of source: Scholarly/academic source (peer-reviewed sociology and food studies article)

Sentence summary of the argument: Krishnendu Ray examines how “ethnic food” categories in American cities are not naturally occurring but are built over time through negotiation among immigrant business owners, customers, media, advertisers, and critics. He shows how power shapes what counts as “Indian food” in the United States, including how areas such as New York’s “Curry Hill” become recognizable and marketable. His argument helps explain why dishes such as butter chicken or curry become simplified representatives of an entire cuisine; they fit American classification systems and restaurant economics.

Three key points:

1. Ray argues that the “sign” under which food is served, meaning how it is labeled and marketed, is constructed through decades of transactions among immigrants and American institutions.
2. He gives a concrete New York City example of how Indian restaurants cluster and become recognizable as an “Indian-food zone,” revealing the social geography behind cuisine in America.
3. He suggests that what may look like classification errors are actually evidence of power and negotiation over who gets to define what Indian food “is.”

Why this source is useful to my project: Ray’s analysis provides an essential U.S.-specific framework for my project. His article helps explain how Indian cuisine becomes compressed into familiar American labels such as “curry,” “butter chicken,” and “naan,” even though the actual culinary tradition is far more diverse.

Why this source is limited: Because Ray focuses more on restaurants, cities, and categorization than on any one dish, I still need other sources that specifically examine butter chicken and curry themselves.

Credentials/ethos: Krishnendu Ray is a major scholar in food studies and immigration studies, and his work on ethnic restaurants and American taste-making is widely cited.

Three quotations that support the summary:

- “...sorted out over decades of transactions between immigrant proprietors...American newspaper critics...advertisers...” (4).
- “...before the people and the food could be put in their mutually comprehensible category” (4).
- “Murray Hill...sometimes referenced colloquially as ‘Curry Hill’...” (6).

Sen, Mayukh. “The Wild and Irresistibly Saucy Tale of the Curry Con Man.” *Vox*, 25 Feb. 2021. www.vox.com/the-highlight/22158105/ranji-smile-celebrity-chef-indian-food-sarah-lohman

Type of source: Non-scholarly source (magazine-style longform journalism)

Sentence summary of the argument: Mayukh Sen tells the story of J. Ranji Smile, a figure who helped popularize Indian food theatrically in turn-of-the-century America. The article shows that “Indian cuisine” was packaged for American audiences through spectacle, stereotype, and entertainment rather than through cultural understanding alone. That history supports my

argument that American enthusiasm for Indian food can still operate through colonial power dynamics, including exoticism, simplification, and control over the narrative.

Three key points:

1. The article shows that early American exposure to “curry” was shaped by performance and image as much as by culinary appreciation.
2. It includes primary-source-style quotations from historical newspaper coverage that framed Indian food as novelty and spectacle.
3. It highlights how racial politics shaped who could be seen as “American,” even as Americans consumed “foreign” food for pleasure.

Why this source is useful to my project: Sen’s article helps me build the historical American context for my argument. It shows that Indian food did not merely “arrive” in the United States; it was introduced through exoticism, media framing, and performance, all of which connect to colonial patterns of representation.

Why this source is limited: Because the article centers on one historical narrative rather than tracing menu evolution across decades, it needs to be paired with broader sources about restaurants, categorization, and mainstreaming.

Credentials/ethos: This article is published by Vox, a widely recognized digital media outlet, and the author supports the piece through historical reporting and primary-source quotations from period newspapers.

Three quotations that support the summary:

- “J. Ranji Smile served Indian food and tall tales...”
- “...dazzled diners with his ‘curry of chicken Madras’ ...”
- “I must think out something new each day...because...the American public must be entertained...”

Holland, Julia. “The History Behind India’s Refreshing Mango Lassi Drink.” *Tasting Table*, 24 May 2024, <https://www.tastingtable.com/1586928/history-mango-lassi-drink/>

Type of source: Non-scholarly source (food media and history overview)

Sentence summary of the argument: This article explains lassi’s roots and traces how mango lassi developed from older savory forms of the drink. It presents mango lassi as an iconic, globally recognizable “Indian” beverage while also emphasizing that ingredients and taste

preferences shape different versions over time. For my project, mango lassi serves as a smaller parallel case that shows how food and drink can become globally popular and then adapted for new audiences.

Three key points:

1. The article claims that lassi originated in Punjab as early as 1000 C., which contributes to my interest in food origin stories and historical continuity.
2. It explains that lassi began as a savory yogurt-and-spice drink, while fruit and sweet versions developed later, offering a clear example of culinary adaptation over time.
3. It notes that mango became a dominant flavor partly because it is native to India and culturally familiar, showing how one version can come to stand in for a much broader

Why this source is useful to my project: The historical evolution of lassi, from a savory drink to globally popular mango-based versions, helps me argue that culinary change is normal rather than exceptional. It also shows how global popularization often selects one version to represent a much more complex food culture.

Why this source is limited: Because the article is not scholarly and does not deeply analyze colonialism or globalization, I will use it as a popular source and support its broader implications with stronger academic sources.

Credentials/ethos: *Tasting Table* is a food media publication that is useful for identifying popular narratives and broadly accessible food history, though its claims should be cross-checked against scholarly research when possible.

Three quotations that support the summary:

- “Lassi originated...in the...Punjab in 1000 C.”
- “The preparation of lassi started as a tangy mixture...with...cumin and cardamom...”
- “Mango pulp was likely one of the first lassi flavors...”

How This Set of Sources Fits My Argument: Taken together, these sources reveal that Indian cuisine is both reshaping and being reshaped by globalization. Heldke shows that authenticity discourse often carries colonial assumptions, especially when consumers expect cuisine to remain fixed and perfectly replicable. Ray explains how American cities and markets simplify cuisines into recognizable categories, which helps clarify why “Indian food” is often reduced to a narrow set of dishes such as curry, butter chicken, and naan. Rana complicates those purity-based ideas by showing that Indian cuisine itself has always been historically dynamic and already transformed through colonial exchange.

The non-scholarly sources add historical and cultural texture to this framework. Sen's article shows that Indian food entered the American imagination partly through exotic spectacle and media performance. Khan's article on the butter chicken legal dispute reveals that authenticity is also about ownership, branding, and institutional power. The mango lassi article provides a smaller example of how one globally popular version of a food or drink can come to stand in for a much broader tradition. Finally, McCart's reporting on Dishoom demonstrates that Indian cuisine is not only being flattened by globalization but also actively influencing American taste, prestige, and restaurant culture.

Together, these sources answer the central tension in my project: Indian culture does reshape globalization by changing taste, prestige, and restaurant culture, but globalization also reshapes the public face of Indian cuisine by rewarding simplification, branding, and marketable familiarity. In the United States, Indian cuisine can gain power as a global brand while losing complexity as a cultural system. That contradiction is the core issue my project will explore.

Works Cited

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