

**PERIYAR UNIVERSITY**  
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Salem – 636011 , Tamil Nadu



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A Two Day National Seminar on

## **Food is not Just a Curry: Raison d'être of Food in Literature (FDLT-2019)**

Organised by  
**Department of English**  
**Periyar University**  
**Salem-636011**

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**Pull up a chair. Take a taste. Come join us. Life is so endlessly delicious -  
Ruth Reichl**



## PERIYAR UNIVERSITY

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Salem - 636 011  
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Vice Chancellor

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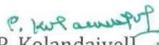


### Message

The Department of English, Periyar University, Salem is organizing a two day National Seminar on Food Literature for a spicy and toothsome literary and scholarly dialogue during 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2019.

Food has been a constant source of inspiration since the time of Vedas, the Bible and the Quran to the kaleidoscopic imagination of human perception. Since the time ink was first put to paper, be it a plot device or a method of revealing a character by eating, drinking or merry making, food has played an important role in many of the literary works. Foods and patterns of eating and their emblematic representations are brought to play because of their elementary place in human life and culture. Every culture being unique has its own traditions and rituals, cuisine and distinct eating habits. Events involving food likes 'cooking to serving' help define the social organization and cultural identity that also gives the distinct literary traditions. Food representation in artistic works may add a level of complexity, making everything related to food and eating a still more important issue of the world increasingly affected by apparently unsolvable problems like hunger. But being two of the greatest pleasures of life, 'eating and reading', explains the fact that why food writing continues to be so popular. The writing about food and the discourse on food indicate an intellectual and intrinsic passage within and across the text through visual and verbal images on human endeavors.

I congratulate the Department of English and all the participants for a luscious but outcome based discussion foreseeing the demands of the posterity.

  
[P. Kolandaivel]

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**Food is symbolic of love when words are inadequate-Alan D. Wolfelt**



## PERIYAR UNIVERSITY

SALEM – 636011, TAMIL NADU, INDIA

NAAC A Grade - State University - NIRF Rank 90

Dr. K.Thangavel  
Registrar i/c

Date: 10.01.2019



### Message

Foodie literatures are as multiple as the cuisines themselves and they are the recipes for the connoisseurs of literature to relish them. Eating has been a basic human activity, which is not only necessary for human sustenance but also depicting culture of the people. Eating patterns and rituals, the preference of dining acquaintance, and the motive behind these behaviours are basic towards nurturing an understanding of human society. Food and drink have not only spiced up but have also given a symbolic insight to the printed pages. The meal is such a human endeavour that it has fed the imagination of poets and writers over the ages to provide the ingredients for many brilliant stories. Food is everything and nothing becomes more cherishing than literary dyeing dipped with imaginary hues with literary intervention and critical understanding spinning around food and the polity involved across continents, races, cultures which require critical discussions and understandings per se. This national seminar is one such deliberation where scholarly discussion may pave the way for a better and improved understanding on this pivotal topic which encompasses all species beyond class and structure but connected only by culinary conception by all means.

I congratulate the Department of English of Periyar University for organizing a two day National seminar as a commemoration on the tenth year of its inception in a foodie way. I hope the two day discussion and scholarly sharing would enhance the basic perception of food in literature.

*K. Thangavel*  
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**There is no sincerer love than the love of food-George Bernard Shaw**



# PERIYAR UNIVERSITY

SALEM – 636011, TAMIL NADU, INDIA  
NAAC A Grade - State University - NIRF Rank 90

## Department of English

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From the Editors' desk...

Luciano Pavarotti says, “One of the very nicest things about life is the way we must regularly stop whatever it is we are doing and devote our attention to eating”. In this materialistic and tech savvy world, his words make little sense to the younger generation.

Gone were the days when man did everything to earn his food. Today fast food has become the order of the day and food has lost its priority. But in a curious reversal, just when the western modernization is ready to pronounce humanity's liberation from its constant food quest, the quest for food reappears to define our times. Whether the food quest is a constant search for the aesthetic or the authentic, for contemplation or entertainment, for study, or for staking moral and political positions, food continues to consume us.

The Department of English strongly believes that food is the ingredient that binds humans together. Many have started writing and conducting seminars on food but not about food's relevance to life's experience; life turns out to be a background for food. Hence, this national seminar.

Dr. V.Sangeetha, Professor & Head

Dr. B.J.Geetha, Assistant Professor

Dr. K.Sindhu, Assistant Professor

Dr. S.Boopathi, Assistant Professor

Ms. S.Snekha Sri, Assistant Professor

Department of English

**People who love to eat are always the best people- Julia Child**

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## **The Association between Food Additives and Learning Disabilities – A Review**

**G. Hemanatchatra, Ph.D. Research Scholar and  
Dr. B. J. Geetha, Assistant Professor**

=====  
Learning is the basic requirement for everything and one's behaviour is the learning. Learning also reflects on individual's cognitive process. The learning happened when individual involves in to the process. When they could not involve, learning is affected and so is the behaviour, cognition and personality traits. There are reasons for not involving; scientifically brain dysfunction is the major cause. The dysfunction leads to Learning Disabilities.

Learning Disabilities become an increasing focus of attention for many modern psychologists and educators. The rationality behind this reflects the acknowledged learning difficulties many students face. The debate addresses the necessity of making the educational process manageable and successful for every student, regardless of his or her individual learning abilities and styles. A great deal of work has been successfully gone into the investigation of the exploration of a little-known territory, to better define such Learning Differences as Dyslexia (reading difficulties), ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) (Turketi 8) and other LD.

“Dyslexia refers to a specific difficulty in the area of reading. Other terms frequently used are severe reading disabilities, primary reading disabilities, specific reading disabilities, and word blindness” (Nakra 46).

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder has long been considered a Learning Disability called a Minimal Brain Dysfunction that results in the lack of concentration, impulsivity, restlessness and a way of processing information that is different from that of other learners (Turketi 9).

Learning disabilities is caused by genetic and environmental factors. Food is the major environmental factor that causes LD. In this review, analyse how food and the additives in them affects children and their learning. The food can also be remedial to Learning disabilities, some researchers find out that additive free diet act as remedial tool for LD children. Comparatively, taking additive food has high risk of ADHD than Dyslexia.

Food additives are chemical substances which are added to the food in order to make them attractive. It will enhance the taste, odour, flavour, appearance and nutritional value. These

substances are always affecting our physical and mental health. “The relation between food additives and behaviour is evaluated rather considering the effects of additives increasing hyperactivity” (Gultekin et al 27). According to park Et al, “high intake of sweetened desserts, fried food, and salt is associated with more learning, attention, and behavioural problems” (Park et al 3) the food additives are one of the reasons for Learning and behavioural disorder. In 2018 researcher Dr. Holton has done a study in which he examines the effects of food additives on children with ADHD. After the intervention with 60 samples, he finds out that children consuming food without additives are showing improvement in their behaviour. They became attentive, their impulsivity has reduced. The scale of hyper activity, impulsivity, learning problems have reduced.

Spring and his colleagues had done a study on additive free diet for 6 hyperactive children. They surprised by the results that all the 6 children were shown the decreased rate of ADHD symptoms. Another study by Connors and his friends concludes after the experiment with 15 hyperactive children, symptom of hyperactivity decreased after following preservative and added colour free food. The same results was given by researchers matte and Gittleman, they experimented on eleven ADHD children.

On the whole,

Behaviours are outward reflection of personality and are shaped by genetic and environmental factors. Nutrients, one of the environmental factors and consumed with foods, are indispensable elements for both prenatal and postnatal life to lead a healthy life at every stage of life and to demonstrate healthy behaviours (Gultekin et al 9).

Parents have predominant role in child’s health and behaviour. It begins right from the pregnancy period; mother has to avoid taking additive foods. If she does, it automatically affects the fetus. An article from *the new Indian express indicates that*, High intake of unsaturated fat and sugar during pregnancy causes Attention Deficit hyperactivity disorder in children with behavioural problems early in life. “The researchers assessed how the mothers’ nutrition affected epigenetic changes (or DNA methylation) of IGF2, a gene involved in foetal development and the brain development of areas implicated in ADHD - the cerebellum and hippocampus” For the healthy brain development and to avoid the risk of Learning Disability, every mother should intake sufficient vitamins, minerals, amino acids and fatty acids in order to thrive healthily.

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## **Food, Morality and Beyond**

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Eating is necessary for survival. The element of food and relevant symbols has been as a read within the field of writing from the beginnings of time, it also gives an impact which can be both verbally and visually felt. Food is a theme of importance seen most in both the literatures written by women and those written for children. Mary Lamb is one such woman writer who had written tales, short stories, and poems for children. This paper intends to seek how of how Mary, sister of Charles Lamb had written poems based on food as a symbol. Mary sees food, as something different, she sees it not alone as a part of survival alone, but she with it views it to be as a part of moulding one's own behaviour. Three poems of Mary are taken for analysis namely: "The Peach" (Lamb 1903 7), "Moderation in Diet" (Lamb 1903 123-125), and "Charity" (Lamb 1903 127-129) from the collection *Poetry for Children*.

"The Peach" (Lamb 1903 7) is a poem which almost includes autobiographical elements that are to be found within the life of the Lambs. There were seven children born to John Lamb Senior and Elizabeth Lamb of which only three survived, who were John Lamb Junior, Mary Lamb, and Charles Lamb. The first two lines of the poem states the family conditions which is written as: "Mamma gave us a single peach, / She shar'd it among seven" (TP 1-2); and this single peach which was divided amongst the seven, which was of a small share, it did flavoured so fine.

This effect of showing the happiness of one peach to be shared amongst seven, shows both the condition of how the Lambs had lived, at one point of their lives, before they earned a proper living through their art of writing. This also shows the child who reads this poem, to learn or know about the class divide, which cannot be understood by the child at a very young age, yet the poet had intended to write the poem in such ways and the poem still continued to show the love that a mother has for her children which is evident from the lines that there were written that, "The tear was in our parent's eye;- / It seem'd quiet out of season; / When we ask'd wherefore she did cry, / She thus explain'd the reason:" (TP 9-12) the reply thus given by the mother was:

"The cause, my children, I may say,

Was joy, and not dejection;  
The Peach, which made you all so gay,  
Gave rise to this reflection:- (TP 13-16)

Here the word gay in line number 15 previously meant to mean happiness, thus Mary utilises old English in her poems. The poem finally ends, by Mary writing the present condition or stance by mentioning that always, “It’s many a mother’s lot to share, / Seven hungry children viewing, / ... / As I this Peach was doing.” (TP 17-20) Thus this poem narrates the issue that the Lambs faced in the past and the last line shows the present sense, thus proving that the sight of the peach made Mary to remember the past life lived by her and her family.

“Moderation in Diet” (Lamb 1903 123) is a poem which moulds the child of how not to spend much money on food, but to also regulate and to have a considerable regard on one’s own ways of eating. The poem opens up first with a punch line on to stop the habit of drinking, where the first stanza begins by advising to a boy named Jim which is written as:

The drunkard’s sin, excess in wine,  
Which reason drowns, and health destroys,  
As yet no failing is of thine,  
Dear Jim; strong drink’s not given boys. (MiD 1-4)

Children are always fond of sweets, and for this addiction, to be moderated it is said by Mary that, “A sweet tooth in an infant’s head / Is pardon’d, not in a grown child” (MiD 23-24). This poem also reads out the universal behaviourism of elders giving children money so that they could buy what they desire and so Mary writes, “If parent, aunt, or liberal friend, / With splendid shilling line your purse, / Do not the same on sweetmeats spend” (MiD 25-27), and she also advises the children to go and buy books instead and she gives a reason for this by stating that, “They who their minds with knowledge sweeten, / The savour long as life retain” (MiD 31-32). Thus Mary points out the truth that it is better to quench the thirst and hunger of the mind, rather than to spend much money on food.

The final poem, “Charity” (Lamb 1903 127-129) talks about class divides, and makes children to attain the behaviour of sharing and finally become charitable. In the seventh stanza of the poem Mary writes to the children by addressing them as, “You eat, and you drink; when you rise in the mor / You are cloth’d; you have health and content” (Charity 25-26) in the next line she writes of how a child never knows what it is meant to be when one is unable to get or eat proper food. These lines may also imply to mean the ways that Mary had suffered during the times she spent in the ins and outs of madhouses, where she was sent due to she being affected of

Bipolar Disorder and which was the cause of her murdering her mother Elizabeth Lamb with a knife and so she adds the line by keeping in the mind the then treatment found in the madhouses by writing that, “And you never have known, from the day you were born, / What hunger or nakedness meant” (Charity 27-28). Thus she also adds the line to the poem as in to share food by writing, “Give thy bread to the hungry, the thirsty thy cup” (Charity 33); and she had also written that if, “Having two cloaks, give one (said our Lord) to the poor” (Charity 37); and she also writes this by including what the Lord had said in the Holy Bible and she also writes that, “This can only be practis’d by persons grown up, Who’ve possessions which children have not” (Charity 35). This line could have been included in the poem since this collection was read along with the guidance of the parents, so they can make their wards understand the poems in a better ways.

Thus all these four poems make the children to attain and share a responsibility to give, to have a moderation in diet, to quench the mind with knowledge, and to be charitable this makes Mary to give importance to food, and to say food not to be an ultimatum for survival alone, but to challenge and make children to eat in moderation, and share what they have. Hence Mary in her poems talks of food, yet goes a step further and beyond by inducing morality without moralising young readers much. Mary thus in these poems concludes the fact that eating is not necessarily an act of survival alone.

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**Self-Acceptance through Serving Food in Amulya Malladi's  
*Serving Crazy with Curry***

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=====  
**Abstract**

The concept of 'Self' is defined as a set of one's characteristics that makes one different from others. Self-acceptance is a major factor that contributes to a psychological well-being of a person. Various cultural practices largely contribute to the formation of one's 'self' and food is undoubtedly a basic identity marker. Food is as deeply connected to one's psychology as it is to one's culture. Food literature has garnered more attention in the recent times and many writers explore the possibilities of various themes connected with food. Amulya Malladi is one such author who projects food as a basic source of expression in her works. Her novel *Serving Crazy with Curry* is a story about Devi, a second-generation Indian immigrant in America who is a lost soul. Devi, a serial failure in her life, fails in the attempt to end her life. And worse, she is saved by the one person whom she avoids the most - her mother. Devi stops speaking because of her trauma and uses food as a means of communication. She serves crazy twists to the Indian traditional dishes over which the family bond and each of their craziness is brought to light and compromises are made. At the end of the novel Devi learns to accept herself with all her faults and begins a new life. The aim of this paper is to analyse how the process of cooking is used as a catharsis by Devi who emerges successful in her self-acceptance.

Amulya Malladi is an Indo-Danish novelist in English who is prominent for her diasporic writings. She has authored the following novels: *A Breath of Fresh Air* (2002), *The Mango Season* (2003), *Serving Crazy with Curry* (2004), *Song of the Cuckoo Bird* (2005), *The Sound of Language* (2007), *A House for Happy Mothers* (2016), *The Copenhagen Affair* (2017). All her novels offer a fresh perspective of Indian diasporas and their experiences in the alien soil ranging from social to personal. Amulya Malladi often uses food as a major trope in her works and *Serving Crazy with Curry* tops this list. The aim of this paper is to analyse how the process of cooking is used as a catharsis by Devi who emerges successful in her self-acceptance.

Devi is the quintessential misfit or black sheep of her family of overachievers. Her father, Avi Venturi is a successful businessman in Silicon Valley despite the fact that he has lost his right arm in the Indo-Pak War of 1965, when he was just twenty-nine years old. Devi's sister Shobha is a Vice President of a software company. Devi's grandmother Vasu served as a military doctor and she retired as a Brigadier. The only person whom Devi looks down in her family is her mother

Saroj. Devi holds her in contempt for her being a housewife, for her blind adherence to traditional Indian values despite her immigration to America. Hence, she feels humiliated in front of her family as she is saved by Saroj. In order to take charge of her life, Devi feels the need to prove herself in something and she decides to take the place of her mother in the kitchen as she knows Saroj loves cooking and it is her passion. Devi defies Saroj by cooking fusion cuisine by adding twists to Saroj's traditional Indian dishes.

According to Freudian psychoanalysis, the unconscious realm of the human mind consists of fantasies, unfulfilled desires of a person. These desires come out in the disguised form through several mechanisms such as condensation, displacement, sublimation, symbolism and so on. Of these, 'displacement' is a common mechanism that is employed by everyone. According to Freud, displacement is "The substitution for an unconscious object of desire by one that is acceptable to the conscious mind" (Abrams and Harpham 248). This can be applied to the novel's protagonist Devi's predicament who tries to prove her mother wrong. Devi's contempt of her mother not only comes from the fact that Saroj is a housewife but also that Saroj is partial in her love for her daughters. "The first time Saroj compared Shobha and Devi was when she was in labor with Devi" (Malladi 26).

Shobha's birth was an easy one, a normal delivery and Shobha was very perfect as a baby. She came out within a few hours of labor, cried less, slept more and hardly disturbed Saroj. On the otherhand Devi's birth was full of pain. The labor lasted for thirty-five hours and the doctor has to perform a C-section to pull her out. In complete contrast to Shobha, Devi cried more and became a handful for Saroj. Saroj never forgets to bring this up whenever she gets an opportunity. This pattern continued till Devi's adulthood. Devi is constantly criticised by Saroj for her selection of non-Indian boyfriends, American lifestyle, and repeated lay-offs. "And each time something went wrong, Saroj thought how wonderful it would have been if Devi was just a little like Shobha..." (Malladi 29). This becomes the base for Devi's hatred of her mother.

It is to be noted that Devi is highly conscious of her skin colour because of the White boy Dylan whom she has kissed for the first time in her life called her "A brownie slut" (Malladi 55). Devi came home crying and when she related the incident to Saroj, she burst out. Saroj even told her that she deserved the title for her cheap behaviour. Vasu scolded Saroj for her remark and the two started fighting. Seeing the fight, Devi ran away from the house but returned soon after meeting a church Father who changed her heart. This is the reason for Devi's colourful love life which provokes Saroj to the core. She dates guys without any restrictions in the age, colour and profession.

Devi sees Shobha as her competitor because Shobha is clearly her mother's favourite and this is why she starts an affair with Girish. Devi feels like an equal to her sister. Though she is not serious about Girish in the beginning, she falls for him. Devi gets pregnant but she does not want to get humiliated in front of her family and so she aborts the child. When Devi is sacked from her job, she could not take it anymore and she slits her wrists.

Despite all her faults, Devi is not a selfish person. She loves her family and she wants to mingle with them. But she does not know the way to do it. Her desire for cooking stems from this very reason – she wants to mix with the family. Devi is not aware of this until she feels the satisfaction for the first time in bringing her family together for dinner. The whole family is present almost every day to taste Devi’s crazy food preparations. Devi’s Psychiatrist asks her to keep a journal as Devi is not ready to talk yet. Devi chooses one of Saroj’s recipe notebooks as her journal. Saroj loves cooking and it is her only passion. By choosing one of Saroj’s notebooks Devi indirectly wants to steal the passion from her mother. Devi cooks fusion cuisine by adding twist to traditional Indian dishes cooked by Saroj. With each cook, Devi feels a change inside her.

The first crazy dish is the result of Devi’s anger caused by Saroj’s boasting – the role played by Saroj in saving her life. When Saroj asks Devi to have samosas and mint chutney, Devi enters the kitchen and prepares new chutney made of ginger, apricot, mint, and chipotle chilli peppers. When everyone praises Devi for her fusion chutney, she feels happy. “Pride swelled inside her and for the first time in a very long time she felt a small measure of confidence” (Malladi 72). The usage of chipotle chilli peppers reflects the anger Devi feels for Saroj and Devi names the chutney as “The Anti-Saroj Chutney” (Malladi 78), which is quite self-explanatory. From that point, whenever Devi wants to express her emotion she uses food as her medium.

Kitchen is almost a sacred place to Saroj and she never allows anyone to cook there. She is utterly helpless when Devi begins cooking in her kitchen.

Saroj lived in fear that Devi, Shobha, or even Vasu would put things away in the wrong place or ruin her perfectly managed kitchen. That was unacceptable and to avoid any kitchen mishaps, Saroj banned everyone from using her kitchen. She never said it out loud, but everyone knew anyway. (Malladi 70)

Devi feels extreme pleasure when she accidentally slips a spoonful of sugar on the kitchen floor and demolishes the herb pot of Saroj. All these actions are manifestations of Devi’s unconscious desire of outdoing her mother.

“The metaphorical meaning of food, which needs to be treated with care, therefore permeates into human relations creating similarities between food and human emotions” (Assella 132). Devi establishes a connection between her cooking and her emotions. The novel is written in third person narrative except Devi’s recipes which are in the first-person narrative. This emphasizes the importance of Devi’s cooking which purges her pain, anger, and suffering.

Devi’s “Cajun Prawn Biryani” (Malladi 93) is the result of her wish to celebrate the obtainment of her driver’s license back. Saroj wants to cook Biryani to celebrate the occasion. Devi intervenes and cooks her own celebratory dish which becomes an instant hit. Devi chooses prawns because Saroj disapproves the usage of prawns in her biriyani. The reason for Saroj’s disapproval is Avi hates prawns. As usual, Devi deliberately adds prawns in her Biryani.

Ironically Avi who hates prawns is the first one to polish off his plate much to everyone's surprise. Again, Devi gains an upper hand. Devi is unable to believe her culinary skills, "Was she creating her own identity by cooking her own kind of food? She didn't know" (Malladi 134). When Devi contemplates suicide again, she is not able to implement her idea as she realizes that she has lot "to live and taste and explore" (Malladi 87) as her doctor said. Meanwhile the members of the family are spending time together and they are revealing their own craziness.

The choice of ingredients and the items she prepares indicates her desires – both hidden and expressed. "When she was angry, the food was spicy, when she seemed happy, there was dessert, and when she looked bored, the food tasted bland" (Malladi 77). The next crazy dish is "Grilled Chicken in Blueberry Curried Sauce" (Malladi 122) – the result of Devi's anger over Vasu's decision that she must go to India to see her hospitalised friend. Her very choice of large quantity of cayenne pepper – which is known for its hotness - reflects the anger she feels within. "Her chicken with blueberry sauce, served with fragrant cardamom rice, was peeling off the first layer of everyone's stomach lining" (Malladi 119). After tasting this dish, Vasu puts hold on her plan and stays with Devi.

Devi's love for Girish is also expressed in her cooking. When Devi prepares "Sooji Ladoos" (Malladi 148) for Girish, she waits for his remarks like a kid awaiting test results. Her ladoos are packed with nuts and they taste delicious. The very fact that she has selected a dessert item to cook for Girish indicates that she is still in love with him. When Girish praises them, she blushes like a teenage girl. She might have put an end to the affair but still she loves him and it is revealed through the dessert. It is because of this confirmation Girish splits from Shobha and moves to Oxford and hopes that Devi would offer him another chance.

The next crazy dish is "Lamb Clitoris" (Malladi 163) which is made by cooking lamb curry in the traditional way with all the spices in addition to the pomegranate as a twist. Devi cooks this dish when her secret is revealed to her family by her friend Jay who also happens to be her ex-boyfriend. Jay often tells that pomegranate is similar to clitoris, pink and succulent and hence she gives the name. The name of the dish is reflective of her sexual desires, her romantic relationships. It is to be noted that the lamb has a powerful Christian association. The lamb is usually offered as a sacrifice to Lord Christ and this can be compared to Devi when she sacrifices her baby for her family. She does not want to hurt her family anymore. When the news of her miscarriage is known to everyone, Devi expects Saroj to burst out but all Saroj does is to hug and comfort her. Nobody pressures her to tell anything regarding the loss of her baby. After this, Devi's attitude towards Saroj change. Devi finally experiences her mother's love for which she has longed for since her childhood. Saroj's change indicates that she begins to accept her daughter as she is.

Devi's closeness with Saroj is only increased when Devi allows Saroj to help her in making rasam powder. "For a moment Saroj thought Devi would refuse. She probably thought that she didn't need her mother's help and Saroj wanted so much to help" (Malladi 164). Devi

makes rasam with flaky pastry on top and it becomes a hit. The important thing is Devi allows Saroj to make rasam and she only adds the pastry on the top. Until that day Devi has not allowed Saroj to help at all but once Saroj starts respecting Devi's choices and accepts her, Devi's hatred begins to dissolve. On the same day Avi and Saroj talk about their marriage and sort out the differences between them. Immediately after their re-union, Saroj takes over the kitchen from Devi. Devi simply obliges and hopes for Saroj. "Maybe now daddy will start appreciating her just as I have" (Malladi 179).

Devi finally speaks to Shobha regarding Girish and asks her forgiveness. After her final meeting with the doctor, Devi asks Avi to put her in a culinary school. Avi happily accepts her decision. When they return home, Saroj's Dosa with Sambhar awaits them, Devi feels grateful and enjoys her mother's dish. "My memories of Sunday morning of eating hot dosas with sambhar and pickle are vivid. I'm glad that I'm living here again so that I can learn to appreciate the one thing that I never did learn to do before: Mama's impeccable south Indian cooking" (Malladi 212). Devi's desire of hurting her mother dissolves the moment she realizes that her mother has loved her always and she feels stupid that she has not understood that before. The very fact that she favors Indian dish over her fusion cuisine indicates that Devi finally accepts her Indian roots and she is proud of her mother.

Devi's desire of avoiding her mother results in the opposite. Saroj and Devi bond over cooking in the kitchen – their shared domain now – and this helps them dissolve their emotional hurdles too. Devi realizes that she will always have the influence of her mother in her own life. "Her food tasted different from her mother's, but she had learned to cook from Saroj and that made Devi feel closer to Saroj in a way she never had before. Silence and the kitchen had brought them together, and it was a time and place that Devi had started to relish" (Malladi 133). Devi finally breaks the emotional wall that has stopped her from realising her worth. She has lost a baby, lost her job and lost her guy. But still she hopes for the better. Till then Devi has been struggling her whole life to be a perfect daughter to her mother, to be an equal to her sister but all in vain. In the end Devi understands that life is not perfect, and she has to make do with whatever she has. Devi takes responsibility for her failures, begins to respect her Indian roots, loves her mother more and above all she accepts herself with all her shortcomings.

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## **An Aberration from the Ordinary-Scarcity as Seen in Grimm's *Children and the Household Tales***

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The aim of this paper is to explore and deconstruct the subtle role which food plays in Grimm's fairy tales. In these tales, frequent representations of starvation and denial can be seen. These representations are said to stem from Grimm's own personal life where he had to battle hunger pangs. Furthermore, widespread famine and poverty were also added reasons for incorporating such references in these tales. Grimm's fairy tales are not only an actual representation of society as it was, it was also a way to weave morals into tales which would guide children later on in life. These tales dealt with complex plots such as wastage, saving for later and even the lengths and extents to which starvation would drive a person. In many such tales, there is a hint of cannibalism, indicating the dire state of affairs which prevailed in the society. Not only can deconstruction unmask the role of food in these tales, it can also shed light on the lifestyle that was reflected as a mirror reflects one's reflection. There is more than meets the naked eye when it comes to these stories. Though they were intended for a younger audience, they have managed to accurately capture what drives a person, be it in the presence or acute absence of food. Not only does it serve as a temptation, it also brings forth the underlying malice within certain characters.

The importance of food is manifold-not only does it sustain life, but also enables man to carry out his everyday tasks with ease. In the absence of food, man's life becomes chaotic and he runs from pillar to post just to scrap through. People live and work for the sole purpose of each and every single day's meal. Food binds man together- important functions uniting friends and family alike are linked by food.

Food is the nexus, connecting man to the society. It can be seen that sharing of food can develop a sense of care and love among people. It can provide a transition for man to relax from the cares and worries of his life. Be it a rich business magnate or a poor roadside beggar, man's ultimate aim is to secure a day's meal.

Food symbolizes several emotions like love, comfort, as stress buster, memory, as reward or power. People turn at least once in their life to satisfy any of these feelings with food. Only for

food people give up their time with family, for friends, their character etc. People spend their life struggling to earn, isolating themselves away from their loved ones just for a day's meal and to make their life satisfactory. It all begins with food.

The need for food makes our society competitive and materialistic. They undergo lots of difficulties and pains in their working area, they accept everything for to fill their stomachs. People are found to bear lots of pain and struggle in their professional environment, all because they realize it is the only way to survive. However, this could be the reason for the old saying that one never forgets the man who served them a meal. Only the struggling understands the true value of pain, the pain of poverty. Nevertheless, it can be perceived that the acute pang of hunger is felt by the poor and hungry than the rich.

A man can bear his hunger only to a certain limit and if he finds or realize a way to satiate himself, he may do anything for it. It is evident from Grimm's Fairy Tale 'The Starving Children' published in his first edition of *Children and the Household Tales* in which the plot describes a mother who was hungry and loses her mind enough to make her choose her daughter as her meal. The tale thus brings out the reality that hunger can make man forget relationships or any sort of emotional attachments.

Hunger can turn a normal person wild making them does anything tragic or disastrous for food. In today's society, it is witnessed that several of the farmers kill themselves as they are unable to feed their family. The recent damage caused by the 'Gaja' cyclone in Tamil Nadu and Kerala floods has wreaked havoc in the lives of people. The newspapers are plagued with families ruined and the struggle to consume even a single meal. When the breadwinner of a family is affected, it results in undue burden being heaped on the shoulders of other family members.

When Grimm's father had an untimely death, a similar fate was in store for the family. They were pushed on the brink of starvation and this could have resulted in hunger and starvation being included as key themes in several of his short stories. The world has seen several of men going to war and even nations waging bloody battles killing each other for the sake of food. It can be observed that a person becomes a thief, a murderer or any other degenerate criminal element for the sole sake of hunger and starvation.

The stark example for this aspect is Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables*. He is branded as a thief for stealing a mere loaf of bread to save his family from hunger. In spite of protesting, he was jailed and suffered for an extended period and languished behind bars. Likewise, the current society has witnessed the murder of Madhu, a tribal man from Kerala who was beaten to death for stealing some food. Hunger can be seen as a driving cause for most of the crimes in society.

Even the carnivorous animals are tame when they are stomach full, nevertheless they are provoked and are ferocious when hunger strikes them. Similarly, hungry people are unable to think about others. They forget themselves when they are hungry and resort to extreme measures which often lead to deadly consequences.

Should the man be blamed? Should his motive be blamed? Or should the driving psychology behind his hunger be blamed? It is still difficult to ascertain which is right or wrong when it comes to these issues and society faces a dilemma. It is frightful to see a starving child who is unaware of what is happening to it and neither can they react however the worse sight is a starving man who has developed vampire instincts. For a hungry man, even a muddy or murky pool of water can appear as ambrosia due to his need to satiate himself.

Rakhi Chakraborty, in August 2014, has mentioned in her article ‘Your Story’ that one of the deadliest famine massacre was in 1943 when three million people died due to starvation and the others resorted to eating grass and human flesh to survive and satisfy hunger. People can stoop to such extreme levels when they come face to face with hunger.

Grimm’s fairy tales abound with themes of hunger and starvation. In the story ‘The Robber Bridegroom’, the dread of cannibalism by hungry men are clearly revealed. “A band of drunken thieves drag home a young woman, force her to drink three full glasses of wine "one white, one red, one yellow," tear off her clothes, and finally, they "chopped her beautiful body into pieces, and sprinkled them with salt” (Grimm 202).

Similarly, in the tale ‘Brother and Sister’ the children, they do not even get good food a day. They worried that, “Our meals are the hard crusts of bread that are left over; and the little dog under the table is better off, for she often throws it a nice bit. May Heaven pity us.”(Grimm 67).

In ‘One Eyes, Two-eyes and Three-eyes’ the girl with the two eyes were tortured by not giving her good and enough food. She cried and cried in hunger and this can be proved through ““Have I not reason to weep, when I have two eyes like other people, and my sisters and mother hate me...and give me nothing to eat but the scraps they leave? To-day they have given me so little that I am still quite hungry”” (Grimm 585). Making her starve was the only way to torture the two-eyed girl. According to Grimm the worst punishment was making people to go hungry. The other two sisters waited for her with the small amount of food and they were eagerly waiting to enjoy how she was suffering from hunger.

These are only a few illustrations of Grimm’s grasp of what hunger and food can make a person do. Though food might seem as an inconsequential element in fairy tales, Grimm has

highlighted aspects of gluttony and cases where a dearth of food has resulted in calamities. Grimm has explored both aspects by weaving moralistic strains for children to abide by.

They are taught neither to be greedy nor to be lured by food, not should they waste food as there might be a time when they might face an acute shortage of food. Since these stories were aimed at moulding young minds, Grimm brothers wanted them to know at a young age that wasting food was not morally correct because there might come a time in their lives when the lack of food would intensely affect them.

At first, Grimm brothers enjoyed their rich life. They got what they wanted in life and they never realized what hunger was. But after the death of their father, it was totally upside down. Fate played in their life and they struggled to get one time meal. Some days they had to satiate themselves with a piece of dry bread.

Jacob Grimm ultimately understood how important it was for him to get a job. Starvation and poverty lead them to be more responsible in life and look out for possibilities enough to feed them. The principle thought that only a man who suffered from hunger can understand its pain is clearly explicable from the Grimm's tales. The brothers have shown a clear picture of the pain of hunger in their tales. Also, Grimm's started to collect fairy tales the time of famine where people starved to death and their hunger lead to kill each other to satisfy their stomachs. That was exactly incorporated by Grimm in most of his tales.

The subtle ways in which he incorporates elements of food, hunger and starvation are mostly to teach his young readers the value of food. He also draws in his own experiences when starvation held its firm grip on his family in the absence on the breadwinner. Extreme hunger is a recurrent theme that runs through many of Grimm's fairy tales and paralleled their own lives.

Grimm's *Children and the Household Tales*, first published in 1812, are about many things: magic and families, evilness and talking animals. But running through many of them is a brutal obsession with food. The Brothers Grimm collected stories of hunger: what horrors it will drive some people to and how sweet it feels to satisfy it. These are entirely based on their first-hand experience of appetite and its effects. Getting in close proximity with hunger and starvation, Grimm finally was able to understand the feelings of the less privileged class.

By the time they were writing their collection of folklore in the early 1800s they were depriving themselves of food to support younger siblings. At breakfast they drank a single cup of coffee. Their only meal was a dinner, three portions shared between five people. There is a voice that pops up repeatedly in Grimm. It says, 'I'll tell you a secret and you won't be hungry

anymore.' Jacob wrote of how he missed the 'order' of mealtimes at his mother's table (she died in 1808).

And almost as bad as the prospect of becoming dinner is the prospect of having no dinner at all -many of these stories are haunted by the spectre of hunger. It is famine and despair that sets the whole plot machinery of 'Hansel and Gretel' in motion. Mothers threaten to eat or abandon their own children because there is no food. Outside of the palace or noble house, people survive on a meagre diet of bread, roots and herbs with the occasional egg or apple. Step children and outcasts get dry crusts and whatever they can forage.

Maria Tatar tells, that the "the tales had their origins in a culture where famine was common, and life was nasty, brutish, and short. The young and vulnerable may have indeed felt at risk when there was nothing to eat, even if, as we know, cannibalism was a fairly rare phenomenon. She points out that adults still "express their affection with phrases like 'You're good enough to eat up.' (Richards).

But as Tatar also says, these stories remind the readers over and over again of the central importance and pleasure of food in their lives. "Often a great meal is the highest good in the fairy tale." She writes: "Yes, gold sparkles and shines, castles lure, and princesses await the transformative kiss, but there is almost nothing like a full stomach for those living in fairy-tale worlds (Richards).

There are also instances of cannibalism in Grimm's fairy tales which some might argue are too intense for young children to fathom. However, Grimm brothers wanted to portray an accurate picture of what would happen in the sheer absence of food. In 'The Juniper Tree', a wicked stepmother kills her stepson so that their daughter will inherit everything. In order to conceal the hideous crime, she chops up the little boy's body and turns him into a pot of stew.

When his father returns home, he tucks into a hearty meal. "Ah, wife, how delicious this food is, give me some more."(Grimm 223). Hunger does not think of any relationship. By including such elements of cannibalism, the lines drawn between family, friends and foes dims. These brutal and animalistic tendencies come to play when food or the lack of it comes to the forefront. By incorporating this basic human need to teach young minds a lesson, the Grimm brothers highlight features of society and its attitude towards food.

In 'Hansel and Gretel' the family is affected by poverty and the step mother finds it hard to feed her step children. Being a step-mother, she thinks of eliminating the kids and uses poverty as the weapon to convince the father to send away the kids from home. This can be proved through, "Everything is eaten again, we have one half loaf left, and after that there is an

end. The children must go, we will take them farther into the wood, so that they will not found out their way out again” (Grimm 88).

However, the children out of starvation look for a way to satisfy their hunger. It was their hunger and longing for food that they got attracted to a house covered with bread and cakes assuming that they will have lot of food to eat. However, their blind hunger pushed them into danger. This is seen through, “... and when they came quite up to little house, they saw that it was built of bread and covered with cakes, but that the windows were of clear sugar”. (Grimm 90)

Many historians point out that famines which plagued the nation and plunged the whole of Europe into poverty were another reason why Grimm incorporated the element of hunger in these stories. Widespread famine swept across the nation and there was acute scarcity of food. Begging, stealing and eating whatever was left were the only means of sustaining oneself during those terrible times. By including these tough situations and ghastly details in these stories, Grimm is able to keep his stories mirroring the reality of society and life during his period.

Children are made aware from a young age that famine and hunger are realities which they might have to face. Though there is a make believe world in his tales, Grimm also wanted to portray a slice of unpleasant reality to keep the children grounded to the real world. Magic and fairies were only a means of escapism. The real world was often a harsh and demanding place where friends could turn into foes in the blink of an eye. It is often thought that a rich man’s dog is getting better food than the servant working in the same household. The disparity in the manner in which the poor and downtrodden are treated when it comes to the issue of food is a blatant reminder by Grimm’s tales of what the person have failed to realize as a society. Grimm needed to keep this thought in the minds of children and hence he incorporated these less than savoury elements.

Ultimately, these stories provide an engaging reading to both children and adults alike. Be it ‘Snow White’ being tempted to eat the poisoned apple or Hansel and Gretel gobbling up the cakes and delicacies, food continues to play an integral role in Grimm’s stories. These stories also remind oneself of the harsher realities of life – hunger, starvation, food scarcity, etc.

By including such themes for tender minds, Grimm has only helped them to grow in maturity and understanding of issues plaguing the present world. These timeless tales continue to remain classic children’s literature due to their ability to weave society’s issues relating to food and food scarcity.

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## **Determining the Symbolic Representation of 'Food' in Life and Literature**

**R. Steffi, Ph.D. Research Scholar and Dr. V. Sangeetha, Professor**

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An individual born in the world grows to 'survive' in the Universe. The growth factors of a person are influenced through various components of which the most important are the primary needs: food, clothing and shelter.

Food is the most essential requirement for sustenance of human life. Even if a human being does not have shelter over their head or clothes over their body, they would still survive if they get wholesome nutrition. That is why all over human history, we have been motivated to search and seek food. Throughout history food has acted as a catalyst for societal transformation, societal organization, competition, development, conflict and expansion. (Singh)

Though the basic needs of life get widened or altered, food remains unaltered and cannot be detached from any living specimen. There are various truths hidden in the various symbols outshone by 'food'. 'Food' through its various forms represents various shades of life.

Besides, literature and life which are the byproducts of each other have never refused to replicate the essence of food that it adds to life. The aspects and emotions that food symbolises through life and literature are being identified and enlisted by the paper by drawing references from life stances and literatures.

Food is an important commodity that marks both opulence and nothingness. The abundance of food denotes wealth whereas the scarcity of food addresses the paupers. Food marks the functioning of a person both from inside and outside. The inside functions of a human body such as losing or controlling one's appetite is determined by the availability of food. Availability of food is again influenced by the purchasing power exercised by the person, the act that takes place outside the human body. Therefore, the act to afford for food to whet one's appetite is determined by the availability of money. Depending on the availability of money, people choose the kind of food accordingly for consumption. Thus food, demystifies both the purchasing power

and the economic credibility of a person. It indirectly introduces the intricate class divisions among the home sapiens.

Food is made a business, it is considered as a commodity that mints money in abundance. In the hands of corporate sectors, food is packaged and sold that has led to food crisis. The food crisis has charged a state, in which the economically sound people afford to buy the packed food commodities and the economically subjugated people act as spectators. This draws a margin between the haves and have-nots. It again reiterates marginalisation in a new form leaving people unhappy and subjugated. In the present times, food attempts to create and thicken the margins between people. Margins majorly affect people of all ages and push them to experience the degrees of unworthiness. It makes people to fail to understand the difference between 'want' and 'need'. On handling these crises, people tend to forget the devastations that occur due to food scarcity.

In the present, 'poverty' that is showed up by the scarcity of food is extensively becoming high across the globe. The traces are evident. "An estimated 85,000 children under five may have died from extreme hunger in Yemen since a Saudi-led coalition intervened in the civil war in 2015, a humanitarian body said on Wednesday, as the UN special envoy arrived in Yemen to pursue peace talks" (Reuters). "The West Bengal Legislative Assembly on Tuesday witnessed noisy scenes over reports of deaths of Sabar community members allegedly due to starvation and malnutrition, with members of the Congress and Left parties staging a walkout" (Special Correspondent).

In literature, the descriptions of food occupy a space. These descriptions are either out letting the setting of the scene or the tone of the characters. 'Descriptions' is the genuine exaggeration employed by writers to exemplify their imagination and recreate the same in the minds of the readers. Some of these descriptions are supported by food products or some of the food products itself are described to achieve the writer's purpose. These genuine exaggerations have never failed to fulfill their purpose of recreating the writer's peace of mind. These descriptions have brought to life many aspects of life.

Food being a lifesaving entity have always found place in literature. The word 'food' or the statements relating to food have made a remarkable and an everlasting spot in the minds of the readers. There are various connotations that literature replicates through food. One such connotation that is annotated by Christopher Marlowe in *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (edited by C. Bhaskara Menon) is 'gluttony'. The description of gluttony, one of the seven deadly sins as enlisted by Marlowe stands the test of time.

GLUT. Who, I, sir? I am Gluttony. My parents are all dead, and the devil a penny they have left me; but a bare pension, and that is thirty meals a day and ten bevers, -- a small trifle to suffice nature. O, I come of a royal parentage! my grandfather was a Gammon of Bacon, my grandmother a Hogshead of Claret-wine; my godfathers were these, Peter Pickle-herring and Martin Martlemas-beef; O, but my god-mother, she was a jolly gentlewoman, and well-beloved in every good town and city; her name was Mistress Margery March-beer. Now, Faustus, thou hast heard all my progeny; wilt thou bid me to supper? (2.2.27)

Food attributes to psychological healing too. Food, either liquid or solid or be it a bowl of delicious biryani or a cup of hot coffee revives not just the senses or the appetite but provides a psychological healing too. What a person eats determines his or her actions. “Put simply, what you eat directly affects the structure and function of your brain and, ultimately, your mood” (Selhub). References similar to these facts are evident in literature too.

People talk too much about the writing of old white men, but if you could never taste again, it is Hemingway who could tell you about food. In *A Moveable Feast*, his ode to appetite, he writes, “As I ate the oysters with their strong taste of the sea and ... drank their cold liquid from each shell and washed it down with the crisp taste of the wine, I lost the empty feeling and began to be happy and to make plans.” (Conroy)

Despite happiness (as described above) ‘grief’, which is one of the difficult situations to experience in life is also reflected through food or over food and finds a place in literature too. The following lines are to be reflected in a state of distress to find solace.

This is Charles Bowden writing in his essay, *The Bone Garden of Desire*, about a defiant appetite in the face of grief. “I would believe in the words of solace if they included fresh polenta with a thickened brown sauce with shiitake and porcini mushrooms ...” He pleads with us to always go to the garden and the kitchen. There is affirmation of life in both. (Conroy)

Food has also become a genre in literature. It influences certain writings and writers to captivate their readers. The illustrations of food employed in literature create awe for the readers and they stand out in the minds of the readers forever. One striking line that just has employed the word ‘food’ is still green in the minds of the readers. The line is from one of the Shakespeare’s plays, *Twelfth Night* and the quotation stands out as follows. “If music be the food of love, play on” (“Famous”).

As food has been ventured in genres of literature the same has eventually ventured as a life changing career. It has branched into a stream of education nurturing someone's occupation. Institutions are specifically offering courses to specialise in catering technology. Cooking skills have illumined the lives of people and have turned people into historical figures as in the case of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) founder Colonel Harland Sanders.

Food plays a role in every genre of English literature. Especially food and drama have historical affiliations. Food and the issues underlying them have influenced writers and their writings as in the case of William Shakespeare.

And during Shakespeare's time, the English people were plenty hungry. The country saw at least 40 food riots between 1586 and 1631, as historian Buchanan Sharp records in his classic work *In Contempt of All Authority*. Shakespeare was new on the London scene just as the city was rocked by the food riots of the 1590s. And the bard well knew the hunger - fuelled 1608 "Midland Rising" that affected his home turf in Warwickshire. Scholars suggest Shakespeare drew on both in writing *Coriolanus*. (Bramley)

Hunger and poverty which are left behind as the ill effects of food's unavailability is truly felt in literature.

But in *Coriolanus*, the playwright makes the struggle real. The play, based on the life of the legendary Roman leader Caius Marcius Coriolanus, opens with citizens armed with "staves, clubs, and other weapons" in protest against the city fathers they accuse of hoarding grain while the populace starves. The resistance leader insists he fights "in hunger for bread, not thirst for revenge" – even as he rallies the masses to rebellion "rather to die than to famish." (Bramley)

The elements of food enter the titles of literary writings. They are employed to create paradoxical, metaphorical, satirical or any special effects to a literary work. They leave an everlasting hue in the minds of the readers. These titles provide symbolic representation of life and life related themes. It seems to turn out as a tool to register the writer's piece of mind. These titles connote the essence of the literary work. These titles propagate the literary work. The titles of these kinds are as follows: *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl, *Jack and the Beanstalk* by Steven Kellogg, *Chicken Soup* series to mention a few.

As titles stand as bench mark for literary works, some of the brands too that label some of the food products set bench mark for certain food products and propagate the same. The food brands such as Café Coffee Day, Starbucks Coffee, Cadbury, Britannia and many more fulfill the purpose of distinguishing their products from others. They denote the trust built on their products by the consumers. They denote the long history of the food products and the various historical aspects attached to it.

Food determines ‘history’. Food adheres history of brands in it. Evolution of certain food, food products and food brands cling to historical background. Evolution of the veteran brand KFC did have a story board relating to one of the historical events. The story of KFC dates back to the period of Great Depression which marks the daunting days of world history. Great Depression which brought differences in literary dimensions has chronicled the birth of one of the world’s popular food brand KFC. “KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) was founded by Colonel Harland Sanders, an entrepreneur who began selling fried chicken from his roadside restaurant in Corbin, Kentucky, during the Great Depression” (Singh).

Thus, despite reiterating the symbolic representation of ‘food’ in life and literature the paper is bound to stress on the following aspects which therefore adds to the outcomes of the paper. Food wastage happens at a large scale. On the other hand, need for food is highly increasing. It is due to ineffective food management. “In every Indian wedding, food is the most important part and the most wasted too! In India, statistics related to food wastage at weddings have been quite shocking, given the fact that it is the same country where countless number of people have to survive without the basic necessity of two meals a day” (Venue Monk).

Food wastage and food scarcity are both recurring and increasing leading to critical situation as stated by the following statistics. “Around 100,000 weddings and social events are held in India every day. Food wasted each day at weddings and family functions in Mumbai alone would be enough to feed the city’s vast slum population” (Venue Monk). In order to curtail this warning situation, food management has to be practiced at a sturdy fashion.

Another impact that the paper implies to stress on is that ‘Globalisation’ has altered the food phase of the country. Food wander has been turned into wander lust. All the continental food of which some are considered junk has replaced the traditional food. These junk foods fail to provide goodness to the human body. This results in an unsound body and mind.

The endurance of food is strongly felt in both life and literature. ‘Food’ denotes various shades of life. The diverse spectrum of emotion that food exhibits is limitless as referred in the paper. The chronicles that food delivers about people, place, and things are exquisite and

interesting. Therefore, food as an everlasting commodity relishes both body and mind. With its nutritional values and deliberate facts 'food' symbolises its key representations. These representations are therefore exemplified by the paper through the instances taken from life and literature. Literature and life are not two different entities - therefore 'food' in both represent life.

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**The Potentate Hunger and the Camouflaged Angel in  
Herta Müller's *The Hunger Angel*  
Dr. S. Punitha**

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The fundamental human activity, eating, is very essential both for the survival and social functioning. The fundamental qualities to endorse the understanding of human society overviews the eating habits, rituals, the choice of dining companions and the reasons behind these purposes. Food is not only meant for the survival purpose but also to delight the individual. Themes related to food are quite common among all types of writing, and they are often used as a literary device in promoting both verbal and visual impact. For example, the attractive display of the menu card leaves the best impression on a foodie.

Food is also a noteworthy theme in literature by and about each region, religion, class, and culture. They play a vital role in determining the identity of any individual by bringing out the emotions through the likeness or hatred, starving or hunger, anger or happiness. When food provides the path, it is the literature that acts as the truck in delivering the message to the readers.

In addition to reflecting social order and civilization, food is often the representative of the limitations imposed upon an individual, bleeding well with the idea of excess as a key element of the author's imagination. It offers a means for powerful imagery in adult literature as well. The aim of this paper is to try to portray how food as a means of communication picturizes the pains, the sufferings, anguish and fear under an undesirable situation.

Herta Müller, a 2009 Nobel Laureate, reminiscent the Romanian-born German writer, Oskar Pastior's irreparable past through the protagonist Leo Auberg in her novel *The Hunger Angel*. It clothes the historical event of the deportation of the Germans in Romania to the gulags of Russia in 1945 with flesh and blood and gives an emotional dimension to it. The novel depicts the trauma of hunger faced by the people in the deportation camps through the character of Leo Auberg, a seventeen-year old deportee.

Hunger, personified as an Angel, strikes each and every individual to transform them to be more and more selfish. The internees in the camp are given very little to eat and are made to sweat away their blood. The insatiable Hunger gets a full energetic life during the sleep after a

day's hard work. The craving for food makes them partly lunatic in their behavior. The hunger angel invariably approaches all the people in the camp:

Uploading was always a job for two or three people. Not counting the hunger angel, because we weren't sure whether there was one hunger angle for all of us or if each of us had his own. The hunger angel approached everyone, without restraint. He knew that where things can be loaded, other things can be loaded. In terms of mathematics, the results could be horrifying: if each person has his own hunger angel, then every time someone dies, a hunger angel is released. (The Hunger Angel 74-5)

The hunger embracing all the people, marks a great impression that cannot be easily erased: "The hunger angel looks for traces that can't be erased and erases traces that can't be saved." (78)

The narrator elaborates on how in the camp they tried to alleviate their hunger by eating orach, the mountain spinach and dill, a kind of grass. They also "stole before, during and after work" (16), begged and combed the rumble heaps. He describes the chronic hunger inflicted on them by "the hunger angel" (18). Leo reveals the never-ending hunger of the internees by his repetitive talk about 'the hunger', 'the chronic hunger', 'hunger . . . always new', 'the hunger echo', 'the hunger angels, 'starvation', pictures their hunger "which is always greater than [they] are" (17). He says that no words are adequate for the suffering caused by hunger" (18) and for 60 years, ever since he came back from the camp, he has been eating against starvation.

The text narrates about the eternal omnipresence of the omnivorous hunger in the internees, throughout their camp days. They had to shovel for their bread and "1 shovel load = 1 gram bread." (76) Leo says that shoveling was hard and it demanded total involvement. His wandering mind sapped his strength at times and sent him into a delirium in which he started fantasizing about food. This shows how the potentate hunger transforms a man into a scavenging animal. Further it suggests the fact that hard work and hunger eroded the mental ability of workers, resulting in deaths by accidents.

The death and the panic of the narrator is an instance of the panic of the people in the camp. Hunger strikes each and every individual to transform them to be more and more selfish. The craving for food makes them partly lunatic in their behavior as Leo points out:

With open hunger the angel leads me to the garbage pile behind the mess hall. . . Hunger is my direction, assuming it isn't his. The angel lets me pass. He isn't turning shy; he just doesn't want to be seen with me. . . . My craving is raw, my hands are wild. They are definitely my hands: the angel does not touch garbage. I shove the potato peelings into my mouth and close both eyes, that way I can taste them better, the frozen peels are sweet and glassy. (78)

Leo recalls a sleepless night, due to hunger and the torturing lice. Whatever Leo finds to pacify his hunger, he tries his hands at all of them. He consumes the grass, flowers and even frozen ice to quieten the hunger angel, which is his constant and noisy companion. The internees found an outlet for their compulsion to eat, in their dreams; but it was a torment too, as they had to wake up to the miserable reality. The golden rule among the internees in the camp was not to talk about the immeasurable hunger, when they were hungry.

Even though people lead a life of utter desperation, their urge to pacify the ravenous hunger stays higher with them. Leo's "skin-and-bones time" indicates the hard times in the camp during which they go on searching for any edible item. The section "The case of the stolen bread", describes Fenya, who doled out a ration of bread for all in the camp. Leo says: "She was the bread, the mistress from whose hands we ate, like dogs, day after day" (97). She was agonizingly disciplined and immaculately ugly, was the mistress of the bread and an accomplice of the hunger angel.

The deadly combination of insufficient supply of food and extraction of utmost labor from the people in the camp became a routine. The ration supply of food for one day will not be sufficient for the internees as this supply differs from people to people in the same camp according to their state of work. Fenya knew exactly who should get how much ration. Leo belonged to the 800gm. group – the normal ration. 600gm. was for light work inside the camp and 1000gm./1kg. was the exceptional ration for the heaviest labour. The bread was very heavy and a single slice as thick as the length of one's thumb weighed 800gms.

Leo's first decision of the day was not to eat his entire portion at breakfast with his cabbage soup and keep aside a bit for the evening. There was no meal at midday, as they were at work. Leo recalls what happened on a day when one of the internees, Karli Halmen, had the day off. He stole the other internee Albert Gion's saved bread. On finding this out, Albert punched him on the mouth, dragged him to the water bucket and choked him. The others in the barrack joined him in pissing him on his face. Once the business with the bread was over, everyone acted the same as always. The bread is the true cause of their fight and their hunger.

Further, the author describes how the internees took various measures to assuage the gutbiting hunger – by discussing the different recipes of various dishes, and about the reminiscences of their childhood days in their home town, when their hunger was at its peak. Leo, the narrator says: "Everyone gets caught in the bread trap" (110) – the trap of being steadfast at breakfast, the trap of swapping bread at supper and the trap of the saved bread under the pillow at night. Everyone felt cheated, after the swapping of bread. Utterly alone inside the pack, each person tried to make his soup go further. By doing so, they want to feel the presence of the camouflaged hunger angel in them.

Hunger isolates the people and brings out the worst in them. Leo says that before someone died of hunger, a 'white hare' appeared on his face and the bread from such a person is called "cheek-bread" (111). No one was allowed to take Kati Sentry's cheek bread. Once the

accordion player Konrad Fonn swapped bread with Kati. She gave him her bread but handed her a rectangular piece of wood. When she bit into it, he laughed at her. Karli intervened and got back her bread. Everyone stood up for her and she proved to be their conscience. Leo says that they had learned in the camp to clear away the dead without shuddering. Their clothes were taken off before they turned stiff, as they were needed to prevent those who were alive from freezing to death and their saved bread was eaten.

Leo speaks about the omnipresence of the hunger in the camp and describes the haunting hunger to be a palpable object. He personifies hunger as a man and a deceiver. Once when Leo went to the market, he found a 10 ruble note on the ground and purchased food items for all the 10 rubles and ate them greedily. When he was nearing the camp, he felt sick and threw up everything he had gorged; he cried even as he threw up, feeling bad about wasting all the expensive food. He entered the camp with an empty pillowcase, empty stomach and a bitter emptiness inside him.

The struggle for bread continues till the end of camp life. The exchange of bread prolongs:

In the evening, over cabbage soup, bread gets swapped, because your own bread always appears smaller than the other person's. And this holds true for everyone. Before the swap you feel light-headed, right after the swap you feel doubt. After swapping, the bread I traded seems bigger in the other person's hand than it did in mine. And the bread I got in return has shrunk . . . I better swap again. (110)

The exchange of bread in the camp takes place until the hunger catches the reader and intensifies the search for it in their own self. The author throughout the novel portrayed the various faces of the disguised hunger attacking the insane people at various angles. Even though these people lead a life of utter desperation, their urge to pacify the ravenous and the potentate hunger stays higher with them even after so many years of their freedom.

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*Food in Literature: Papers Presented in National Seminar on Food in Literature, 2019*

Dr. S. Punitha

*The Potentate Hunger and the Camouflaged Angel in Herta Müller’s The Hunger Angel* 30

## **Representation of Food: A Study of Anita Nair's *Alphabet Soup for Lovers***

**S. Kiruthiga, Ph.D. Research Scholar  
Dr. B. J. Geetha, Assistant Professor**

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Anita Nair (1966- ), the living writer of this century, is an Indian English writer. She is a creative artist bestowed with enormous ability and scholarly view. At the same time, she is artful in interweaving her stories in the Indian scenario, unique in presenting her formation and pioneering in sharing the experiences of language. Exhibiting an individualistic elegance in her writing style, Anita Nair's novels display an awe-inspiring depth in her narration, and the main thrust of her novels is the confrontation between the self-actualization and family responsibilities of the individuals. Almost all her novels are embedded in Indian culture and the characters and settings are inherently Indian.

After venturing out to sea with the tale of a Somalian trader with a jeweled eye, Anita Nair once again goes back into the feminine zone quite a few years' after *Ladies Coupe*. This book is a somewhat tranquilize love story between Shoola Pani, a popular film star on a self-imposed retreat up in the Anamalai Hills, and his landlady Lena Abraham.

The author's latest work is openhandedly embellished with references from the kitchen. Anita Nair's latest book, *Alphabet Soup for Lovers*, is very different from her sweeping historical saga, The book follows Lena whose easygoing life on a tea plantation in the Anamalai Hills is turned upside down with the arrival of the south Indian superstar Shoola Pani. The love between the movie star and memsahib is told partially through the eyes of Lena's cook and general factotum, Komathi, as she learns the English alphabet through similar-sounding ingredients.

This paper entitled "Representation of Food: A Study of Anita Nair's Alphabet Soup for Lovers" portrays a riveting tale of two ill-fated lovers who get together after a long struggle, sacrifices or a display of strong character. This book *Alphabet Soup for Lovers* felt like interleave in a bowl of warm, ghee laced khichdi, occasionally biting into a whole peppercorn

or a piece of mango pickle accompanied by a rather limp, oil soaked papad which should have brought it some texture and flavors into the khichdi but ended up rather being a nuisance.

*Alphabet Soup for Lovers*, Anita Nair's most recent novel, was born when her Italian publisher specially made her to inscribe food-based short fiction. Since she refused to 'write to order', the book emerged as a slim novel built on the foundation stone of romance. However, despite its simplicity it is not an ordinary romantic tale. Nair has spiced it up with a character-cum-narrator and a sub-plot that make all the difference.

At the heart of the story Lena Abraham married to the very gentlemanly KK. They live quietly on a tea plantation in the idyll of the Anamalai Hills in south India. Komathi, their cook and Lena's true lighthouse keeper, begins to learn the English alphabet using the sounds of common cooking ingredients to help her remember the letters. As she makes progress with her lessons, she narrates the events at her employers' home unfolding before her, escorted by her own views and analyses. More often than not, she comes across as an astute observer. For instance, this is how she describes the relationship between the husband and wife:

That's how they always are. Like two strangers in a doctor's waiting room [...] These two are like store-bought appalam. Seemingly perfect but with neither flavor nor taste. (*Alphabet Soup for Lovers* 5)

Incidentally, Arisi Appalam is the first of the element with which she begins her alphabet voyage. However, Komathi shares the space with another narrator throughout the novel unidentified and omniscient, hence less interesting but equally significant. This voice has a sensitive comment to make on Lena and KK:

There's an absence of messy emotions between them, the sort that can throw people off kilter. They don't question and judge and this allows them to remain wedded to each other. (7) The tediousness of their lives is interrupted by the appearance of a well-known actor on the scene. Shoola Pani Dev, an aging actor and south Indian cinema's 'heartthrob', rents the home stay the couple runs, seeking refuge from his own stardom, at the peaceful site. In her first encounter with him Lena finds his actions unpleasant and confronts him with the words, 'Are you always this rude?' — to which his response is an apology offered with a boyish grin. This section of the novel comes across as somewhat of a cliché, though not precisely an Elizabeth-Darcy charade, since there is an instant connect between them. (78)

Even though the lovers cannot yet comprehend what is become obvious between them, Komathi can read between the lines with no trouble and fast. When Lena returns from her regular visit to the actor in the cottage, Komathi examines a ‘gleam in her eye’. She says,

When she was a child, she often dipped into the honey jar with a large spoon when no one was looking [...] My Lena is too old to find joy in the sticky sweetness of honey. What has she been stealing? (34)

Komathi’s intellectual perception is evident here. Lena is not particularly fond of Daangar chutney (D is for Daangar chutney), yet she asks her to make it and takes it to Shoola Pani, who apparently tasted it last when his mother was still alive. The making of Daangar chutney also brings back to Komathi memories of her own unfortunate romance — that forms the parallel thread in the book. While on the one hand she is loyal to her charge and even severely defensive of her, on the other bitterness smoulders deep within her because somewhere she holds Lena liable for the despondent end to her own love story.

Komathi can see and understand the romance blossoming between Lena and the stranger, but her reliability clearly lie with Lena’s husband, KK. Again and again her aggravation surfaces at the extent of his blindness to the new developments in his life taking place right under his nose. Nair’s humour is at its best here:

And KK, does he see the transformation in her? [...] But even he can’t be oblivious to the stars in her eyes. Or does he think filter kaapi put it there?’ (F for Filter kaapi, Nair admits, is her personal favourite in the book.) (54)

Even though the actor-ordinary woman romance lies at the centre of the novel, while Komathi and her backstory stand at its periphery, it is actually the old cook, her candid and revealing commentary, besides her personal history that are far more interesting and captivating than the characters in the foreground.

Stories that use food as metaphor for life, love and anguish hold their own appeal, and this one is no exception. There is no conflagration, not much anguish or any real or imagined hand-wringing involved in this affair; the lovers pretty much go with the flow, pretending not to hear the tick of the unseen but very-much-felt clock.

The tale is peppered with dollops of kitchen wisdom but no recipes. Yet, the food-narrative device works rather well. There are some charming homilies on the preparation of dishes, like this one:

There are rules and rules about making oorkai. You mustn't make it on a Sunday, Tuesday or Friday. You must make it before the moon disappears entirely behind the clouds on an Aamavasya night. You can't touch the oorkai when you are menstruating. You can't touch the pickle pot after being with a man. (122)

Into the mix are added bits of Komathi's own romance. The two love stories twined together stress both caution as well as devil-may-care valor and show that both work in their own ways. But yes, at times, Komathi's takes sound a little too sophisticated for an unlettered soul, as does her patois. That is still palatable. The problem is that at the end of the tale, the characters all remain shadowy figures:

the earthy Komathi who nurses her own heartache, KK who may or may not have cottoned on to his cuckolding, Shoola Pani, the film star, who has inner conflicts that are only hinted at, Lena, the *châteline*. (146)

Komathi, for reasons not fully explained, wants to learn the English alphabet. And so she starts to match words and letters in a manner that makes eminent sense to her and yes, to the readers too, such as 'A' for arisi appalam, 'Q' for qollu, 'S' for sora and so on. Even as she is engaged in this task of literacy at the kitchen sink, she is an impassive observer of what is going on right under her nose, the illicit attraction that has sprung up between the lodger in the overseer's cottage and Leema (a combine of Lena and amma). Since a food analogy is the pitfall Alphabet Soup is rather like a light-as-air soufflé that melts in the mouth but does not leave any trace, enduring or otherwise.

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## **Food Practices in *Perumpanatrupadai***

**S. Aathirai Nallaal**

### **Introduction**

Food stands as an inevitable part of life and culture of human beings. It is food practices that basically differentiates human from other species of the world where human beings are the only Mammals who cook their food. People of various ages and various parts of the world follow food practices that is different from each other. This paper focuses on food practices followed by ancient Tamil people of Sangam Age as portrayed in *Perumpanatrupadai*.

### **Objectives**

\*To explore the food practices of Sangam people through 'Perumpanatrupadai', on the basis of their geographical divisions.

\*To understand the culture of the ethnic group 'Perumpanar'.

\*To imply how food practices of the same society has now changed at post-modern period.

### **Background**

"Perumpanatrupadai" is one among the "Pathupattu" (The Ten Idylls). It belongs to Aatrupadai type of Literature where the poems are narrated by "Perumpanan", a singer who got patronized by a wealthy generous King, directs the poor to the King, that he may also receive the same benefits. 'Perumpanar' was a sect of people who are experts in Isaitamil. They sing Tamil songs along with instruments like KUZHAL (Flute), YAAZH (Harp), etc.

Perumpanatrupadai was written by Kadiyalur Uruthiran Kannanar. It contains about 500 lines. The work is all set in Thondaimandalam. Though it is absurd about the meeting of the two 'Perumpanars', it is clear that the Panan who got patronized by the Thondaimanadala King Ilanthirayan, praises him and directs the poor Panan towards the land of this wealthy King.

### **Division of Geographical Areas and Their Food Practices**

The categorization of Land into Five, based on their characteristic features is based on their unique practice of lifestyle which cannot be found in other than Tamil culture. All these types are referred with "THINAI" after each of its name. It divides Land into Five,

1. KURINJI
2. MULLAI

3. MARUTHAM
4. NEIDHAL
5. PALAI

Perumpanatrupadai speaks of all these categories of land, except on Kurinji land.

### **Palai: A Mixture of Mullai and Kurinji**

**“Suramum suram sarndha nilamum”**

Palai is not a separate region but Mullai and Kurinji are referred as so, when any of these two loses its fertility and becomes a dry, wasteland due to some reasons like summer, drought, famine, etc.

The main source of food for the people of this region is robbing from the trespassers. But sometimes they do also cook their food like the people of other regions.

Perumpanatrupadai depicts what and how people of this Palai region cooked their food. The Vettuvar sect of people belonged to this region. They cooked Tamarind curry for rice. They were also familiar with the art of Grilling, where Perumpanatrupadai speaks about how they grilled the flesh of “AAMAA”. (P.A-175-177).

Perumpanatrupadai also states that the people of PALAI consumed “ Pullarisi” and “Uppukanda” and the other dish is salad made up of Udumbu (Monitor lizards).

The following lines capture the process of making meals with Pullarisi as practiced by the people of Palai region,

**“...Nonkaal  
Irumbuthalai yaatha thirunthukanai vizhukolil  
Ulivaich churayin milira mindi  
Irunilak karambaip paduneeradi  
Nunpulladakiya venpal Eyitriyar  
Paarvai yaatha paraithaal vilavin  
Eelan mundrinilavurar peidhu  
Kurungalulagai yochi nedunginatra  
Vallootruvari thondi thollai  
Muravuvai kulisi muriyadupu potri  
Vaara thatta vaadoon pulukkal...”**

-(Perumpanatrupadai:90-100)

### **Mullai: The Forest**

**“Vanamum vanam sarndha nilamum”**

Mullai Thinai refers to the Forest regions of Tamilnadu. Mullai or Jasmine is the flower of the forests. The major food items consumed by the people of Mullai are Foxmillet flour, Honey and Root vegetables.

Perumpanatrupadai also captures the food habits and practices followed by people of Mullai . The book states that these people ate boiled foxtail millet along with milk. They also prepared a dish named ‘KUMMAYAM’ using Kodo millet in combination with Hyacinth bean. (P.A-192 -195).

They also cooked reddish Hyacinth beans, Bamboo rice and rice from Paddy altogether in Tamarind water and consumed it as Gravy. (P.A.-434-436).

They also cooked rice of equal size along with meat of a lamb and ate with foxtail millet flour (Thinai maavu).

### **Marutham: The Cropland**

#### **“Vayalum vayal sarndha nilamum”**

People of Marutham regions were majorly farmers. As this is the Urban kind of region, people of this region tend to have spent a luxurious life when compared to the other regions. Perumpanatrupadai attempts an gastronomical observation on this region. People of Marutham exchanged sugarcanes and Aval with people of Kurinji, for some amount of meat of deer and toddy. Marutham people of Thondaimandala consumed smashed Aval. (P.A:223-226). They also cooked paddy rice and salad of meat of hen. (P.A:356-366)

### **Neithal: The Coastal Region**

#### **“Kadalum kadal sarndha nilamum”**

The prominent gourmet of Neithal land is fish. Neithal people harvested Salt from sea water with a natural chemical process. Salt was supplied to the other regions with the help of Barter system.

In the coastal areas of the Thondaimandala (the present Mammallapuram), people fed their swine livestock with rice flour in order to make them healthy and fluffy. When once the pigs turned healthy and fluffy, people of Neithal region cooked pork out of it and served it. Neithal citizens, too had the habit of enjoying Toddy.

Neithal people travelled in families carrying the fish they caught in sea, to the other regions in vehicles along with Salt they harvested, and Pickle prepared by them. They exchanged these food items with the people of other regions for the items produced and cultivated there.

### **Food Practices Of Marayavar**

MARAYAVAR were a sect of people who learnt and preached holy scriptures. They also offered burnt sacrifices to God. They lived in almost all the regions and they were highly praised by

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**S. Athirai Nallaal**

**Food Practices in Perumpanatrupadai**

Kings and the common public. Hence, they had royal cuisine of meals. They were usually vegetarians and thus they ate healthy rich food like tender coconut, palm fruit, etc. The cooked meals of Marayavar contains, Rice mixed with milk, rice cooked pulses and cereals, and ‘Aaguthi’ made up of rice from paddy, etc. The rice taken from paddy which is commonly used, and the staple food of present age were once tasted only by Royals and luxurious people during Sangam Age. They added pepper grounds and curry leaves to melted butter in order to season the Pomegranates and they mixed this along with paddy rice. They named this dish as Aaguthi. They also had the practice of adding Maavadu (tender mango pickle) to their meals.

“...Karpin nudhal  
Valaikkai maguduu vayinarindhatta  
Sudarkadai paravai peyarpaduvattam  
Sedha narumor vennayin maadhula  
Thurupuru pasungaai polodu karikalandhu  
Kanjaga narumuriyalai Ippaindhunar  
Nedumara kokkinaruvadi vidhirtha  
Thagaimaan kaadiyin vagaipada peruguvir”

**Perumpanatrupadai:303-310**

### **Feast of the Royal Court**

The Royal Court of Tamil Nadu has always known for their Hospitality. The courts of Tamil Kings served its guests with meals that fed their hearts, beyond their appetite, which made the people to speak about it for ages.

Perumpanatrupadai speaks about the hospitality of the Thondaimandala King Ilanthirayan. In his palace at Kanchipuram, King Ilanthirayan had appointed an expertise Master chef who cooked varieties of meat, Red rice, Sarkarai Adisil (sarkarai pongal) and more and the King served it to his guests with pleasure and honor.

Perumanatrupadai also tells about how the food was served in the Royal courts. The King presented the above-mentioned dishes for Panars. The children were served in “Star-like” small silver utensils, whereas the adults were served in large “Moon-like” utensils. (P.A: 471-480).

### **Drinks**

“Illadu kallin thoppi parugi”

- **Perumpanatrupadai:142**

This line from Perumpanatrupadai reveals that the people had the practice of preparing Toddy at their homes from a particular variety of rice called “Thoppi”. This variety of rice is found in Madurai. The book also speaks about how the Valayar sect of people prepared Toddy. (Perumpanatrupadai:275-281). Apart from that, almost all the sect, class and age of people had the habit of consuming Toddy which is taken from not only Thoppi but also from coconut, palm fruit, etc.

## Food Habits of the Present

The food habits of the people of present age is no more similar to their ancestors, who was depicted in Perumpanatrupadai. The average amount of hard work put by a person of this age, is ghastly low when compared to the people of Sangam Age. In Post-modern society, people run behind “Fast food” that would end their lives so fast. But this was not the state of the Sangam people. They cultivated their own food, that suits the place they live in and for their metabolism. They never practiced any act against Nature and to be more precise, worshipping and being one with Nature is their culture, unlike the present.

## Conclusion

Perumpanatrupadai is a strong piece of evidence to understand not only the food practices of Sangam people, but also the culture of that age. The differences in the gourmet of people according to their sect, class and region is evident through this paper. The paper also attempts to notify the absence of THINAI- the geographical divisions, in the present age. Thus the paper concludes with the finding that, this absence of geographical divisions and relevant tradition, is the reason which is leading the health of people into remarkably bad state, as they follow food tradition of foreign land which does not suits their body.

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**Water as a Literary Device in Mahasweta Devi's**  
***Mother of 1084 and Water***

**D. Kavitha, Ph.D. Research Scholar (PT)**

=====  
**Abstract**

Food, clothing and shelter are the basic needs of any human being. Among these, food is vital. Water is looked upon as a great source of food when there is no solid food around the corner. Literature has been reflecting society and life from time immemorial wherein writers adopt literary devices to enrich the force, style and understanding of their writings. As anything under the sky turns into a literary device, water has also been used as a device so effectively in writing.

The present paper aims at exploring how water has been successfully handled as a literary device by Mahasweta Devi in two of her plays "Mother of 1084" and "Water". In "Mother of 1084" water travels as a psychological reflection of the protagonist. Though the device is used in a few situations, it stresses significant mental state.

In "Water" obviously the literary device plays a prominent role. In fact, the river Chasra is a metaphor of the doms themselves. As the river remains calm except during the monsoon, the doms seem still. Just like the monsoon rains trigger Chasra's force making her break the boundaries that contain her, the doms dare to knock down the injustice done to them after receiving hope from a selfless, generous and genuine guide.

**Keywords:** Mahasweta Devi, *Mother of 1084*, *Water*, Psychological reflection, water as substitute, survival value, metaphor, psychological transformation.

Mahasweta Devi, the veteran Bengali writer and political activist, had been ingrafting precious stones to the crown of Indian literature. She was born in 1926 at Dhaka. More than a writer, she had been an activist all through her career. Her struggle was for the rights and uplift of the marginalized tribes with whom she spent a considerable period of her life. In her writings she recorded the life of the marginalized in its naked reality. She wanted to document her own time as a professional writer. She transformed her novel *Mother of 1084* and four other short stories into dramas in order to reach the illiterate audience. Her five plays have reached the minds of her readers as well as audiences in an efficient manner as she has skillfully handled dramatic techniques.

Professional writers differ from the ordinary ones as they know the nuances of reaching their readers. Writers of literature excel in handling the literary devices and techniques in their writings. Mahasweta Devi is no exception for it. In her dramas she has used literary devices that enrich the understanding and realization of her works. This paper expands the idea of water being used as a literary device excellently in two of her plays *Mother of 1084* and *Water*.

*Mother of 1084* deals with an upper-class family whereas *Water* is in complete contrast to it. In *Water* the readers find the lower-class doms who find it difficult even to quench their thirst. There is water in both the plays and the mention of it finds its relevance in its own way.

Sujata, being an upper-class mother, is not rich in happiness. Her mental agony finds its expression every now and then throughout the play. Devi has excellently brought in water to express the pain both physical and mental that Sujata experiences. While speaking with her daughter Tuli, Sujata tells that she has had a tablet to soothe her pain in the morning. Obviously, water has also been taken along with the tablet. Hera starts water's journey with Sujata's psyche. Except a few cases, whenever there is a mention of water in the play, there is Sujata's expression of her wounded mind and pain. In another case, having realized that she will not meet Somu's mother anymore, Sujata is seen in utter melancholy. The stage direction expresses her state: "*The curtain is still down when Sujata's voice, sad and exhausted, is heard on the tape (24).*" At such a psychological torment, she meets Nandini, Brati's ladylove. After a while of silence, Sujata is seen taking a Baralgan tablet and a sip of water which again symbolizes the mental agony along with her physical pain. More than her aching body, it is her aching mind that seeks to find solace somewhere.

The final scene of the play deserves a special place, as one can find Sujata's outpouring of her thoughts for one last time. Again there is a reference for "ice water" and "cold bath". It is Tuli's engagement and everyone is in celebration mood. For Sujata, it is just a day of Brati's birth and death. She speaks to herself that she had been with Brati the whole of the day. Though she wants to be a dutiful mother for all her children, the similarities she finds between herself and Brati, forbid her from becoming one with the celebrations that are taking place around her. She is found immersed in Brati's memories. The reflection of Sujata's aching body and mind is expressed in the following lines:

The Kapadias move over Dibyanath and Dhiman. Bini comes to Sujata with a glass of water.

BINI. Must be paining a lot, Mother?

SUJATA (with a strained smile). No.

BINI. I noticed you were drinking ice water, you had a cold bath.

Sujata holds the tumbler to her chest and shuts her eyes.

SUJATA (voice on tape). Brati's fingers, his eyelids, how cold they are to the touch. Nothing can be colder. I was with Brati the whole day (37).

Again, the reference to water, insinuates a sense of Sujata's psychological state, thus traveling with her as her psychological reflection.

A huge difference is found between the use of water in *Mother of 1084* and *Water*. In Sujata's case it is a submissive force that reflects her inner self every now and then whereas in the case of *Water*, the device is portrayed as an obstinate force that symbolizes the doms themselves.

Chasra village is a dwelling place for both the doms and the upper-casts. Santosh is the village's head, who happens to be a representative of a domineering community. He is entrusted for the distribution of government's relief materials to the really affected victims. But he does not perform his duty as the head of the village. Rather he hoards and sells the relief materials and adds wealth to his own family while the people of another community starve. As drought is a routine in the village, the government regularly sends relief materials to the inhabitants. Apart from the relief fund and materials, the government also devotes fund for the public well as the doms do not have drinking water. Public wells are dug for use of the public in general. But in Chasra the public wells are for the personal use of Santosh and his people. Even when the doms demand their relief materials, he does not provide them any. He steals the relief materials, the supplies for the government school and above all water which is a life-saving precious thing the doms need. The pathetic thing is that it is Maghai who divines water for the wells to be dug but his own community is denied using water from the wells. As there is no possibility to fetch water in the public wells, the doms scratched at the sands of the river Chasra for a cupful of water.

Unable to fight for their rights the doms try to find alterations in order to fulfill their needs and quench their thirst. For the doms water is the very supplement of food as they do not have food to fill their stomach. They have never had a full stomach. Drought snatches away the yield of their land on one side and on the other Santosh snatches away every available relief material and even water, leaving them deserted. As a result, the destitute find their refuge at the banks of the river Chasra, scratching the sands with their hands in the night to get some water, which is their primary food. Maghai, who is the very source of water for the entire village, is fated to leave his people starve without sufficient water.

E. Sathyanarayana says, "... Maghai, though alive to pains of the abject poverty and oppression, never tries to rebel against the society. Rather, he firmly believes that he is fated to starve." (*The Plays of Mahasweta Devi A Critical Study*) (111)

The doms of Chasra know the value of water's survival value, yet they are unaware of the possibility of getting water until a selfless and generous leader opens their intellectual eyes to build a dam across the river in order to save water for themselves. When Maghai is

carried by Dhura and others after a heavy work and argument in Santosh's land, he is offered water to keep his spirit alive. Also, the people who helped in carrying Maghai, are provided water which is more valuable than food for them. Though their struggle is for the relief materials, their main demand and struggle is for water.

Another important thing to notice is that water is a metaphor of the doms. There are many similarities between the doms and the river Chasra. As the river is away from the mainstream people, the doms are away from them. Chasra remains calm all through the entire year being content within its banks. In the same manner the doms remain calm whatever happens. Even when Santosh openly pretends that he did not receive any large relief materials from the government, they remain still; when they are denied to fetch water in the public wells on the ground of their untouchable fate, they remain calm; when they are threatened to be branded as naxals, they remain calm. The monsoon rains give Chasra enormous power that she finds it unable to stay within her banks. She overflows and comes out of her suppressing borders. Likewise, Jiten, the village school teacher, like the monsoon rains, enlighten the doms on the possibilities of a dam that could be built across the river. Like the river overflows its banks, the doms are overjoyed on hearing the possibility of a dam which could hold the water that can be used all through the year. Forgetting the threats of Santosh against building the dam, they act with superhuman power and build the dam. They become relentless and brave humans like the Chasra during the monsoon.

Thus, Mahasweta Devi presents the image of water in two different extremes effectively. The painful psychological condition of the upper-class mother is expressed efficiently by giving reference to the presence of water during her realization of her mental agony. In the same way the psychological transformation of the doms is expressed through the gushing Chasra especially during the monsoon rains.

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**Food in Literature: Papers Presented in National Seminar on Food in Literature, 2019**

**D. Kavitha, Ph.D. Research Scholar (PT)**

**Water as a Literary Device in Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* and *Water***

## **Food – Lit- Kid – Connect – A Treatise on Food in Children's Literature**

**M.R. Devika**

**M.A., B.Ed. (Hindi), B.Ed. (Eng & Soc. Stu.), M.Ed., M.A. English  
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Literature is to the mind what food is to the body. Literature is a means of sustenance to the human soul, an instrument of expression as well as aspiration. While literature satiates the emotional pangs, food gratifies the immediate physical need of hunger. The origin and the gradual crescendo of research on food and its position among subjects like social sciences, culture studies, arts and the humanities is in itself an interesting study ( Keeling and Pollard – Critical Approaches to Food in Children's Literature). Compelling and forthright arguments are brought out to establish the concept of food in literature. Researchers from Anglo – American countries have stated that food is a “powerful and complex signifying force” in literature (Keeling and Pollard Pg 13). Hence on any studies on Literature, Food can have a unique connotation and connection. Scholars have unearthed how cooking recipes connected to literary characters can eventually signify “a form of literary cannibalism”, wherein one is a slow product of what one eats ( Jodie Slothower and Jan Susine –

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236720504\\_Critical\\_Approaches\\_to\\_Food\\_in\\_Children's\\_Literature\\_review](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236720504_Critical_Approaches_to_Food_in_Children's_Literature_review))

There is also a two-sided feminist notion on Food and Literature. One, who sees food and kitchen as a constraining force on women empowerment and two, who view food as a right endowed to all females and the superiority of women in culinary skills as compared to men. There lies yet another connect too where food in literature is connected to so-called feminine characteristics of cooking, serving, eating and nurturing (Girls, Mothers, Children)

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236720504\\_Critical\\_Approaches\\_to\\_Food\\_in\\_Children's\\_Literature\\_review](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236720504_Critical_Approaches_to_Food_in_Children's_Literature_review) by **Nikola von Merveldt**) .

Interplay of food, ethnic studies and historical identities over a geographical milieu to include Asian, Mexican and Brazilian literature in addition to Anglo – American literature is also set forth as an engaging penultimate chapter by the same author. The gradual building up of character ethic from verdant childhood to ripened adulthood with food playing a constructive and deconstructive role is also discussed in depth.

There is an interesting connection between Children's Literature and food, as food is an instant source of gratification for Children. Establishing the Food – Literature – Kid Connect is not Terra Neo – an untrodden path. Seibert sees literature particularly children's literature as an integral part of the larger poetic system, rather than a pedagogic subsystem of literary genres. He ropes in Austrian literature to augment his argument. Carolyn Daniel views food as a trump card to gradually blend in cultural and social values in children.

It is at this critical juncture that study on Children's Literature and Food, stands. Three world-renown and tremendously popular authors – Enid Blyton, Lewis Carroll and Roald Dahl, in no particular order, are taken up. The gem in the diadem of food-writing in Children's Literature, is inarguably, Enid Blyton (1897-1968). For those who were born in the 1960s and 70s the world over, Enid Blyton was staple food that we devoured greedily with great excitement. Bedtime stories, Grandma's stories, 6 o'clock tales, 8 o'clock tales, Fairy tales, The faraway tree, The Naughtiest Girl series were the first taste. The Famous Five, Secret Seven, The Adventure series, The Five Find-Outers and the exciting stories of Boarding schools like Malory Towers and St Clare's among others were steadily handed down to us from seniors. Not to be missed were the midnight parties and candle-light feasts with canned pineapples, lemon sucks, jammy buns and tinned biscuits. The images of pure, escapist pleasures that Enid Blyton created were justice enough to make students of Boarding schools try out pranks in an otherwise drab existence.

Enid Blyton could set one off, self-drowning, on a pool of drool with her ethereal descriptions of generously buttered and freshly baked scones with sugar sprinkled on them, sweet-smelling strawberry jam with thick slices of bread and butter (none of those slim, mean and stingy bread slices from Aunt Polly or whoever), farm fresh, thick – creamed milk and ginger buns to go with them. Food fit to make the most fastidious diet regimes to become gone cases! - There is an uncanny austerity and missionary meticulousness to the ritual of eating with Enid Blyton. Perhaps it was the reflection of the times of the 1940s where, after the Second World War, austerity marked the dietary history of the world then (Dr Joan Ransley, Honorary lecturer in Human Nutrition, University of Leeds).

Meal times were regular – breakfast, lunch, high tea and supper, with a small 11 o'clock thing in between. The children always carried nice, home-made things, neatly packed into baskets in their cycles and at the drop of a hat, flash picnics on fresh, green grass in ensemble. They do visit the local eatery at times, a friendly Mrs Smith's home parlor, for freshly baked cakes, tarts, hard-boiled eggs with a screw of salt and an ice-cream lolly that Timothy, the dog, gulps down at one go, making it seem 'a waste of an ice-cream'. There were always generous lashings of lemonade or ginger ale to wash it all down. All this betwixt solving dark mysteries in

erie castles, running behind spooky trains and sinister secrets. Ideas and insights emerge like blue thunderbolts during such open-air meals and roadside parties.

The children are mannered enough to share food and even Fatty *aka* Fredrick pass the food and liberally feed Timmy *aka* Timothy and in the other series it is Loony the dog. The children treat the dog well and give it generous nibbles and bites. These are in-built lessons on ethics, empathy and moral values in Enid Blyton. Perhaps it is the food connect for their diet is simple and balanced. Hunks of crusty bread for carbs, cold fish, meat and a ‘large round ham’ for protein, fiery red radish or a crisp, dewy lettuce for vitamins and minerals and luxuriantly fresh, creamy milk from the dairy. Simple, down to earth, healthy food, nothing very exotic, yet the gloss with which the children ate their food made the reader drool and drench the pages, seeking at least a poor substitute to the completely alien, foreign foods mentioned therein. This scholar when at Switzerland for presenting at an Educational Leadership, was affected with food nostalgia and hunted shops for marshmallows that the children munched on their many picnics, bought a packet and greedily ate several and then found that beef gum was one of the ingredients and then it did not taste so good after all!

The Island of Adventure is a part treatise on food – pure, natural and simple things that are available to the Jack, the neighborhood boy who has no family barring his old grandfather and the children Mike and Nora, the twins and their sister Peggy, who are ill-treated by their Aunt Harriet and Uncle Henry and run away to the Secret Island, all by themselves.

In the book “The Secret Island” by Enid Blyton, the beans, radishes, lettuces, mustard and cress grow enormously in the rain. Jack and Mike harvest the “rain-swollen” lettuces and bring them back to their friends to relish them – “so crisp, juicy and sweet”. They also had a simple meal of fried eggs and mushrooms, wild strawberries and cream, afterwards.

They tame a cow, christening it Daisy and grow fowls and hens in the island. They build a willow house and lead a Robinson Crusoe-like life on the island. When they are forced to hunt rabbits that so tamely come to them in the island, little Nora feels bad to kill them for meat. But Jack the older boy convinces them that they need to eat meat in order to survive the cold. Humanitarian touches and reprimands when one of the children fails to obey rules and laws are visible in the passages and lessons for young children on moral and ethical living as undercurrents.

*Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll (1832-1898) immensely popular with the children but seen as rebel literature by grownups then, has plenty of imagery for food in it. History has it that too many rules on Etiquette and Dining during meal times were prevalent when he wrote the book. Hence may be as a sign of rebel, he may have used food in a symbolic way. The Mad

Hatter's Tea party to which Alice sits down uninvited, fresh dishes placed upon old and not-cleared dishes, placing elbows on the table and the atrocious pouring of hot tea on Little Dormouse's nose.... The images do come across as a clear no-no. The young girl eats cakes and gulps down potions listlessly, which leads to a lot of adventures and growing up large and shrinking too small. Enid Blyton is at a diagonally opposite station in the study of Food and Literature, when compared to Lewis Carroll. Food is a temptation that Alice often succumbs to – only this time the food brings dangerous tidings for her. Alice ate and drank not because she was hungry but just as a past time and when in search of an adventure.

Carroll may have had a hidden didactic agenda to it all in 'Alice in Wonderland' by showing what perils can be precipitated for children who do not exercise restraint in eating. If Enid Blyton showed children how to eat, Lewis Carroll put forth how not to eat. Alice encounters a mushroom, by eating one side of which she would grow taller and by eating the other side of which she would grow shorter. But the caterpillar her freshly-found soul mate, who lures her to eating the mushroom does not tell her which side would do what. Hence Alice is frightened beyond her wits. May be Lewis Carroll wanted children to exercise caution before eating anything offered by strangers.

Alice has a tryst with the terse pigeon that mistakes her to be a serpent, the resplendent replicate of the sinister evil in literature, who had come to prey upon her precious eggs. Alice glibly tells her that no doubt as a human, she was fond of eggs. This rude riposte unnerves the naïve pigeon but gives Alice an idea that she could pose to be a serpent. The ultimate end to the story comes in the form of a Trial on food, where the King and Queen of Hearts stage a trial to investigate who stole the Queen of Hearts' tarts. Here again there is a temptation for Alice for food:

There is, "in the very middle of the court...a table, with a large dish of tarts upon it: they looked so good, that it made Alice quite hungry to look at them" (86). The trial scene wrenches Alice from the tumultuous Wonderland and brings her back to her sister, to the real world. Even in the sequel to the book "Alice in Wonderland" the 'Through the Looking-Glass' book there is a passing reference to this fad for food of Alice where Humpty Dumpty tells her that with the right guidance she could have grown up better had she not yielded to temptation for food.

Both the books recur on any research on food in literature, although the treatment of food as an object to entice is different. (Spring 2013 Nothing More Delicious: Food as Temptation in Children 's Literature by Mary A. Stephens Georgia Southern University)

The third author taken up in this study is Roald Dahl (1916-1990). Roald Dahl 's immensely popular books are a much later escalation in the flight of Children's literature, with

Dahl's first essay when he was only sixteen years of age, extolling the noble indulgence of eating and drinking. He is identifiable to the current crop of children after the film "Charlie and the Chocolate factory"

Jodie Slothower and Jan Susina note that "Dahl's stories reveal an author obsessed with food" (28). His love for food is gluttonous, luxurious and almost obscene. The protagonists who partake the meals in his books are the starved, emaciated, economically weak sort, whose hardships the readers will feel, truly deserve the super-sumptuous spreads that Dahl red carpets for them (13 of the best food descriptions by Tom Bonnick). Morals, there will be, with magic thrown in, in the make-believe world of Dahl's books. Good and bad children will be there in the stories, with the implication that the good will truly triumph at the end. And the pattern ensues with an adult guide, who is there to fetch and bail out the good child from the clutches of the bad, amidst ravenous descriptions of food, in giga quantities, colourfully chaotic and in mind-boggling varieties, fit to give a jaw dropping effect, much like in the scenes of Charlie and the Chocolate factory movie. As though as a compensatory afterthought, there will be a fat child in the story, much addicted to eating which is a subtle warning to wean off highly indulgent children. The protagonist good child will be depicted as a child who has family values, with a generous extended family of four grandparents and he would not trade being with them for the sake of as great a temptation as owning a chocolate factory. As a stark contrast, the villainy children will be ego-centric, unfair, impolite and spoilt brats, who connive umpteen contrivances to go on top and sustain their place there. The gluttony for food will be ascribed not to the children themselves but to insufficient upbringing and indulgence of parents who fail to prune the character ethic of children as they grow up, in their formative years. These lessons, Dahl indoctrinates through his stories, creating unforgettable characters

(<https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/children/2017/6-of-the-most-gloriumptious-roald-dahl-heroes>) like Matilda who uses a spell to teach a lesson to the stentorian school Principal, Billy the brave who meanders into the forest,

Charlie Bucket with his grandpa sailing into the Willie Wonka Chocolate factory, George the accidental scientist and Sophie who saves the children of the world and James the savior of the insects aboard his Giant Peach. He reproaches and reprimands neglectful parents in the stories, up scaling his didacticism to the earlier generation too.

If Enid Blyton, Lewis Carroll and Roald Dahl have woven food into literature from 1832 to 1990, the Indian treatise 'Arthashastra' written by Chanakya in an ancient book called 'Vridhha Chanakya' states 'We are what we eat' ('Atha Sanskrutam' <http://blog.practicalsanskrit.com/2010/07/we-are-what-we-eat.html>). The verse was written anywhere between 371 and 283 BC in Pataliputra, India. Chanakya or Kautilya or Pandit Vishnugupta adorned the court of King Chandra Gupta Maurya as his political Guru and God

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Father. His body of work titled “*Arthashastra*” was veritably the Bible of Political Wisdom and Ruling, earning him the title, ‘The Indian Machiavelli’.

The shloka is a simple one, but has deeper connotations:

Lamp eats darkness and produces [black] soot!  
What food (quality) [one] eats daily, so will [one] produce.

We become what we eat –

दीपो भक्षयते ध्वान्तं

दीपो भक्षयते ध्वान्तं कज्जलं च प्रसूयते |

यदन्नं भक्षयेन्नित्यं जायते तादृशी प्रजा ||

dIpo bhakShayate dhvAntam kajjalam cha prasUyate |

yadannam bhakShayennityam jAyate tAdRishI prajA ||

The ‘*Artha Shastra*’ is a political treatise, composed, expanded and re-dated between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE and 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE. It was influential until the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when it is appeared. It was rediscovered in 1905 by R Shamasastri, who published it in 1909. The English translation was first published in 1915. This is a sample of the connect between food and literature from an ancient Indian perspective, perhaps a forerunner to all world literature, taking into count the time it was written.

This hint from ancient Indian wisdom is quoted here to add an Indian perspective relevant to the current scenario, where book reading among children is dwindling and is in doldrums, whence caution and precaution need to rule the connect between food and literature today. The latest in the gamut of Children’s literature is Harry Potter, by J K Rowling, who has confessed to borrowing heavily from Enid Blyton in her descriptions of food. With obesity becoming a curse with the case of couch potatoes, what lessons will be imbibed as regards food, in children’s literature, is again a moot point. It suffices to say that literature must and will pass the litmus test of being a beacon light to the society, in the basic human activity of food.

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## **Concept of Food Beyond Survival**

**Elvina C M., M.A. English Literature**

### **Introduction**

Food is a need for the survival of all the living beings. The intake of food nowadays by the people is largely different from that of ancient days. The Bible is a holy text for Christians. In the Old and the New Testament, food is said to serve human beings in different occasions. In fact, food is a concept beyond survival. There was more divinity when the people had the food given by God. Food is depicted as a sign of glory, a means to restore faith in the minds of the people. Many multitudes were highly benefitted when they were in starvation because they followed the teachings of God. Even the people who complained for various reasons were made to understand the greatness of God through food. The inner qualities of human beings are brought to the forefront and those qualities can be understood by the kind of the dish and different styles of cooking. The greediness of people by going against God's instructions is clearly stated in certain chapters in the Bible.

### **Objectives**

To examine the purpose of food, during the time multitudes were in support and against God.

To understand the concept of food, then and now.

To examine the inner qualities of the people.

To compare the food intake of the ancients with that of the present day.

### **Significance of the Paper**

The paper examines the kind of food eaten by the people in the ancient world. The paper analyses the effect of food in the present-day world. The paper ascertains the way of living of the people by the consumption of various kinds of food. The paper discusses the problems faced then and now where there were availability and lack of food.

### **Methods**

The paper has adopted 'The Bible' for textual analysis.

The paper compares the way of living of people, then and now with reference to food.

## **Background of the Study**

The paper has a background of food and its reference with 'The Bible'. It is described in the Bible that many people followed the teachings of God. The grace made known by the impartiality of God. There are many incidents in which food serves as the factor in which the people understand the greatness of God.

## **Food in the Old Testament**

### **The fall of Man**

The fruit of knowledge which was forbidden was the reason for the fall of mankind. The very first man and woman created have sinned, as they went against God's words. Their want to be equal to God has led to the eventual fall from the Garden of Eden.

The greatness of the Almighty:

The Lord is said to have heard all the complaints of the people while the Israelite community has set their journey from Elim to reach Canaan. The Lord dropped manna for them. Then the Lord said to Moses, "I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them that at twilight they will have meat to eat and, in the morning, they will have all the bread they want. Then they will know that I, the Lord, am their God" (*Today's English Version*, Exod.16.12). The quails were dropped in the evening.

Through this, it is understood that The Lord satisfies people with the food they want. In fact, they are given in plenty despite their complaints. This proves the greatness of the Lord. The long-lasting life of food:

The Manna showered by the Lord is the long-lasting food which satisfied the people beyond the limit. The Lord's abundant mercy can be understood by it. Moses says to Aaron to save some Manna so that even the descendants may come to know about his mercy. "The Israelites ate manna for next forty years, until they reached the land of Canaan, where they settled" (Exod.16.35).

## **Food as a Factor Affecting Family**

Togetherness should be an essential factor among the family. Any discord in the family leads to negative outcomes. In the case of Jacob and Esau, the brotherly relation between them is not equal. Blessings from parents are always a boon to an individual. Jacob, in order to get his father's blessings, he was ready to disguise as his hirsute brother Esau. Isaac (a blind old man), the father of the two, wants Esau to go to the country and kill an animal which in turn would be served to Isaac because he likes it. "Take your bow and arrows, go out into the country, and kill

an animal for me. / Cook me some of that tasty food that I like and bring it to me. After I have eaten it, I will give my final blessing before I die” (Gen.27. 3-4).

Rebecca, Isaac’s wife, listens to the conversation between the father and the son. She understands that Esau will get the blessings of his father before Isaac dies. To avoid this, Jacob is instructed by Rebecca to go to the flock and pick two fat young goats. Rebecca puts on Jacob the best clothes of Esau so that his father would not identify he is Jacob. Isaac, initially has a doubt and later when Jacob came up to kiss him, Isaac smelt his clothes. Jacob gets Isaac’s blessing after Isaac is satisfied eating the tasty food. Isaac blesses, “May nations be your servants, and may people bow down before you. May you rule over all your relatives and may your mother’s descendants bow down before you. May those you curse you be cursed and may those who bless you be blessed” (Gen. 26.29).

Esau is helpless when he comes to know that Jacob has cheated on him. He cries out loud when he realizes that his father cannot bless him as already Jacob has received his blessing. In this, the deserving son do not gain anything even though he did as his father said. The cheating attitude among the family members is brought out through Rebecca and Jacob.

### **Elijah is Helped**

Elijah, a prophet from Tishbe in Gilead, said to King Ahab that there will not be rain for two to three years. He was helped by the Lord. He did as the Lord instructed him to do so. He hid himself near the brook of Cherith, east of the Jordon. There the brook supplied him with water and ravens brought him bread and meat.

### **Elijah Helps the Widow**

The Lord instructed Elijah to go to Zarephath, near Sidon, as the brook dried up due to lack of rain. He requests for water and bread to a widow gathering firewood, as the Lord has commanded her. She replies that she has only a handful of flour in a bowl and a drop of olive oil in a jar. He asks her to prepare and bring the first loaf to him and then prepare the rest for her and for her son. She did as Elijah said. And “as the Lord had promised through Elijah, the bowl did not run out of flour nor did the jar run out of oil” (1 Kings. 17.16).

### **Elisha Helps a Poor Widow**

Elisha helps a widow, who was a member of a group of prophets. She asks help as her sons life is in danger. Her husband has died. A man he owed money comes to take away her two sons as slaves in payment for her husband’s debt. She answers that she has nothing except a small jar of olive oil in her home when asked by Elisha. She pours the oil into the jars and filled

it. Elisha tells her to “Sell the olive-oil and pay all your debts, and there will be enough money left over for you and your sons to live on” (2 Kings. 4.7).

### **Food in the New Testament Celebration**

Celebration is often carried out by serving food to the relatives, friends, etc. In the parable of the prodigal son, a father who has two sons celebrates the return of his younger son. The younger son expects a scorn from his father for wasting all the money, which was the property granted, on gambling and prostitutes. He realizes the goodness in his father when he accepts him. The father tells his servants to arrange for a feast.

“Then go and get the prize calf and kill it and let us celebrate with a feast!

For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.’ And so the feasting began” (Luke. 15.23-24).

Through this celebration one comes to know that the goodness is within the human beings, so that the quality of forgiveness is explicitly stated in the case of the father in the parable. The celebration can also be looked at the perspective that human beings are ready to accept others though they are wrong.

### **Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand**

Jesus feeds a large crowd who followed him because they had seen his miracles of healing. He already had an idea on how to feed the five thousand men. Andrew, his disciple, said that a boy had ‘five loaves of barley bread and two fish’. “Jesus took the bread, gave thanks to God, and distributed it to the people there. He did the same with the fish, and they had as much as they wanted” (John. 6.11).

### **Jesus Feeds Four Thousand People**

Jesus always had a large crowd after him. Jesus felt sorry for those people who haven’t eaten anything for three days. He asked his disciples how much bread they have got. They had seven loaves of bread and few small fish. He gave thanks to God and distributed it among the disciples. They ate and were satisfied, and they had seven baskets full of pieces left over.

### **The Wedding in Cana**

In the town of Cana in Galilee, Jesus attended a wedding. Jesus’ mother said that there was no wine left. The moment he knew the time has come to do the miracle, Jesus said to fill the jars with water. He turned water into wine so that the guests would have it in plenty. That was his first miracle performed in Cana in Galilee

## **The Lord's Supper**

Jesus dined together with his disciples during the Passover meal. He knows that somebody would betray him among the group. He said that the one who dips his bread in the dish with him would betray him. Jesus took the bread, gave thanks and broke it and gave to his disciples. He said, "Take it, this is my body" (Mark. 14.22). The same he did for the cup and said, "This is my blood, which is poured out for many, my blood which seals God's covenant" (Mark. 14.24).

## **Methods**

### **Textual Analysis**

In the Old and the New Testament, the concept of food beyond survival is clearly stated. In the Old Testament, the ambition to become equal to God is brought out by the want for eating the fruit of knowledge. The manna and the quail dropped by God shows the forgiving nature of God. Whereas, it shows the evil nature of man because they pile up even when food is not needed for them as instructed by Moses. The growth of worms on the stale food suggests that anything done with a view of greediness will lead to waste. The cheating attitude of the mother is depicted in such a way that she cooks the goats taken from the flock instead of animal from the country. This shows that she does not respect her husband's words. Her son, Jacob, is also not shameful for deceiving his father and his brother. The goats taken for cooking instead of an animal from the country clearly proves that the respect which they pretend to Isaac is of a low manner and is deceiving, because Isaac did not know that those are goats. The Lord helps the prophet Elijah by making birds as a tool to give him food. This shows the faith of man will make him hopeful. The widow trusts in the words of Elijah. Elisha helps the poor widow so that she can lead a decent life with her sons, by selling the resource which she has, in order to earn money.

In the New Testament, food is an aspect used to explicitly show the goodness, in the parable of the prodigal son. Jesus never leaves those people who believed in him. He considers them and distributes food by giving thanks to God. This shows that he fulfills the purpose of God. The miracle performed at the wedding in Cana is a sign of his glory. In the Lord's Supper, Jesus gives an opportunity for Judas to repent. He taught that humility would come only when one becomes a servant to all. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and asked them to do the same with one another, which shows the humbleness in him.

## **Food, Then and Now**

In the Bible, the inner qualities of human beings are understood through food. Food was even a negative influence as it was the reason for the fall of mankind. The patience of God, the cunning trait of the wife of Isaac is aptly described and is made clear to the readers. Moreover,

the forgiving nature of God, the glory and humility of Jesus, the faith of man can be comprehended. So, food was eaten for survival purposes but the purity of God, the kindness of men serves a larger purpose than the survival. Food was either a positive or negative impact on the lives of people.

Nowadays, the lifestyle has changed. People mostly do not know the speciality of certain foods. Food cooked in a traditional style is eaten only during occasions in fast-moving city areas. The benefits of nutritious food are not known. Many people suffer from illness as they eat fried foods because of its taste. Most of them are not health conscious due to the new trends followed in today's milieu. Advertisements of fast foods have a negative impact on the eating habits of people. Chemicals are being sprayed or injected into the foods to make it look more natural. People are often lured by the appearance and the taste. Food is distributed among the needy. Many people who are in poverty are not recognised. There are still people starving and dying. Few well-off people do not understand the value of food.

## Conclusion

In the Bible, food is described in various situations and it serves many purposes. Though the need for food is for survival, many other aspects are also highlighted. People in the present world, do not understand or are not aware of the benefits of eating good food. This in turn leads to various diseases. The life span of human beings nowadays is shorter than those of the ancient days. Westernization has blinded people in many ways. The traditional food, the traditional cooking is almost fading from the fast-moving world.

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**Food in Literature: Papers Presented in National Seminar on Food in Literature, 2019**

**Elvina C M., M.A. English Literature**

**Concept of Food Beyond Survival**

## **Food Be Thy Medicine and Medicine Be Thy Food**

**K. Visalakshi, Assistant Professor**

Nature is the only God in all creatures in the world. All the components needed for humans are derived from nature. We can get healthy life in the way we handle it. Food habits that our ancestors practiced prevented the disease. The food we eat must be able to get rid of the waste of our body. It is special that 30% of the food is like a fruit in our daily diet. The National Food Lab (NFL) declared is red guava is the best fruit in the world. The humble fruit is extraordinarily rich in vitamin –c, vitamin B-6, and vitamin A, and Calcium (Ca), Magnesium (Mg), phosphorus (P), iron act as potent antioxidants which neutralize free radicals generated in the body, preventing the growth of cancer cells. Coconut oil contains natural saturated foods that increase the good high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol and also help turn the bad low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol into a less harmful form. Gingelly oil has compound called sesame oil. Sesame oil is an anti-oxidant and an anti-inflammatory agent and it's extremely good for the heart and also prevents the instruction of fatty deposits in the arteries.

Plastic containers and refrigerators were detrimental to society but in this fast world, nobody knows the alternative to junk foods. If we have red rice flakes and palm jaggery, Rice flakes sweet dish can easily be made within 15 minutes for evening snacks. This red rice flakes contain Magnesium (Mg) , Calcium(Ca) , Selenium(Se) ,and Manganese (Mn) . Magnesium prevents the heart attack and low blood pressure. Manganese helps in developing metabolism. Calcium prevents healthy bone and teeth. Selenium assures comprehensive good health.

Dairy foods are the best food source of dietary calcium. It has had plenty of protein, vitamins, and minerals to fight the diseases. Low – fat dairy foods make the best snacks because they contain carbohydrates and proteins. Dairy foods are perfect snacks for diabetics and everybody because they maintain the blood sugar levels. Leafy greens are the best disease-fighting foods. It contains vitamins, vitamin C, carotenoids, beta-carotene, folate, Iron (Fe), Magnesium (Mg), phytochemicals, and antioxidants.

Whole grains have nutritional components like folic acid, selenium, and B-vitamins it helps to a healthy heart, weight control and reducing the exposure of diabetes. Their fiber content helps the digest problem and feeling full between meals. Present food habit had changed a lot

from traditional food but the present food habit is not good for health. If we take more fruits, vegetables, and small grains (*siruthaniyangal*) we could lead a healthier life.

According to change the seasons, we could adopt seasonal foods. It will help with our healthy life. In summer seasons we should take salads, fruits, buttermilk, ragi malt, tender coconut. During the winter seasons, we should take heavier foods and spices. This not important to what lifestyle you have, but important what type of food you have for a healthier life.

Along with eating the most nutritious foods that provide the most benefit to your overall health, the importance of eating the right amount and combinations of watch food are also stressed. If you want to lead a healthy life you should follow a well-balanced diet. If you are not taken a balanced diet it will affect not only the body and also affects the mind. It will cause the eighty percentages of diseases. This well-balanced diet habit was followed from an early age.

It has been shown over that eating a balanced diet of whole foods can keep body and mind in good form. Fruits, vegetables, seafood, nuts, seeds, whole grains and, legumes support good health, Chronic inflammation is at the heart of many diseases, but eating the right foods and maintaining wholesome lifestyle can help achieve better health. Some foods that may help fight infection and provide hints for lifestyle changes.

Fermented foods have taken a important role in human diet. It will contribute to good bacteria in our gut. There are different kinds of fermented foods used in milk, vegetables, meats, bread, and cheese. Yeast is used to make a fermented food. It contains vitamin B content and increase the mineral level in food. Good nutrition is fundamental for good health. Food is medicine is a term creates by Hippocrates. He is also called the father of western medicine. According to his words, you will eat healthy foods you can escape your medicines.

Centuries ago the earliest known doctors and health practitioners across the world imparted the benefits of using food as medicine to heal the body and how based on research it is clearly evident that food plays a considerable activity in health and how you feel on a day to day basis. Hippocrates believed that illness against inadequate nutrition and bad eating habits and that if people were to gain well-eating habits then optimum health would be restored. Long before doctors and medicine were frequently used, wise tribal elders would seek out healing herbs and plants for their community and food would be applied prescriptively to bring about healing. Slowly through the years, man has moved abroad from the healing power of nature and towards prescribing load synthetic drugs and unreal remedies to deal along with ailment.

The actuality is that because we have relocated away from natural and essential remedies and many of us rely on a diet of processed, fatty and sugar. Laden food the consequences are that rates of obesity and disease have increased automatically. If food has the power to prevent much of the chronic ailment then it makes sense to alter our dietary to use it our own advantage to not only heal and bring back the body but also to prevent ailment.

Although taking pharmaceutical drugs for ailments may be useful, they often come with short and long-term side effects and contributes to the toxic build up in our bodies. While drugs are essential in life-threatening situations, if long-term conditions can be managed with diet and lifestyle changes then using food as medicine must be considered as a basic way of tackling the issue and prevent future health problems.

Health specialist and scientists are now uncovering the benefits of nutrigenomics and the whole notion that food is information that speaks to our genes and triggers messages that create health or disease. There are many factors that culminate to bring about diseases such as stress, nutrition, hormone balance, the health of our gut, and the importance of detoxification and food.

Thinking about what's at the top of your fork will assist you to avoid specific unwellness that arises thanks to years of unhealthy ingestion. the great news is that these are often reversed with the assistance of a decent diet. notwithstanding you reside on eliminating you'll be able to build healthier decisions, additional and additional services, restaurants and other institutions are recognizing the healing power of food and are together with healing foods as a part of their menus thus nutritious food isn't as hard to search out because it once was. Being healthy means that putting the proper fuel into your body and having your internal engine run swimmingly. each meal that you simply consume influences the method that you simply feel one way or another. that the additional nutritious foods you select, the healthier you'll be. Whole foods act as medicine to heal and shield your body and provide the system a possibility from coping with toxins, preservatives, additives, and chemicals that are enclosed in such a big amount of-of today's processed food.

If you're uptake food every day with very little or no nutrition, your body won't be receiving all of the nutrients it has to perform properly and health problems will arise. All that you just body can operate on are the foods that you prefer to place into it. Healthy nutrient made and alive foods facilitate to heal the body at the cellular level and build sturdy defenses enabling you to combat malady and environmental toxins. The primary factor to rely on if you're coming up with on giving your diet an overhaul is to make sure that you just have a healthy system digestorium. This can be an important ingredient and essential to ensure that you just area unit with efficiency burning your food and effectively extracting the nutrients from it.

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Diseases are usually related to vitamin and mineral deficiencies or food sensitivities, therefore, having healthy digestion and knowing what foods work for you is basically necessary, you will need to think about a food elimination diet to seek out that foods may have a sensitivity or allergic reaction too. For a few individuals, raw food though perceived as healthy, is much too onerous on their inflamed and delicate organic process systems and that they might have to start by incorporating a diet like juicing and uptake soups and simply eatable foods till their gut heals. Animal oil could be a good way to naturally combat inflammation too.

Various foods have specific healing properties like garlic and onions that embody antibiotic and antifungal properties. Explicit chronic conditions like arthritis and disorder enjoy a specialized diet and avoiding explicit foods. so foods that cut back inflammation and ones that facilitate lower sterol like fish and omega three fatty acids. Doctors counseled uptake a minimum of two servings of fish per week. it's continually sensible to do and acquire the organic process advantages from your food and not place confidence in synthetic supplements.

Refueling abreast of super food could be a good way to produce the body with nutrients and not overeat. Individual foods have their own distinctive set of nutrients to satisfy the wants of your body. Therefore, uptake a large sort of foods ensures that you just have gotten various vary if nutrients vitamins and minerals that you just want. Incorporating the seasons into your menu coming up with can profit you, so you'll be able to relish contemporary and within the moment foods that area unit copiously out there. There's additionally a price saving after you stock season, back up native growers' markets or co-ops and talk over with the sellers concerning what's in season.

Even supposing it takes a bit longer once searching gets accustomed reading labels and searching for precisely what's within the food. If it's quite six ingredients it's most likely not planning to be that sensible for you. Search in season and opt for foods that are as about to their state of nature as possible. One should develop sensible nutritional habits with a diet right from an early age. Since such habits cannot be changes night long, youngsters ought to be school the worth of uptake organic process food and unwell effects of food in life. A balanced diet and applicable meal timings area unit necessary for a healthy body and mind. Uptake nourishing food not solely helps in weight management and unwellness prevention in adults however additionally contributes correct growth of kids and their higher performance in studies and sports.

Nutrition is that the broader term that isn't restricted to develop only healthy dietary habits however additionally a healthy lifestyle patterns from an early age. A healthy lifestyle excludes smoking, alcohol consumption etc. and includes regular exercise, regular meals further

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as applicable sleeping hours. Learning such things from an early age helps one to guide a healthy life as an adult and even in adulthood. So a correct nutrition for everybody will enhance, the productivity of the individual and contribute to the development of a nation as an entire.

Nutrition education is a vital think about overall improvement for society health and bar of all varieties of deficiency disease. For spreading such education faculties area unit ideal platforms, for promoting womb-to-tomb healthy uptake habits and lifestyles in the community. Most countries today implement health of education programmer in faculties that is embody feeding to students, deforming, victuals and mineral supplementation etc. youngsters should perceive the necessity of minerals, vitamins, proteins, fluid balance etc. further as limiting calorific value of food that one ought to consume as totally different ages. All folks should notice the worth and significance of fine organic process habits for an extended and healthier life.

Food is the best medicines and therefore we should take into account carefully how we perceive and use them. First, choose the right diet and the right food to eat can help improve health and body functions. Second, using food for health benefits has been a norm and that scientists are looking forward to creating food that can fight diseases. There are some parallel and contrast in the views on the health benefits of foods between two different generations. And last but not least, foods with health benefits have been industrialized which raised the concern on how the government should regulate them. We aware that we eat the foods we consume every single meal notably impacts our health and therefore it can be used as medicine. Healthy diets are directly linked to good health. The human bodies must need food to work properly, if the food is not good enough then our functions are disrupted.

Today's food is the food we eat for all of our problems. Many people are suffering from a lot of illness. The absence of immunity in the body is because we are not eating the right foods. We buy it for the taste of food items sold in stores. But we still do not think about these problems. The main reason for our physical health is the fact that our environment is changing and eating habits. From young to old we should aware the values of medicines as well as foods. Many people spend a lot of money to purchase the medicines, but they are not ready to purchase the medicinal value foods. We are eating the food, what our eyes want to buy not our mind's choice. This is our important duty to give the awareness to children for nutritional foods. Only a few people really follow the principles of healthy eating. Most of the scholars have fashioned correct ideas regarding healthy intake, good and bad food early in their education. The main source of information for rational nutrition for about two-thirds of the students is the Internet and their friends. The family itself does not provide the necessary basis of notions for healthy eating of the young people. Healthy intake is outlined as a balanced intake of food to satisfy the physiological desires of the body. The way of eating is determined by the age, sex, the physical

and or mental work that is fulfilled by each individual and it can differ in order to ensure traditional growth employability and making stipulations permanently health and life. The principles of healthy eating are the basis on which everyone can build a diet according to his or her taste preferences, motivation, awareness and living conditions. Conclude is in your hand

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**The Outrageous Power of Food in Preethi Nair's**  
*The 100 Shades Of White*

**S. Karthika, II M.A. English**

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Changes are the one that cannot be changed. As with such changes, the Indian society and the literature had came up. The Indian writing in English had been brought centuries ago. And now it flourished away with the clear view point and reached the towers of intellectuality high. In such a way, Preethi Nair is one of the most best-known authors in the ocean of Indian writing in English literature. Born in Kerala, her writings had the Kerala is the regional settings of her novel. Though she brought up in United Kingdom, she had the ancestral roots of the India.

Preethi Nair had the style of writing with the Indian traditions and cultures in touch. Her novels are Gypsy Masala, 100 Shades of White, The Colour of Love. Each and every of her novel had the Indian touch. And she had also written play Dreaming Alice: The Looking Glass and The Whole 5 Yards.

The novel *100 Shades of White* shows the different aspects of an author's view point and the portrayal regarding woman in the society. And mostly she had brought the outstanding idea of using the spices or food as magic tool to perform the changes which the author liked to. The usage of food as a magic tool is different in writing style of the author.

The story of the novel revolves around Nalini and her children Maya and Sachin. The story is designed with the techniques of stream of consciousness. The protagonist Nalini is the narrator. She explains her life in Kerala with her mother working as a maid in rich family. Her mother says the whole managing attitude of the family lies in the hands of the one who makes the food for the family. She says that the spices and the food have the ability to change the situation from bad to good or from good to bad. She will watch the situations in the family and then prescribe the spices accordingly.

Thus, in such a way, the healthy conditions of the Kathi family are controlled and taken into care by her mother as a cook and Nalini as her assistant. Her mother says, "If the ingredients are incorrect administered, or if you work with bad intention, it can also bring the most disastrous results" (100 SOW 55). Her mother maintained the merriment of Kathi family with her cooking magic. The role of spices played an important role in the whole story. "The right amount of cumin to stimulate appetite for life, a cinnamon quill to bring spice or action into stagnant phases of life, lemon juice to diffuse an argument, chilli to relieve pain and turmeric to heal the heart" (100 SOW 55). Each and every spice has the specific unique qualities to perform the magic.

Even her mother could sense the unpleasant situation of the family by the food get rotten. She warned Nalini about being cautious of Raul, by the food getting rotten. These reflect the foretelling power of the spices. As said, Raul had got attracted the minds and hearts of Nalini, and eloped. Raul and Nalini got settled in Mumbai. At first everything seems to be best for Nalini till she gets conceived. After her pregnancy, she had slightly drifted upon Raul and after her delivery, situations turned upside down. Nalini sensed the situations and called out her to come to her home in Mumbai.

Her mother came to Mumbai and made slight changes in her home. As the kitchen is in the worst hands of a maid, Nalini had faced such things. But after her mother arrival, she got perceive the life she once had with Raul. This shows that the usage of spices with devotions and the change of the charming hands to do the food could bring the pleasant situations in the family.

Nalini had faced many problems in her marital life. In fact her marital life was a failure. Raul had an extra marital affair and left Nalini and her children all alone in life. So it is in the hands of the Nalini to take up the wisest decision. She lied to her children that their father had died in an accident and convinced the children to accept the reality. Nalini is now responsible for bringing the child in a better way.

As the daughter of the cook, she had the devotion in her work and the magic in her hands. She started to make pickles and sold it in nearby houses. And the thoughts of ideas grew into big. Her pickles got sold in super markets, whole sale shops, hotels and so on. Later her idea of making pickles got into the business and it is successful. The food can help one to overcome in his life.

The spices and the food can give answers to the questions wondering over the mind. Nalini had a marriage proposal from Ravi Thakker. Though Nalini was ready to accept, she was in confusion regarding the acceptance of her children. She concerns for her children's future. She worried about her children's education and their future.

She had many confusions and question rolling all over around her. She says, "how would the children feel about it? What about the business? How would Ravi's parents feel about him marrying a woman with two children? How did he feel about Maya and Sachin? Did he love them like they were his own? (100 SOW 118). She has been placed in the despair.

As so many questions rolling all over her mind she is in distress and she needs someone to help her to come over. She picked the help of the spices and food. Even the spices could answer for the question quivering over the mind. She says,

"In cooking there are always answers. As I squeezed the fresh tomatoes into a pulp, I thought of saying yes to Ravi and then as I chopped and fried the onions, I would agree to move the family to Mill Hill but on the condition that I kept my business and perhaps with the deposit I had saved, I could lease a shop or an outlet where we would work from. As the onions sizzled, I added garlic, ginger, some turmeric and it seemed

better to wait until summer when the children’s school term would be over and Maya would be finishing the junior school and moving to new secondary school. .... fresh coriander and a few cinnamon sticks made it smell just right. Things would work out. I called up Ravi and said, yes, yes, I would be his wife” (100SOW 120).

Thus Nalini had chosen to be his wife for her entire life. Things got changed around as days moved. She lost Satchin in a car accident and Maya had departed to abroad for her higher studies. The spices had helped her to come over the pain she had on being part with her children. The spices are the soothing agent for her pain and wounds, and bringer of peace. It gave her courage to start up a new life whenever she felt she can’t. She opened up the new shop with new ideas and new fresh start. And it gave them the new way of living.

The spices, foods, ingredients were played a major role in the whole story. And the role it has taken place in the story is indispensable and insurmountable. The food had been the stuff for enjoying, and medicine for wounds, pains, bruises and so on. It had healed over the pains undergone and been the best catalyst to start the new life too.

Thus the author had used the food as a reacting agent for the situations and incidents that had in the story. The unique thought of using the food in literature as the literary device is something different and unusual.

The similar usages of food as the literary device could be seen in “The Mistress of Spices” by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Here the author uses the spices as the major theme. Tilo the protagonist who is said as the Mistress of Spices works in the spice bazaar and uses the spices as the healing agents for the immigrants and performs magic in their life. The different spices are used for the different purpose in their lives. Each and every spices in the spice bazaar had a unique quality.

Similarly the same ideas of using the foods in the story are mentioned in “Like Water for Chocolate” by Laura Esquivel. The plot is slightly different from other plots. The protagonist is very much interested in cooking and baking etc. The main theme is the feeling in which she cooks get deepen into the food or dishes and the person who consumes gets the same feeling. The device of mixing up the food with the magic realism.

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## **Food as a Symbol in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis***

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Before discussing about the aspect of food in this work, it is important to talk about the work itself. *The Metamorphosis* was written by the German novelist Franz Kafka and published in the year 1915. It tells us the story of Gregor Samsa, a travelling salesman. The novella became well known because of its extra-ordinary opening sentence. The story begins by telling the readers of the very transformation of the protagonist into vermin. It begins thus,

“One morning, as Gregor Samsa was waking up from anxious dreams, he discovered that in bed he had been changed into a monstrous verminous bug” (3).

It is not so much the unconvincing aspect of a person turning into a bug one morning that is strange, but the very casual and ordinary manner in which it has been narrated that makes it absurd. Moreover, we see that Gregor betrays no emotion of shock or disbelief at his condition. His immediate thoughts are about his work life. We can see him fretting about the train that he needs to catch and the possible admonishments he would have to face from his boss. His bodily transformation doesn't bother him at all, at the moment.

Kafka wrote this novella in the 1900s during which time Germany had become a major European power. There was a huge industrial growth driven by the steel and pig iron production. The urban working-class population grew rapidly during this time. German employers were considered hostile and authoritarian and the workers had very little political rights. On the whole, one can gather that the German society at the time was very materialistic and inhuman. We get a glimpse of this from the novella very clearly. Gregor's vexations about his work life and the everydayness of the various hurdles he needs to face as part of it, is very evidently given in the text:

“What a demanding job I've chosen! Day in, day out on the road. The stresses of trade are much greater than the work going on at head office, and, in addition to that, I have to deal with the problems of traveling, the worries about train connections, irregular bad food, temporary and constantly changing human relationships which never come from the heart. To hell with it all!” (4)

Hence, one can see that Gregor is presented as a victim of the deeply inhuman and materialistic German society. There are enough evidences in the text to show that Gregor and his family belonged to the proletariat class. Gregor was the sole breadwinner of his family and he stayed in on his unpleasant job only because of his family's poor financial status and to pay off his father's debts. But his transformation into vermin changes everything. From being the provider, he becomes

the one who needs to be provided. After Gregor's transformation, his family reacts in a repulsive way towards Gregor; something they couldn't help doing. The only way they could now love and care for him was by providing him food, which his sister Grete did dutifully three times a day.

As mentioned before food cannot be seen as just a source of sustenance. One of the most palpable ways of expressing one's love and care to someone is by preparing and serving them good food. Food has this remarkable quality of giving people a sense of contentment and warmth. Grete expresses her concern for her brother by bringing him food. On the first day, she brings a bowl filled with sweetened milk with tiny pieces of white bread dipped in it. She brings him the sweetened milk because it was his favourite drink which makes Gregor, even in the pathetic condition that he is in, to "laugh with joy". When she finds out that milk no more suits Gregor, she brings in an entire new variety of food items the next day, like, half-rotten vegetables, bones from the evening meal, covered with a white sauce which had almost solidified, some raisins and almonds, cheese, a slice of dry bread, a slice of salted bread smeared with butter, a bowl of water etc. Because of Gregor's transformation into the vermin form, there was no way to communicate with him and food became the only channel through which Grete could show that they still considered him as family, in spite of his condition.

This routine slowly dies out as the story progresses, showing the diminishing concern of the family towards Gregor. In a materialistic society, humanitarian values give way to concepts like utility. Gregor's transformation into vermin renders him unable to work and earn for his family and the story clearly marks the diminishing concern of the family for Gregor for now he cannot provide them anything and also the slow disintegration of the Samsa family. As the story progresses, one can see how the Samsa family slowly slips into abject poverty and how they turn to do things that are suggestive of poor financial conditions. Gregor observes,

"What the world demands of poor people they now carried out to an extreme degree. The father bought breakfast to the petty officials at the bank, the mother sacrificed herself for the undergarments of strangers, the sister behind her desk was at the beck and call of customers, but the family's energies did not extend any further" (56).

In midst of their struggle for living, they start caring less and less about Gregor. Their change in attitude towards Gregor is again brought out by the way Grete feeds Gregor. While earlier Grete was concerned about what sorts of foods pleased Gregor and took notice of how much he had eaten his meal, later on she becomes indifferent and busy with her own chores. Gregor laments about this lack of care as follows:

"Without thinking any more about how one might be able to give Gregor special pleasure, the sister now kicked some food or other very quickly into his room in the morning and at noon, before she ran off to her shop, and in the evening, quite indifferent about whether the food had perhaps only been tasted or, what happened most frequently, remained entirely undisturbed, she whisked it out with one sweep of her broom" (57).

Hence, the author uses the act of feeding here as a tool to depict the changing attitude of Gregor's family towards him.

The act of dining is something very much integral to every conventional family. It is the time during which the family sits around and spends time together. It is symbolic of the unity and harmony that is there within a family. The importance of this culture of sitting together to eat within a family is that it gives opportunity for the members within the family to sit together and spare some time from their busy schedules to share their stories and show care and love to each other. Kafka shows the changing pattern of dining routine of the Samsa family to show the disintegrating harmony and order within it. In the beginning Gregor talks about his father's routine of sitting at the table for a prolonged breakfast, reading newspapers. It was around the dining table that the father sat and read the newspaper aloud to his family.

In spite of his busy schedule, it is suggested in the story that, Gregor always sat down with his family for his meals. This was a routine that the Samsa family never broke. However, after the bizarre event of Gregor's transformation, things change. Kafka deftly shows the disorder that creeps into the Samsa family and distorts whatever goodwill existed in the household. One can eat only when one is happy and peaceful. Gregor observes how the people in the house slowly gave up eating. He also observes that they now ate in complete silence opposed to the earlier times when they talked and discussed matters. Also, one can see later on that, three lodgers come to stay at the Samsa household who take the place of the family at the dining table and that Grete, her father and mother eat at the kitchen. By this time, Gregor's family had completely given up on him for they stop feeding him now. This shows the complete breakdown of the homely ambience that once existed in the house. Food and the ways of dining of the Samsa family become symbols that the author uses to bring out this aspect to the readers.

Food also plays an important role in the story, telling the readers about the changing psychological state of the protagonist. The first time Gregor finds food at his door he is overwhelmed with joy and feels thankful to his sister for the gesture. Later on, we see his appetite diminishing as he turns into a rebellious mood over the neglect he was facing from his family. His appetite returns once again when he watches the lodgers eat sumptuously at their dining table. This hunger is symbolic of his want of attention and the jealousy he feels towards the lodgers for now they have taken his place in the family.

As mentioned before, food forms an integral part of our daily lives and there are emotional, psychological and cultural ties that are associated with it and hence it finds ways into our literature too. In this paper an attempt was made to look at the ways in which food has been used symbolically by the author to tell the story, set its ambience and also shed light into the psychological states of its characters.

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## **Food in Media: As a Bridging Catalyst between Cultures and a Humanitarian Tool**

**Sudharsanan, Dhanya, Assistant Professor**

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### **Introduction**

Films are phenomenal tools for effecting change by transforming behaviours and ideologies. Food has occupied a privileged position in visual arts for its ability to pack in layers of meaning and to connote emotions and feelings in recognizable bite-sized formats. Food is such a globally connecting element these days and so the portrayal of food and its local and national variations is alluring in all media these days, especially in movies. For filmmakers, food is a powerful tool for encapsulating the decadent, nostalgic, and even grotesque on-screen. It is also manipulated symbolically, to sketch the formation of characters on screen, their emotions and moods, mostly delivered in a very subtle and imaginative fashion. Food is such a globally connecting element these days and so the portrayal of food and its local and national variations is much popular in all media these days especially in movies.

Experiments by renowned chefs in food, results in exotic dishes which costs a fortune. Golden Phoenix Cupcake at Bloomsbury Cafe - Dubai, UAE (\$18,713) is one among them, crafted with fine Italian chocolate, 23-karat edible gold sheets, vanilla beans from Uganda and strawberries dipped in edible gold. Kopi luwak is one of the most expensive coffees in the world, selling for between US\$100 and \$500 per pound. Innovation and adding richness to food is always welcome. But in the midst of all this craze about introduction of inventive recipes and highly expensive dishes which becomes more of a symbol of luxury than a fundamental necessity, the real purpose of food is often conveniently forgotten. It is our responsibility of making sure that our fellow beings are not starving and have basic necessities fulfilled. This paper focuses on two movies to explore the inevitable role of food as a bridging catalyst between cultures and as a humanitarian tool.

### **The Hundred-Foot Journey**

*The Hundred-Foot Journey* (2014) is a movie by 'Dream world entertainment', which features the story of a family of restaurateurs from Mumbai who moves to Europe and tries to open a restaurant, catering authentic Indian food in France. The Kadam family consists of a couple and their 5 children who have a passionate brilliance in cooking authentic Indian specialities and Tandoor cooked delicacies. But definitely, in a country like France which has a proud legacy of world-renowned cuisine, it's not going to be a cake walk for them.

The family with five kids was running an open-air restaurant in Hassan's (the second one of the 3 sons) school compound. Their mother was the chief cook and she used to mentor Hassan, who

always expressed an exceptional sense and interest in cooking and tasting food. He would stay mesmerized with closed eyes, when the fragrances and flavours seeped into him. A riot breaks out in the village after an election and someone throws a burning twig into the school yard, ending up in burning down of the restaurant and the mother loses her life in the fire.

After a short uncomfortable stay in Britain, They decide to move on. They are forced to stay the night in a French town as their van needs repair. Marguerite, a young French lady who is a Sous chef, takes the whole family to her house and serves them some home-cooked cold food. The platter looks so flattering and they all enjoy the food. The father in his sheer appreciation for her hospitality and the great food made with all home grown and processed ingredients states that,

"My family is silent because they are afraid, they died in the accident and is in Heaven"

This shows how food is so cherished, sacred and delighting for the Kadam family and they are very open to good food and kindness from anyone. Here offering food to someone in need is not only a kind and most humanitarian gesture, but it is also something which warms up and melts down the differences between people of two countries with completely different cultures.

In spite of many arguments and apprehensions within the family, they buy a left-alone space and decides to set up their restaurant there. Even though the elder kids other than Hassan are so worried about the presence of a Michelin Star<sup>1</sup> Restaurant in the proximity, father takes an audacious step and opens the restaurant, 'Maison Mumbai'. He is confident that the French people will definitely find Indian cuisine interesting and special, stating that they never had a chance to try it.

Mrs. Mallory, an elderly woman who runs the reputed restaurant, Le Saule Pluereur, is very particular about her menu and makes sure that they always serve the best food in the best way. She corners the staffs, picking on an overcooked asparagus shoot, they served the previous day and warns them:

"In this Restaurant, the cuisine is not an old tired marriage. It's a passionate affair of the heart."

Her words denote how proud they are about their cuisine and also how hard they have worked to come up to the level of a Michelin star restaurant. Food is not just to suppress hunger or to merely survive, but to feel and embrace life with all its richness and beauty and differences too. It acts as a cementing element between people, sometimes even makes them ignore trivial differences and immediately connect them to grow into deep relationships.

Mrs. Mallory looks down at the Kadam family initially, as she considers them as inferiors and despises their attempts to put up the restaurant and tries her best to make their opening day a failure.

When Hassan suggests adding white wine to cook mutton faster, retaining all its tenderness and flavors, Mansoor the elder son questions using wine, which is not a part of Indian cuisine. Then, he responds,

"We cannot survive unless we adapt"

While being proud of our own heritage, we should also be open to blend and widen the horizon of our exposure and food is one of the best tools, which aid that and many a times leads to treasurable memories and unprecedented bonding.

Hassan later impresses Mrs. Mallory with his culinary brilliance by making a very much Indian flavoured Omelette and she hires him. In spite of the differences and conflicts they had, Mrs. Mallory is a lady of pure passion towards brilliance in cuisine and open to innovations. Hassan's relentless stride towards innovative excellence, always maintaining a hint of the striking Indian flavours in his dishes and talent gets them the second Michelin Star. Hassan moves on to a prestigious Paris restaurant, where he becomes the celebrated chef and talk of the town. But later, he returns to St. Antonin and his family and the Le Saule Pluereur and takes charge of it, in partnership with Marguerite, with whom he falls in love deeply. Their romantic relation and the warmth between the two families is not just the bonding between them, but also the mighty bridging of two great cultures catalysed by food as a magic ingredient.

The whole theme of the movie focuses on adapting and blending and being open to new ideas and experiences. Mankind has always evolved through its numerous interactions and involvements with other ethnicities and when we look deep into any culture or community, we can see a clear connection between their history and geographical conditions and the food culture they flaunt. And many a times, it's not a much appealing reality for traditionalists that, there is nothing original in what we claim as our own traditional food and it is all a very harmonious blend at many levels and layers, of what was shared with us by all the people who approached us as traders, conquerors or explorers.

As stated in *Global Gastros* on Internet,

"From the black pepper trade of the ancient Romans to the introduction of potatoes from the New World into Irish cuisine, new flavours and cooking techniques were often incorporated into cuisines as a way to add a bit of interest".

As we become more globally connected, food culture is no longer tied down to any particular place or original, but it is adopted by anyone who is interested and to any extend, personal or professional level, and spreads far and wide.

The abovementioned merging of cuisines did not always just stay as whisking of food habits alone. History has many instances of fusion of cultures which also resulted in union of people in

deep, long lasting relationships too or vice versa. This has been carried down to coming generations also, which is quite interesting.

### **Usthad Hotel**

Anjali Menon, a promising female director and story teller of Malayalam industry, under the direction of Anwar Rasheed has crafted ‘Usthad Hotel’ as a vibrant commercial movie and nevertheless addresses many social issues out of which it drills down to the painful reality of poverty and starvation in our world, when so much food is wasted. It is based on a real-life story.

The movie is based in and around Calicut, a district towards the Northern side of Kerala which is so popular for its outstanding hospitality and baffling array of exquisite dishes which is supposed to be one of the repercussions of a long history of trade with many, including the Arabs, Portuguese etc.

Faizi, the young hero of the movie is a certified Chef from a reputed Swiss culinary institute, who always had a keen interest and skill in kitchen. But he does this course convincing his family, particularly his father that he is doing a management course in hospitality, so that they can run a five-star restaurant of their own. When the reality is revealed to his father who was waiting for him to come back as a management graduate to take over his business empire, he is enraged and takes away his passport so that he cannot join his job as a Sous chef, which he had already qualified to.

Faizi ends up with his paternal Grandfather who runs a beachside eatery called ‘Usthad Hotel’ which is famous for its special biriyani. Faizi who enjoyed a pampered and posh life so far, learns many ground realities of life during his stay there. He also gets an opportunity to work in a star hotel there. Even though he finds life with his grandfather interesting, he is still waiting for the chance to move out to London and take up his glamorous, dream job. But eventually when his grandfather falls ill, he requests him to meet a person in Madurai, Tamil Nadu which turns out to be a life-changing experience for Faizi.

There he is awestruck by the life of a man who has dedicated himself completely to feed the starving people and he realizes that:

"The purpose of serving good food is not only to fill the stomach but to make people happy and contented."

Narayan Krishnan who is a real-life hero from Tamil Nadu was himself a chef of Taj group of hotels. When he was about to relocate to the US for a very well-paid position as a chef, he comes across a man in streets who is in a really deplorable condition. And he tosses his dream job in the realisation that his duty lies here in feeding the poor and homeless brothers of his own.

The simplicity and humility of his noble work moves Faizi. He senses the ultimate satisfaction of feeding the needy ones, and the matchless sparkle of gratitude in their eyes strikes him

deep. He who was enduring everything in the hope of somehow getting into the luxurious and glamorous life of a Chef, now realises that all that is futile when there are still so many who doesn't even have enough to survive.

## Conclusion

"According to UNICEF, around 22,000 children die each day due to poverty. Even though the world produces enough food to feed twice the world's present population, food wastage is ironically behind the billions of people who are malnourished. The number of hungry people in India has increased by 65 million more than the population of France "as per the statistics mentioned in The World Today. As stated in the CSR Journal, "According to a survey by Bhook (an organization working towards reducing hunger) in 2013, 20 crore Indians sleep hungry on any given night. About 7 million children died in 2012 because of hunger and malnutrition".

Weddings, hotels, social and family functions, households spew out so much food. According to the United Nations Development Programme, up to 40% of the food produced in India is wasted. About 21 million tonnes of wheat are wasted in India and 50% of all food across the world meets the same fate and never reaches the needy. In fact, according to the agriculture ministry, INR 50,000 crores worth of food produced is wasted every year in the country. While some restaurants in India employ food controllers to check food spoilage, others donate it to their staff and other personnel and smaller standalone restaurants, donate it to orphanages. Few also reuse non-perishable food.

The heart wrenching short story "Biryani" (2016) by Santhosh Echikkanam, a Malayalam short story writer portrays the life of a daily wages worker who has to dig a pit to dump a huge Chembu<sup>2</sup>, full of biriyani, with an empty stomach and a starving kid at home. It is not at all imagination, but a deep dark reality of our society. There are also commendable movies like *Like Water for Chocolate* (book published in 1989) which is based on the book of same title by Esquivel Laura. This work attempts a mesmerising analogy between original Mexican recipes and the life and experiences of Tita the protagonist, manoeuvring magic realism.

Food will always be the very basic need of humankind and above that, it will take countless forms as something which will always influence allure and baffle humankind as much as humans transform it. And it will continue blending cultures and ethnicities all over the world like nothing else can do. However, deep down, food is the basic necessity for any human being and each of us should feel responsible to make sure that everyone gets their rightful share of it.

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## NOTES

1. The term normally refers to the annually published Michelin *Red Guide*, the oldest European hotel and restaurant reference guide, which awards up to three *Michelin stars* for excellence to a select few establishments. The acquisition or loss of a star can have dramatic effects on the success of a restaurant.
2. It is a huge vessel used, mainly for cooking briyani.

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**Magic of the Spices: Mythology in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's  
*The Mistress of Spices***

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Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is the award-winning author in Diasporic Literature. Her themes include the Indian experience, contemporary America, immigration, myth and challenges in a multicultural world. Divakaruni wrote her first novel *The Mistress of Spices* in 1997, this book short listed for the Orange prize from England and selected as one of the best books of 1997 by Los Angeles Times. She recreates the forgotten Indian myth and belief in her novels. She used magical elements in her following novels *The Mistress of Spices*, *Queen of Dreams*, *The Conch Bearer* and the *Palace of Illusions*.

The basic need of human is food, shelter and clothing. Food is inseparable part of human life. Collen Taylor Sen said: "The life of all living is food and the entire world seeks food. Complexion, clarity, good voice, long life, understanding, happiness, satisfaction, growth, strength and intelligence are all established in food" (7).

Indian culture is the one of the old civilizations in the world and the use of natural ingredients in food for health benefits is well known. Historical incidents like foreign invasion, trade and colonialism introduce the variety of food in India. The Indian food became world famous because of immigration. Peoples from India move to other countries and they popularize the Indian cuisine all over the world. Indian food is different from other country foods because it has some unique taste and cooking method. Indian foods are popularly known for its spiciness. Throughout the India spices are used in food. Spices used in Indian dishes carry some nutritional as well as medicinal properties. The present India shows the both ancient and modern culture in food.

India is the country with different cultures. Food habits also a symbol of culture. South Indian and North Indian foods are popularly known for its unique taste. South Indian foods have that unique aroma of spices and the tamarind sour taste. North Indian foods are well known for its sweets and the fragrant of ghee.

In Indian mythology people believe that rice given by Annapurna Goddess of Food. Indian bees make honey because of the divine intervention of the twin brother Avins. Akshyapathra is a vessel from Hindu mythology. It was given Yudhisthra by The Lord Surya. The power of Akshayapathra is it would provide unlimited amount of food to eat. This is a mythological story in The Mahabharat.

In India the food strongly connected with the culture and religion. People worship their Gods with offering the special food. In mythology Lord Krishna steals the butter from the houses in Brindavanam. So nowadays people offer butter in Lord Krishna Temple. The enduring story is fighting between Lord Muruga and Vinayaga because of Gnana Pazam. Another mythology of Menakshi kalyanam where the Gatothkaja eats up all the food made for the wedding and the resulting thirst is only quenched when Lord Sundereswarar creates the river Vaigai that still flows in Madurai. All these stories are referred as mythological stories on food.

Divakaruni used myth in her novel through the spices. *The Mistress of Spices* is a debut novel of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. It is a unique novel written with the blend of myth and medicinal. The protagonist of the novel Tilothama, she provides spices for her customers not only for cooking, it heals their family problems, loneliness and mental illness.

*The Mistress of Spices* is the story of the girl born with magical powers, later she was kidnapped by pirates because of her magical power. She was trained by the old mother in the island and she became mistress. She chooses the Oakland in California through the holy fire Shampati for run a spice shop.

This story describes the healing power of the spices with reference to magic. The protagonist uses spices like turmeric, fenugreek, cinnamon and other spices. Peppercorn has the ability to reveal one person's secret. At the beginning of the novel she describes silky yellow powder turmeric. In Ayurveda turmeric is the antibiotic it safeguards the humans from fungus and bacterial infection. Turmeric used in the cooking for add some color but the actual reason its medicinal quality. Tilo said turmeric have the quality of enhancing our beauty it will erase the blemishes and wrinkles. Based on mythology each spice has its special day. For turmeric it is Sunday. It used for sprinkling in the head of new born and over coconuts at puja, rubbed into the borders of new cloths. When she holds the spices, the spices speak to her. "I am turmeric who roses out of the ocean of milk when the Devas and Asuras churned for the treasures of the universe. I am turmeric who came after the poison and before the nectar and thus lie in between" (14). She believes that turmeric, the shield for sorrows and gives hope for rebirth. So, she gave turmeric to Ahuja's wife for her marital sufferings. In her shop, she makes barfis for children, she added the flavors of crushed cardamom, clove and cinnamon in that barfi.

She gave that barfi to Jagit to make his breath fragrant. Cinnamon is a spice believed as a friend maker. It filled with antioxidants and fight against the heart disease. In ancient period they believe cinnamon gives strength to destroy the enemies. The small boy Jagit, he is the only Punjabi in his school. He was afraid of the school and his classmates. So Tilo decides to give cinnamon to him. She stuck the small piece of cinnamon in his turban.

Fenugreek is considered as a Tuesday's spice. In Ayurveda fenugreek is medicine used to take care of asthma, hormonal disorder and to maintain a healthy metabolism. It was first shown by Shabari, oldest women in the world. Tilo described fenugreeks taste as: "Put in water and it will

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bloom free. Bite the swollen kernels between teeth and taste its bitter sweetness. Taste of water weeds in a wild place, the cry of grey geese” (47). She asked fenugreeks favor to help Ratna. She feels humiliated by her husband so Tilo gave the spice to make them happier.

Tilo meets the lonely American who frequently visits the shop on every Friday. She feels very close to him, she wants to give some spice to him. She remembers the old one word for each person there is one special spice. So, she searches the spice for lonely American. Finally, she finds Asafoetida, a remedy to love. Tilo describes the things in her shops:

See, bunches of podina leaves green as the forests of our childhood. Hold them up and smell how fresh and pungent, isn't this cause enough for gladness. Tear open a packet of chili-cashew. That hot taste, that crumple and crunch against your cheeks, the delicious tears that rise to your eyes. Here's kumkum powder red as the heart of a hibiscus flower to put on our foreheads for married luck. (79)

She was worried about Lalita Ahuja's wife. She wants to know whether turmeric works or not. Few days later she came to the shop without any happiness in her shop because she lost the turmeric, she doesn't use the spice. Tilo consoles her and give Fennel, which is the spice for Wednesday. It gives the fresh smell and refreshment. Tilo advised her to take a pinch of Fennel after every meal, she insisted give fennel to her husband also because Fennel cools the temper. There is myth about Fennel, when sage Vashistha swallows the demon Illwal he ate Fennel to he would not come back. Ancient people believe that Fennel is an equalizer; it can take the power from one and give it to another when two people eat at the same time. So Tilo thought Lalita got strength to protect her.

She was in the disguise, for getting her original appearance she used the spice ginger. It is used for digestion problem in Ayurvedic and one of the important spices in Indian curries. Tilo sliced the ginger and boiled it for her. But now she breaks the rule of the mistress. She would not use the spices for her own benefit, she thought it's all for Geetha's welfare. She ate the ginger slices; the gingers give her youth appearance. She went to meet Geetha to give the mango pickle mixed with some magical spices. Tilo has some doubts because she breaks the island rule, so the spices are angry on her.

Tilo falls in love with Raven the lonely American. The old mother warns her, but she is not aware of the consequences. She requests the king of spices Makaradwaj to make her most beautiful women in the earth. But Makaradwaj remains silent because Tilo humiliating the island customs. The spice laughs and warns her as “Do you desire it more than you desired us on the island, that day when you would have thrown yourself off the granite cliffs had the First Mother said no” (261).

The medicinal quality of the spices in this novel is true it will help in practical life. But the magical qualities of the spices like giving courage solve the family problems and rebirth is the

mythological references. The spices turned against Tilo. The important law of the spice island is when the mistress committed any prohibition act the spices withdraw their magic powers it acts against the beneficial persons. So the people who are all visited the spice store get into trouble. Jagit the school boy, Lalitha typical Indian women and Geetha and other people facing the problem because of Tilo's magic failure. Lalita wrote a letter to Tilo about her problems, she requests all the spices to help her. She said, "I will pound almond and chyavanprash for mental strength and physical and set it outside the door for the wind to carry to the women-house where you wait" (273). Finally, she consoles the spices and First mother, she got new life and named herself as Maya. "In the old language it can mean many things. Illusion, spell, enchantment, the power that keeps this imperfect world going day after day" (317).

Divakruni used myth to enlarge the benefit of the spices. Each spice has the medicinal quality but people unaware of that they think spices only used for cooking. In this novel Divakaruni was gave awareness to the people about spices and its medicinal qualities. When the myth included in this novel it became interesting.

Thus, myth is extremely played an important role in this novel *The Mistress of Spices*. The ancestors create a myth on every spice to easily convey the medicinal qualities of the spices. Because no one giving importance to the plain theory, so when they include some myth and magical elements into that matter it easily reaches the peoples mind. So, Divakaruni cleverly handles the myth as a tool to explore the qualities of the spices.

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## "CONSERVATION: THE NEED OF THE HOUR"

### An Ecocritical Analysis of Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and Markandaya's *Nectar In A Sieve*

**Jenith. J., Assistant Professor**

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#### **Introduction**

Literature is generally defined as the medium that serves to mirror life and all its facets. In the recent times, it explains the relationship between the human world and the physical environment. Particularly, it showcases the concerns that comes along with the constantly changing face of human connectivity with the natural world. Our natural world needs ecology and ecosystems to be maintained and balanced, so that both human society and other living species can have a good life in the present and in future. That is, with sustainable development and with the limited use of available resources, living beings can have a safe and secure future generation. All the earthly beings are blessed with the natural resources from which they get food and produce food and that is how they survive. Every living being is dependent on one or the other living beings, that forms the ecological pyramid.

From the last few decades, there has been a lot of disasters ruining the lives on the Earth. Misuse and over-usage of natural resources spoils the ecological pyramid and have left us at the brink of destruction. Cutting down of trees, fast depletion of fossil fuels, disorder in the seasonal cycles and all contributes to ecological disaster, which is happening now all over the globe. With the help of literature, this paper aims to highlight the practical difficulties that human beings face from Nature and how they manipulate and consume things from Nature according to their needs, considering themselves superior. These are analysed from the works of two Indian novelists. First one is the winner of Jnanpith Award 2018, Amitav Ghosh and the other person is one of the most prominent Indian novelists, Kamala Markandaya.

Amitav Ghosh's "The Hungry Tide" focuses on the practical difficulties of people and, the changes in climate and environment are highlighted. The theme of the novel can be connected to the report from 'The Guardian',

"Earth has lost half of its wildlife in the past 40 years since 1970, says WWF: Species across land, rivers and seas decimated as humans kill for food in unsustainable numbers and destroy habitats."

Kamala Markandaya's "Nectar in a Sieve" portrays the theme of poverty, starvation and the degradation caused by poverty. As mentioned rightly by Professor Ken Albala,

"The agricultural revolution is probably the single most important event in human history... ..how people figured out a way to support their growing population by moving toward an agricultural-based society" (KA12).

### **Oppressions in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide***

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* gives importance to nature and environment and how human beings enjoy the nature and eventually exploit nature for their own benefits. Misuse and over-usage have led to depletion, destruction and annihilation of the face of earth to an unrecognizable state that has resulted in the phenomenon of climate change. Nature has started paying back humankind and other living things in the severest manner. Humanity has to rethink, reevaluate and re-designate its relationship with its surroundings by acknowledging the fact that, we are part of our environment and in no way superior to it.

This novel reveals the interactions between the fauna and flora and the physical environment, both the tragedy and the hypocrisy that were inherent in the conservation efforts in the Sundarbans. In this novel, Ghosh problematizes the tensions between and within human, their respective relations with the natural world, and the extra-discursive reality of nature that changes and therefore, it is simultaneously changed by humanity.

'Nature' is personified as a character, whom Ghosh introduces in the first chapter, 'The Tide communities Country'; It is described by its beauty, physical and geographical settings. As it is said, "...A mangrove forest is a universe unto itself...". (THT 9)

The novel highlights not only Nature's fascinating features, when it is ecologically balanced, but also its aggressive aspects when the balance collapses. These lines are quoted from the text:

"...Every year, dozens of people... .. killed by tigers, snakes and crocodiles ... .. everyday, thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater..." (THT 25)

Nature is depicted in its dual nature. It is paradoxical, that it is as a coin with two sides,

Nature is pictured as 'a creator - destroyer', it's appealing characteristics and the disastrous hostility; the supporter of life's survival as well as the destroyer of many lives.

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An Ecocritical Analysis of Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and Markandaya's *Nectar In A Sieve*

In the novel, the characters Nilima and Nirmal are the social activists, who start the NGO Badabon Development Trust to help the poor people providing those basic amenities of drinking water, electricity, education and medical help. Nirmal keeps a notebook in which he records the place, the people, the history and the environment with the idea of compiling a book about the tide country, Sundarbans. Having come there in his youth after thirty years in the late 70's, he finds that the millions of swarming crabs and birds were fast disappearing, the fish were dwindling, and the land from day to day was being reclaimed by the sea. He also records the happenings at Morichjhapi island, where the settlers were being forced to relocate to the main lands and vacate the forests. He writes how Kusum (belonging to the indigenous people of Sundarbans) explains the situation when the police laid siege to Morichjhapi and its people who were starved by the authorities whose action might force them to quit the island:

"...the worst part was not the hunger or the thirst. It was to sit here, helpless, and listen to the policemen making their announcements, hearing them say our lives, our existence, was worth less than dirt or dust. This island has to be saved for its trees, it has to be saved for its animals, it is a part of a reserve forest, it belongs to a project to save tigers, which is paid for by people all around the world . . . this whole world has become a place of animals, and our fault, our crime was that we were just human being, trying to live as human beings always have, from the water and the soil. No human being could think this a crime unless they have forgotten that this is how humans have always lived-by fishing, by clearing land and by planting the soil" (THT 261-262)

Ghosh makes a case for the indigenous inhabitants who were considered a direct threat to the lands, forests and reserve areas and who in turn were dispossessed of their homes to accommodate more space for the tigers. These people had to fight against not only the unstable and menacing natural environment, the cyclones, tigers and crocodiles but also other powerful human beings.

Piya, a cetologist sights a group of seven Orcaella and describes the behavioral pattern of one of the smallest in the group, a calf that as she observed, —coming to the surface in a "corkscrew pattern with its little head protruding out of the water—an indication that it still had to learn to breathe smoothly" (THT 114).

This mammalian species is considered to be critically endangered and Piya believes that trying to decipher the movements of the Orcaella adapting itself to the tidal ecology might provide clues to conservation of this endangered species. She also gets to learn how these dolphins cooperate with the humans in their cast-net fishing sightings. The region needs to be protected all the more from such human infringement, as the incident in the novel is highlighted, when Piya and

Fokir (a nature lover) on one of their forays in to the Garjontola are shocked to find the carcass of the calf, that she had been happy to witness at the first instance of spotting the dolphin along with its mother. She learns that the propeller of one of the fast-moving motorboats of the coastguard or the police or even the forest officials had hit the calf and caused its death.

Fokir also points out that he had come across three such instances along the river that emphasizes the need for conservation and habitat preservation. The Sundarbans is the only mangrove forest in the world that houses the tiger with the highest tiger population in the world being found in this tiger reserve. That's how the Royal Bengal Tigers, at the same time are marginalizing the people of the islands. With the increase in tiger population, there raises the question of how much space has been actually earmarked for the movement of the increase in the number of the species. There is danger of tigers wandering into human habitation and end up eating men, women, children and cattle.

An incident is described where one is wondering at the credibility of conservation of one particular species at the cost of another. Piya, Kanai, Fokir and Horen witness the killing of a tiger by a mob. The tiger had already encroached upon human habitation having killed a buffalo and revisiting a second time is caught by the furious mob waiting to kill it:

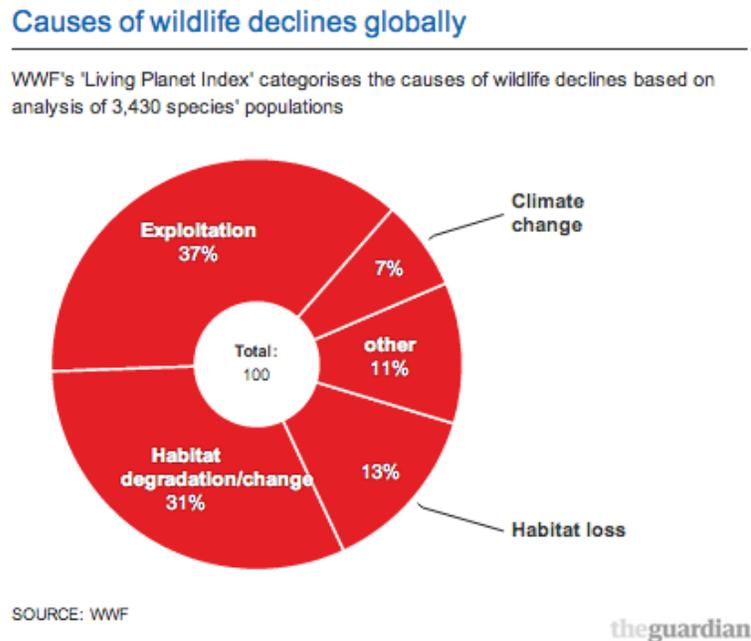
"By the light of the torches they saw that the village was made up of clusters of mud huts, so arranged as to run parallel to the embankment. There was a small mud-walled structure with a thatched roof in front of them. More than a hundred people had gathered around this little hut: most of them were men and many were armed with sharpened bamboo poles: they were plunging in to the hut over and again. Their faces were contorted in such a way that they seemed to be in the grip both of extreme fear and uncontrollable rage. Many of the women and children in the crowd were shrieking, Maar! Maar! Kill! Kill!" (THT 291, 292)

*The Hindu* OP-ED in its Jan14, 2012 edition discusses the issue and suggests that "the answer to this human-tiger conflict lies in good conservation science and in mitigation measures that help people co-exist with the carnivores at the landscape level and the relocation of people from tiger territory with handsome compensatory packages is a superior alternative to crisis management techniques, providing a wider prey base within its habitation will ensure the tiger not seeking the cattle. And creating wider undisturbed habitat will benefit both".

As mentioned in *The Guardian*, "We have lost one half of the animal population and knowing this is driven by human consumption, this is clearly a call to arms and we must act now," said Mike Barratt, director of science and policy at WWF. He said more of the Earth must be

protected from development and deforestation, while food and energy had to be produced sustainably.

The steep decline of animal, fish and bird numbers was calculated by analysing 10,000 different populations, covering 3,000 species in total. This data was then, for the first time, used to create a representative “Living Planet Index” (LPI), reflecting the state of all 45,000 known vertebrates.



**Fig. 1**

### **Farming and Food Production in Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve***

While we discussed about the cruelties that happen when nature retaliates, here, in this novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, there is a contrast, where Kamala Markandaya portrays the Environment, Rukmani, the protagonist and Ira as oppressed beings. Rukmani's work in the garden and total dependence on this farming through her hard labour depicts her deep-rooted link with nature. She gets pleasure when she sees the growth of her crop. It becomes clear when she says, “our freedom to work in the forest and to farm is very important” (NS 241)

Nathan, Rukmani's husband was a farmer. They had six children, of which five were boys and one girl child, Ira. Their lives were dependent on land, farming and food production. Their only concern is producing food and surviving on it. It is on the harvest and the yield, that their joy, survival and family is holding upon every year. When Rukmani thinks about the difficult times, about the sons leaving the farm lands to a distant place like Ceylon and when she laments, Nathan shows her the green ripening fields and utters these words with a strong hope of future:

"Nathan said, 'You...think only of your trials, not of the joys that are still with us. Look at our land -- is it not beautiful? The fields are green, and the grain is ripening. It will be a good harvest year, there will be plenty'. Nathan went and plucked a few green stems and brought them...

'See how firm and strong they are -- no sign of disease at all. And look, the grain is already forming'" (NS 82)

She misses nature and organic form of living when she is alienated from her land, finds trouble in getting charity food and finally gets back preferring her organic company to get pleasure of life. Markandaya has portrayed a true picture of village life, where Rukmani and Nathan are not single characters, but they represent the whole community. They are left into poverty and when rains fail, their crops are not giving a good yield. Thus, their survival becomes a great question mark. This novel clearly showcases the problems faced by our farmers these days in our society. How are we reacting to it, even after knowing these people's emotional connections with farming and their lands?

Life is in the verge of destruction, though there are plenty of food produced. "Even though the world produces enough food to feed twice the world's present population, food wastage is ironically behind the billions of people who are malnourished. The number of hungry people in India has increased by 65 million more than the population of France" as per the statistics mentioned in *The World Today*.

As Ken Albala has quoted in his "Food: A Cultural Culinary History",

"... population pressure forced some people to find new ways of getting food, it did not free them from the recurrent crises, food shortages, and famines.." (12)

Not even stopping with famines, it leads people to death ultimately.

## Conclusion

There are several other endangered ecosystems on planet earth. It is the moral responsibility and accountability on the part of every human to conserve our environment, as it is increasingly threatening to each and all of its members, human or nonhuman, where each requires in its own space to be. Animals are more eco-sensitive than humans. Global warming is responsible for the fast depleting spaces, thereby driving many species to extinction and puts human existence itself in a conflict. The need of the hour is to build a future that strikes a balance between man and his surroundings, to live in harmony with his environment, maintaining the ecology, expelling his human dominating-ego, as shown in Fig.2, taken from Web for reference.

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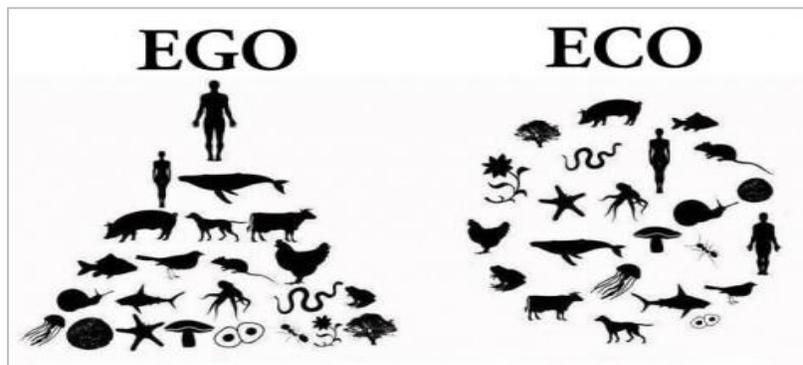
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**Fig.2**

The transformation of attitude of human kind from all-exploiting self-declared rulers to co-existent species of planet Earth is the crying need of the hour. I would like to conclude the paper with the quotes by Aldo Leopold,

"Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land. By land, it is meant all of the things on, over, or in the earth. Harmony with land is like harmony with a friend; you cannot cherish his right hand and chop off his left. That is to say, you cannot love game and hate predators; you cannot conserve the waters and waste the ranges; you cannot build the forest and mine the farm. The land is one organism. Its parts, like our own parts, compete with each other and co-operate with each other. The competitions are as much a part of the inner workings as the co-operations. You can regulate them—cautiously—but not abolish them."

As Alice Walker puts it, "Activism is the rent I pay for living on planet Earth", let us all become environmental activists to preserve our nature and conserve the environment.

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### Figure References

Fig. 1: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/sep/29/earth-lost-50-wildlife-in-40-years-wwf>

Fig. 2: <http://neighborhoodeconomics.org/ecosystem-vs-egosystem/>

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**Psychological Reflection on the Role of Gustatory Emotions in Aimee Bender's *The Particular Sadness Of A Lemon Cake***

**S. K. Jeya Vidya Shree, M.Phil. Research Scholar**

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Postmodern culture has been greatly stimulated by food images and the use of food as a metaphor. Current studies have opened doors in literary studies to look at how the employment of food imagery and metaphors symbolise multifaceted thoughts and profound meanings in literature. Literary food studies evaluate food symbolism to echo the cultural identity which comprises of assorted topics from societal position to sexual desire to gender relations. Food carries numerous meanings that serve to coerce the action of the plots, typify the characters, and replicate the culture. The writers use food and eating to signify cultural matters of reception, resistance and protection of civilisation. They also employ motifs of memory, emotions, relationships, power, and consumption.

Aimee Bender's *The Particular Sadness of a Lemon Cake* portrays the family of Rose Edelstein and her family members who undergo some disorder and confusion. The protagonist's mother has insomnia, her father detaches himself from the family, her brother Joseph disappears into wooden chairs, and Rose (protagonist) is left alone with the food psychic disorder. Literature has seen the rise of several fiction works that employ the use of food images. But in this novel, Aimee Bender brings out the unusual and unheard side of food preparation and the emotions carried by those who prepare it. In the shoes of Rose, the readers can see how the simple routine task of having a proper-meal turns out to be dreadful for a child of nine.

The food we eat has a dramatic influence on our physical and mental health. Recent research on the topic has depicted that our diet can have an impact on our mood. There is a strong relationship between food and atmosphere in emotionally distressed individuals. The neurotransmitters and neuromodulators are considered to be the basic units of chemical communication in the human system. Most of the neurotransmitters are deemed to be present in food, and they have a direct influence on our brain. Research has found that most of the people consume large quantities of food that are rich in carbohydrates. Consumption of foods that have high levels of carbohydrates helps people to elevate their mood with the rise of the serotonin levels in the brain.

Bad tastes and dislike towards a particular food item develops easily than good tastes and likes. An acquired distaste towards a specific dish is termed as food aversion in which the individual always associates a negative consequence (example: nausea and vomiting) of eating a particular food. Food aversion is said to be found common and remain persistent in both young and old individuals. The aversions have been reported to be long-lasting in a few individuals. The initial

rejection of new food is termed as ‘food neo-phobia’, and the condition can be reduced by exposure and consumption of a specific food item often. This condition is common with young children as an aversion towards a particular food item has a substantial impact on them. There are also futuristic possibilities of disgust shown towards that specific food item even after they are grown.

Taste is usually considered as being composed of four basic sensations – sweetness, saltiness, sourness and bitterness. Apart from the other senses, taste and smell are deemed to be highly subjective senses. The pleasure and displeasure of a particular sensation provided by any food are always stored in the subconscious level of the mind. Physical disgust towards food is linked to the cognitive, behavioural and physiological processes. The consumption of mother’s homemade lemon-chocolate cake for Rose Edelstein’s ninth birthday created a strong impact and made her realise the birth of the highest and most disturbing potential. The Los Angeles spring week of March made Rose associate her birthday with the bright sunny days that lay ahead of her. The pleasure of watching the stirring of eggs, sifting of flour and the bowl of chocolate icing and rainbow sprinkles made Rose realise her mother’s love and the challenges that involved in the process of baking a birthday cake.

Rose had developed a strong liking for sourness, and the whiff of warm citrus baked cake sprinkled with sugar invaded her senses. The first bite of the lemon-chocolate cake made her recognise that she has turned into a food sensor since she was able to identify the mood and emotions of the person who prepared the food. Here, the cake beneath the layers of chocolate and lemon zest prepared by her mother made her feel hollow and empty. A feeling that she has not experienced ever in her life, “in each bite: absence, hunger, spiralling, hollows” (Bender 10). For children, cakes baked for birthdays are always extraordinary, but Rose was not able to sense any happiness after eating her birthday cake. This identification of her extra-sensory proved to be an unnecessary load for a child who wanted to savour her birthday cake.

Rose was able to smell her mother’s attitude and mood in which she baked the cake. She was not able to recognise whether it was because of the bad lemon or old sugar or her mother’s woes that made her ninth birthday cake taste sorrowful: “I could feel the mountain swelling in my throat, an ache spreading into the lining of my neck” (Bender 11). Rose confessed to her mother that the cake she baked for her with love tasted ‘empty’ and made her feel deserted. The child was filled with anxiety and fear to eat her mother’s food and experience the same feeling of hollowness and emptiness. Rose’s relationship with her father was more like that of a stranger whereas her brother Joseph rarely interacted with her. Rose’s mother comforted her with soothing words, but her favourite child was Joseph. Her mother listened to Joseph keenly and nodded with encouragement whenever he spoke. Her brother and mother shared a special kind of intimacy which she did not receive from her mother and father.

Loneliness in an individual is also said to result in eating disorders. The deterioration of relationships and solitariness in life lead people to find comfort in food. They assume that the particular food item will present them with the sense of warmth that no human has provided them

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with in their life. Throughout the novel, Rose seemed to be detached from her family members and had a difficult time to express her strange disorder of tasting people's feelings to them. Her mother's roast chicken tasted weird, and Rose was left unnoticed by her family members at the dining table. At school, Rose spent the entire hour without any company by drinking the warm metallic water from the fountain pipes to erase the taste of the previously consumed foods. Day by day, she was able to feel the dominance of sadness in all the foods that she consumed. It was overbearing for a nine-year-old kid to go through this range of feelings and emotions. This food psychic disorder only made her feel out of the box and secluded her from people.

According to Fischler, consuming particular food objects is one primary way in which individuals can exercise "control over the body, the mind and therefore over identity...it is the first and probably the main means of intervening in the body, the favoured instrument of control over the self" (p 5). Her brother's best and only friend George Malcolm gave her company and lighted up the journey of ups and downs with her food choices. She confessed that something was wrong with her and George helped her to realise her extraordinary potential. His kindness and support gave Rose the capacity to bear with the emotions caused by her mother's cooking. Her brother Joseph reached out for her "the same way the desert blooms a flower now and then" (Bender 54). Rose craved for attention and love from her parents and brother, but it was George who offered it to her generously.

George made her taste varied foods produced by sellers in the city since she would be able to tell different things with unfamiliar people who created it. To name a few: he took her to a bakery on Beverly which produced the best batch of homemade cookies. She was given the chocolate chip cookie which tasted of 'tight anger'. Only now George and Rose identified her potential when they realised that the baker hated his job and did not like to bake cookies since he started his job. Next on line was the oatmeal cookie which tasted of hurriedness, prepared by a woman who was always late. Throughout the process of tasting and identifying each emotion and mood, George had much patience which made Rose develop a strong bond with him. She was then made to taste a yelling for love and loud homemade ham-and-cheese mustard sandwich prepared by the girlfriend of the shopkeeper. It was George who gave her the name 'magic food psychic': "I am a food psychic, I told myself, even though the thought of it made me want to crawl under the buildings and never come out" (Bender 67).

The food habits of children can be assumed to be influenced by the food choices and practises of their parents. Parents play a significant role in the pattern of food habits and preferences of young children. They can influence their children's food choice by making specific foods available and by acting as examples by their behaviour in particular situations. Usually, children tend to be afraid of new foods, and they do not readily accept to eat whatever is offered to them. Earlier experiences of a particular food are the primary determinants of the development of the acceptance pattern in children's menu. The concept of 'gatekeeper' denotes that in all families there is usually one person

who takes the primary responsibility for deciding which foods are to be served. The gatekeeper takes the job for the provision of food preparation in the family.

The food choices and preferences of a woman in the household are said to influence the family members and particularly children. Thus, we can see the significant role of parents and their food choices on children's eating pattern. People seem to have an innate preference for sweet tastes and avoidance of bitter flavours. The infants and their facial expressions are studied by giving them the flavours of sweetness and bitterness. Both adults and children seem to reject specific foods based on perceived taste, and the best predictors of individual willingness to try foods are the perceived taste and earlier experience of the food.

Rose's Mom loved to cook whereas Rose somehow wanted to skip the meals prepared by her at home. The result of Rose's super sensory power made her lose weight and also created an obsession over the emotions of strangers. The smell of fruit and leaven made her realise that her mother was preparing summer pie: "the taste was so bad that I could hardly keep it in my mouth" (Bender 73). Rose detested the preparation of baked goods by her mother, but she consumed all her cooked dinners without any sign of sadness and frown. She was burdened by the continuous thoughts of her next meal and the emotions that went into while preparation: "And, day in and day out, I had been faking enjoying faking at home, through the weekly gaps and silences between my parents, through my mother's bright and sleepless eyes, and for whatever reason, for that one time, I could not possibly pretend I liked her pie" (Bender 75).

After having a bite of her mother's summer pie, Rose confessed that she was able to feel her sadness and was desperate to get over the taste. Later, Rose was taken to the hospital, and the doctor's diagnosis was of no help to her, and she felt the same 'hollowness'. Rose had the immense pangs of loneliness in her heart since she was not normal like other people. Rose envied the people who were able to relish their meals without tasting any emotions in it. She did not know whether it was a boon or bane in her life. In her twelfth year, Rose found her mother's illicit affair by eating the family dinner of roast beef and potatoes. As a child, Rose was able to sense thick waves of guilt and romance of her dear mother in the dish. At the first bite, Rose instantly identified her mother's secret relationship. She locked this painful experience to herself and never wanted to confess it to her stranger father.

At the dinner table, the family rarely conversed with each other, and there was always an air of detachment between them. Rose's complicated relationship with food had steady growth every day. She became a surveyor of the meals cooked by her mother to know about her current mood status. Her gustatory senses were active and alert and she now attained the power of tracking and identifying produces that came from more than fifty states in the US. With the produce, she was able to locate Larry, the co-op president of the furniture company and the reason behind her mother's new romance. Her mother's work trip to Nova Scotia made Rose converse with her father and spend

some quality time with him after nearly twelve years of her birth. She craved for her father's attention which she never received from him since he was like a stranger in his own house.

Rose's mother used cooking as her pastime to forget her own disappointments and miseries in life. Her sleeping disorder made her to cook vigorously and serve her baked products to her family members. Her mother too like Rose craved for attention and appreciation for her meal preparation. The individuals use food to provide comfort during periods of stress and sadness. Foods are distinct from other objects that people may use to derive comfort because they are incorporated and taken into the body and so they produce physical, as well as psychological and emotional effects. Women with disorders associate food and eating with emotions and social-psychological expectations and needs. The feelings of anxiety, anger, disappointment, disgust, frustration, guilt, happiness, love, hate and nostalgia are readily associated with food. The selection of particular food objects for consumption may appear to be a highly personal choice, and it is also deeply rooted in substantial cultural and social systems.

The twelve-year-old Rose was overburdened and stuffed with information about her mother's relationship with Larry (president of the co-op). It was too strong and early for her age to know that her parents were flawed and messed with their personal lives. Rose chose to hide it from her father because her mother was her only source of comfort in the family. Contrary to the pie and her birthday cake, her mother's pretzels outstood as the best one for Rose. At one point in time, Rose was entirely drained because of the constant tasting of people's food to judge their moods. Joseph's strange behaviour of disappearance into the chairs diverted her to think about him. Few years after the total withdrawal of Joseph, Rose decided to use her superpower for a purpose. She spent her money on meals by travelling to different parts of the city as a food psychic. At the end of the novel, Rose came to know from her father that his father had a particular disorder where he was able to sense whether people were happy or unhappy just by entering into a room. She then realised that this sensor disorder runs in their family.

Taste also refers to the personal dispositions and preferences. The sensation of tasting involves registering the impression as pleasant or unpleasant. This impression provides the humans to judge the quality of their food experience through the immediate approval of the gustatory. Gustatory gratification is invoked as a prompt, sensed, hopeless pleasure. It also involves the pacification of hunger and the satisfaction of a bodily appetite. Food cannot be judged based on the gustatory taste because eating is bound to be an activity with private interests. Flavour is counted to be an individual experience, and it may vary from person to person. Flavour and tastes were the two things that Rose was never able to relish in her day-to-day meal after the consumption of her 'empty' birthday cake.

Barthes in *Empire of Signs* explains that "Food serves as a sign not only for themes, but also for situations; and this, all told, means a way of life that is emphasised, much more than expressed by it" (p 171-172). We can see that food connotes the images of a familiar and soothing way of life and

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**Food in Literature: Papers Presented in National Seminar on Food in Literature, 2019**

**S. K. Jeya Vidya Shree, M.Phil. Research Scholar**

**Psychological Reflection on the Role of Gustatory Emotions in Aimee Bender's *The Particular Sadness Of A Lemon Cake***

also brings in nostalgia through consuming particular food objects. The conditions of postmodern society have made it increasingly difficult for individuals to form and sustain meaningful personal and social identities. At the same time, people feel compelled to engage in self-help behaviours to make themselves feel better. The notion of comfort food has become increasingly prominent. Food prepared in a traditional style has nostalgic or sentimental appeal and it provides one with psychological comfort - any food consumed by individuals, often during periods of stress evokes positive emotions and is associated with significant social relationships. For some cooking is a leisure activity that they like to do at all times while the other few do it due to their circumstances in life. Aimee Bender has struck the readers with the idea to love what we do or it will affect the people around us.

This article emphasises on the importance of active parental participation in the life of young children. Neglecting and being inattentive to the evolving psychological changes in children will create a permanent scar on them. Aimee Bender sketches the alternate traumatic side of eating through the depiction of the range of emotions underwent by Rose Edelstein. Food and eating plays an increasingly central role in individuals' lives. We rely on objects and particularly food objects to define who we are as individuals and as groups. The media and advertisers of consumer goods use this social function of food to their benefit. The past decade has seen the notion of comfort food appearing regularly in popular magazines, television, literature, and advertising. Daily life in the modern world with its stress, psychological discomfort, and personal dislocation has given rise to the need for comfort foods. In this novel, we can see that the innocent phase of Rose is lost due to the dark side of gustatory effects on her body and mind. Tasting each and every emotion gave her enlightenment and maturity about adulthood and life. The delicate young age of her life seemed to be a torturous one for her since she was made to carry a heavy weight on her shoulders without the support of her family. Further research in the novel can be done to study the symbolism of food signs and their meanings.

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## **Food for Thought: Is It Human Evolution or Feeding Evolution?**

**K. N. Jayakumar, Assistant Professor**

### **Introduction: Inter and Intra Species Differences**

Roughly, Modern Human beings are walking over this planet for the last 2 lakhs years (Foley, 2003). For the sake of debates, 'human beings are considered to be different from animals' but truly it is 'different from other animals' and their characteristics of developing art, culture, language and machines separates humans from other animals (Tomaselo, 2003). Looking at the ways of how humans are similar and different from other animals apart from their creating abilities, they all together share similarity in the way they are born, grow, mate, reproduce, raise and die. But one thing that is significant is the qualitative differences in this evolutionary process. This qualitative evolutionary process differentiates from that of animal species and within the human species itself. The reason could be that humans have created accumulative cultures and languages that their influences are seen in all the things they do. This creativity has its foundations on intelligence which evolved over seven million years (Klug, Cummings & Spencer, 2012).

### **Feeding Behaviour**

Apart from intelligence what makes humans different from other animals is the way humans feed even though their nutritional needs are not so different from other animals (Schmidt-Nielsen, 1996). As intelligence started to evolve over millions of years, the feeding behaviour and feeding habits started to evolve. Qualitatively, nutritional requirements across species remained the same except for changes in one or other components (Prosser & Brown, 1968). According to Zucoloto (2008), living beings are different from one other based on their size, temperature, physical activity and various factors. As intelligence evolved hominins (human ancestors) became more and more emotionally empathetic the aggressive behaviours started to wane and as a result socialization became more possible and mate selection became exchanged based. And this became progressively evident over millions of years, the feeding preferences and feeding habits still remains the same for other animals till date unless there is unavailability of preferred food (Zucoloto, 2011). In spite of availability of the preferred food, what is consumed, how it is consumed has seen a drastic change due to the cultural advancements.

Unlike other animals, humans have spread, survived and established across all the geographical areas of earth due to the cosmopolitan nature. As other animals still maintain the food preferences unchanged when they move across the places, but humans have retained their traditional food preferences even after immigration to other regions. Local and regional foods like vegetables, fruits, bulbs, tubers, grains and meat were part of traditional cultures and different populations

maintain this tradition even after migrating to other regions of the world where there is unavailability of these, they tend to cultivate or rear.

### **Carnivorous or Herbivorous Debate**

In the gamut of food habits, the fundamental question that keeps researchers engaged in answering is the question whether humans are vegetarians or not? Is homo-sapiens herbivorous or carnivorous? Looking at the evolution of feeding habits, the control of fire (*~ one and half million years before*) brought in a great change in feedings habits and behaviour.

Apart from changing the feeding practices, fire also gave the warmth and protection from predators. What led to the human brain development? Is it the consumption of meat or consumption of nuts and cheese nuts? Those who argued that humans were essentially carnivorous postulated that increased meat consumption was the reason behind human brain development and those who believed that humans were herbivorous in nature argued that nutritionally rich nuts were the reason behind brain evolution. According to Diamond (2001), the debate became more complicated with the invention of agriculture some eleven-thousand years before as it changed the direction of the feeding habits as humans learned the art of food cultivation than being a nomad and passively or aggressively dependent on what they got in their environment. Knowing to control fire, and inventing to cultivate modified the way humans lived their life which changed from nomadic culture to settling culture. Fire and agriculture further brought humans closer as social gatherings and lead to shared feeding behaviours (Mazoyer & Ronadart, 2009). Agriculture introduced grain in the human diet like oats, barley, rye, wheat etc and learning to rear animals alongside agriculture which made them to survive in fixed places. This has led to further development of cultures and modifications in their feeding habits. It can be concluded that humans are neither exclusively carnivorous nor herbivorous but omnivorous. As the species survived both in tropical as well as in Polar Regions of the earth, the omnivorous feedings habits would have helped them survive and sustain. Ideally, humans consumed more of vegetables than of meat in tropical regions and it was vice versa in Polar Regions.

### **Nomads Becoming Settlers**

In modern age, apart from culture, the social, life style and economic factors also decide the nature of feeding behaviour and habits. As nomadic tribes, they constantly kept moving and always had accessibility to abundant food but, periods of starvation appeared only after the implementation of agriculture (Cordain, Miller, & Mann, 1999) and food was easily found when there was no population expansion. The hunter-gatherers had a variety of foods to eat unlike the agricultural period which was tied down to a few varieties and moreover agriculture augmented population expansion and people became sedentary. Further, the man produced food always had lower nutritional value than the ones found in nature. Sedentary life style due to agriculture was the cause for obesity (Prentice, 2005). Researchers found that those humans who were fed larger quantities of calories thrice a day developed fat accumulation than those who were fed smaller quantities at

shorter intervals. This reveals the difference in hunter-gatherer's life style and that of settlers' life style on obesity (Blundell, Cotton, & Lawton, 1993). This also explains the metabolic differences in human body due to life style influence. The genetic makeup is such that the human body requires physical exercise (12 kms walk approx.) and feeding from variety of sources and less of human population. But today's life style is sedentary with chemically cultivated vegetables and meat with highly saturated fat which is unsuitable for human nature (Zucoloto, 2008).

## **Food and Religion**

Of many factors that influence our feeding behaviours, religion has added to the complexity of understanding our natural feeding behaviours. There is a genuine need to understand that religion and food are related to one another and religious differences are stressed in the way of beliefs related to a) food creation and production, b) food consumption and c) food distribution (Giorda, Bossi and Messina, 2014). In some religions, having food is a way of connecting to God. What is consumed and how it is consumed, with what and what not and how it is prepared, and who prepares in what occasion, and when and how abstinence or fasting is practiced are all the contributions of religious beliefs and practices. More the religious faiths more are the complexity in feeding behaviours. Religions are divided across the carnivorous, herbivorous and omnivorous lines and further there are certain foods that are preferred, restricted and banned. In Hinduism according to Bhagavad Gita (9, 27-28; 17, 8-10) food is classified into three 1) *food of goodness*; dairy products, grains, fruits and vegetables which increases the life and purity of life 2) *food of passion*; bitter, sour, salty, pungent, dry or hot and causes distress and 3) *food of ignorance and putrid*; meat, fish, poultry and causes pain, disease and bad karma. In Islam, food is divided into 1) *Halal*; meaning permissible i.e., meat of domesticated animals and 2) *Haram*; meaning impermissible i.e. pork. The most minimalistic restriction on food comes from Christianity and anything that is healthy can be consumed with no adverse consequences and abstinence is recommended during certain time like Ash Wednesday and Holy Friday (Giorda, Bossi & Messina, 2014).

## **Human Evolution or Expression of Selfish Gene and Brain**

Tracing the human evolution from hominins (7 million years ago), Palaeolithic age (200,000 years ago), Neolithic age (11, 000 years ago), Bronze and Iron age (Megalithic age) to present, humans have evolved, and their feeding habits have also changed very different from their ancestors. Even though it is convenient to conclude that human's discovery to control fire, agriculture, culture, language, religious and life style factors have contributed to what is in our food plate and what has become our present-day feeding behaviour, one important factor that needs attention is the evolution of the human mind itself. As we try to understand all the factors that has influenced our feeding behaviour, it is the human mind that has created all these things and this needs careful consideration. The moot question to researchers is why did humans change their feeding behaviour from that of their ancestors particularly from the Palaeolithic period? Is there a corollary between human evolution and evolution of feeding habits? There answer could be in the explanations in Selfish Brain phenomena and Selfish Gene phenomena. The Selfish Brain theory developed by Achim Peters (1998) explains that the brain behaves selfishly in regulating the energy intake as it first covers its own requirements before distributing to other organs and similarly the Selfish Genome

theory developed by Dawkins (1976) says that competing genes work as a unit and promote themselves from one generation to another generation. Logically, feeding behaviours have evolved to suit the natural requirements of the species and only those feeding behaviours that help the species to survive in their situation have been passed onto the next generation.

In the evolutionary process, hominins gradually separated from primates, but their food habits were very similar to that of their primate ancestors. As the species became more and more distinct from the ancestors, the feeding behaviours has also modified leading to an intricate situation unclear of what drives the change in feeding behaviour i.e., is it the genome, or the brain or the species. As genome and brain is the core of human existence, naturally leads the direction of thinking that human evolution and feeding evolution as one and the same outcome of genome and brain functioning for existence on earth.

### **Conclusion: Evolution Now and Devolution Next?**

In the long history of humans on earth, food habits and feeding behaviours catered to the mostly physical functioning and lesser cognitive functioning. As time and space has moved forward, the human species has become more and more intellectually driven than physically. This has led to the sophisticated life style of convenience and comfort than bodily effort and strain. It has come to a point where machines assist humans not only in physical work, but also in intellectual pursuits and man has become more than a biological creation. Likewise, the feeding habits have changed and have its tell-tale signs on the increasing number of diseases and fertility issues. Many human-like species have emerged from hominins and gone extinct and with the present rate of health issues, it is only clearer that homo-sapiens have moved beyond biological species and makes one to wonder whether it has begun its devolution before becoming extinct. This makes one to wonder whether it was more than a coincidence for Claude Lévi-Strauss (2005) the father of modern anthropology, to know the end of the human evolutionary journey and stated “My only wish is a little more respect for the world, which began without the human being and will end without it - this is something we should always keep in mind”.

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## Food as a Challenging Factor in *The Refugee* by Pearl S. Buck

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Food is an important one in everyone's life. It is an essential need for survival and also an energy giving factor. Among the three basic needs such as social, esteem and survival, food and shelter form the survival needs. It not only makes one to be active but also provides nutrients which promote growth and development. It also maintains the health and prevents from various diseases. Because of the scarcity of food and poverty, people suffer from various diseases and malnutrition which leads to physical disability. Every living species needs food for survival.

*Refugees* means the people who leave their native land and move to another land due to natural calamity or persecution or due to war. To secure their life, they are forced to leave their native land. They struggle their life without food and shelter in an unknown environment. The topics **food** and **refugee** are interrelated. This topic represents poverty, hunger, food scarcity and various things. Food of various regions represents their own tradition and culture. When the refugees move to another land as wanderers, they follow the varied traditional food of other people. Due to this, they were losing their identity, culture and tradition. Even rich people were facing the same critical situation by losing their jobs, lands and everything in order to secure their life from disaster.

Pearl S. Buck speaks about the refugees and their conflicts in life without basic amenities. Pearl S. Buck was an American novelist, short story writer, teacher and a translator. She was awarded Nobel Prize for literature in 1938.

In her short story "The Refugee", Buck describes the Chinese refugee and depicts that their faces were filled with sign of starvation. They were carrying the iron cauldron and quilt along with them. The city dwellers and shop keepers thought that they have to offer something to them. The story depicts the refugees' life of pity in a new environment.

Pearl S. Buck focuses on one old man. He was very weak such that his steps were infirm. Looking at him a passerby took pity on him and offers him one silver coin and a copper penny. The old man replied "I did not beg of you, we have good land and we have never been starving

like this before” (TFWAOS 232). And their life was filled with conflicts because of flood. Even the seeds he saved for planting, people ate because of hunger. The old man said “Sir we have no seed left even, we have eaten our seed. I told them we cannot eat the seed. But they were young and hungry they ate it.” (TFWAOS 232)

The Old man explains about his situation and refused to accept the offer given by him. But the passerby dropped the coin in his smocked aprons. He bought a small bowl of noodles with copper penny for his grandson and he saved the silver coin to buy seeds in order to secure his grandson’s future. When he gave the noodles to his grandson, Buck described “One would have said the child was dead except that when the old man lifted his head to his mouth could touch the edge of the little bowl he began to swallow feebly ” (TFWAOS 233) . When the noodle vendor asked him to buy some noodles for him with that silver coin, he refused to do so. The old man says that he had saved the silver coin to buy seeds. The noodle vendor replied that if he were poor he would have offered noodles to him but the old man had a silver coin and this confused the noodle vendor. The old man said “But if you had land you would know, it must be put to seed again or there will be starvation yet another year.” (TFWAOS 234) Pearl S Buck represents the importance of food and tradition of agriculture through this story.

This story depicts that due to natural disaster their lives became hard and they lost their identity, culture and tradition. Even they did every work they get as wanderers in another land by getting low wages, because of this the city dwellers were angry with these refugees. Through the old man’s deed, she says that life becomes hard due to this flood and he thinks wisely to secure future. One must understand the reality of life and the old man thinks that by saving this silver coin he can make some changes in the life of his grandson. Pearl S. Buck conveys that life is very hard for the refugees and they are facing many challenges and obstacles in life with courage. This short story depicts the importance of food and difficulties in refugees’ life through various incidents. The refugees were working for low wages in order to meet their needs and their uncontrollable hunger made them eat the seeds that they preserved for planting, and they did any work which they got. The author compares these refugees to dead people as they looked so tired and faint. Due to flood the old man lost his son and daughter in law. Because of flood, refugees’ life was economically unstable. The primary need of the refugee was to fulfill their hunger. In this short story the old man was not sure about the next meal of the day, but he was preserving for the future needs. He could have made use of the silver coin in order to satisfy his hunger. His thought of saving the silver coin shows the futuristic vision and he wants to fulfill the hunger of many people for the upcoming days. Through this he can rebuilt the better future for the refugees.

‘Health is wealth’ shows that the primary wealth of man is health. To maintain health food is necessary and inevitable. Hunger is the universal feel that exists in every one’s life which is irrespective of the region, culture, caste and language. Jean De la Fontaine’s declaration “A hunger stomach cannot hear” can be related to the story. The people were not able to tolerate the hunger and the quest to satisfy it. It has made them blind such that they cannot find the difference between food and seeds. The hunger made them to consume the seeds that were kept for plantation. Thus, hunger makes a person physically and mentally weak.

Thinking about the welfare of the future, he had saved the silver coin to buy seeds for plantation. Being a farmer, he hoped that he could build a healthy future. Only this sector of people understands the significance of food and its requirements. Thus, the story represents selflessness of the old man and his self-reliant nature.

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**Food and Sexuality:  
A Critical Analysis of Leena Manimekalai's Poetry**

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Food and sexuality are associated with various ways in history. Generally, women's body are described with the imageries such as animals, birds, flower, and even food. Poetry and food are related in few aspects. It is common to be noted that men describes women's body with several similes. It is to be considered that women's eyes are compared with fish, her breasts are compared to apple and it is erotic to be described. Women's body gets affected on all sides by various forms. This paper sets forth about how women's body is compared to food and about the hungry and thirst of men. Hunger or thirst not only exist in the means of food, it is also connected with the lust of men towards women.

Poetry is always about discovering a new language and meanings. Food is also used as a motif or a repetitive symbol in poetry. Leena Manimekalai, an independent film maker, poet, and an actor compares the body of women with the elements of food in her poetry. Her works include five poetry anthologies, films in different genres like documentary, fiction, and poem films. She has awarded in many international and national film festivals. Through her poetry 'My Mirror is the Door' visualizes the age of Sangam, medieval and modern periods and she traces out her as a Modern Tamil poet.

Leena Manimekalai has several opinions and open up everything freely in all those aspects. It can be quoted by her statement: "Obviously my poetry is dangerous to religious and ideologically fanatic minds. Language is my first enemy; its norms, design and usage are controlled by the dominant patriarchy" (Samposonia way). she is frank about her own sexuality and similarly she views the world too. Manimekalai's poem was opposed and condemned by common people but she was keen to portray about the sufferings and pain of women. As a activist, she has represented female physic and sexuality as a tool for feminist resistance. She gives voice to voiceless. She violates the social norms of chastity and sexual fidelity.

Leena as a powerful and rebellious writer in her poem "October Poems" laments about the women's body.

...You say that my child has mistaken  
honey for milk  
You name it different everyday  
to impress me  
May flower chithirakkani thorn apple screw pine  
Hibiscus lily egg fruit what not... (14-19)

She explores in these lines of how women's body is compared to food. Men do not consider the inner emotions of women. They seek women merely for physical pleasure. Leena here confronts that woman as she was feeding her baby her husband mistakes honey for milk. He impresses everyday by naming it with different names. Food is used as an imagery to describe women's body. By critically analysing the poem of Leena Manimekalai she used the word 'egg fruit' as a vaginal symbol and 'apple' and 'screw pine' is used as an imagery for breast.

Her poem "Menstrual Flower" celebrates the creative and productive aspects of womanhood.

...I give myself to satiate the hunger of eagles  
The blood oozing from the flesh  
Makes the forests go mad... (7-9)

'Menstruation' is generally considered as a sign of impurity. Women are not allowed in the temple in the name of religion and myth of impurity, but a woman should give herself to satisfy men. 'Sate the hunger of eagles' symbolizes the sexual pleasure of men and considers women as a prey or a food to satisfy their hunger. Menstruation is not a painful experience for the poet but it is an obstacle for her passion and emotion. Woman's body is considered as a victim by which, she does not have the right to know about her own self (body).

The poem "What do you Want?" also deals with the men's attitude towards women.

Finally when I met him  
He happened to be a fish  
In my ocean he swam  
with millions of scales  
Never once did he  
get caught in my fingers  
Whenever he plays the brown blue serpent gourd  
And convulsions die down

He drinks my spirit  
In his thirst  
I kept drowning  
whenever I tried to grab  
His light-ball face... (1-13)

Leena considers men as a fish by which he swam into women who is considered as a ocean in order to have physical pleasure. 'He drinks my spirit/In his thirst/I kept drowning'-thirst is not only the thirst which generally we have, here Leena considers thirst as a vaulting ambition towards women. The thirst of men on women is as a painful experience. Thirst symbolizes the desire and sexual thirst of men. The poet considers how women toil hard in the male- dominated society. Leena uses powerful images such as hunger and thirst to express how men see women with their naked thought.

The most exotic poem of Leena, "Me Him" brings out the element of food such as salt and coca cola.

...wrestled him down  
And asked him to lick the salt,  
He mumbled coca cola  
Hugged him till he swooned... (24-27)

'Salt' symbolizes the saltiness present in the flesh and represent the sexuality. This representation of salt and coca cola appears as the symbol of sexuality. Food is thus, interpreted as a sexual object and appears to be erotic.

"Chichilli" is a poem which celebrates female sexuality.

...I will now gulp down my hunger  
And free the fish to  
Frolic in the boat... (14-16)

Here the poet compares herself to be a kingfisher and her body is multi-colored like a bird. With her multihued body she spreads her wings by which she catches the fish. 'Fish' here is considered to be men. The poet fulfills her hunger. Generally, women are considered to be the victims but here in this poem it is reversal. The object becomes the subject, the prey becomes the predator. Women is considered as the site of power and authority.

Leena Manimekalai in the context of controversies and criticisms, approached with her focus with strength. Her writings marginal the figure woman/female-body. As a poet she used several imageries with reference to food.

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## **A Comparative Study of Food as a Necessary Crisis Depicted in Select Contemporary Poetry**

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Food is a common ground for all living beings. It is a universal experience and it is a basic necessity such as clothing and shelter. It is a central activity of the human mind which also holds a society together but in modern times food is projected as a symbol of luxury and fashion. People who live glued to computers at work and home do not think about the wastage of food. Though food brings people together at different levels on the one hand, it also makes people to fight and struggle for food on the other hand. At modern times, People are surrounded by choices of food. They eat according to their convenience but do not care about the shortages of food. During the Second World War there were serious food shortages which led to food crisis. This aspect can be illustrated by comparing the present-day conditions of food and attitudes towards food. People at present consider food as an entertainment.

The poems taken for analysis in this paper are written by modern poets like Elizabeth Padiolla Oleson's "We Cry for Food they Gave Us Bullets", Slyvia Lovina Chidi's "Slaves of Food", Veeraiyah Subbulakshmi's "Don't Waste the Food", and Ashok Chakravarthy's "The Crisis Within". There are over eight hundred million people who are suffering from hunger and every five seconds a child dies of hunger. In literature food poetry plays an important art to understand emotions, deep feelings, and aesthetical sense about people who suffer from hunger and it also condemns the attitudes of the minds who used to waste food. The poems are set to deal with a comparative study of food as a necessary crisis in the prevailing situation of economic disparity within a given society and among countries at global level.

Elizabeth Padillo Oleson, is a poet and a prose writer and some of her works are "A Talk to The Night", "A mother", "A Plea For Forgiveness". Elizabeth Padillo in her poem "We Cry for Food They Gave Us Bullets" (Padillo 95) begins her poetry by "Food! Food! Food! / It is all that we need" (WCFTGUB1-2). As food is the basic necessity of all living beings. It is all that is needed for survival and it helps to calm down inner spirits. The poet says that food fills hunger pains which are caused by the contraction of the stomach. The poet here refers to emotions that are very deep which cannot be understood. It leads to the worse condition and also makes people

not to sleep. It is stated in these lines as, “But cannot sleep / ... / That make our saliva / Taste sour and acidic” (WCFTGUB 9-13). The people are psychologically affected which makes them not to sleep and cannot express through vomiting. People cannot taste food because their taste buds have become completely acidic. They were unable to torment their state of being.

The poet compares the mental condition of the people who suffer from a food crisis. She compares it to a child. A child weeps and cries out of hunger but is speechless. It cannot express its feelings but there are also a group of people who stand on the streets to promote that they are helpless and left uncared. They cry for food like a little child. Their cry cannot be neglected because it is for food, which makes them to calm their soul. People cry for food, but they get only bullets in return. They were deprived of basic rights. It is expressed by the lines, “But you gave us bullets / On the street where we stage/ Our cry for food” (WCFTGUB 23-25). People cry for food as long as they are hungry. They cry forever like to get food.

Slyvia Lovina Chidi is an author and had published books such as *After Red Wine* and *Beautiful Selected Poems* which is a collection of fifty-seven poems. Her poem “Slaves of Food” (Lovina 20), conveys the reality of human beings. She begins by writing that the poem with the line, “Thick red blood veins bath in anger / The stomach grumbles of idiotic anger” (SF 1-2). The human body which is composed of blood and veins arouse out of anger, it is because the stomach complains, for an unreasonable anger. The poet expresses the pain of hunger that pricks the stomach. Hunger can be understood mentally but the human body cannot understand the feeling of an empty stomach. It can be clearly stated as that, “We are all but slaves of food” (SF 6).

People who belong to different races guzzle and wear different costumes according to their social construction, but food is a common thing that unites everyone together. Food gives a mental stimulation and satisfaction to fill appetite yet, but by people’s dismay is food and their hope for good is completely lost. The poet says that, people are filled with joy after a meal. Their inner delight is cheap but is real. It gives satisfaction to the soul and stomach which is unknown to anybody but has a real value. The poet says, “I conclude with fluctuating moods / There is a food for romance / ... / Hungry mouths elsewhere regularly wait for its rescue” (SF 20-24). People call themselves as human beings, but they are all just slaves to food. Food is prepared for romance, party and for several other occasions and it is available to fools but food is not available for the people who are really hungry. There is a crisis for food and hunger mouths regularly wait for their rescue.

Veeraiyah Subbulakshmi has written about thousand and five hundred poems, she is a modernist poet. Some of her works are “A Child’s mother”, “A Fruitfly”, “A Broken Heart Always Weeps”, “A Dramatic Lover”. Her poetry “Don’t Waste The Food” depicts the wastage

of food and it also condemns certain habits people do. The poet condemns through these lines, “Dusty roads are many, where gusty people walk” (DWF 1). The poet says that, there are many roads with full of dust and dirt, but people are with dusty minds and they are irresponsible towards food. People throw food into dustbin without knowing its essence. The poet examines the life cycle, to demonstrate the reality of the world. In a life cycle every species is dependent on the other species. If the life cycle is disturbed it leads to several crises.

The poet views the atmosphere of the river bank to show the natural occurrences. A canal was built on the river bank for drainage, water supply, irrigation, and transportation where every species is dependent on the other species. Likewise, every species in the world are dependent on the other for their food, water and shelter. People have to survive a long way, but their end is not very short. It is stated in the lines that, “We are though species to conquer any other species, / We have to come a long way not to make it a short exit/ Let us celebrate the victory of mother earth” (DWF 6-8). People must celebrate and preserve the nature because it is a treasure. The treasures of the nature is being stolen just for people’s pleasure. Food wastage happens everywhere such as a school, farms, restaurants, and grocery stores. It also affects people who are living in seashores. People dump the food wastages in seas and rivers which affect tiny species and it collapses the entire life cycle.

The attitude of the people towards food became more fashionable. People tend to order pizzas or other fancy eatables through their modern gadgets despite the fact that ample of food are already made available to them. People do not bother about the food wastage. Subbulakshmi clearly catches the trending mindset of the human mind by stating that, “We human, hurt our fellow human for our greed, / Millions roam on the urban jungle for the food, / Millions throw the food into bin as a fad” (DWF 10-12). Human beings hurt other fellow beings for their own greed. Millions of people roam everywhere in search of food in jungle, forests and so on but another million people throw their foods into dustbin without knowing its importance.

Ashok Chakravarthy a poet and a review writer, has composed a thousand two hundred poems. Some of his poems are “Charismata of Poesie”, “The Chariot of musing”. On his “The Crisis Within” he has stated that, “Big nations vie to occupy a supper- power level / While small nations struggle for own survival” (TCW 1-2), many developed countries provoke their superior power by strength, but they do not care about small nations who struggle for their daily basis.

The poet here questions that whether humanity can elapse the crisis within the country and among a global level. Whether humanity will save the crisis or it gives a usual defeat for common people. Huge developments were made in the field of technology. It was made in the name of people’s security and welfare but there are no concern made for people’s crisis. The

poet says that, people are made to stand mute during wars because wars display real faces of human beings. They were like tramps of love and equality. Wars made a mass of destruction of people. According to the poet, “Food, the life-saving precious commodity / If invites a human disaster its scarcity/ ... / To show and share humane concern and pity” (TCW 17-20), food is the lifesaving process. It gives a direct impact physically and it also gives the ability to enjoy life. If a disaster occurs through external forces, people must show concern and care for every living being. Humanity is essential for humans.

The poet highly condemns that, “Showing the least concern for life- giving ecology / We are but creating advanced warfare technology/ In the process we are destroying the origin of life” (TCW 25-27). The poet argues that, people destruct the origin of life by creating advanced technological features which is harmful to humans. People do not care about the environment and pollute the surroundings.

Thus, all these poems talk of how food is seen in a different perspective through the modern day poets of the contemporary period. Making the readers not to waste food the next time they order or buy something to eat.

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**Food in Literature: Papers Presented in National Seminar on Food in Literature, 2019**

**P. S. Kavin Molhy, II M.A. English and Dr. B. J. Geetha, Assistant Professor of English**

**A Comparative Study of Food as a Necessary Crisis Depicted in Select Contemporary Poetry**

## **Food as an Imagery in *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel**

**Kiruthika. S., II M.A. English**  
**Dr. B. J. Geetha, Assistant Professor of English**

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Food is one of the essential needs of a living being and it always plays an interesting role in every individual's life. Without food one cannot lead a happy and peaceful life. The daily process of a person depends on the food one consumes. The preparation of food also differs from every individual. Mother is the first person who is always remembered by every person. The food prepared by mother will be delightful and sometimes plays the role of medicine to cure the disease. It provides unforgettable memories and long lasting happiness. Food is always a captivating factor. The aroma, the sounds during preparation, the addition of different flavours, and the final presentation has the ability to convert a disturbed mind to a peaceful one.

Food is used in literature to convey the importance of culture, tradition, ethics, the power, individuality, innovation, and the responsibilities too. Around the world food is been widely prepared by women. There is some magical element being hidden in the food prepared by them. A common tradition has been revolving that women should prepare food than do any other work. Laura Esquivel has portrayed this practice in her novel *Like Water for Chocolate*. She conveys the relation between food and emotion. This novel carries food as an element that becomes the main world in which women are able to expose their desires with complete fulfillment and without any restrictions from the family and by the formal ethics. It is like a one way conversation between the woman and the food.

The novel displays the Mexican tradition through the character Tita De La Garza. The major role of food and tradition in the Mexican culture is also depicted in the novel. Mexico was ruled by Spain for 300 years and after independence it has left its mark on the culture and cuisine of Mexico most importantly. Mexicans prepare very different and delightful dishes normally and for special occasions. They put a good concentration to prepare varied dishes that taste good and unique.

Esquivel concentrates on Tita's restricted desire to marry her beloved as its against their culture. According to their customs the youngest daughter should remain unmarried in order to take care of their mother at their old age. It portrays the perfect image of a Mexican young woman who has the desires that every young girl has. Though she is been restricted she never

shows her disappointment deliberately, but it's been hidden displayed through the food she prepares.

Each chapter in the novel starts with a recipe that depicts the effects caused by few incidents in Tita's life. Her imprisoned desires and emotions is been carefully carried into the recipes that she prepares throughout the chapters. It begins with Tita's birth in the kitchen. Her mother Mama Elena is not able to take care of her daughter because of her husband's sudden death. She is been cared by Nacha, the head cook. Tita is also used to the aroma, the flavours and their varied purpose, the culinary sounds, and every other aspects of kitchen completely like an expert. This enables her to learn cooking and the very minute aspects very clearly from Nacha and this makes her the next cook after the death of Nacha. This provided the liberation that she longed for.

Magical realism is the important aspect used by Laura Esquivel in her novel. She has employed this to bring out the in depth yearning of a woman to satisfy all her desires and to make a unique identity in her life. Only Nacha and Tita are well versed in cooking. Mama Elena and her other daughters lack their ability in cooking. From the day of her birth till her death, Tita is been closely related to food. This magical realism helps Laura to display the emotions of Tita when her wish to marry her beloved Pedro Muzquiz is been forbidden by her mother and in various other events. This happens like a chain reaction. Initially the recipe is been prepared. It consists of certain texture, flavours, and the mindset of the woman who prepares the food. This is been infused into the recipes that are prepared. This induces the emotion to the person who consumes it. Through the flavour of the food she exposes her happiness, disappointments, and sometimes her active thoughts.

Through the wedding cake that she is compelled to prepare on her sister's wedding with her beloved she pours out her sorrows that is one of the drops of tear falls into the icing. The cake carries the sorrow completely and the initial bite makes the guests to cry heavily and this makes Mama Elena who didn't cry even in her husband's death. Thus, the power of a cook could be visibly seen through the first strong chapter. Tita cannot bear the pain of seeing her beloved getting married to her sister. Similar incidents depict the power of Tita's emotions. This spell is employed as magical realism by the author. She is not taking revenge in any situation instead prepares delicious food.

The recipe of rose petal and quail brings a twist in Gertrudis' life. Pedro bought roses for Tita after his marriage with Rosaura. As Mama Elena objects their conversation Tita is worried but she plans to prepare a dish with roses. This is prepared with Tita's complete love and sensual interest towards Pedro. The recipe turns out to be very sensuous. This is deeply felt by Pedro and

Gertrudis. Both Pedro and Tita share their gazes but Gertrudis loses her control. Through the quail, she entered into Pedro completely. Gertrudis is disturbed by the essence of the dish. She was aroused and started sweating. She imagines of Pancho, whom she met a week before. She eloped with him. Food here has nourished both body and passion. Later She also feeds her nephew, Roberto as Rosaura does not. Rosaura is not loved by Pedro as he loves Tita. This makes her weak in caring her son. But Tita loves Roberto as Nacha did and feeds him with good enrichment with complete love and affection. As Mama Elena didn't shower the love of a mother, she knew the pain and yearning. With Roberto she was happy.

Tita was very dedicated towards her work. She cooked very carefully and with all concentration. She prepared the recipes with the actual formulas. Sometimes she missed Nacha's presence in the kitchen. Nacha was the only person who was concerned about the well-being of Tita. She made her passion to be true. Throughout the novel the readers can witness various other recipes used in different situation like to express love, to cure the disease etc. Chenchu prepares Ox tail soup for Tita's sickness. Thus, it also plays the role of a doctor in individual's life. Tita makes kitchen as her restricted world where she could reign completely. Mama Elena doesn't know to cook but she instructs others to cook for her. Through the character of Tita one could deliberately visualize the hidden world of a woman. Tita is perfect in cooking and she enjoys her time by preparing delicious dishes with Gertrudis. Though she doesn't know cooking, she had fun with Tita. Her creativity and passion towards innovating dishes is been displayed by the author cleverly. Tita created a path for her sister's liberation. But she is happy that Gertrudis is out of the regular norms made by her mother.

Though Gertrudis has become a part of the brothel, later she joins men as a part of becoming soldier and she also brings them to the ranch once to experience the inbuilt talent of her sister and to show them the reason of her transformation that was raised from a gentle flower, Rose. This is an ironical scene in the novel.

Mama Elena sends the small family to San Antonio, in order to separate Tita and Pedro completely. This affects Roberto's health; he becomes weak and was dead. On hearing this news in between a preparation of the sausage, Tita and Chenchu got tears, but it's been ordered by Mama to control as it might affect the taste of the food as it happened before in the Chabela wedding cake. But they shed tears and Mama Elena attacks Tita fiercely. This shows her dominance towards the women who cook in the ranch. The sausage comes out worst with worms. In this particular scene, the author conveys the result of a food being prepared out of disinterest and disappointment. Thus, food carries emotion and the thought of the person who prepares it. There is a belief that while lending a glass of water; the person's thought is also lent through the water. Thus, it carries the current ideas and opinions naturally.

Women were able to find the medicinal abilities hidden in the food elements. When Tita is been asked to take to an asylum by her mother, she is been taken good care by the doctor, John Brown. She is in his laboratory and is been transformed to normal with the help of a lady who is believed to be the ghost of grandmother of John. This lady is well versed in finding the medicinal facts about the food elements and had once cured the great grandfather of John.

Tita feels Nacha in the place of Chenchu. Both share affectionate love and caring. Her Ox tail soup cures Tita and brings back to her normal form. This is been astonished seen by John as he provided her with different American soups. John realised what the actual ability of a food will be. He remembered about his grandmother who could transform food to a medicinal factor. When Chenchu returned from Tita, the candids were attacking the ranch and she was raped by them, Mama Elena was attacked badly and became paralysed down her waist. During this inability, Tita is the person who took care of her mother. But Mama was very doubtful of Tita and her food. She believed that Tita was adding poison to food that she gave for her. Her cruel thoughts made her feel that the food was bitter though it tasted good for others. She also attacked Chenchu through her words. Mama couldn't accept Tita's relationship with the doctor. She dies soon with all her hatred in her.

As the culture and tradition is been carried from one generation to other, similarly Tita's love and passion towards cooking is also found in Pedro's second child, Esperanza. She wishes to be with Tita in the kitchen than any other rooms in the house. The recipes prepared to bring Rosaura's health to a good condition makes her understand that she must not have the thought that she had before regarding Tita. This brought a good understanding between them and this did not last long as Tita believed that she has become pregnant because of Pedro.

When Tita was preparing the chocolate and the bread, she was yearning to have Nacha, Gertrudis near her. She only had good memories with them and not them at present. But this thought of Tita brought Gertrudis home. This was quite magical but was true. She came along with her husband Juan and felt home after long time. Both the sisters were happy for Gertrudis' presence. She strongly said that Tita would prepare this particular recipe at this time. Gertrudis wants the secret talent of cooking to live long in Tita and should be carried on to the next generation.

Esperanza is been protected from becoming the daughter who takes care of the mother like Tita by Tita and Pedro. She is introduced to Alex by Tita during their secret conversation in the kitchen. Tita was trying hard to give a good future to Esperanza and not the one like Tita's. In

her wedding she prepares chilies in walnut sauce which is been appreciated more by the guests as usual. This also creates a sensual effect for everyone.

The character of Tita is very different and a unique one. The author has expressed the very deep thought and the passion of a woman throughout her life. Tita's character shows how deep a person could love their passion. The food is used to carry on the longing, desires and the very deep wishes of a woman. It also helps to create sustainable memories and remarkable moments in one's life. Though it includes several recipes it actually has some memory, and it brings the people back to Tita whenever she is need of them to help her balance her thought psychologically. Laura Esquivel's idea of creating this book raised when she was cooking one of her dishes that she learnt from her elder.

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**Stop Dieting for Life in Tennie McCarty's**  
*Shades of Hope: The Program of Stop Dieting and Start Living*

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Food is the dominant material in this cosmos. It is consumed for the nutritional support of one's own personal body. Each and every living creature knows the prominence of food. It is the most important reason for all the individuals to stay alive because only through this everyone gains energy throughout the lifespan and motivate growth. Food, in the beginning, was consumed by the tribes by hunting and will not cook instead they consume as raw food. Later the food was consumed by the gathering of agriculture. In day to day life, since the population of the world increased the food is supplied by the food industries and food factories. The intake of food varies based on the ages. Mother's milk is for the infant. The solid food like cereals, meat which contains protein, fruits, vegetables, grains and more.

Food has both helpful and harmful facets. It is all in the hands of people to take personal care of their own health. Food will not only help to survive but also cause threat. Food is mainly linked with the brain that is the human mind. People with anxiety will choose food for easing. The invention on a variety of food is all considered to be accidental. The worth of food has been developed. People started to study the elements of food family like vitamins, minerals, fat, calories, carbohydrates and other nutrients. Over and done with these elements the food can be restrained. Starvation can be only won over by food. The ability to taste rises only through hunger. According to Guy Fieri, "Cooking is all about people. Food is maybe the only universal thing that really has the power to bring everyone together. No matter what culture, everywhere around the world, people get together to eat."

The culture, eating habits, rituals are the main components that can be identified by food. People usually lack in choosing good food. Currently, people are paying attention to food by its colour and garnish style. People drive behind it even though they are not ambitious because of its appeal. In the early days people consume for constant health but now food is considered as the fun element. The importance of food starts to shade away. Following a proper diet has become jock.

Eating too much or too less will affect human life. Each and every one should know the limitation of consuming food. People who work hard in the fields for example farmers will mainly consume organic food and will not be affected much but those who sit simply without any work and consume food which is rich in carbohydrates and fats will surely take them to some life-threatening situation. There are different types of people who consume food based on their emotions. A joyful person will consume more food even though they are not hungry, similarly, a person who is depressed will prefer to intake food without limitations.

Food is the main disadvantage which has an emotional impact on everyone both physically and mentally. People who are not hungry will be attracted also by the visual factors like plate size and spoons which also stands as a barrier for intake. People should be aware of food which contains fat content and carbohydrate only then we can maintain our own body. Each and every person will wish to sit together and have food with family or friends which help the relationship to get healthier. According to Steve Maraboli, “By choosing healthy over skinny you are choosing self-love over self-judgment.”

People can be easily differentiated by the choice of food. If there is a plate of chicken or veggies placed in front of a person who is in proper diet will obviously choose veggies and will not choose chicken because they will be very conscious about their body and health by calculating the fat and carbohydrate in it. But their vision will be on colorful food and the food they like but since that particular person is in diet will avoid consuming it. A vegetarian will favor only veggies and will run away if they see a plate of meat which they think unpleasant. A non-vegetarian will obviously prefer meat and will be very happy if they have a plate of meal in front of them.

An athlete will choose a food which contains protein so that they can gain muscle. The responses of the people towards food show the thoughts and psychology of the people. The relationship with people and food is equal. Any emotions and expressions can be easily changed by the food. Similarly, intake of food should depend on the people mentality to choose whether that particular food is permissible for their body. Nowadays the food products from the food store are distributed among the people in which a chemical is added which urge people to consume that food.

These chemicals are added based on the psychology of human mind which should be avoided; they are Monosodium Glutamate a chemical used to enhance the flavor of spicy dishes. Artificial food coloring which is used to brighten and change the appearance of the food. Sodium Nitrite a chemical which is added to prevent food from bacteria, Guar Gum is added to solidify and muddle foods and is added in ice creams, salad dressing, sauces, and soups. High-Fructose

corn syrup is added for sweetness and can be frequently found in soda, juice, candy and so many snack foods. Artificial sweeteners which are also added for sweetness and can be found in beverages in which the sweetness has reducing calorie content.

Carrageenan also used to preserve food products like milk, cheese, coffee creamers and so on. Sodium benzoate is a chemical used to preserve food like pickles, fruit juice, salad dressing which are all the acidic foods. Trans fat is a type of fat which is unsaturated which helps in increasing the shelf life and consistency of the food product. Xanthan Gum is also used in thickening and stabilizes few types of food. Artificial Flavoring is a chemical which is invented in such a way it imitates the taste of other food ingredients. Yeast Extract is added to boost the flavor in products like cheese, soy sauce, and salty snacks. And hence the food should be chosen by reading the ingredient labels for a healthy diet.

Being in a diet has become common at the present time. People are much concerned about their own health because they themselves wanted to show how confident they are both mentally and physically. Not following the proper diet will not only cause weight gain but will also result in some sort of disease and health issues. People are very conscious about their physical appearance.

In the book *Shades of Hope: The Program of Stop Dieting and Start Living* by Tennie McCarty predominantly talk about health and wellness, disease and disorder. She came up with her own inspiring story. She is one of the leading experts who is also addicted particularly in an eating disorder. She was under treatment for this addictive disease nearly thirty years. She lives in Buffalo Gap, Texas. She was suffering from this disease since her age of 13 which was undiagnosed and untreated for decades. As the result of her recovery from bulimia and compulsive overeating and a survivor from abuse, she is now an internationally esteemed therapist and the CEO of the residential treatment center, shades of hope which is a hospital. It was co-founded in the year 1987 which recovers from the addiction of eating disorder.

She believes that eating disorder like chemical dependencies, physical and mental problems can be sorted out by the spiritual solution. Meals provided in that hospital for the patients are ultra-healthy. Sugar and white flour are strictly banned. She also gives some step by step program that teaches how to let go of bad feelings, negative behavior and never ending diet.

It is not about the food which is the addictive property it is all because of the chemical which is added the food. People should know how to eat properly to stay healthy without any disease. Should study about the food family and should avoid hazardous food. That addictive person should have a proper meal plan which should be limited but also feel satisfied so there

will be no psychological need for undesirable food apart from the meal plan. To recover from food addiction, one must consult the food therapist. Should take healthy organic food instead of being in diet which paves the way to deficiency. Accept what you have don't go in search of stand-ins. Live life without complications.

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## **Food, Identity and Ethnicity in Salman Rushdie's *Grimus***

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The novel opens with Virgil Jones, a man devoid of friends who lives a lonely life. While sitting on a small beach away from the Mediterranean Sea, he sees a body floating in the sea and brings that body ashore in a state of unconsciousness. He and Dolores O Toole find the person as Flapping Eagle, the protagonist of the novel. The rescue of Flapping Eagle shows Jones fellow feeling and concern for a person in distress. Eagle formerly known as Joe-Sue, narrates his past before Jones and O Toole. Joe-Sue and his sister were Axon Amerindian orphans, who were determined to lead a free life. Because they were detached from their tribe “for three reason: First his confused sex, second the circumstances of his birth and third his pigmentation” (G - 18).

Joe- Sue was rejected by the society because he was a hermaphrodite born from a dead-women. The people of Axona are a dark skinned race and short height. Whereas Joe was fair -skinned and tallish. This interprets how people of confused sex are treated by the society. The orphans are also regarded as bad omen in the society. Both brother and sister called themselves as Flapping Eagle and Bird- Dog, respectively as a mark of their emancipation.

Bird-Dog was sitting on a mass of rock, a grown-women of thirty-four years, three months and four days in wearing old clothes, her hair falling blackly over the olive face. She has two small bottles. The one in her right hand was full of bright yellow liquid. The one in her left hand was full of bright blue liquid. Color was brought up everywhere, except in her skin. She felt a cloud pass across the sun.

Bird - Dog comes across one Mr. Sispy, a peddler, who gave her two bottles - one carrying yellow - liquid and the other blue - liquid. On swallowing the yellow elixir, one becomes immortal and swallowing the blue elixir one meets with one's death perpetually. It exhibits human desire to live longer. Bird - Dog consumes the yellow elixir and elopes with Sispy in order to remains as his captive servant. Before her departure, Joe - Sue has a clash with a bird on the Stone-Rose and is named as Flapping Eagle by his sister.

Flapping Eagle and Bird -Dog consume the yellow elixir to remain immortal to find out his lost sister. His quest for his sister brought him to the Calf Island. His quest made him aware of the presence of several levels of existence. At the bottom, there is an ordinary world where Joe - Sue and other

Axonians have their origin. However, a number of inhabitants are shifted to Calf Island after drinking the elixir of life and becoming immortal. The elixir of life comes from the third world the world of gorfs. The gorfs are stones and thus do not really have life. They are the most sensible forms of life in their galaxy who neither need food nor atmosphere. It is with the help of gorfs that *Grimus* gets possession of the elixir of life. *Grimus* thus has created Calf Island a place where both East and West confront each other. Moreover, Virgil Jones describes *Grimus* as Middle European a refugee on doubt. Thus, he resembles Flapping Eagle who is an exiled representative of the civilization of the Native American tribe. Eagle is an exile inside an alien culture who is also unable to find his own cultural roots and identity and at the same time inept of adapting himself to the norms and values of Western culture.

*Grimus* belongs to the team of men who find the Stone Rose and the elixir of life. Deggle and Virgil Jones are the other two persons who help him in getting the possession of Stone Rose. *Grimus* cleverly dominates and throws out Virgil Jones ejects Nicholas Deggle and becomes the chief exploiter of the Stone Rose. *Grimus* has created Calf Island as a place for the immortals. The island is an embodiment of Paradise. It is green and fertile which gives joy and happiness to its inhabitants. In the beginning, it acts as a utopia for the men living in it. However, the utopia proves to be untrue and everything goes wrong after just a couple of months.

Some people commit suicide and others turn against *Grimus*. The pictures of life in K function as a parody of social, religious and political utopias. Although “K is a town of obsession, the town was full of reprobates and degraded types, Selfish decadent people that no decent woman would want to be near” (G, 41). Flapping Eagle, the protagonist, has sexual relationship with many women in the novel. Even incest between brother and sister has been expressed by the author. These are the situations which delineate the immoral activities in the present society. The domination of *Grimus* over the Gorfs is vividly presented, hence Stone Rose displays his political power and exploitation. *Grimus* stands for Western Super power in the novel.

The novel also highlights the problems of the migrants who seek their own identity in alien lands through the quest of Eagle. Undoubtedly the author expresses his own plights through the character of the Eagle. The quest of the protagonist resulting in the ascent of Mount Kaf not only means the emigrant’s gradual ascent on the social status in the metropolis. The theme of migration and transformation of character which especially we find in the character of Flapping Eagle, expresses authors attempt for cultural fusion and pluralism. However, the process leads to dislocation of root and culture.

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**Food in Literature: Papers Presented in National Seminar on Food in Literature, 2019**

**L. Raja, Ph.D. Scholar and Dr. K. Sindhu, Assistant Professor**

**Food, Identity and Ethnicity in Salman Rushdie's *Grimus***

## **Food and its Manifestations in Contemporary Indian Films: A Study with Reference to Malayalam Movie *Guru***

**M. Lakshmi, Research Scholar**

Food is a constant and continuing presence in literature and art. This is not a new phenomenon. Right from the beginning where our ancestors began carving on rocks, dining and food and culinary activities were never spared from being their topics of expression. It is in myriad ways that food is presented to us in our arts and the representations of food serve different purposes in art and media. Sometimes the work becomes completely about the activity of cooking and dining, like the cookery shows and cook books. Sometimes the work could be on the different cultural aspects of food. This is done in a number of different ways, ranging from books on the topic, to food festivals that show us the different foods and thus tell us how the food of a region is a symbol of its culture. Sometimes food can be a constant presence in a work, forming a part of the major frame of the story, sometimes symbolically representing a totally different idea.

Now is a time when food is used in stressing and underlining our politics of gender. The importance of food in our daily lives, as an influence on our lives perhaps in ways which we have never even imagined, is being stressed strongly through our arts and media, which includes paintings, literatures, movies, advertisements, and even music. If we were to trace the beginnings of the representations of food in arts, we must not be surprised seeing food and drinks as the most common motifs in our early age paintings and sculptures, the Da Vinci painting of the “Last Supper” being the most famous of them all. In many literary works and also in other art forms, we have seen food being used to represent women. We see women being compared to food--the bride being described as a ‘beautiful iced cake’ Katherine Mansfield’s famous story “Frau Bechenmacher Attends a Wedding”--and this has been constantly attacked by our feminist theorists as highly sexist and antifeminist.

Food has been used to convey social messages in the catchiest way by our famous writers across the globe. In the very famous play “Arms and the Man” by George Bernard Shaw, which was intended to be a satire against violence and war and the heroism attached to it, we see a soldier carrying in his pockets chocolates instead of cartridges. *Arms and the Man* has its setting in the 1885 Serbo-Bulgarian war. The humorous play, depicting the futility of wars, is most often referred to as the wittiest of Shaw’s plays. In the play we see the female lead character Raina Petcoff refers to Captain Bluntschli as “her chocolate cream soldier” for he carries chocolates in his pockets. Bluntschli, here, is a diminished version of Aeneas, the hero of *The Aeneid*. In this play, through

Bluntschli, Shaw satirizes the heroic retelling of wars. This is a great example of a literary work where the author has used food as a tool to deliver a social message, though not explicitly.

“Art is not what you see, but what you make others see,” said the great French artist Edgar Degas. Art, be it any form, must evoke, and without doubt, one can say that visual arts is the most powerful of them all. Movies are the most popular and powerful among the variegated forms of visual arts. Films not only present us with characters and events, but also with larger political, cultural and ethical issues. Most often, movies travel far beyond the borders of aestheticism and act as social forces, taking up socially relevant themes. Movies are usually based on universal principles and shared sentiments.

*Guru (The Teacher/Spiritual Guide)* is a 1997 Indian movie directed by Rajeev Anchal. The movie, which was selected as India’s official entry to the Oscars for the Best Foreign Language Film category, is a metaphorical movie with multiple layers of meaning. The movie begins with the wordings “Guru is someone who with his wisdom removes the screen of ignorance and makes you see again.” The movie has a higher symbolic meaning to it and has been compared to Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave*. In Plato’s *Cave*, he compares the “effect of education and the lack of it on our nature”. Here, in the *Allegory*, we see a group of people living chained to the wall of a cave, facing a blank wall. On the wall, they watch shadows of the objects passing in front of a fire behind them, and consider these shadows to be the reality. One day, a prisoner manages to free himself from the bondages, and gets to know that their reality was not the ‘actual reality’. The light hurts his eyes for he was accustomed to darkness since ages. Plato says that the prisoner would turn away to the things that he is accustomed to. But if he was forced to come into the light and know the actual reality, after he gets to know the reality, the prisoner would pity the other prisoners who live in total ignorance. He would want to free them off their chains and bring them to light. But the prisoners, says Plato, will not be willing to take the path the older prisoner took for they think it would hurt them. They would therefore even try to kill anyone who attempted to take them out of their own bubbles of ignorance to which they are accustomed.

Plato was talking about an issue that still holds relevance, even today. This is where the foci of Plato’s *Cave* and the Malayalam movie *Guru* fall together. The movie is a surrealistic work which uses metaphors to convey greater messages. The movie begins introducing us to a near-Utopian land where people of all castes live in harmony. This harmony is broken when people with vested interests create trouble in the name of religion. The hero, Reghuraman loses his family in the religious riot, and he joins a hindu extremist group to avenge the death of his family. Reghuraman happens to be at an ashram, where he meets Vaidehi, a disciple of the Guru. Vaidehi asks him to meditate at the Guru’s feet, and there he gets a vision. He is taken to another world in his vision to a valley of the blind where the sense of sight is a lie; where darkness and ignorance is the only reality.

It is a story within a story technique that the makers have employed in the movie. In the new land, Reghuraman meets a group of people who think it as sinful to even talk about light and the

sense of sight. The people there believe that their world is the only world, that their reality of darkness is the only reality. In the movie we come across a blind teacher teaching his blind students:

“At first, the world was the emptiness between these rocks! Dear children, the world is as small as the fruit of Ilama. In short, the world we live is the only world. The world is bordered by the rocks which guard this valley. The top of the world is just a soft outer cover....

The basis of this world is sound. The variations in sound create the time. Smells and sounds are the eternal truths. Sight is just a falsehood.”

This is a very thought-provoking instance in the movie for we see ourselves here. It is our ignorance and limited knowledge that is portrayed in these words. The country of the blind acts as a mirror held towards the hypocrisies and ignorance of the world.

‘Ilama fruit’ is the most important symbol that is used in the movie. In the movie we see a major character Ramanagan explaining to Reghuraman the myth behind the Ilama fruit. He calls it the gift of their goddess, and the root of their lives. The children of the valley at their birth are fed the juice of the fruit but the seed is said to be deadly poisonous. Reghuraman eats the fruit and is taken away by its sweetness, and the sweetness tempts him to have more of it. Suddenly Reghuraman experiences blurred vision, and becomes blind, and realizes that the fruit is the reason for the blindness of the valley. He walks around shouting out to the people that the real cause of their blindness is the Ilama fruit which is considered to be divine and life-saving. The king of the land calls this blasphemy and orders him to be killed in the most barbaric way – by feeding him the seed of Ilama.

“As he preaches against Ilama, let his death be with its seed.”

Reghuraman is fed with the seed of the Ilama fruit as a punishment. The next morning he wakes up back to the world of colours. He regains his sight. He realizes that what was thought to be a poison was actually the antidote to cure their blindness. Reghuraman, with his newly gained knowledge, brings the people of the valley to the world of light.

Reghuraman now wakes up from his meditation to the real world, and realizes the real meaning of his vision. Reghuraman, who was blinded by the extremisms of religion and violence wakes to the world of knowledge and spiritual enlightenment, and the movie ends where he decides on embarking a journey towards peace and brotherhood.

The movie, says the director, took its inspiration from H. G. Wells’ *The Country of the Blind*. The movie is a highly metaphorical one with many levels of meaning. Ilama fruit, in the movie is a great symbol that the director has employed to convey his intended message. The parable of the Ilama fruit explains to the readers how religions which were supposed to spread the message of love and peace among the people, end up spreading hatred. The fruit, here, stands for religion – where the flesh of the fruit is the religion as is preached to us today, and the seed is God, the eternal truth. In

the valley of the blind, the new born babies are fed the juice of the ilama fruit which makes them blind. People of our world, like how the babies of the blind valley are blinded with the juice of the fruit, are blinded with the misinterpreted and wrong notions of religion and God.

“Like in my world where, the real God is hidden by the walls of religion, here a wall hides the truth from me”, says Reghuraman in the movie to the King of the blind world. This statement stands really important even today. In today’s world where people are fed the wrong truth, we tend to ignore the real essence of these religions, which is represented by the seed in the movie.

In the movie, by using Ilama fruit as a symbol, the director makes a statement on the evils of the world blinded with arrogance. The movie gives a universal message about the greater spiritual truths that we tend to ignore in life. The movie is a reaction against the social evils, blind faith and religious terrorism. The movie, through Reghuraman who stands for the entire humanity, tells us that the darkness of ignorance can be overcome only through attaining a higher spiritual knowledge, and that explains the relevance of the movie in today’s world.

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## **Cooking Home-food: Culinary Identity and Nostalgia in the Diasporic Stories of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni**

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Though any dictionary would define food as the source of basic nutrients required for the sustenance of life, it is far more than just biological need. The food we eat is intrinsic part our identity—geographical, ethnic, cultural, it is deeply embedded in our history and consciousness. It is just not what we eat that matters, but the way we eat, the culinary skills that make it palatable to us which comprises our culinary identity. By “culinary identity” I mean the food habits, the gastronomic practices, the spices and flavours, the culinary skills that are exclusive to a geography, race, tribe, and culture — an identity that has been acquired through history. Culinary identity varies from region to region; even from family to family and how deep-rooted it is in our consciousness is often overlooked by us as are the very presence of our limbs. It appears in our conscious and sub conscious thoughts, our dreams and imagination with an ease that we fail to notice it is there. However, we readily realize its essential centrality in our lives whenever we are denied our gastronomic choices on our daily platter. Away from home and home-food we become all the more conscious of our culinary identities. Bengalis, otherwise known for their love of travel and fairly cosmopolitan culture, when travelling places as diverse as Haridwar, Amritsar, or Coimbatore would be in search for Bengali eateries serving curried fish with steamed rice, *rasogollas* and *mishti doi*. It is intriguing to note that in a multicultural melting-pot like India, the Tamils would rather pertinaciously stick to *sambar* and *rasam* as Punjabis would do to *rajma-chawal* and *makki di roti*.

This strong attachment to regional food and cuisine comes through in the works of South-Asian fiction as has been noted by many including Anita Mannur in her work *Culinary Fictions* (2010). In this connection, reading Chirta Banerjee Divakaruni’s two volumes of short stories *Arranged Marriage* (1995), and *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives* (2001), I have noted a considerably high number of references and allusions to food and culinary practices which underline the diasporic experiences of the characters. In this paper I propose to study some of the short stories in the above-mentioned volumes by Divakaruni’s that essentially speak of immigrant Indian women’s experiences in the U.S. and yet love and nostalgia for home food is equally strong in the other sex. Though references to food and culinary practices are numerous in both the volumes of short stories for the sake of precision have chosen four stories for study from each of the volumes: “Mrs. Dutta Writes a Letter”, “The Intelligence of Wild Things” and “The Blooming Season for Cacti”, from *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives* and “Affair” from *Arranged Marriage*. My reading will attempt to illuminate certain aspects of Divakaruni’s short stories: culinary identities of the diasporic characters in the multicultural setting of the U.S. stirs up memories of homeland; women use their culinary skills for cooking home-food to strengthen withering bonds within the family and also to forge new

relationships; culinary identity of immigrants problematises the process of assimilation to the dominant culture.

*The Unknown Errors of our Lives* opens with “Mrs. Dutta Writes a Letter” where sexagenarian Mrs. Prameela Dutta who has lived all her life within the bastions of a conservative Bengali family in her in-laws’ house in Calcutta goes to the U.S. to live with her only son and his family. Unlike the younger Indian immigrants, she does not come to seek fortune or a career but love and care of a son and grandchildren, for the sake of a family that she had cherished all her life. Her experience in her son’s house in this alien land soon becomes sour as she struggles to adjust to the foreign ways of life: the modern household gadgets, unfriendly neighbours, unfamiliar television shows. Mrs. Dutta’s struggle is not limited to coping with the alien land, its culture, its ways of life and livelihood; it soon starts on a very different plane near home as she senses irreverence, insensitivity and even hostility in the behaviour of her daughter-in-law, and her young grandchildren who are supposed to be her own flesh and blood. Even her son seems to be unfamiliar to her.

Mrs. Dutta longs for the life in Calcutta, busy and noisy with visiting neighbours and relatives, hustle and bustle of the crowded alleys, the call of street vendors, for “fragrant cardamom tea” brewed with real sugar. She cherishes the memories of her past, the home she had left far away, and to connect to her son who has grown estranged, to appease her daughter-in-law, to befriend her grandchildren she takes recourse to cooking and is reassured that the family is eating good Bengali meals “proper Indian food, rutis that puff up the way they should, fish curry in mustard sauce, and real pulao with raisins and cashews and ghee” (“Mrs. Dutta”). As an Indian homemaker cooking had been her forte for years and now she applies her culinary skills to survive in an alien land to hold on to a withering bond with her own family but sadly, her daughter-in-law complains under her breath of excessive grease in her cooking, of rising cholesterol and weight-gain. She would rather prefer her children to have frozen burritos than the oily home-cooked meals their grandmother cooked. It pains Mrs. Dutta to realise that within the family itself she is the other. Against the nuclear family of her son, his wife and children she feels herself to be unwanted and superfluous— “how alone she is in this land of young people. And how unnecessary” (“Mrs. Dutta”).

“The Intelligence of Wild Things” too is about failing bond within the family. Elder sister and brother meet after years of separation. Both are immigrants and had led their own lives in America away and independent of each other. The narrative is in the first person, voiced by the elder sister, who brings to the brother news of their dying mother and of her last wish— to see her children before she dies. A cold indifference has so frozen the previous warmth and familiarity that the sister is unable to reach out and give the message to the brother who seems to have snapped all relation with home. In such a situation, memories of shared meals that rouse confused feelings of pain and hope: “that dim kitchen, our own cave, with its safe odours of coriander and fenugreek; the small blue glow of the gas stove in the corner; three people, cross-legged on the cool cement, making food for each” (“Intelligence”). She wishes to preserve and eternalize those lost moments of her past life, “to keep it safe from loss—and from change, which is perhaps crueller than loss” (“Intelligence”). She manoeuvres to communicate to her brother through the expanse of frozen years of silence by stirring up memories, “[r]emember when Ma used to fry us pantuas for dessert, how we’d sit and

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wait for them to turn red? Remember our kitchen . . .?” (“Intelligence”), but immediately she realise her folly. Her brother has learnt cooking lasagna instead of pantuas in this alien land which is indicative of the onslaught of multiculturalism on the immigrant character. “*Food. Home. This way danger lies*” the sister helplessly reflects (“Intelligence”).

Home cooked food, its tastes and smell remain the connecting principle between individuals in “The Blooming Season for Cacti”. The story speaks of an unusual bond between two strange and dissimilar women Mira and Radhika. Mira is a young immigrant who works as a cashier in an Indian restaurant owned by a prosperous but rather dubious Indian-American named Malik. Radhika, though the second wife of Malik, is actually more of his mistress. Like many women from India, Radhika has been tricked into a fraudulent marriage to Malik. Mira and Radhika forge a nameless relationship which is beyond the regular descriptions of “friend, sister, mother” (“Blooming Season”). Mira, who had lost her mother in the Bombay riot, finds in Radhika something more than kindness. On the other hand, Radhika being the older woman not only dotes on Mira but tries to find a new meaning in life by clinging to her.

On entering Malik’s Indian restaurant in California Mira’s olfactory senses were invaded with “cumin and coriander, a roasted brown smell” which reminded her of her mother’s samosas. Her mother “used to make the best samosas, fat and crisp” and Mira remembers her culinary expertise (“Blooming Season”). And it is by frying “golden-crisp samosas” for Mira that Radhika wants to hold her back at home, closer to her and away from dating a man. In Mira’s mind the samosas surely associate with the memories of Mira’s dead mother but nonetheless fail to hold her back. Like many of Divakaruni’s characters, Mira envisions the U.S. as a land of promise and liberation and would not consider retracing her footsteps to the suppression and relative insecurity of her native land. Ironically, in spite of the strong desire of Divakaruni’s characters to break free from their stifling and patriarchal Indian background, complete “Americanisation” is not possible (Zupančič 87).

The poignancy of Divakaruni’s diasporic stories stem out of the characters’ unhappy realisation of the inadequacy of their hyphenated existence. They look back to India with nostalgia and yet are eager to explore the America that surrounds them as has been put by Vijay Mishra:

Diasporas are people who would want to explore the meaning of the hyphen, but perhaps not press the hyphen too far for fear that this would lead to massive communal schizophrenia. They are precariously lodged within an episteme of real or imagined displacements, self-imposed sense of exile; (Mishra 1)

*Arranged Marriage* is the earlier volume of short stories with the underlying theme of incompatible, unhappy or failed marriages. Interestingly, the volume has a glossary attached to it which mainly comprises of Indian words and 35 percent of these words are either names of food or are associated to the culinary practices of India. This underlines the importance food in Divakaruni’s stories. In an interview the author has expressed:

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Food is an important symbol. It is particularly important for immigrants as the one thing they hope to be able to carry forward that is relatively easy to recreate, . . . food exists on many levels in my books. It reflects changes in our culture as we take shortcuts in how we cook our food, how it remains a comfort regardless.” (Divakaruni)

Stories like “Golden Pavements, Silver Roofs”, “Doors” “Affair” and “Meeting Mrinal” have a fair amount of references to home-cooked food that stir up old memories with poignancy. Women apply their culinary skills to reclaim their relationships with their loved ones, to connect and communicate but often it proves to be a futile exercise. I would particularly point out the short story “Affair” where the narrator protagonist Abha has been portrayed as an impeccable homemaker married to Ashoke, a first generation Indian-American. An excellent cook Abha meticulously maintains a “pristine kitchen” with shining of pots and pans all arranged in rows that could impress any man. However, to her husband this is of little consequence. He would order for a Domino’s pizza with mushroom and sausage toppings while freshly cooked red hot chicken curry cooked by his wife waited in the kitchen. Abha was the typical traditional Indian woman who had never thought beyond the kitchen, home and traditional wifely duties; good looks, fashionable clothes, even marital sex did not count much. Ashoke sneers at her “*prudish Indian upbringing*” (“Affair”). Ironically, it is her culinary skill that gives her new identity in the foreign land. She occupies herself with writing for a food column in a local paper and is even offered to author a cookbook. By the end of the story Abha earns confidence enough to bank on her new found career as a chef and food columnist to walk out of a loveless, suffocating marriage that is steadily heading towards mutual hatred.

Asha of “Meeting Mrinal” also undergoes a divorce as her husband walks out of their marriage to live with an American woman deserting her and their son Dinesh. Asha rues the fact that she had “wasted” much of her life “mincing and simmering and grinding spices” (“Meeting Mrinal”). In the multicultural cauldron of U.S. other allurements are stronger than home-cooked food and one’s culinary identity. It’s *kachori* versus burger, as it is the conservative Indian wife versus the alluring sexuality of the American woman.

Divakaruni’s short stories narrate poignant accounts of experiences lived by the immigrant Indian characters in the U.S. where the culinary identity of the diasporic population definitely is a persistent issue. The name of Indian recipes, the aroma of exotic tropical spices underlines the culinary identity of these diasporic characters all to whom struggle to recreate the taste of their home food in a far-away land. Home food gathers new meaning in the foreign land invoking memories of the past of which they were a part, memories of a homeland which was once their own, but it also underlines their essential alienation from their natal cultures. Rushdie beautifully illuminates this aspect of emigrant writing:

[W]riters in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge –

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which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will, not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost” (Rushdie 10)

Divakaruni tries to capture diasporic experience at the intersection of immigration, hybridity, multiculturalism, globalisation thus mapping the complexities of expatriate lives. These short stories show that while the Indian diasporic community long to hold on to their cultural identities they have to fight the opposing currents that drive them towards assimilation. They live in two worlds— one into which they were born, and the other that they come to acquire in their new country, and thus and keep on oscillating between the two polarities as Divakaruni herself mentions in an interview (Zupančič 94). The memories of home cooked food evoke nostalgia, but they are unable to deny the reality of America that surrounds them. Much of the poignancy of these stories is caused by this dilemma in the characters which is often expressed in their ambiguous response to food.

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**Food – The Engineer of Mind**  
**Neethu Asokan**

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“Tell me what you eat, and I tell you what you are” is a famous saying by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, in 1826, in his seven-volume book *The Physiology of Taste*. In *Ecce Homo*, from 1908, he wrote, ‘But as to German cookery in general what has it got on its conscience! Soup before the meal; meat cooked till the flavour is gone, vegetables cooked with fat and flour; the degeneration of pastries into paperweights! Add to this the utterly bestial postprandial habits of the ancients, not merely of the ancient Germans, and you will begin to understand where German intellect had its origin in a disordered intestinal tract. German intellect is indigestion; it can assimilate nothing.’ Similarly, the concept of ‘you are what you eat’ continued to be famous till now and several researchers contributed evidences proving food is the medicine and the vital component that could build a man physiologically and psychologically.

Food is considered to be culture and is an essence of life. Eating a meal makes anyone calm and happy. Be it humans or animals, it can be observed that hunger can cause them to be alert and irritable. However this emotional sense and response has made all living beings to find food and do anything to satiate hunger. Food what one consumes is therefore is variety of emotions that are connected with several emotions or circumstances.

There are several studies that have proved that food what one takes to have direct impact on their psychological stability. A meta-statistical report of 10 countries by researchers suggested that diet of a person may contribute to depression (Psychiatry Research, Vol. 253, 2017). There were also reports by Felice Jacka, PhD, director of the Food and Mood Centre at Deakin University in Australia stating that dietary patterns impact hippocampal volume in adults, (BMC Medicine, Vol. 13, No. 215, 2015). Children nowadays are observed to have attention deficit disorder (ADHD) showing signs of inattention, hyperactivity, and/or impulsivity in specific ways. These symptoms had a strong relation with the food the children consumed. Children who took higher amount of carbohydrate, junk food and sweets were likely to develop ADHD symptoms. A change in their diet has shown to decrease the ADHD symptoms within months.

Whatever consumed directly or indirectly affect one’s brain. Some things affect more, and usually it affects one when enough of it is not available. Research have shown that consuming low amino acids like tryptophan makes one depressed and angry and this can lead to multiple wars for food and cannibalism. Similarly, too low sugar and vitamins can cause a change in brain functions that will be revealed after few days of deprivation.

However, these reports have proved that food play a major role in the mood and mental health of man. If it had to be focussed on the effect of starvation on mind and health, there are surprising results. Scientifically, it is proved that there is a treacherous relationship between hunger and anger. Skipping the breakfast and staying hungry for long cause one to be grumpy, angry and irritated. This is biologically due to low sugar in blood. Serotonin is a hormone that helps standardize mood and appetite. And once body cut off the production it leads to mood swings especially anger and frustration. Low sugar in blood causes several hormones like leptin, growth hormone, ghrelin and so on are imbalanced, simultaneously disturbing the neurotransmitters. This condition makes one harder to concentrate on simple tasks and makes them difficult to behave within the socially acceptable norms. This is one reason that many grab on to a snack or are advised to do so when they feel inexplicably angry.

The effect of starvation is seen from several episodes in history. One such was witnessed by the world during the tragic naturalistic experiences of famine. And others are often seen in news where some get violent out of hunger leading them to do anything.

It is observed from several classics and myths that the best talk was around the food table and the appearance of food caused an instant happiness in man. Sometimes even the thought or smell of food made one feel relaxed. Food is considered to the essence of life. There was an age during the 1940s when women exchanged their silk wear or wedding rings for a meal during famine.

Nevertheless, the present study focuses on how diet can influence human mind. Simple experiment is when one takes a cup of coffee, here seems to be quick dose of energy and concentration and conversely if more than one cup is taken it leads to heightened anxiety. This suggests that taking good and right amount of food can cause positive vibes and also keeps chronic stress, depression, depressive disorders and even schizophrenia at bay. Researchers have investigated on this matter and have revealed that patients with mental disorder are considered better to choose fruits and vegetables over comfort food to enhance their state of mind. A 9yr research of nearly 300 Canadians, found that a higher fruit and vegetable consumption was related with lower depression and anxiety – beyond age, gender, income, education, physical activity and so on. Similarly in 2013 a survey found that adults had a better mood when they consumed more o fruits and vegetables and the researchers suggested 7-8 servings of fruits and vegetables or positive mood.

There are roughly 100 billion neurons in the brain and about 100 trillion bacteria in the gut and they communicate with each other. Researches into the gut-brain axis called the biochemical signalling taking place between the gut microbes and the central nervous system has changed the way one looks upon mental health. In a study based upon 710 young adults, it was found that frequent consumption of fermented foods like yogurt, kimchi, tempeh, kefir, soymilk, sauerkraut, pickles, miso soup and even dark chocolate lowered symptoms of social anxiety, especially in those who were prone to neuroticism. This was attributed the probiotics- live friendly bacteria present in the fermented food having antidepressant and anti-anxiety effects.

There are also reports showing drinking certain beverages in the right amount can toast one's mental health by uplifting their mood and creating a positive energy. A study on 5,500 adults in Spain have revealed that drinking 2-7 glasses of wine per week led to low depression. However it was also reported in the same study that higher consumption of alcohol led to depression. Scientifically the positive mood given by these food and drinks was due to the presence of polyphenols – compounds from plant based food, exerting a positive effect on the cognitive function, synaptic plasticity, mood and neuronal function. This could be the main reason for the old saying 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away'. Some other studies have stated that even mild dehydration of 1 to 2 percent of water loss can lead to poor concentration, short-term memory problems, moodiness and anxiety.

The present study conducted a survey on 100 university students on the relationship between mood and food. It was found that about 85% of the respondents were observed to have their mood controlled by food. The respondents were found to have positive vibes when they consume their regular breakfast before coming to class. They have also confessed that the menu they dislike were likely to make them upset and grumpy.

Even though science have proved the concept of food determining mood, ancient literature and several literary books have marked characters and situations where food plays a major role. In most of the classics a social gathering involves drinks like wine, beverages which were an indication of joy and a positive start of relation. Food was used to depict strong emotions to the reader. This can be seen in Grimm's fairy tale 'Hansel and Gretel' where the children lost in the wood were frustrated, hopeless and tearful with hunger but are overwhelmed with joy at seeing a house made of food. In the story Gods food by Grimm's also portrays the distress of a widow mother who was starving along with her five kids. In most of the fairy tales there are the hungry ogres, mean stepmothers and witches who make a meal out of poor children. Babies are also portrayed as cannibals who eat their mother out off hunger or anger. In the tale One Eye, Two Eyes and Three Eyes, Grimm's have pictured a magic goat who gives food keeping them happy. In another stage, when hunger strikes two eyes, she is so frustrated that it lead her to cry her heart out.

One of the stories in the new collection is 'The Two Travelling Companions'. Two men, a shoemaker and a tailor, set off on a journey. The tailor only brings enough bread for two days. When his food runs out, and he starts to waste away, the shoemaker is merciless. Grimm's tales have portrayed the horror of what hunger can lead to and how sweet it is to satiate hunger.

There are also several historians who controlled their die to remain calm and get rid of their animal passions. Since the time of Adam and Eve, there are other vegetarians like George Bernard Shaw, who avoided meat, tea and so on for aesthetic reasons. Mahatma Gandhi also eliminated milk products and meat to keep his spirit calm. Leo Tolstoy, Albert Schweitzer and Adolf Hitler were all vegetarians. Since the age then people knew and believed food influenced human behaviour. Hitler was a teetotalter and has said in several stages that elephants are the strongest animals and they don't eat meat.

Depending on what is consumed, the duration and the quantity consumed, food is known to have both negative and positive effects. There is a clear connection of food with the negative emotions one possesses. Usually people grabbed on to the food that could make them happy and it varied from people to people. In this study also most of the respondents had different reasons to why they chose the emotional foods. The food chosen by the respondents also differed with gender. When males chose meal type food, females preferred snacks. Some respondent's happiness and energy depended on the meal time- breakfast, lunch and dinner. While majority of them felt happy and positive when they had their daily breakfast (70%), some of them preferred a luxurious lunch and few preferred the dinner they have after work. It was also found that skipping their positive vibe meals cause them to be cranky whole day and sometimes even the next day. However there also observed that the foods they chose to be different from the comfort foods (like caffeine, chocolates, fat foods and carbs). Most of them (80%) chose healthy food than comfort food to uplift their mood.

There are several reports stating that food with saturated fat, high calories, sweets and sodium increased the negative moods days later. Whatever the food taken the mood was sure to stay after a day or two with a maximum of three days. Some of the respondents who had an inclement towards comfort foods for positive mood also had a negative influence in them in later days. It is scientifically proved that comfort foods can only uplift one's mood for short period.

The present study has given supportive evidence that food is engineer of mental health. The survey taken among the university students revealed that meals have a large impact on mind and mood of students. Food controlled the mind of people. From all the previous literature and present study it can be concluded that food will directly influence the mood of man.

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**Dynamics of Cultural Cuisine and Rituals of Eating: Explorations of  
the Jewish Identity in Israel Through Amos Oz's  
*A Tale Of Love And Darkness and Judas***

**Neha Soman, Ph.D. Research Scholar**  
**J. Pandeewari, Ph.D. Research Scholar**

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Societies are defined in the way they represent its people and culture. The very existence of a society demands its association with a specific group of populaces, which would exhibit a collective behaviour to be distinct or distinguished from other groups. The possibility of any societal subsistence is unattainable without the interaction between its people and their collective behaviour which is also dignified as "culture". Culture is evolved and modified through centuries to ease human functioning. Man has the privilege to make variations in his collective behaviour so that the possibilities for his progress are expanded. Thus, culture cannot be considered as a static phenomenon which would remain as the foundation for communal existence, without attempting any changes for a better need. Culture or the collective communal behaviour in this context, thus represent the driving force which is undeniably flexible and offers affinity towards progress. It significant to acknowledge the fluid nature of culture to understand that this changeability helps individuals to acquire better skills and knowledge, beyond the geographical and socio-psychological restrictions. So, culture represent the manifestation the ideas, the tradition, the custom and the social behaviour of a specific group of people.

Since the emergence of research in sociology, researchers have been keen in analysing the distinctiveness of each culture in particular. They have realized the need to make such attempts so that intellectual reflections and contemplations can be made on the process of cultural transformation around the globe. Culture, as a whole consists of several elements that would define its indiginity to glorify and to celebrate the distinctiveness of a society in particular. Every society will have its own characteristics which can only be understood and interpreted by keen observance and appreciation. Man has the tendency to disregard anything beyond his territory, of doing which he will forfeit in the task of analysing the hybridity of human nature. Thus, studies on cultural characteristics and their developments need to be initiated to provide an extensive consciousness of collective human behaviour in specific groups.

Middle East is one such geographical area where the amalgamation of different cultures can be observed but unquestionably in conflict with each other. The dominant ethnic groups have their ways to emphasis on their pre-eminence and the minorities are often marginalized from the mainstream. The socio-cultural implications of Middle East have emphasised on the need to be distinguished from one another in their language, attire, food habits, religion and customs. The ever ending dispute among the Middle Eastern countries point at the fact that societies will constantly attempt to prove their superiority and the elements which make these distinctions represent the individuality of each society which should be recognized, appreciated and celebrated. Middle East's geographical reality submits to a region that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to Afghanistan in the east. It encompasses four different culture areas; Arab, Turkish, Iranian and the newly emerged Israeli culture. Except the Israeli culture which was evolved after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, all other areas share the same ethnic identity with minute variations. Thus, Israel demands attention and further deliberations to explore on its dual identity and customs.

Israel is a plural society consisting of Jews and Arabs, two dominant claimants to the same land. Jews practice Judaism and the Arabs are Muslims practicing Islam. Both the groups fight for their domination in the land, though the global politics has announced the state as the permanent homeland for the Jews. The birth of Israel as a state has emerged from the Jewish persecutions and the holocaust that had attempted at extreme eradication of Jewish race. They were tortured, mercilessly murdered and driven out of wherever they had gone. Jews were scorned for their ethnic identity. Judaism was ridiculed for its orthodox customs and indignity, but it was in actual, the fear over Jewish intellectuality which is capable of ruling the world itself. They were made to wander in search of peace and settlement but were not welcomed in any country. Finally, with the rise of World Zionist Organisation in Russia, a recreation of conventional Zionist ideology, the Russian Jews initiated the global need for establishing a land for Jews who are still persecuted and unsettled. Israel, as a state was established following several disputes but finally offered a permanent national home for the Jews and also shared the land with the Arab minority.

Judaism is not just a religious practice; it involves the essence of being a Jew. Jews belong to a conventional ethnic group where they follow stringent laws and religious practices. Though Israel has created a liberal atmosphere for the Jews, they are observant of preserving their individuality by performing their unique religious and cultural rituals. It became their need to emphasis on their Jewishness as an answer to all the struggles they have faced all these years. Jewish food habits or their cultural cuisine and the rituals of eating are distinguished features of Judaism. They make sure that their laws of appetite are followed throughout generations to nurture and celebrate their Jewishness. Jews follow a law dealing with the food habits named

“Kashrut”. It encompasses the list of foods that can be and cannot be consumed by the Jews and the laws regarding how the food should be prepared and how it should be eaten. Kashrut is actually a set of biblical dietary restrictions concerning the eating rituals of the Jews. People often fall into misconceptions that the Rabbis or the priests “bless” the food to make it “kosher” which describes that the food meet the standards. But in reality Jewish food can be “kosher” without any religious interventions.

### **General Rules of “Kashrut” or the Cultural Cuisine of Jews**

- Restriction includes the flesh, eggs, milk and any other organs of the forbidden animals which should not be eaten at all.
- The birds and mammals that may be eaten must be killed according to the Jewish law.
- Certain organs of the permitted animals are forbidden from consuming.
- Blood must be sapped or broiled out from the meat before it is eaten.
- Bugs are not “Kosher” thus they should be inspected and removed from the fruits and vegetables.
- Meat and dairy should not be consumed together.
- Cooking surfaces and utensils which are used for meat should not used for dairy.
- Grape products made by non-Jews should not be eaten.
- A Jew who is required to follow “kosher” should be involved in the preparation of food.

### **Rituals of Eating in Judaism**

Judaism follows certain laws pertaining to the way food should be consumed or the rituals of eating in particular. The major component of Jewish eating is “ablution” or the ritual washing. It takes two forms in general. There rituals of hand washing are found in the Hebrew bible but are followed within the Orthodox Judaism. Conservative Judaism practices these rituals with certain exceptions whereas Reform Judaism does not practice ritual washing. The two components of “ablution” or the ritual washing are “tevilah” which is the entire body immersion in “mikveh” (a bathing pool for purifying body)” and a “netilat yadayim” which involves washing of the hands with a two-handled cup called “netal”.

“Netilat Yadayim” observes several kinds of hand washing. Jews are supposed to wash their hands when they wake from their sleep, three times, sporadically over each hand. This washing cleanses them from the evil spirits from their fingers. They are supposed to wash their hands before cutting bread for one’s supper and that bread should be made from one of the five principal grains according to Judaism, wheat, spelt, oats, wild barley and cultivated barley. Washing of hands are mandatory at a dining table where the salt of Sodom is served. Prior to eating Jews are supposed to practice this ritual of “netilat yadayim” when one dips a morsel of

food within a liquid which later clings to the morsel. Fruits do not require washing of hands in Judaism. Though these practices might sound strict, Jews hold them as the factors of their ethnic pride. Following the rituals and cultural cuisine help them represent Judaism globally. They are persistent about differentiating Jewish cultural sovereignty through following their conventional approaches towards the ways of leading a Jewish life.

Personally, I do not believe in world reform. No I do not believe in any kind of world reform. Not because I consider that the world is perfect as it is- certainly not, the world is crooked and grim and full of suffering- but whoever comes along to reform it sinks in rivers of blood. Now let's drink a glass of tea and leave aside these obscenities you've bought me today. If only all religions and all revolutions vanished from the face of the earth someday, I tell you-all of them, without exception-there would be far fewer wars in the world. (*Judas* 68)

The two novels, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* and *Judas* written by Amos Oz, the prominent Israeli writer deliberate on the struggles of Jews in identifying their national and personal identities in the newly established state of Israel. Though the novel discusses the issues of Jewish persecution, trauma, Zionism, identity crisis in Israel and the conflict between Jews and Arabs, the author does give instances where the reader can actually feel the desperate attempts of the Jews to uphold their ethnic pride through various forms. Author portrays Mrs. Fania, the female protagonist of the novel *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, preparing the food for her family in accordance with the Jewish law though they are not provided with enough rations at the time of dispute. The family even initiates a garden where they were supposed to grow fruits and vegetables free of impurities and "bugs". For them, the celebration of Jewishness was more significant than opting for comfort and the influence of modernization. On the other hand, in *Judas*, the rituals of eating define the life routine of the characters. Though they are caught in between the trauma of the past and the uncertainty of the future, Oz's characters identify their private and indigenous cuisine and eating rituals to celebrate Jewishness in their personal spaces.

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## **Food and Literature Across the Ages**

**A. Parthipan, Assistant Professor of English**

In literature many writers registered cruelty of hunger in their works. Food is one of the basic components for the functioning of everyone in this world. It is the duty of a ruler to provide basic essential to the people of a nation. Many children die due to lack of nutrition. Many countries in the world suffer with extreme forms of hunger, especially Somalia like countries are suffer much due to hunger and people are being exploited. Every nation has its own unique food culture, but hunger is common for all. Many Tamil writers discuss about hunger in their writings. Among them Ovaiyar Tamil poet is very vividly expressed it in the following manner in her Nalvali:

Honor, class, learning, strength, wisdom, sense of charity, austerity, aspirations, perseverance, desired of women of sweet talk all these ten will vanish once is confront with hunger. (Nalvali26)

Through her words one can know the nature of hunger well. In Hungry mood one cannot listen to anything, cannot do anything, in his life. Extreme hunger leads to many problems. In her text 'The Room of One's Own' text Virginia Woolf states the plight of hungry as: "One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well" (Woolf ..)

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation also observes the importance of food, he states that food is very important. It is like God for the needy, where he say: "There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread" (Ganthi 62).

The Poet Subramaniya Bharadhi asserted responsibilities of a nation in providing a proper shelter and food for its people. Thus, he vey boldly asserted people's right to throw away the failing rule in the following manner and showed himself as a radical fighter who voiced for the sake of his nation. "If there is no food for an individual let us destroy the entire universe" (Bharathiyar 45)

In Manimekalai, the sequel to Cilapathikara of Illangovadikal, Saththanar depicts the myth of Manimekalai, the daughter of Madhavi of Silapathikaram. She gives 'Amutha Surabhi'

(ever giving food bowl) which will satiate hunger of all living beings. While giving her the Amutha Surabhi, the goddesses Deeva Thilaki explains to her the virtue of feeding the hungry. She says that the one who gives food to the needy will be consider as God and one of the best charity is offering food to the needy it classifies the offering in the following in the following manner:

Benefactors to the ale are just traders in virtue;  
Those who satiate the hunger of the feeble are  
Who embody virtuous life in this world.  
To all those who live in this atom filled world-  
One who gives food is one who gives life (Manimekalai 11 92-96)

The above lines one can find meaning for the different types of charity. The offering which has expectations is like a business, but the offering which is given to the needy is worth doing than other offerings. One can trace God's presence by giving a hand to the needy. So providing food to the needy is usually consider as a life giving act, because food is life for the one who is suffering with hunger.

The cruelty of hunger is very clearly portrayed by our Indian poet Jayanta Mahabharat in his much fascinating poem 'Hunger'. This poem depicts the sordid realities of life. Its sketches two different type of hunger one is for food another is for flesh. First part of the poem tells about the suffering of a poor fisherman. The fisher man is at the verge of poverty and is unable to feed his daughter and finally he turned himself as pimp for his own daughter and offered his body to the poet who is longing to satisfy his carnal hunger. The acts of the fisher man reveal the sayings of Avvaiyar's words which were discussed in the above.

It was hard to believe the flesh was heavy on my back.  
The fisherman said: Will you feel her, carelessly,  
trailing his nets and his nerves, as though his words  
sanctified the purpose with which he faced himself.  
I saw his white bone thrash his eyes'. (Jayanta Mahapatra 'Hunger')

Thiruvalluvar too discussed how the wealth of benevolent man is useful for the society and how poor will be benefited by the wealth of a virtuous men in the following couplets, "The wealth of men who love the 'fitting way' the truly wise, / Is as when water fills the lake that village needs supplies" (Kural 215). The wealth of benevolent man who wants to exercise his duty to the needy is like a city water tank which provides water for all people irrespective of

color, creed and caste: ‘‘A tree that fruits in the hamlet’s central mart, / Is wealth that falls to men of liberal heart’’ (Kural 216).

The wealth of a virtuous man is like a tree which is full of eatable fruits in it and also standing in the central place of the village, which means any one can get fruit out of it and quench his hunger. Likewise, the wealth which is possessed by a noble man can easily be received by the need of a single request. Valluvar differentiates the miser from the benevolent man. The misers are the greedy people who always wanted to possess a lot but offer nothing to the needy or to the destitute. They are the men with stone hearts, because they are the sole reason for the economic disparity of the society. He ridiculed them in the following couplet: ‘‘When he whom no man loves exults in great prosperity, / ‘Tis as when fruits in midmost of the town some poisonous tree’’ (Kural 1008). Valluvar says that whoever neglects to spend his money towards charity and the needy are sinners. The wealth which they possess is like a tree with full of poisonous fruits, even if it stands in the middle of the village it is useless. So, this type of hypocrite will not get any due recognition from the society even among his own people.

The Holy Bible also stresses the importance of providing food for people. Jesus wanted to provide food to the multitude of people who followed him for three days. He fed forty thousand people with seven loaves and some little fishes. He stressed the importance for hospitality.

So, the multitude marvelled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel (Matthew 15:31 King James Version)

Then Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, ‘‘I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way. (Matthew 15:32 King James Version)

His disciple said to Him, ‘‘Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude? (Matthew 15:33 King James Version)

Jesus said to them, ‘‘How many loaves do you have?’’ and they said, ‘‘Seven and a few little fish (Matthew 15:34 King James Version)

And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground (Matthew 15:35 King James Version)

And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude (Matthew 15:36 King James Version)

So, they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left (Matthew 15:37 King James Version)

Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children (Matthew 15:38 King James Version)

In Indian epic Mahabharat, Pandava after losing all their wealth in the gambling of dice with Kavruavas went to exile. During this period of exile, the Pandava would obtain their food by means of the Akahaya Patra, which would become exhausted each day once Drupathi finished her meal. One day when Draupadi finished her meal, there came Lord Krishna with many men. However, she did not come out of the house to greet Krishna. Then Krishna enquired for the strange behavior. He came to know the situation, then he asked to bring that Akshaya Patra. She showed it to him. There was only a single grain of rice inside the pot. Krishna took it away and ate. Then entire men's stomachs were filled. He then justified that giving god food is equal to feed entire world. Thus, it also stressed the importance of hospitality.

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## **Gastronomical Study of R K Narayan's Select Fiction and Short Story**

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Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Narayanaswami (1906-2001) is better known as R.K. Narayan this change was done on Graham Green's suggestion then his name has been contracted R.K. Narayan. He is one of the prominent writers in Indian Writing in English in 1930s. He was born in Madras (today's Chennai) later he spent most of his life in Mysore, Karnataka. Certainly, there is no need to give any introduction to him and he is as famous as any acclaimed writer, not only in India but also outside of India too. In fact, his name was nominated for Noble Prize once and he rightly deserved it and he was also nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 1980. As a Rajya Sabha member for six years his only concern was about school children's learning burden and the plight of school children, especially the heavy load of school books. R.K. Narayan's personal life and his association with other prominent personalities give some more insights about what a humane writer he is.

This paper would like to attempt to study some of the gastronomical aspects in his selected works. Before going to his fictional world knowing about his personal life a bit is better and it gives some more insights for the eternal spirit of his enquiry. From the beginning R.K. Narayan was an introvert person he was a man of words who mostly confined to writing and walking he used to make time for these two things. Writing was his vocation and avocation for his entire life. He was a teacher for a brief time that didn't suit for his maverick personality and he resigned for his job. He decided to be a writer for rest of his life. Moreover, it was challenging thing to take up freelancing reporter job that time it was a rare thing unlike today it is one of the lucrative options anybody can choose but those days were very challenging to take up writing as a career. R.K. Narayan was adventurous enough to take up a small time freelancer reporting job in *The Hindu*. His beginning was so humble like another great English novelist Charles Dickens both the writers have lot of similarities like: They are known for their realistic writing and both started their career as self styled journalists and ended up as successful novelists in their respective countries.

R.K. Narayan's writing in 1930s was an humble beginning his first novel *Swami and Friends* (1935) was set in British India in a fictional town called Malgudi it is one of the famous fictional town ever created by any Indian writer in English and later two more stories were included; *Malgudi Days* and *Under the Banyan Tree*. These same stories were adapted by

Kannada famous actor Shankar Nag into the television serial popularly known as Malgudi Days in 1986. Entire imaginary Malgudi was created at Agumbe, in Thirthalli taluk, Karnataka. The famous musician L. Vaidyanathan composed music and R.K. Laxman, legendary cartoonist sketched cartoons. R.K. Narayan's writing in the initial stage was not cake walk his first novel *Swami and Friends* was rejected by many publishers but later it was published on the recommendation of Gram Green and that one step facilitation made R.K. Narayan as a literary giant today. From the general introduction to specific works of R.K. Narayan brings more insights for further intellectual discussions. R.K. Narayan has written extensively, and his unique style, simple language and selections of topics are special in its own way. In fact, some of the critics they have criticized him for simple language especially Shashi Tharoor once commented that R.K. Narayan's writing is as simple as anything and it is almost like translation work in a review of his *The Grandmother's Tale* in the New York Times. Later, Shashi Tharoor recreated and also acknowledged in his famous non-fiction *Bookless in Baghdad*, Tharoor apologies with a separate chapter called *R.K. Narayan's Comedies of Suffering*.

R.K. Narayan serialized his first few novels; *Swami and Friends*, *Bachelor of Arts*, *Dark Room* and *The English Teacher* and he used to infuse his novels with lot of things which were around him. As a writer he was a keen observer and he was known as a legendary walker among his family and friends circle. He used to walk from his home Yadavagiri house to in and around Mysore and then he used to create his fictional world Malgudi. Though most of his writing used to be day today's life's crisis like family, school and small social issues instead of concentrating on freedom movement or any such ideology oriented lenience. His writing period falls in both pre-Independence and post-Independent context, but he didn't show any such great interest towards the freedom movement, partition Gandhian philosophy or Gandhian teachings. Unlike his contemporaries like: Khushwant Singh, Mulk Raj Anand, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Raj Rao and Manohar Malgonkar, etc, all these writers written extensively about Indian freedom and other related things, whereas R.K. Narayan had written very less about freedom movement. He was completely detached from those things. In his famous novel *Waiting for the Mahatma*, there is no glorification of Mahatma or rigor of freedom movement and only gentle irony, humor, and humorous characters become near to readers' heart.

R.K. Narayan's meticulous record of many aspects about human life has touched almost all aspects on this earth and it has not left anything. Further we understand his interest in many things in life from some of his personal anecdotes. R.K. Narayan married to Rajam from Coimbatore and he loved her passionately. Unfortunately, she died very early and he was left with his only daughter Hema. In fact, in his fictional autobiography *The English Teacher*, protagonist Krishna tries to connect with his wife's soul and fictional character Krishna is an alter ego to R.K. Narayan. It shows how R.K. Narayan's life was disturbed so early and it had hurt him so deeply

for many years. In spite of, all the odds he continued his writing and his brother and other extended family was a great help in taking care of his daughter and his strict dietary food habit.

Narayan is a quintessential Indian writer his sociological understanding was intense he wrote almost all his novels from his Yadavgiri house in Mysore. Now it has become museum from the effort of one of local English dailies 'Star of Mysore'. In one of its reports about pathetic condition of R.K. Narayan's house and it has been saved his house. R.K. Narayan was not a very gregarious person he never addressed any public meetings or that matter any intellectual gathering but he had many good friends and well-wishers: M.S. Subbulakshmi (legendary Carnatic Musician), Dr. M.N. Srinivas (well-known Sociologist) and his wife Rukmini Srinivas, T.S. Satyan (a famous photo journalist), C.D. Narasimhaiah (a legendary English Professor and Nehruvian scholar, University of Mysore), N. Ram (The Editor, The Hindu) and our own Mysore city journalist K.B. Ganapathi, Chief Editor of *Star of Mysore* and others were very close to him.

Some of their anecdotal experiences have been used in this research paper especially about food. As R.K. Narayan's grandnephew R.S. Krishnaswamy recalls now and then how his uncle was very particular about his diet especially his aptness for South Indian food and coffee. He recalls once in New Delhi Prime Minister Indira Gandhi invited R.K. Narayan for breakfast where the South Indian breakfast was served, and R.K. Narayan loved it. When Mrs. Indira Gandhi asked him about the breakfast, he was so bold enough to say, "the South Indian breakfast was excellent, but your cook does not know how to make coffee." These anecdotes get lead for this research paper.

His close friend T.S. Satyan, a very famous photojournalist, recollects in his famous memoir *Alive and Clicking (The Malgudi man)*: whenever R.K. Narayan used to drop in their home it was tough task for ladies to make perfect aromatic froth coffee for him and also Narayan was fond of curd rice and its slurping sound. Dr. M.N. Srinivas's wife Rukmini Srinivasa has written R.K. Narayan's visit to America and his fondness for areca nut in her famous book *Tiffin*. The transition from these personal anecdotes to R.K. Narayan's novels and gastronomical studies will bring more lead about gastronomy in the fictional world. Any piece of writing or literature will be autobiographical in nature, food or gastronomy will be one of the potential topics to know any society in depth. The gastronomical study is not only about cookery it goes beyond that it is in depth study of that society psychologically and sociologically. Food, cookery, behavior or habits have appeared in one or the other novels among his fourteen novels, short stories and autobiography.

To study about gastronomical aspects in R.K. Narayan's fictional world his famous novel *The Vendor of Sweets*, and short story *Half a Rupee Worth* and his autobiography *My Days* have been used extensively in this research paper. The food and its habits can be philosophical and

metaphysical in nature. *The Vendor of Sweets* was published in 1967, the protagonist of the novel Jagan is a 55 year old sweet vendor a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi, but R.K. Narayan has portrayed his character as a very simple one he is a so called Mahatma Gandhi follower always he has double standard in his life. The novel begins with Jagan's advice to his cousin "Conquest taste, and you will have conquered the self," (P7). Jagan says these Gandhian philosophical words though he is a sweet vendor who sells sweets to his customer by hook or crook. In an ironic way the person who is listening to him asks why to conquer taste and Jagan's answer is very blank and says "...I don't know, but all our sages advise us so" (P8). R.K Narayan makes sure that all his characters are ordinary mortals and they are very near to reality. Whatever Jagan preaches outside he himself is not following in his business. Jagan is a widower, in his personal life he wants to lead a very simple life and he pampered his son Mali who is out of control. Day by day Jagan's business started progressing he completely engross with his sweet shop and monitoring day today activities and he is so successful in his business but in his personal life he is a person of failure. Mali wants to go to America to do some writing course. In the beginning Jagan's world of confections is everything but later his worry started when his son returns from America with the half Korean and half American girl Grace. In the subsequent days their relationship gulfs further and Jagan lives with his so called Gandhian philosophy and shop. Everything is not fair with Jagan's simple living even he too has some of the common weakness and hypocrisy whenever something is left over in the evening, he orders his cook to make another type of sweet or he repeats the same sweet for the next day in a very philosophical way he justifies it as "...after all everything consists of flour, sugar and flavors" (P13). As R.K. Narayan was known as a legendary walker among his friends circle he used to walk around Mysore and used to interact with shopkeepers. Probably that made him to understand the anatomy of the food habit of one place and person. In this research paper food and its preparation are main focal points. For R.K. Narayan creation of *The Vendor of Sweets* is not just a story creation beyond that sweet vendor's job and writer's jobs are also the same. Both of them imagine create and flavor it but one adds material sugar, another one adds aesthetic sugar to the readers' mind. In fact, making sweet is also making literature and the title of the novel is very appropriate.

Along with the novels R.K. Narayan has written short stories extensively. One of his short stories has taken here for the research *Half a Rupee Worth* and this is about rice merchant Subbahi and his tragic end. In the story, only the protagonist's name appears; other characters are only generic in usage. Subbahi's business grows day by day through his hard work and also through his selfish black market business. During the drought time one day a man tuns up for rice only with the half a rupee in his hand. At the outset Subbahi rejects him but later agrees to give him and goes inside the secret godown there he meets a tragic end; a rice bag falls on him and dies then and there with half a rupee in hand. In the story R.K. Narayan has infused a gastronomical deep

philosophical answer that is how much a human being can have only that much one can have not more than that.

## Conclusion

Though food is a generic term, it gives a lot of insights towards society and people and individual personality. In R.K. Narayan's novels, Malgudi, Albert Mission School, Lawley extension, Lawley statute, food/cooker/gastronomy also takes a equal position either directly or indirectly. To illustrate it further Ananda Bhavan *hotle* appears in all his fiction. From the study of autobiographical and fictional world one can come to the inference that R.K. Narayan was not a foodie but very particular about some of the things and in a lighter vein probably. That is one of the reasons for his long health. He passed away in 2001 in Chennai at the age of 94.

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## **Portrayal of Food in Select Works of Tamil and English Literatures**

**S. Pavith, M.A. English Literature**

### **Introduction**

Not to forget that when we talk of writing about food it doesn't indicate a transitory reference to tradition it basically means a passage in a book where the author has really written about the food itself creating both visual and verbal impact and to create a mood or to convey the idea, meal a such a human endeavor that it has said the imagination of poets and writers across the ages to provide the ingredients for many wonderful scenes.

Eating has been a basic human activity and activity which is not only necessary for continued existence but also connected with social functions. Eating patterns and rituals, the preference of dining acquaintance and the motive behind these behaviors are basic towards neutering and understanding of human society. Food and drink have not only spiced up but have also given an emblematic inside to the printed pages. Food and function bearing is as old as the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible and the Vedas; it has been a constant source of inspiration since the time it was first put into paper be it a plot device or a method of revealing character, eating, drinking or merry making food has played an important part in many of the novels poems and other literary works. Food and pattern of eating and their symbolism are brought to play because of their elementary place in human life and culture. English and French writings have many a times associated bountiful supply of food with good health and festivity it represents brightness, a more practical approach would be that food representation in artistic words are the level of complexity that make everything related to food and eating a still more important issue in the advancement of a world increasingly affected by apparently unsolvable problems of Hunger and calmness but being two of the greatest pleasure of life eating and reading explains the fact that why food writing continues to be so popular and the craze and its development will probably never fade away or can never be stopped.

### **Origin of the Study**

The research was taken up after the keen observation to make a connection and coherence of two different literatures and the displayable features of food and taste of the people depending on the literature, culture, beliefs, people and geological location.

## Significance of the Paper

English has grown to be a universal language and Tamil a classical language in keen to the proposal of food literature and reflection of it is as significant as the topic. Food Literature is now an emerging genre in Literature and the importance of this is at a needy one. Food not only tastes the buds but also to our mind and soul in literature.

## Food and Culture -Geographical Traces

Agricultural being unique it has its own traditions and rituals, its own cousins and dusting eating habits so it is with its food culture for example, unique methods, technological growth and harvesting practices are some traditional practices. Events involving food cooking and serving help define the social organisation and cultural identity of communities that give rise to listing literary traditions. The sentence evokes and a valence of memories and feelings and though are put in writings as food involves with all the other sense too besides the taste and smell.

There are five traditional landscapes of Kurinji (hills/mountains), Mullai (forests), Marutham (agriculture land), Palai (desert) and Neithal (coastal area) had divergent cooking methods, recipes and varied eating culture. Food in ancient Tamil society was based on the landscape and easily available resources. In ThiruvilayadalPuranam a classic work, it deals with a recipe called Pittu and to eat that Lord Shiva himself came down to earth says that great master piece. Literature usually projects food as a socio-cultural element but Tamil in an extraordinary manner and that could be supported in various ways.

## The Meal, Culture in Respect to Religion

The portrayal of meals through literature as the union of individuals and as moments of light and warmth in the dark and cold is not uncommon the famous Christmas feast in Christmas carol by Charles Dickens perhaps is the best example where Scrooge clock family feast on the plum pudding and roast Turkey. A feast is not only an indicator of celebration of victory a successful marriage acceptor but also sucked sanity of a community does Shakespearean romantic comedy such in 'As you like it' and 'The Tempest' also comes close to it in relating to food and magic.

In Tamil literature 'Thanipadalthirattu' an anthology of poems the 32<sup>nd</sup> song goes like this -- 'Varaguarisichorum, vazhuthunangaivaatum, moramoravenapulithamorum...'  
(steamedvaragu rice, smoked and mashed aubergine and tangy frothy buttermilk).  
According to the Hindu belief system, food is considered a gift from God and is treated with respect and offered to God as nivedyam (sacred food offering) and then given to the devotees as prasadam. The nivedyam at Hindu temples are always the most admirable food that would taste brilliant. They are prepared at the temple by the priests after the food is offered to god and then it

is given to the devotees. As the priest enters the sanctum sanctorum with the nivedyam, he closes screen behind him in front of the devotees who are waiting to offer their prayers. For the next several minutes, the priest chants the mantras in Sanskrit/ classical language or regional language as he makes the ceremonial offering of food to god. Then he pulls off the screen or the door, and as the priest will conclude the rituals with oil lamps, sweet-smelling flowers, and the burning of camphor cubes, and fragrance sticks. The assistant of the priest will then walk out with a pot full of nivedyam with a few leaves on top and will provide it to the devotees waiting there. The tempting aroma of the neyyappam, (sweet rice cakes) and the subtle fragrance of neypaayasam (rice pudding sweetened with jiggery or sugar, and enriched with ghee) would pervade the air in front of the devotees. The nivedyam is then distributed to the devotees as prasadam (food that had been blessed).

Appam is the nivedyam at hundreds of Lord Ayyappa, Lord Ganesha, Lord Krishna, and Goddess Devi temples all over South India. Eating through the dark brown crust, crisped by rice flour and sugar, and the savoring the soft and chewy delicious middle of the appam is sheer delight. Customarily it is cooked in a bronze pan called appakara, about eight inches in diameter, with three or more large cavities, alike to an aebleskiver pan.

In Tamil Nadu both appam / adhirasam is made by deep frying a fermented batter. It is called by the name appe in south Karnataka and it is a must for Ganapathi puja. In Coorg situated in the southwestern Karnataka it is called as kajjaya. The Konkani community of Karnataka prepares it with semolina and either with jackfruit or banana and they call it Mulik. In Andhra Pradesh it is known as atrasalu or ariselu, and if it is deep browned in ghee it is called nethiariselu. It is served at many auspicious occasions and at weddings that marks a cultural ceremony.

On MattuPongal day, a festival celebrated in south India where women in the rural areas would get together and will set up sulliaduppu and will cook Kari, kozhi or eralchoru. The technique of cooking rice and meat together was in exercise even before the advent of Biryani.

### **The Feast as the Focal Point of Plot**

Feast or an integral part of a literary work although the plots are based on the human tendencies of love, conquest, betrayal and loss rather than food the feast still it holds the path to be a flower crown on which a plot can turn inwork titled like Odyssey that discuss rivals right after the feast of the suitors. Food and social healing in Charles Dickens play a Christmas carol the character Ebenezer Scrooge a misery transforms after overlooking his clothes family feast on Christmas on that night Scrooge find the angles child of the family crippled and the family as a whole raising a toast to Scrooge even after his indifferent behavior.

### **Food in Sangam Literature**

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The literature of classical Tamil, that later became referred to as Sangam literature were graven on palm leaves and dates back to the amount between three hundred B.C. and three hundred AD. These heroic poems written in ancient Tamil diagrammatically describe life in south Republic of India below the Chera, Chola, and Pandya dynasties.

There are many classic works that would have the imminent portrayal of food in it, TamizharUnavu authored by BhaktavatsalaBharathi has a separate chapter called ‘food in Sangam age’ and enumerates the literary references. The Sangam literature also refers to the cooking methods like vakkuthal (direct fire cooking) that differed between regions. Direct fire cooking was predominant in the Kurinji and Mullai landscapes while, frying and sun-drying were common in the Palai and Neithal areas. It was in the Palai area (desert areas) that preserving methods like pickling were followed. In the agricultural fields of Marutham, the people chiefly boiled and steamed which has later developed into elaborate cooking methods that are followed in the modern era in technical terms.

Food in the Sangam Age to the common man ranged from ordinary to peculiar. Millets and grains like varagu, thinaisamai were main, there were also few dishes and food that were made only in special occasions.

- ***Sirupanatrupadai***

Couplets in Sirupanatrupadai indicate that people of the Marudham landscape (agriculture land) ate white rice with a thick pasty curry made of crab flesh and ridge gourd. It records forms of rice, meat, spinach, vegetables, dry cereal, pulses, cereals, legumes and pickles as staple within the diet. In Sirupanatrupadai a poem, a Panan (one who sings) who had received rich presents from the lord Nalliakodan meets a group of Panars traveling in very hot weather, and he acclaims that they go to his patron for help. He also tells them what food they will get from the people of various regions on the way and finally from the king.

In the seashore towns they will provide:

*"Fishermen will give you aged liquor that their wives with sharp, spear-like eyes and pretty faultless faces that make the moon jealous, have prepared along with fried kulal fish cooked over akhil driftwood wood of sleeping camel's shape brought over by swollen waves"*

In the hot wasteland they will be given:

*"Women of the Eyitriyar race who stay in huts will be hospitable to you and will feed you rice and venison cooked in tamarind sauce"*

In the agricultural tracts they will have:

*“The sister of the farmer will serve cooked white rice balls made from rice finely pounded with an iron pestle, with a dish made of split-legged crabs”*

Finally, when they reach the king’s palace he will get:

*“He will give you toddy strong that stupefies like poison of snakes, and in golden plates that much surpass the morning sun that lights the sky, he will serve many dishes suited to your taste that are prepared according to the rules found in the treatise\* that a hero wrote whose chest was as broad as the snowy mount”*

- **Porunaratrupidai**

Porunaratrupidai describes how the Kurinji (hills/mountains) people or the people of Chola country ate roots and honey. Malaipadukadam accounts the dish called kozhambu made of jackfruit seeds, raw mangoes and tamarind extract that was eaten with bamboo rice and buttermilk. Perumpanatrupidai also records a recipe in which Varagu rice, lentils, tamarind pulp and broad bean seeds were cooked together. A poem in Porunaratrupidai, the poet Mudathama Kaniyar describes the royal lunch he was treated to in the palace of the Chola king. “Skewered goat meat, crisp deep-fried vegetables, rice and over sixteen forms of dishes are mentioned as a part of the lunch. Similarly, in Porunaratrupidai (one of the earliest poems in Pahtuppattu) the poet meets a wandering minstrel and directs him to his patron Chola king Karikalan. Foods and drinks offered to the bards by the king are described in the following lines:

*“In the halls bejeweled, smiling, comely maids poured out from spotless golden vessels full like cheering rain much stupefying drink repeatedly. Knowing the time to eat, he urged me to eat cooked thick thigh meat of sheep that were fed arukam grass twisted as ropes and fatty, big pieces of meat roasted on iron rods. He gave more and more even when I refused them again and again; he served many tasty pastries in many shapes”*

*“One day the king begged us to eat cooked rice whose grains unbroken looked like jasmine buds, all the grains of the same size with no streaks and long like fingers along with curries mixed with roasted seeds staying with me sweetly”*

- **Purananuru, Agananuru**

Purananuru reveals the cooking method that how meat was marinated in curd before cooking. The kinds of Paalsoru (milk rice) and Puliyodharai (tamarind fried rice) find a mention in Agananuru, which also describes a hunting episode in which watchmen guarding millet fields in the Mullai (forest) region hunted wild boars and cooked the meat in direct fire. Agananuru indicates a recipe of tender pomegranate seeds fried in ghee that was a kind of nutritional supplement for vegetarians. Purananuru tags fish varieties such as Vilangumeen, Pothimeen,

Thelimeen and Valaimeen that are usually caught in the slush in agriculture fields during the harvest of paddy.

It may sound bizarre and shocking in today's contextual world, but it was once a popular food of the masses, for example, rat meat, squirrel meat.

- ***Natrinai***

A poem in Natrinai, brilliantly describes how the loving couple will be meeting under an age-old tree. Thalaivi (The lady love) asks an owl nesting in the tree to keep quiet and not disturb their private moment in return of which she promises the bird a return of meat fried in ghee that she affectionately cooked it for her love (Thalaivan). Similarly, Pattinapalai accounts the meat of tortoise and monitor lizards as food of the Neithal region people.

With the provided literary references, ancient Tamil society was largely meat-eating one. It was only in Marutham, the vegetables dominated the tray. However, there are few references to food in the royal palaces that were individual and different, songs in Purananuru discourse feasts served in the palaces as 'Arusuvai Virundhu''

- ***Pathuppattu***

Pathuppattu (The 10 Idylls) A compendium of 10 middle length poems is one of the oldest living Tamil poetry. The poems in Pathuppattu praise kings, valor, wars, generosity, loyalty, and gratitude. Poems describing the king's generosity provide graphic descriptions of food that he gave to the bards. Five of the poems in Pathuppattu are guide poems where one bard urges other bards to go to his generous patron for help. According to Tamil scholar Kamil Zvelebil, these guide poems are some of the oldest poems written from around the second to the third century A.D. These poems eloquently portray a sophisticated civilization that prevailed in south Bharat throughout the first centuries.

## **English Literature**

*“For those that love words and those that love food, the combination is heaven”.*

I first learned how literary food could make my mouth water and tongue slurp like remembering how Edmund couldn't resist Turkish Delights and loved it that was not a matter of issue, but he was ready to betray his own siblings, how an author could make a sentimental treat sound so seductive. We do not need that much definite, but it's always pleasant to experience lovely language mixed with food. “Garnished with honey and puddings made of delightful creaminess.”

- **The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe**

The first reference of food in the novel is that when Lucy gets into Narnia and she meets a goat footed man called Tumnus offers her drink at his home this shows the culture and the importance of food not only in this world but also in an imaginative world like Narnia. The second reference is Turkish Delight offered by the White Witch to Edmund, he inhaled the Snow Queen's Turkish Delight and betrayed his siblings, the temptation of food and taste makes a man to such extent.

The third portrayal of food is when they are invited to the Beavers home and the feast provided there the cordial welcome and hospitality seems like we too have to make a visit there. The fourth reference is to show how the mystical creatures dance and celebrate the feast when Aslan is killed at the stone bench as per the agreement between Aslan and the White Witch. This represents that people get together and celebrate as a whole in reflecting the culture.

The last representation is that when Lucy brings back alive the wounded and dead people in the war using her Christmas gift which was a magic portion which is also a food or medicine to treat the wounded.

In this novel alone, there are many references to food and each time it represents different things and also provides the culture and taste of food to humans and the imagination of a fantasy world in comparison to the real world.

Turkish delight is actual a dish comprised of sugar, gelatin, water, and cornstarch, and it is commonly flavored with rosewater, lemon or mint however Narnia is an imaginative world but not the food described in it.

- **Green Eggs and Ham**

Green Eggs and Ham is a children's short story written by Dr. Seuss, The book contains only fifty words on a bet with Seuss' publisher that he will be able to write a book for children below 225 words (Cat in the Hat word count). The formula contains seven: ham, eggs, inexperienced coloring, oil. The green eggs are not liked by a strange creature where Sam-I-Am and Ham wanted it to taste it and they follow it everywhere and it finally had to taste it without any option and it also likes it, it could be connected to children who will not have their appetite full until they like the colour of the food and so it should not be judged by the colour but with the taste. Similarly, many healthy foods are rejected by children with such wrong judgment sometimes.

*Little House On The Prairie*

The Little House on the Prairie books by Laura Ingalls Wilder is a chiefwork of children's literature. Western Boundary dishes and desserts are an important part of the series, which led to a bonusand selling of cookbook that highlights many of the recipes just like this one called Snow Candy. It is made-up to resemble a snowy landscape with dark syrupy streams.

- ***Harry Potter And The Chamber Of Secrets***

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets is a novel series by J.K. Rowling in which Aunt Petunia's violet pudding. Pudding may be a fashionable sweet at Hogwarts, however nobody will it up like auntie flower. Dobby drops the cake onto Mrs. Mason's head.

*"Aunt Petunia's masterpiece of a pudding, the mountain of cream and sugared violets, was floating up near the ceiling. On top of a cupboard in the corner crouched Dobby."*

Now, J.K. Rowling is not far across food in imagination most of the letters, gifts and announcement are done at dining or in the banquet table where they have their food and the variety of list stated in it would make the readers mouthwatering, she did not impart this recipe it is a traditional British dessert.

## **Conclusion**

According to Careme, "when we no longer have good cooking in the world we will have no literature nor high and sharp intelligence nor friendly gatherings nor social harmony". We see food as an essential one in our day to day life but beyond that it's an art where everyone are not god cook but anyone could be a foodie, "There is no love sincerer than the love of food." says George Bernard Shaw.

Everything is an art as we could quote by George Santayana "The earth has music for those who listen." Similarly, it's only visible to those who can appreciate little things in life. The specialty of literature is different where not facts nut could add fats in it by food description. We are not only introduced to variety of food but also the culture and people, sometimes reading is the wider travel and it's true in this account. The food habit depends upon the geological location, climate, people and tradition.

Literature has never failed in portraying what is happening in the society where these literary pieces could be next to history in order to reflect the human society. There are many other literatures that could be compared but it's limited to Tamil and English Literatures' and particular works which have major food impact in the work.

"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food." Says Hippocrates, where Tamil literature says, "Food is Medicine, Medicine is Food" (Unave Marunthu, Marunthe Unavu).

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## **Analyzing the Perspectives of the British Empire on the Construct of Vegetarianism in India**

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### **Introduction**

The diet one follows plays a very complex role today in India, a country that hosts a diverse population filled with differences. The discourses on diet in the 21st century India are not only filled with religious, medical, social and moral arguments but are also politically charged. In particular, the conflict between the Vegetarian and the non-vegetarian discourses seem to be never-ending. This paper concentrates particularly on the vegetarian diet which has been prominent in the socio-cultural and religious history of India.

The definition of Vegetarianism according to the Oxford dictionary is “The practice of not eating meat or fish, especially for moral, religious, or health reasons”. Vegetarianism has its roots in ancient civilizations of India and Greece. As the world is moving towards veganism which stemmed from vegetarianism, it is important to discuss the history of vegetarianism in India. The ancient Indian culture was majorly influenced by their religious beliefs which also shaped their diet practices. Many of the Indian religions advocated the view that animals are not meant to be harmed or killed. This research paper resolves to analyze the British’s attitude towards India on the construct of vegetarianism.

### **The Clash of the Cultures**

The British considered food as a significant bearer of national identity after their Language. Food was considered to be a marker of class and status which in turn provided a key to the hierarchy of races or nations (Gregory, 2007). Vegetables were associated with certain classes. The onions were considered as the staple for the poorest, whose strong and uneducated stomachs required their stimulus (Gregory 2007).

The English loved their beef. They bred cattle for meat rather than for dairy trade. According to New Moral World, an early socialist newspaper in the United Kingdom, Britain was a heavy consumer of meat in Europe. Meat eating was woven intrinsically into their culture that they associated it with being “English” and possessing “manly English virtues”. The English also identified meat with a man being fit and healthy. For a manual laborer being fit is what will

land him a job to provide for his family. This sequentially prompted the consumption of meat to avoid being interpreted unfit for the duty of providing his family. "The Roast Beef of Old England" an English patriotic ballad was written by Henry Fielding for his play *The Grub-Street Opera*, which was first performed in 1731 clearly portrayed the English's notions on meat eating.

Meat always found its place in the center of the table during the traditional British meal. No Christmas dinner or Sunday lunch is complete without it, they say. They prided themselves for their taste in beef. Dr. Hunter of York wrote in 1806 that "When England discards Roast Beef, we may fairly conclude that the nation is about to change its manly and national character" (Wilson, 2012). Any attempts made to criticize the consumption of meat which is considered to be a symbol for national pride were gauged to be unpatriotic. But meat was not all they ate. Another symbol of "Englishness" was the plum pudding - a meatless dessert made using plums. They followed a mixed diet and for this reason the British considered themselves to be modern and civilized.

India, which was under the influence of various rulers, on the other hand, found itself giving up on meat eating due to various reasons -- Hinduism and Buddhism, the arrivals from central Asia and Arabia and the rule of the Mughals and the Islam paved way for the vegetarian diet in India. The religious perspectives that the different rulers brought with them shaped the people's thoughts on meat eating. During the rule of the Mauryas by around 300 BC, or earlier, the beliefs that animal sacrifice will add on to your karma and that eating meat will keep you in the wheel of reincarnation, spread among the Hindus. Although this led to the downfall of animal sacrifice people did not completely give up eating meat. Then the tradition of cow veneration soared among the Indians. The Hindus worshipped Goddess Kamadhenu, the divine bovine-goddess who is described as the mother of all cows in Hinduism. She is generally depicted as a white cow with a female head and breasts, the wings of a bird, and the tail of a peafowl or as a white cow containing various deities within her body. This became one of the reasons for the Hindus to cease the consumption of beef. Cows are also held in high regard by the farmers as they proved to be their best companions in this agricultural country. Thus, the cow came to be revered not only by the Hindus but also by Indians in general. And this made most of the Indians cease the consumption of beef almost completely. With the influence of the Islamic conquests in northern India many people gave up pork as Quran criticizes it. Thus, the practice of vegetarianism in India owed its origin to multiple factors.

### **The Reaction of the British on the Vegetarian Diet of India**

Regan has pointed out how John Ovington in his book *Voyage to Suratt in the Year 1689* has documented his fascination for the Hindu meatless diet. Regan also mentions writers like Dow, Orme, Falconer and Smellie and their views on the Indian "low-diet". Through the

writings of such writers, the fact that the English have enlisted India as an inferior race based on vegetarian diet practices can be observed. Smellie, in his 1791 *Philosophy of Natural History* has documented his views on the East Indians as a "meager, sick, and feeble race" due to their vegetarian diet. The English associated consumption of meat with military superiority. This is evident in Alexander Dow's work *History of Indostan* (1768) in which he claimed, "It is apparent... the immense regions of Hindustan might all be reduced by a handful of regular [British] troops" (*History*, vol. 2, 94).

### **Analyzing the British Attitude**

It was not until the latter half of the eighteenth century the British began to see itself as a ruling power in India. Until then the relationship between India and England was mostly mercantile (Teltscher). Sensing that colonizing India would be advantageous to them, the British began to generate "confidence -boosting image" of the British rule in India. They did so, among other things, by pointing out the vegetarian diet of the Indians as a proof for the people to be uncivilized and that the British have to civilize them (Teltscher). According to Robert Orme, one of the three factors that led India into subjugation is a "sparing use of animal food" and the other two being the "hot climate" and "the horror of spilling blood". Orme in his *"History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan From the Year 1745"* has also said that these factors made India a perfect candidate for foreign occupation.

### **Change in Position at the Dawn of the World War I – Vegetarianism Preferred**

The events of World War I brought about a change of heart among the English. This part of the study is indebted to the work of Jasmine Owens in which Owens has studied the ways in which the Vegetarian Organizations utilized World War I to increase the popularity of vegetarianism in Britain. I have used Owens' observations to analyze how the British went from opposing meatless diet to embracing it.

As the age of enlightenment paved the way for humanist's ideas in Great Britain, meatless diet was beginning to spread in England. The eighteenth-century Vegetarian movement was one of the movements that stemmed from Romanticism. Romantics like Thomas Tryon, Alexander Pope, Joseph Ritson and Percy B. Shelley played a great role in Vegetarianism by promoting meatless diet in their writings. Poet Shelley was an avid vegetarian who saw carnivorousism as the 'root of all evil'. He wrote a pamphlet named "In Vindication of a Natural Diet" in which he talked about vegetarianism and animal rights. Vegetarianism then gained momentum with the founding of Great Britain's Vegetarian Society in 1849. But it was not until the Great War that meatlessness came into wider practice.

Owens notes that before the Great War, the activities and events of the vegetarian society like private cookery classes, all-inclusive summer schools, and fundraising events were accessible only to the middle classes as they were expensive. The Vegetarian Society was also criticized for opposing the consumption of meat especially the Roast Beef which was strongly associated with the traditions of being “English”. Owens then identifies a turning point where “meatlessness” became the marker of patriotism and the notions of Englishness. With British entering the Great War the country needed more men in the war front and so the agricultural workers were conscripted which resulted in fewer animals being fed. With more men entering the war, the government had more men to feed. This resulted in the war rations. The British public was asked to cut down on their meat consumption. In order to get the people to cut down the meat consumption, the government then started associating going meatless with patriotism, the total opposite of what they propagated earlier. Advertisements and campaigns were run by the government Committee, endorsing the consumption of meat alternatives as a matter of national duty. A full-page spread of advertisements under the heading “Eat Less Meat: an earnest appeal” was released by the National War Savings Committee (Owens). Health food companies were set up in Britain which appealed to the housewives to provide their family with a healthy “meatless” meal. This clearly shows the dissimilarities between the actions of the British during World War I and their earlier views on the Indian vegetarian diet.

## Conclusion

We notice changes in attitudes towards meat eating in Britain: From looking down upon Indian notions on vegetarianism for the sake of subjugation to changing the English notion of patriotism, deeming meatlessness with Englishness.

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