

## REVIEWER'S REPORT

**Manuscript No.: IJAR-58020**

**Title: The Mnemonic Conversion: From Communicative Memory to Cultural Memory in the Culinary Memoirs of Olia Hercules**

**Recommendation:**

- Accept as it is .....
- Accept after minor revision.....
- Accept after major revision .....
- Do not accept (*Reasons below*) .....

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	...			
Techn. Quality		...		
Clarity	...			
Significance	...			

**Reviewer's ID: JPR- 180**

### *Detailed Reviewer's Report*

The article, “*The Mnemonic Conversion: From Communicative Memory to Cultural Memory in the Culinary Memoirs of Olia Hercules*,” offers an insightful exploration of how culinary memoirs function as repositories of cultural memory. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Maurice Halbwachs and Jan Assmann, the author examines Olia Hercules’ *Summer Kitchens* (2020) and *Strong Roots* (2025) to demonstrate how everyday domestic practices, recipes, and food traditions move from the realm of communicative memory transmitted orally within families—to cultural memory, where they become preserved through written texts and cultural artifacts. One of the major strengths of the paper lies in its strong theoretical grounding. The discussion of Assmann’s distinction between communicative and cultural memory is clearly articulated and effectively applied to the selected memoirs. The author successfully establishes how culinary narratives preserve social knowledge, family histories, and cultural identities that might otherwise disappear due to migration, modernization, or political upheaval. The integration of memory studies with food studies creates a compelling interdisciplinary framework that enriches the analysis.

The paper also excels in its close reading of Hercules’ memoirs. Through numerous textual examples, the author demonstrates how food preparation, family gatherings, and inherited cooking techniques function as forms of embodied memory. The analysis effectively shows that culinary knowledge is often transmitted through observation, repetition, and participation rather than formal instruction. These examples convincingly illustrate the fragile yet enduring nature of communicative memory within domestic spaces. Another significant contribution of the study is its examination of embodied, affective, and material memory. The discussion of sensory experiences particularly smell, taste, and touch highlights how emotions intensify memory and facilitate cultural continuity. The author persuasively argues that handwritten recipes, household objects, textiles, and symbolic motifs act as material anchors that preserve memories beyond individual lifetimes. This multidimensional approach broadens the understanding of how memory operates within culinary narratives.

The article is especially valuable in its treatment of Ukrainian cultural identity and resistance. By situating Hercules’ memoirs within the context of displacement, war, Russification, and cultural erasure, the paper demonstrates how food traditions become acts of preservation and resistance. The memoirs are interpreted as counter-archives that safeguard national identity and collective memory during periods of geopolitical crisis. This perspective gives the study contemporary relevance and underscores the political significance of culinary practices. Despite its strengths, the paper could be improved by engaging with a broader range of culinary memoirs for comparative purposes. The exclusive focus on Hercules’ works occasionally limits the scope of the discussion, making some conclusions appear highly text-specific. Additionally, a deeper engagement with recent scholarship in food studies, diaspora studies, and trauma studies could further strengthen the theoretical framework and situate the argument within wider academic debates.

# International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

*www.journalijar.com*

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Overall, this is a well-researched, coherent, and original article that successfully demonstrates how culinary memoirs transform personal and familial memories into enduring cultural archives. The author effectively combines literary analysis, memory studies, and cultural history to reveal the importance of food narratives in preserving identity and cultural continuity. The study makes a meaningful contribution to both memory studies and culinary literature scholarship and will be of interest to researchers working in cultural studies, autobiography studies, and food humanities.