

## **Is Food Building the Relationship? Analysis Through Literature**

**Pooja. A., I M.A. English Literature**

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### **Introduction**

It is not that people consume food only as fuel or to taste every flavor, everyone needs food to survive and carry out their daily tasks. In ancient times people obtained food through hunting and gathering. Now everything is changed as people obtain food through cultivation and also from animals. Although some food is obtained from oceans and fresh waters, but the great majority of food for human populations is obtained from traditional land-based agriculture of crops and livestock (October 5,2012). The food we eat affects our feeling. The food we select should make us feel good, only then it will be great and will nourish our body. When you eat too little or eat too much, then your health and quality of life will definitely be damaged, which may even result in negative feelings toward food.

### **Emotional Eating**

Emotional eating is mainly focused now-a-days. If you think that food have no emotions, then it is definitely wrong. We experience a constant and ever-changing flow of emotions the whole day. So, it is definitely applicable for eating too. Dynamic Eating Psychology says that the way we relate to our emotions can have a big impact on what we choose to eat and how our body processes our food.

If you say, I am an emotional eater, it means "I'm doing unwanted eating that's driven by unwanted feelings." So what people do is they self-diagnose and say that they are emotional eaters which means that they are doing this unwanted eating behavior that's driven by these unwanted feelings which they really don't like. If emotional is this then the opposite of emotional eating is assumed as unemotional eating. If you describe them as they will sit there like a machine and eat then also it doesn't take the point.

### **Eating for Love - "Emotional eating is eating for love"**

As humans, we are definitely emotional creatures. So emotional eating gives us a statement that if you're at a party and you're sitting down and you're eating with friends. And

you have your food because of love. Meanwhile you will have nourishment and also warmth. Then it is said to be emotional eating.

Imagine it's your birthday dinner and sure you will be in celebration mode. There emerges emotional eating. If you had a bad day at work all through the day your face will fill your mouth with food only because you are stressed."

When you need to share your emotions to whoever it might be whether she is your beloved or partner, you share your good feeling, bad feeling, embracing moments and many other things all through the day, . We put all this feeling and energy and emotion into our food, thinking it's going to make us feel good (Institute for the Psychology of Eating, Feb 4, 2016).

### **Food in *Half Girlfriend***

*Half Girlfriend* is a romance novel by Indian author Chetan Bhagat. It is about the story of a Bihari boy in quest of winning over the girl he loves.

'Listen, have you eaten anything all day?' I said. He shook his head. I looked around. A bowl of fruit and some chocolates sat next to my bed. He took a piece of dark chocolate when I offered (Bhagat, 2014)

By analyzing the conversation between Chetan Bhagat and Madhav Jha, the research says that when you need to build up your conversation food is essential.

Now Madhav Jha and Riya have a conversation after returning from the movie where they have finished two thirds of their milkshakes without talking to each other (Bhagat 2014). So it is clear that you can accompany a person even without talking but not without food where they are accompanied by Keventures milkshake.

Whenever you have a problem of initiating the conversation then step into the cafeteria and start ordering your food to make you feel better.

Now the situation is in Riya's home where she has invited Madhav for her birthday party and Madhav as usual stay silent. His only conversation was with the waiter who arrived with the tray of drinks

"I didn't know what to take so I waved a no." (Bhagat, 2014)

Even here to break the silence and show you are not a dumb, food is needed.

### **"Food kills the frustration."**

Again, now they are in the drawing room when a waiter arrived with spring rolls, Madhav says, I nodded as I ate the spring rolls. A part of my frustration came from hunger. I felt better after the snack (Bhagat, 2014).

So, food kills the frustration and makes you feel better.

Celebration is incomplete without food. Yes, a few months later it was Madhav's birthday. He and his friends are in the cafeteria. It was the best reunion for him made by that cafeteria, because he met Riya there after six months of break up. If it was not his birthday celebration, he would have not met her in the cafeteria.

Madhav was to meet Samantha and her colleagues from Bill Gates Foundation in a hotel. They entered the hotel coffee shop for their breakfast. The buffet consisted of over twenty dishes. It was time, so they have to leave the hotel. But Madhav wondered he would have eaten some more. Again, he says, "If we had started breakfast a few minutes later, I would still be eating and wouldn't have noticed her" (Bhagat, 2014).

When Madhav and Riya were at Maurya Complex in Patna, the building had no character, but the street food stalls of Patna made their day. Madhav took her to a stall where little chokas were made. When Riya took a bite expressing 'This is unbelievable'. Her expression made the stall-owner's chest swell with pride. So his food preparation made him pride that makes them more to talk about little chokas and there emerges a relationship. Even if you meet him somewhere else in your lifetime you will definitely remember him that you have met him in the food stall.

Everyone might have come across certain times when you thought food is only essential it was also a case with Steve Jobs who had founded Apple Computers. When we think of Steve Jobs, we only look him as a popular richest person. But that richest person has also suffered for food.

Riya showed Madhav the YouTube video Steve Jobs's "Stay Hungry Stay Foolish". He had mentioned in that he returned Coke bottles for five-cent deposits to buy food with, and he would walk seven miles across town every Sunday night to get one good meal a week at the Hare Krishna temple (Bhagat 2014).

He had also told that simple food made him happy. No matter how rich you grow your first priority will be to food. This shows one's importance to food.

When Riya had the meal in Madhav's home she exclaimed it was the best meal she ever had. So, food here brings the happiness and she wants to have those foods again in her lifetime. It is only because of their relationship she had the best food in his home.

### **Conclusion**

The paper identifies, "More sharing gives you more love". In this scenario, this paper brought out the idea of connection between food and relationship. This idea has been researched and proved through several events in the novel 'Half Girlfriend' by Chetan Bhagat and also how food played a role in building the relationship between Riya and Madhav, and also has brought out the values and needs for food.

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**Pooja. A., I M.A. English Literature**  
**Bharathiar University**  
**Coimbatore**  
[poojasmhs@gmail.com](mailto:poojasmhs@gmail.com)

## **Good Things Come in Small Packages with Reference to the Novel *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl**

**Dr. B.S. Arun, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Assistant Professor**

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The premise of food has recently begun to rule. The striking headlines of newly published novels create a center of our attention from behind the bookshop windows. Within its literature, each tradition portrays its characteristic cookery, as well as its atypical conventional rules and habits in the act of eating. Food offers a means of powerful descriptions. The purpose of this paper is to discover the theme of food in Roald Dahl's novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Its theme in juvenile literature goes hand in hand also with reassurance and coziness. The chocolate factory is the physical personification of the difference between poverty and wealth. Charlie's poverty-stricken home stands in the shadow of the behemoth chocolate factory, which is filled with innumerable riches. The chocolate factory also represents the idea that things cannot be fairly judged from an outside standpoint. It seems enormous from the outside, but its true glories lie below ground, where they cannot be seen without a closer look.

Most good stories start with a fundamental list of ingredients: the initial situation, conflict, impediment, climax, suspense, completion, and conclusion. Great writers sometimes shake up the recipe and add some spice.

*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, children's book by Roald Dahl, first published in 1964. It was perhaps the most well-liked of his mocking, darkly comic novels written for young people and tells the story of a destitute young boy who wins a golden ticket to tour the mystifying and magical chocolate factory of Willy Wonka.

Charlie Bucket lives on the outskirts of town with his poverty-stricken family with his parents and all four grandparents. Each day on his way to school, Charlie passes the best and biggest chocolate factory in the world, run by the secretive Willy Wonka. When Charlie's father loses his job, things go from bad to worse. Grandpa Joe tells Charlie that in the past, competitor stole Wonka's candy-making top secret and the factory shut down. Later, the factory recommences production, but no one was ever seen entering or leaving. One day, Wonka makes known that he has hidden golden tickets in five Wonka chocolate bars, with the prize of a tour of the factory and a lifetime supply of Wonka products for each child who finds a ticket. Wonka-

mania surrounds the globe and one by one four of the tickets are found. Charlie finds money sticking out of a snow bank and buys himself two Wonka chocolate bars; the second encloses the last golden ticket.

The five children are greeted outside the factory by the eccentric clairvoyant Willy Wonka. The inside of the chocolate factory is magical and the workers are exposed to be the tiny cacao-loving Oompa-Loompas, rescued from Loompaland by Wonka. As the tour advances four of the children, too self-centered to follow the rules, suffer bizarre and often painful penalty. In the Chocolate Room, the gluttonous Augustus Gloop falls into the river of chocolate and is sucked into a glass pipe carrying the liquid chocolate to be made into falsify. The gum-obsessed Violet Beauregarde takes a piece of experimental chewing gum, which turns her into a blueberry. The tremendously spoiled Veruca Salt tries to seize a trained squirrel to have for herself, but the squirrels identify her as a bad nut and toss her down a garbage chute. Mike Teavee inserts himself into an experiment on sending candy bars through television and is get smaller to pocket size. The Oompa-Loompas regularly break into moralizing songs to comment on the children's mischief. At last, Wonka tells Charlie that, because of his respectful deeds, he is being given the chocolate factory.

Roald Dahl uses a book about chocolate, the final profligacy, to relay a message about the dangers of greed. All four of the naughty children are greedy in some way; Augustus is a glutton; Veruca is a spoiled brat; Violet is greedy for gum, and Mike is greedy for television. This novel reveals how greed can consume and ultimately destroy a person, particularly children, since each child is changed forever as a result of his or her greed.

The idea of karma reverberates heavily within Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. The children that do bad things have bad things happen to them. On the flip side, Charlie, who is a very good boy, has great things happen to him. He is kind and courageous and owns up to his errors. At the end of the book, Wonka leave Charlie his factory. Each of the other children receives a sentence that has something to do with their vice. Augustus Gloop, the awful glutton, gets stuck in a pipe after falling into a chocolate river. Violet Beauregard, the gum-chewer, gets turned into a human blueberry after eating an new piece of bubble gum. Veruca Salt, the spoiled unpleasant child, gets sent down a garbage chute after she doesn't get what she wants. Finally, Mike Teavee, obsessed with electronics, is disappearing when he tries to teleport through a TV. These painful punishments are what the bad people have earned. Charlie, being the only good and kind child, gets the only reward. The other good people, namely Charlie's family, all receive the remuneration of a place to live and unlimited food and care. Their insistence in their poor stage gave them hope, which led to them being heavily rewarded.

The story links the children's parents as responsible for much of their bad behavior. Most of the Oompa-Loompa songs, which are meant to teach main lessons, speak about the parents' role in corrupting these children, whether by indulging them, like Mr. and Mrs. Gloop and Mr. and Mrs. Salt, or simply turning the other cheek and not putting a stop to their bad habits, like Mr. and Mrs. Beauregarde and Mr. and Mrs. Teavee. This novel makes it clear how much authority parents have over the way their children turn out, and it serves as a reproving tale to parents to make sure they raise children with sound values.

An important theme in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is how outward show can be to be regarded with suspicion. Many characters in the story are not what they seem. For instance, Dahl chooses to create most of the good things in this piece small. People pity Charlie for his small size and skin-and-bone ill-health, unaware of the goodness that he carries in his heart. Additionally, Wonka is also quite small, and the first explanation focuses partly on this. The Oompa Loompas are also a good thing in a small package. They are described as being the size of pygmies, yet they have the most significant jobs in the factory and they try to instill principles into the reader. The factory itself is small on the outside yet extends subterranean within the earth and contains numerous incredible things. These things encourage the reader to question reality and always look further than the surface.

Wonka's formation completely defy nature, hot ice cream, chocolate bars sent by television, chewing gum meals. Everything he creates is out of this world and further proof that nothing is truly impossible if you can think it up. Even more, Charlie himself proves that nothing is unfeasible with a dream:

he opened merely four chocolate bars during the entire Golden Ticket contest and managed to find one, while some children opened hundreds per day and did not. No one would expect a small, impoverished boy like Charlie to be the next heir of the Wonka factory, and yet he has achieved it—this is an inspirational message to readers that even the seemingly impossible is within reach. (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* 147)

The difference between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' runs throughout the text of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Charlie is excruciatingly poor and this causes us to heavily commiserate with him. It also makes the climactic scene, where he take delivery of ownership of the factory, that much sweeter. All of the other kids at the factory are very well off and Veruca is rich. Coming with this, they all have dreadful vices. Veruca is spoiled, Augustus is voracious, Violet can't stop chewing gum and Mike is obsessed with electronics. Money sets the background, as money in the wrong hands can be dangerous. With their money, the kids became bad. With his money, Wonka created a authentic fairyland. Charlie, without money, isn't

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

**Dr. B.S. Arun, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Assistant Professor**

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tempted and stays pure of heart. Mr. Salt is the embodiment of the evils of money, as he throws his money around and buys Veruca a Golden Ticket. Their misdeeds catch up with them, as they are sent down a trash chute. On the other hand, Charlie handles his poverty quite well. He doesn't desire unimaginable riches; he only wants enough to get by and to have the occasional chocolate bar. Of course, Charlie ends up magnificently wealthy and he can provide for his entire extended family. Veruca is punished for her inherited wealth, while Charlie must earn his.

One of the most notable things about Charlie and the rest of the Bucket family is that despite that bad hand that life has dealt them, they are all the time kind to each other and others, showing kindness in the way they care for one another during their hard times. The entire family tries to share their food with Charlie and Charlie in return tries to share his food with them. They are grateful for what they have, even if it is not a lot. Growing up in a home that places these important values above all else has twisted Charlie into the vertical child that he is and distances him from the unkind, showing no gratitude on children who are get rid of from the contest.

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Dr. B.S. ARUN, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor, Department of English  
Erode Arts and Science College (Autonomous)  
Erode – 638009  
[arunsadasivan83@gmail.com](mailto:arunsadasivan83@gmail.com)

## **Food for Thought, Culture and Identity: A Study of Kiran Desai's**

### *The Inheritance of Loss*

**Dr. Prathibha Anne Baby, Lecturer**

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A society's customs, arts, music and even their food habits are certain means of expressing one's culture and identity. But usually, scholars give emphasis to language or religion and overlook the importance of food and cuisine. But food is a powerful tool that can be used to express one's social identity and culture. It plays a major role in defining a person's attitude, lifestyle and character.

A cultural group might consider its every day food as ordinary and will not associate it with one's culture. But for people outside that culture, they could easily identify this and connects it with individual culture. For instance, Indian families usually stick on to their traditional food habits and immigrants from India sometimes find it difficult to adjust with the western food culture and most of them struggle and nostalgically yearn for their traditional food.

With the phenomenon of globalisation, world has shrunk into a global village and customs and food habits are not static and is in a phase of transformation where continental and Chinese food are easily available even in a small town in India. So globalisation has created a global food system which further progresses the distribution facilities and at the same time it advances the rate at which the foods change its regional contexts.

Food connects people with their traditions and they can express themselves and their identity through food. All over the world, food has deep underlying connotation which links it with warmth, sharing and togetherness. It can always be considered as a symbol of warmth as it always allows people to connect and make intimate kinship with others.

As Robin Fox says,

Food is almost always shared: people eat together: meal times are events when the whole family or settlement or village comes together. Food is an occasion for sharing... for the expression of altruism". (I)

The present study analyses how food act as a binding force among the various characters in the novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai. It also analyses how the novelist uses food as a medium for expressing the attitudes, identity and lifestyles of the different characters. Though the novel analyses a number of serious themes, a close analysis reveals how the writer prudently uses

food as a tool in exhibiting the changing cultural dimension of the locality. This paper also analyses how globalisation and immigration influences even the food habits of individuals.

Kiran Desai's Booker Prize winning novel *The Inheritance of Loss* celebrates so many serious themes like multiculturalism, post colonialism, impact of globalisation and immigrants' bitter experiences. But this paper attempts to discuss how food acts as a tool which symbolically represents the changing identity and culture of the various characters. Food is closely related to Indian culture and preparing the various traditional dishes using so many spices and ingredients is an art in itself. Here, in this novel, the novelist represents food as a symbol which reflects the isolation and psychological colonisation of the different characters.

The novel mainly tells the story of Jemubhai Papatlal Patel, a retired judge in Kalimpong and his relationship with his granddaughter Sai. In a parallel story, the novel sketches the life of Biju, the son of the judge's cook who is an illegal immigrant in New York. Sai falls in love with her mathematics tutor, Gyan who is a descendant of a Nepali Gurkha family.

The novel opens itself by describing the "cavernous kitchen" (1) where the cook prepares tea for the Judge and his granddaughter Sai. The three of them communicates rarely among themselves but they at least fumble a few words over their food. Mostly it will be an accusation by the judge of the inefficacy of the cook and the lamenting of the cook in return. Sai always tries to lighten the situation or sit as a mute witness to everything.

From the beginning, one can understand the peculiar character of the judge, for his preference for western lifestyle. He rudely scolds the cook for not serving the tea in the appropriate western way and without "cakes or scones, macarons or cheese straws". (3) The novelist gives an idea of the lifestyles of both the judge and Sai through their food habits. The readers become aware that Sai has no idea of Indian cooking when she helped the cook in preparing tea for some hooligans who attacked their house and demanded tea and refreshments. "She only knew the English way" (6).

When Sai reached Cho Oyu for the first time, the cook prepared a many course dinner to welcome her. He even,

"modelled the mashed potatoes into a motor car, recollecting a long- forgotten skill from another age...The car sat in the middle of the table, along with paddle-shaped mutton cutlets, water- logged green beans, and a head of cauliflower under cheese sauce that looked like shrouded brain. All the dishes were spinning steam furiously, and warm, food- scented clouds condensed on Sai's face" (32)

But the warmth of the food got dissipated in the presence of the judge. He became angry and shouted at the cook for not bringing the soup on time. So from the very beginning, the character of the judge is revealed through the symbol of food and it also reflects the extent to which they got westernised.

Jemubhai Patel is a retired judge, living a secluded life in Kalimpong. He was born and brought up in a poor family in Piphit, an obscure village in Gujarat. The time he spends in England for higher studies is one of extreme loneliness and humiliation. Without any company, he gradually becomes an alien even to himself. Colonisation made Jemubhai consider himself as a lower grade citizen in England. As a result of cultural colonialism, his language, colour, religion, food habits and customs become irrelevant and inferior compared to that of the white masters. As Ngugi Wa Thiong’O has observed in his introduction to *Decolonising the Mind*, “The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity and ultimately in themselves” (4). It was out of humiliation that he tossed the banana and the food packet that his mother had prepared for him on to the ocean when he was travelling to England for the first time. Thus, Jemubhai consciously shuts all his connections with his own people and culture and prefers the western culture and habits. The sense of insecurity and lack of self- belief that Jemubhai feels in the new cultural context is precisely described in the text.

He reiterated into a solitude that grew in weight day by day. The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man, and it crushed him into a shadow. With no family or friends in England, he grew stranger to himself than to those around him. He found his own skin odd-coloured, his own accent peculiar. He forgot how to laugh... He began to wash obsessively, concerned he would be accused of smelling, and each morning scrubbed off the thick milky scent of sleep, the barnyard smell that wreathed him when he woke and impregnated the fabric of his pyjamas. To the end of his life, he would never be seen without socks and shoes and would prefer shadow to light, faded days to sunny, for he was suspicious that sunlight might reveal him, in his hideousness all too clearly (39).

Thus, the judge is isolated from everything around him. His relationship with family, friends and relatives gets ruined because of his adopted culture. His food habits, mannerisms and lifestyle are entirely westernized and even his relationship with his granddaughter appears strange. Apart from their food habits, Sai and her grandfather are also virtually unable to speak the native language of Kalimpong and read and study almost entirely in English. This results not only in the fracturing of the natural culture, but also of the fracturing of their minds and identities. They are constantly torn between the East and the West. Sai speaks English as her first language. Her convent education has transformed her completely. Their food habits, lifestyle and attitude are clearly marked through these words.

Cake was better than laddoos, fork, spoon, knife better than hands, sipping the blood of Christ and consuming a wafer of his body was more civilized than garlanding a phallic symbol with marigolds. English was better than Hindi (30).

Apart from the cook and Sai, the only other person who tries to have a connection with the judge in Cho Oyu is Gyan, Sai's mathematics tutor. But the judge considers his presence at the dinner table as an "insolence" (109) and sneered at him. Gyan reminds him of his own naïve character when he was a student in England. Even though Sai and Gyan love each other, their different life styles keep them apart. Both of them are embarrassed to eat together, "he, unsettled by her finickiness and her curbed enjoyment, and she, revolted by his energy and his fingers working the dal, his slurps and smacks" (176).

The cook's son Biju has a different story to tell. Biju is representative of the thousands of illegal immigrants in the U.S who cannot lead an honourable life there and are unable to go back to their native land. The character Biju's essential nature is one of melancholy and he nostalgically dreams of his father's house, his grandmother and the various sounds and smells of his village. He is staying in New York but cannot identify himself with the food, beliefs, lifestyle and culture of the people there. Out of self-pity, he wept sadly "looking at a dead insect in the sack of basmati that had come all the way from Dehra Dun..." (191). Biju remains a traditional Indian all throughout and he cannot think of eating or serving beef even if there are Indians who have it. The restaurant in which he works provides only one menu of steak, salad and fries. Biju left his job there and searched for a restaurant that does not serve beef. His attitude is perfectly etched in these words. "Job no job. One should not give up one's religion, the principles of one's parents before them. No, no matter what" (136).

Post- colonialism becomes another name for globalisation when it comes to culture, language and food habits. Desai's novel is full of instances of the western culture infiltrating into the third world. And she partially expresses it through most of the character's food habits. The judge's neighbours Lola, Noni, Uncle Potty and father Booty are all examples for this. Lola and Noni's garden at Mon Ami has only western vegetables like broccoli which they procured from England. Later, we meet Lola and Noni, "sipping Sikkimese brandy, BBC news sputtering on the radio, falling over them in sparky explosions" (44). Both colonialism and globalisation attempt to impose an unchanging ideology of progress, development and civilization. Here, most of the characters are aping the west or considers the western way of life superior to their own culture and life style.

Kiran Desai uses language quite artistically and at times she even presents it as if it is a fine delicacy from kitchen. There are so many instances of inserting rich mouth-watering food items to express certain ideas. She inserted them in such a way that they appear to be integral to its structure. Phrases and words like "cosy scoop of minced mutton in charming dimpled wrapping... (257), refrigerated voice (257), hut coming up like a "mushroom" (240), "sand sieved fine as semolina" (78) comes up at the right time.

Kiran Desai realistically portrayed the life on two different continents that demonstrate a fathomless interest for human condition. It makes clear that an all- embracing, humanistic vision of the world is a mirage, but it also suggests an exploration of East in relation to West in a positive

light. As Edward Said said, “Nativism is not the only alternative. There is the possibility of a more generous and pluralistic vision of the World.” (52).

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Dr. Prathibha Anne Baby

Lecturer

K G College, Pampady, Kerala

Chiratteparambil

Amayannoor P O

Kottayam, Kerala 686019

[prathibhababy5204@gmail.com](mailto:prathibhababy5204@gmail.com)

## **Desserts as Stress Reliever in Marian Keyes's *Watermelon***

**Dr. K. Sindhu, Assistant Professor and A. T. Princy, Ph.D. Scholar**

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The novel *Watermelon* belongs to chick lit genre. This genre mostly concentrates on the dark side of the women. The unspoken part of the female emotions is just expressed in a wild way. The protagonist are free from male dominance, their response towards men are something bold and tricky. Women take care of their body shape and show interest in dressing. The chick lit genre offers a detailed analysis of examining constructions of sexuality, beauty, independence, work, and singleness.

The chick lit articulates a distinctively post-feminist sensibility characterised by an emphasis on neo-liberal feminine subjectivities and self-surveillance and monitoring; the notion of the (sexual) body as the key source of identity for women; discourses of boldness, entitlement, and choice (usually articulated to normative femininity and/or consumerism); and a belief in the emotional separateness of men's and women's world.

From the above description about the chick literature in common it explains broadly that the women who love their body show least interest in food and feasting. This is because of the changing conception of the relation between body weight and attractiveness. "An underlying cause of many eating disorders in western women is their belief that being slender is beautiful. And certainly, our modern culture does celebrate thinness" (Gleitman et al. 100). The reality is that the bond towards food always exists, because chick lit gives importance to many partying scenes which picturize the consummation of Alcohol as the main event in this genre. The craze for food is universal.

Food is one of the fundamental needs of a human being. The taste and aroma may vary but the love for food will never vanish from the world. As long as the human beings exist in this world the craving for food will increase day by day. In every celebration, even during the sad time, food gives some sort of enthusiasm to tune the mood. The taste one senses will also have some possessions on their emotions. For example, if one is in a mood for celebration, the sweets will dominate and help you cherish the mood, if one suffers from depression or is stressed then alcohol leads to break away from reality.

The tang of Alcohol is vinegary, astringent and it imitates the mindset of the person in ignorance. When the sour and bitterness increase in a person's life their subsistence will be felt hollow. The strong stink and the taste of the alcohol will make one person to ignore the reality and delight in dream. The depressed person drowns himself by constant consumption of alcohol. Alcohol stands as a cure to drive away the bareness. To ignore and avoid the throbbing alcohol is used. Everyone cannot get the drugs or sleeping pills from the pharmacist so alcohol acts as a sedative for many depressed people.

When someone is ignored in every aspect of life, they will start ignoring the reality. The alcohol which they consume is a pretext, but it helps them to escape from the emotional imbalance. Food takes the lead in human emotions. The taste of food will bring a nature of feel which soothes the emotional imbalance of a person.

Food cannot only bring the joy but also accompany the lonely person. In the novel *Watermelon* the protagonist Claire who was happily married to James was betrayed after giving birth to a baby girl. She could not accept the truth that she was betrayed by her husband who was her one and only lover for the past seven years.

There was no clash between the couple for a long time, but the sudden break up turns to be a great shock for her. After she finds out the reason was that her husband maintained an affair with another woman, she felt flabbergasted. When she found out that all her friends and neighbors know about the affair of James, she could not digest it.

How do you know? I asked her, pouncing on her for the information.  
Michael told me. Aisling told him. George told her.  
(Michael was Judy's boyfriend. Aisling worked with him. George was Aisling's husband. George worked with James.). So, everyone knows, I said quietly. There was a pause. Judy looked as if she would like to die. (Keyes 19)

After knowing that everyone around her knew the affair of James she felt that she was ignored by everyone, because no one informed her that James was betraying. This sense of ignorance wounded her a lot which stops her urging emotion for a few minutes with the shock. She was blinded by the perfection of James and she was not aware about the betrayal.

Claire moved back to her parent's house which was in Dublin. When she reached the airport, it was raining in the city. The sorrow which she carries along with the season is too heavy for her heart. The betrayal of her husband and the ignorance from her friends made her lonely. Claire did her best to forget the past and to escape from the truth. She drowns herself in

alcohol. She became so addicted that she always needed the company of her drinks, if she found none, she would ransack her house.

Claire was the first girl in the Walsh family, she had four younger sisters, the second and third sisters were away from the home, and the fourth and fifth sisters were in her home. Anna who was the fourth sister was the only source for her alcohol. When Claire was at home, she drank all the bottles left in their house. And when she woke up in the middle of the night, she would go to Anna's bed and.

I dragged myself over to her room and quietly opened the door. The fumes hit me when I had the door opened about an inch... Anna sorry to disturb you like this but have you anything I could drink? I asked her. She just stared at me. Why are You here? She asked in a little frightened voice. Because I'm looking for a bloody drink' I said exasperatedly. (Keyes 67,68)

This shows how badly she needs the drinks. She cannot even stay a night without consuming it. The weaker she behaves the stronger she needs the alcohol to accompany her. She believes that the alcohol will help her to overlook the catastrophe of her life. The alcohol destroys her calm nature and turns her to be a vigorous character. The stronger she consumed the worse she behaved. Her rage and the abhorrence burst out to her parents and siblings that make an uncomfortable situation for her family members.

She gave away her strength to mourn for her misery. She thought to herself that she was just moaning for her betrayal. But she failed to notice that she was really becoming a troublesome person for her family. When she finally happened to eavesdrops, a conversation between her mother and her siblings, she realized her fault. Then she throwbacks her memory and realized how she behaves arrogantly to her family. Then she convinces herself to start a new life for her baby girl. She tries to create some good terms with her family, so she decides to make dinner for the family.

No, no I protested laughing. I mean I'm going to actually cook a real dinner for you all. As in, you know, go to the supermarket and buy fresh ingredients and make something from scratch. Oh really, said my mother and a faraway look came into her eyes. It's a long time since a real dinner was cooked in that kitchen. (Keyes 119)

The dinner made by her not only refreshed her from the suppressing past but also brings some kind of a new beginning for her life. After cooking the dinner for the whole family there

was an uninvited guest appears there with her little sister. Adam introduced himself as a classmate of Helen, the youngest sister of Claire. But he looks older in age. He complimented the dishes cooked by Claire and carries little Kate like a tender father. And that was a turning point in Claire's life. Food not only brings happiness but also unites people at the right time.

The dinner made by Claire was really a great feast for her because she happens to meet her stable life partner. Their love not only starts there but also continues throughout their life. Adam stays strong by the side of Claire in all her situations and helps her to bring up her child in a good and caring way. In this novel the food not only shares the joy but also brings a lot of hope towards the life. A changeover from the suffering to the happiness was carried out with the help of food.

So, it is true that food will calm down a person and will help them to take a clear decision. An empty stomach will go crazy and do things upside down. The restless mind is also a side effect of hunger. When the tummy fills with food the mind will open up and begins to listen and observe the surroundings. There is a saying in Tamil "Vaiyirara undu manathara vazhthuvom" which means when the tummy is filled the heart also filled with peace and pleasure so that they will praise the people who made a good food heartily. The food will bring peace and happiness. So, happiness means to be shared through food.

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Dr. K. Sindhu  
Assistant Professor  
Periyar University  
[Ksr.nina10@gmail.com](mailto:Ksr.nina10@gmail.com)

A. T. Princy  
Ph.D. Scholar  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
Salem-11 [princyalackal@gmail.com](mailto:princyalackal@gmail.com)

**Food and Culture:**  
**Textual Analysis on the Representation of Food and Drink in**  
**African Literature**

**Raga Sownthariya. K., II M.A. English**

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**Introduction**

The pleasure of reading about what others eat and drink is similar to that of being fed. Thus, from ancient Greeks to emerging works, food and drink have supplied with sizzle and spice to the printed texts. One among such work is *Purple Hibiscus* by the Nigerian writer Adichie. The work contains different kinds of Nigerian contains that has in it lot of herbs, spices, meat, rice and beans.

**Implications of Food**

Eating never stops in *Purple Hibiscus* and almost every page has some interesting dishes like plates of Jollof Rice, Utazi curry, Fufu, Egusi soup, Moi moi and Palm wine to name a few.

Food such as Egusi soup and Utazi Curry appears in the novel when Kambili, the 15-year-old narrator, imagines what the usual lunch in her family is like. The mention of Cashew wine takes us to the factory that Kambili's father owns and his act of presenting each new food or drink that is manufactured to be tested by the family. This wine is also an implication of domestic abuse and we see that Kambili gulps it down just because she couldn't refuse his father and becomes sick of it later.

Among all Jollof rice is a constant food that exists throughout the novel. Jollof is usually eaten at birthdays, burials and many other occasions coexisting in all spaces and time. The first appearance of it is made when Beatrice is seen serving Jollof rice to the nuns at her home and thus it acts as a symbol of thoughtfulness and care. It is neither a meal of elite or poor and is used as a welcome meal despite poverty. Only the accompaniment to the rice varies according to the social status and it is evident through the contrast both in Kambili's house and in Auntie Ifeoma's house, where there is moi-moi and fist size chunks of fish in the former and miserly pieces of meat in the latter.

The last mention of Jollof rice is at the closing pages where Mama takes it to the prison to feed Jaja as a reminder of home and family, who was imprisoned for taking charge of killing Papa Eugene.

“She is setting out a cylindrical food flask full of Jollof rice and chicken. She places a pretty chins plate down as if she were setting a fancy table”

The tension between the members of family is seen when they dine together. Kambili’s father constantly warns his children not to touch any food that is offered to them on their visit to Papa –Nnukwu, their grandfather, who is considered a heathen by Papa Eugene. He also gets extremely angry when he comes to know that his children is sitting along with Papa-Nnukwu in Auntie Ifeoma’s house and then brings them back to Enugu.

### **Decline of Nigerian Culture**

There is an increasing influence of western culture seen in Papa Eugene and his behaviour where he constantly trains his children to speak in English and even while dining he insists on the western mode of table manners. In Papa Nnukwu’s house it was a custom to eat sitting over the raffia mat on the floor but in Eugene’s house they usually sat on the table and ate using forks and knives provided with a napkin.

“The sounds of forks meeting plates, of serving plates, of serving spoons meeting platters, filled the dining room, Sisi had drawn the curtains and turned the chandelier on, even though it was afternoon”

### **Apples in *The Smell Of Apples***

*The Smell of Apples* is a novel by Mark Behr that was published in 1995. The mere title of the books has in it the element of food and throughout the work it serves as an anecdote and is associated with white supremacy, European civilisation that was opposed by natives.

““They stink. Smell this”, and he holds the apple to my nose. I smell the apple in his hand. It smells sour.”

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Raga Sownthariya. K., II MA English  
Department of English and Foreign Languages  
Bharathiar University  
Coimbatore  
Tamil Nadu  
[kragasowntharya@gmail.com](mailto:kragasowntharya@gmail.com)

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**Food and Culture: Textual Analysis on the Representation of Food and Drink in African Literature 185**

**Food in Children's Literature:**  
**An Analysis of Food and Culture in Roald Dahl's Fiction**  
**Ms. Rajalakshmi M., Ph.D. Research Scholar**

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Ideologically, Food is one essential element for all living beings that provides nourishment to the body and allows specific function to work at the best. Psychologically, good food is good mood; many psychoanalytic theories suggest that eating habits play a fundamental role in creating self-identity and in defining a certain social role as in a family or a social class. Food comes in variety, depending on the nature of the one consuming it. Food plays a vital role in maintaining proper health, relationships, culture and tradition. It helps us to understand the essential meaning of home. For most humans food is a direct influence of one's culture, religious practices and personal preference. In literature the theme of food is connected with the state of one's soul as a part of their individuality. It is said that human kind begin with the mythological story of Adam and Eve, since then the concept of food has its own specifications in Literature. In The Garden of Eden after Eve and Adam consume the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge, it gave them the ability to conjure negative and destructive concepts like shame and evil. Here the food (fruit) plays the role of human temptations and ever the fall of man.

Food acts as a lens to view the ritualized ceremonies in society. When sharing a meal together, people observe the certain rites and these religious customs are witnessed from the beginning of human history because these food customs bring warmth to the domestic hearth. Habits of eating and its practices help the better understanding of human society. Though eating is inevitable and delightful, food also refers to society's structure and world vision. The act of food preparing and sharing help to determine the social organization. Therefore, it helps a better identification within culture and it is the ingredient that unites people together.

The theme of food takes a key place in many literary works. In fiction the theme of food is no longer bound by any kinds of social limits, so most of the writers focus their work on food. It also offers a means of powerful imagery. In any literature food imagery serves as a source of deep- rooted connections that lead into the depths of individual and cultural memory. Food is also fundamental to the imagination. The very word 'imagination' leads us to our childhood days. It is because, the deepest emotional outlet we have of imagination is what we experienced

in our childhood. Like the food studies are becoming significant in the field of general literature, it is becoming as significant in the field of children's literature too. Every child has their own experiences of food from birth onwards, thus it is hardly surprising that food is a constantly recurring dominant element in literature written for children. Apart from reflecting social order and civilization, food is always representative of the limitations enforced upon a child's world, uniting well with the idea of excess as a key concept of childhood fantasy.

Food is not just a food, it is a cultural identity. In children's literature food is portrayed as the cultural characteristics related to the characters and their peculiar traditional rules. The family at table is a strong cultural signifier representing stability and prosperity and the fact that those in power have used this image to reassure the nation only emphasizes its influence. From the ancient folktales and fairy tales to the modern children's stories food plays a specific role. The first exposure children experience to the food and cultural codes of society is contained in the tradition of fairy stories. This can be seen in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Enid Blyton's stories or in Roald Dahl's works. Children's literature is flavored with food and social occasions related to it. In Roald Dahl's work *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, where chocolate and sweets play the main part. And in *James and the Giant Peach* where the magnanimous juicy peach stands as an escapism for James from his wicked aunts.

Food is a major part of Roald Dahl's work, not only in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1961) and in *James and the Giant Peach* (1964), but also in *Matilda* (1988), *The BFG* (1982), *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (1970), and many more. Dahl's daughter Lucy Dahl in one of her interviews said that Food was a huge part of their upbringing. And as it turns out, Dahl's creative and sometimes twisted approach to food wasn't confined to his books. Dahl had wake the kids up in the middle of the night and pile them into the car – which was full of hot chocolate and cookies – and drive them up the road in the English countryside where they lived. He kept his kids entertained during normal eating hours, too. He often used mealtime to test out new characters from stories he was working on. Just as Roald Dahl used stories to bring food to life at home, he used food to bring characters to life in his books.

Food culture evoke a plenty of associations in different writers' minds, but for Roald Dahl its only magic and surprises. His food creations include everlasting gobstopper, chocolate fountain, eatable marshmallow pillows, fizzy lifting drinks, hot ice cream, invisible chocolate for class room, three course meal gum, rainbow drops, sugar coated pencils etc. in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. In his *James and the Giant Peach* Dahl created a huge juicy peach with James a 10 year old along with some weird insects in it. These characters will have the giant peach as their food for survival.

Dahl wrote his chocolate factory during the emergence of industries in Britain, so the influence of the industrial culture can be seen in his *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. This book give the enduring complexities of many food issues in Britain from the 1960s onwards, Dahl attempts to restore a number of competing ideas about junk food, and more specifically sweets, inadvertently revealing his somewhat inconsistent views about the confectionery industry in the process. Dahl romanticizes sweets and associates sweets-eating with an idealized depiction of childhood. His nostalgic childhood days made him to give the pleasure of eating chocolate in his *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, where the young readers can always associate their life with characters. The mouth-watering description of candies, ice-creams, gums and chocolates make the readers to lose themselves in the candy world. Through this fiction Roald Dahl has instruct the children not to be greedy, adamant, head- strong and selfish. The story is about a little boy Charlie Bucket, hardly of 10 years old, who stay in a small wooden house with his parents and four grandparents. Charlie won the Golden ticket to Willy Wonka’s Chocolate factory (inspired by Cadbury) along with the other four winners from rich family background. The child protagonist Charlie Bucket stands as an epitome of moral values. His behavior and manners have been attracted by Willy Wonka and Wonka gave his chocolate factory to Charlie in the concluding chapter.

Throughout the novel the reader feels like they are actually into the factory. Each chapter has it own surprises and shocks that makes the readers delight. The other child characters are Augustus Gloop – the greedy boy, Veruca Salt – the spoiled child, Violet Beauregarde – who chews gum all day and Mike Teavee – who always watch television. These characters of Dahl tells the readers how the culture of the sophisticated Britain during that time. The history of literature however shows that the topic of food appearing in contemporary literature cannot be view as a new trend. Themes related to food were common even before Dahl’s period. Dining with family often render the family with reflection and expression of human behavior, together with its desires and appetites. Not only food has always been an essential ritual in family life and focus on the socialization of the family members, but also it provides a significant psychological support. In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Charlie with his parents, his two grandfathers and his two grandmothers have their supper together.

“There wasn’t even enough money to buy proper food for them all. The only meal they could afford were bread and margarine for breakfast, boiled potatoes and cabbage for lunch and cabbage soup for supper”

- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. P– 5

Though everyday they have cabbage soup for their supper, they never complaint but enjoyed to their fullest by talking about their days work. Eating together at the table has always

played a vital role in the socialization of children. Children should learn discipline, respect and observing the rules that can be experimented in the society. This part of Charlie's life tells how the families of below poverty line survive with what they have. In spite of being poor Charlie has been brought up with good manners unlike the other child characters in fiction.

Roald Dahl's another fiction *James and the Giant Peach* centers on a young orphan boy of 10 years old, who enters a gigantic magical peach.

"The tunnel was damp and murky, and all around him there was curious bittersweet of fresh peach. The floor was soggy under his knees, the walls were wet and sticky and peach juice was dripping from the ceiling. James opened his mouth and caught some of it on his tongue. It tasted delicious."

- *James and the Giant Peach*. P- 31

This giant peach serves as an escape world for James Henry Trotter from his two selfish and lazy and cruel aunts. As James enters the magical peach, he encountered with various smaller creatures but extremely gigantic in size and shape. The creatures whom James meets in the peach are, an enormous spider, an old green grasshopper, a giant ladybird, centipede and an earthworm. The adventurous journey of James and his inmates begins from here and their final destination is the New York City. The journey filled with many adventures such as escaping from shark, from cloud-men, minor accidents etc. Dining together is an essential part of the basic tradition of eating together, the fundamental bonding of custom. These habits of sharing food bring people together in appreciation and companionship. In this fiction James with his companions share what they have and enjoy the ride in the giant peach.

It is commonly considered that the dining rituals as the suitable use of food to display belongingness to a certain social group. Concerning a social group some different manners are involved and the food could be one of the means of defining social status and social interaction. During family get together, festivals, celebrations it is essential to eat together because people associate and consolidate their common identity that too when they gather to eat a meal together. This concept is witnessed in Bible when Jesus Christ offered his Last Supper to his disciples. The theme of food is traced back to Bible when the food is embodied by spiritual appetite where the bread and wine stands for Christ's body and blood.

This research paper has been written with the intention to analyze the significance of theme of food and culture in children's literature with reference to the select works of the centenarian children's writer Roald Dahl. Food can serve as a replacement to equate our psychical, psychological, imperfections and social desires. From infant to the adulthood mankind tend to taste the food along with their culture. The very first taste we get attracted as an infant is

sweetness, when we talk about sweet we cannot avoid talking about chocolates and candies. Sweets are indeed the innocent pleasures of childhood carrying to the adulthood. Chocolate, eating together bind the social relationships. Chocolate is a temptation to which every human kind is enslaved. This enchanted enslave is clearly depicted in Dahl's juvenile book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. And sharing the food is the best thing human beings can do to fellow being and this sharing one's food is very much clear in *James and the Giant Peach*. Hence both the chosen novels of Roald Dahl have its own similarities and differences in theme of food and culture, where food is a part of cultural identities.

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Ms. Rajalakshmi M

Ph.D. Research Scholar, University of Madras [rajiphd1@gmail.com](mailto:rajiphd1@gmail.com)

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**Ms. Rajalakshmi M., Ph.D. Research Scholar**

**Food in Children's Literature: An Analysis of Food and Culture in Roald Dahl's Fiction 190**

## **The Denial of Food and the so called Cultural Norm in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland***

**S. Snekhya Sri, M.A., M.Phil., Assistant Professor  
V. C. Revathi, II M. A. English**

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Food and literature bring pleasure to all human beings. Food is considered one of the greatest innovations of mankind. One cannot survive without food. Food is also a part of the culture. The taste of food is different in different cultures. Culture is identified on the basis of food too. Food is one of the essential parts of life. The nutritive content in food gives strength to all lives. But on the contrast, people are forced to adopt a culture in terms of food.

Indian society is different from all others. The food and culture of India bring out a unique place worldwide. Indian flavors are all much unique and Bengal food is one among them. Naturally cooking in the Indian culture is based much on women. Household chores, especially cooking food is especially associated much with women. Women consider cooking as one of the pleasures because she fills the hunger and happiness of her family.

Many diasporic writers mentioned the differences in culture and food in many of their novels. One among them is Jhumpa Lahiri born at London to Bengali parents and was brought up in the United States. Lahiri is herself an immigrant and her short stories particularly focused the marital differences, the disconnection between first and second generation as Indian immigrants. Lahiri's works are much autobiographical with fictional elements and characters. She draws down her own experiences her parents experiences and which they were met with their relations or neighbors, or where her parents have conveyed to her. Lahiri's characters move away to the new land by leaving culture and its traditions. Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Lowland* brings out the importance of humanism and culture.

*The Lowland* is the story of Subash and Udayan born to Bengali parents and Subash is elder by fifteen months to his brother Udayan. Days passed and the two brothers were separated by the paths which they chose. Subash moved to the US and there he started to cook his own meal and in India Udayan joined the Naxalbari movement, it was a movement of armed peasants

revolt. Udayan married Gauri, before his brother Subash and he was against Indian culture in which he was bred. Gauri, one of the protagonists of the novel was interested in studying. Instead of going to college, she was advised by Bijoli to do household duties. "Her mother-in-law had told her, the first morning, to put away the book she'd brought with her, and to concentrate on the task at hand" (*The Lowland* 354). In very few days Udayan was planned and killed by the police and Gauri became a widow. Subash married Gauri to make her free from the culture bound society. The present paper studies about denial and the foods that were prohibited to Gauri and the culture of cooking food in the Bengali tradition.

Bijoli, the mother of Subash cooked and took care of the household. The culture of Bengali is to have complete meal every day and it must also fill for all the members of the family. Though the family was running in poverty, she had given much importance for the meal and is evident when she complained of the less quantity of the things purchased. "If their mother complained that he hadn't brought back enough, He'd say, better to eat a small piece of fish with flavour than a large one without" (91).

Bijoli's family had eaten and purchased what the culture had taught them. The purchasing of groceries was the duty of men and the cooking was of the women. ". . . he and Udayan had accompanied their father to shop or to pick up rationed rice and coal" (91). The culture of Bengal and most parts of the people in India consume meat, especially on holidays. "On Sundays, they bought meat" (92).

The culture and food of Bengali are one of the unique ones. Bijoli and Gauri cooked simple food. Gauri's suffering is partly in cooking food and much in cooking with the coal it was the toughest job for her, who wished to pursue her education but culture being the main barrier she suffered much and was partly happy in reading books brought by her husband. Subash too at times hated western foods. He loved the food of his country. "he was ravenous for the simple meal, dal, and slices of fried bitter melon, rice, and fish stew. Sweet Pabda fish from the river, their . . ." (109). It was the women who cooked and also served the food. Men even if they wished they were not allowed to do so. "His mother ladled the dal onto his rice" (110).

Gauri who lead a happy life would find it difficult to sit in front of coal, kerosene and dung patties. This was also one of the reasons for Gauri's lack of interest in cooking even with the help of her mother-in-law. It is observed that the smoke would affect many women and cause breathing problems which would affect the future generations too. "Thick smoke stang her eyes, blurring her vision as she fanned the flame" (354).

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To put away the book was hard for Gauri and the culture which the Bengalis follow had made Bijoli stop Gauri from studying and she also helped Gauri in cooking. The family of Udayan being strict followers of culture and traditions had taught Gauri to be patience in her activities. The hard works that she did were very much new to her and being a good daughter-in-law she did not complaint her pains to her husband. "If the servant was late . . . she had to grind the turmeric root and chillies on a stone slab, . . . When she ground the chillies her palm felt as if the skin has been scraped off. . . . The weight of the inverted pan strained her wrists, steam scalding her face if she forgot to turn it away" (355).

Her tender hands had become rough and she did not mind it for she knew the culture and the importance that her in-laws have towards it. Udayan was also at the same time patriarchal when he calmed her by saying Subash's wife would help her one day. This can be seen as dominance because of the culture they followed, where he was not trained or his mind was not set up to help a woman in cooking. The men of the household earn for the living does not take up the raw sufferings of women during their time of cooking food.

On the contrast, Subash cooked his own meal against his cultural norms. His mother would have denied and condemned him for she believed it is women who had to cook foods. He cooked in the Rhode Island and also share with his friend. He liked cooking for the taste of US did not suit him. "Most nights Richard was out at dinnertime, but if he happened to be home he accepted Subash's invitation to share a meal, . . . Subash cooked curry and boiled a pot of rice" (49). During a conversation with Gauri, it can be completely known that he cooked his own food. "Is there a mess hall? No. Who cooks for you, then? I do" (117). These two incidents prove the cross cultural difference. How was against his cultural norm. but he liked his own cooking "You're staying at the International House? I preferred a place with a kitchen. I wanted to make my own meal" (45). Professor Narasimhan being an eastern born and brought up had helped his wife in the western land. he cooked dishes and also invited subash to dine with them. "I'll make you my yogurt rice on of these days, Narasimhan called out" (46). Men too cook at times and is evident through the incidents in the novel.

Nutritive value is important for all human on this earth and especially to the women around the world. But the culture had denied few food to Gauri during her gestation period. This is very harming and being a woman with a baby this would affect both. She was made to cook when she likes to study, was forced to eat only very few dishes which would make her and the baby weak. She must be cared by giving good and healthy intakes. The culture had stopped Gauri from eating fish and this blind attitude would result in weakness of the mother and child. Food is common to all but the restrictions laid on a pregnant widow lady would bring hatred towards culture. The humans framed the rules to follow the customs and traditions and had made it for their own wish not barring the people who get affected through the wrong belief of culture.

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

S. Snekhya Sri, M.A., M.Phil., Assistant Professor and V. C. Revathi, II M. A. English

The Denial of Food and the so called Cultural Norm in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*

“Is it because of my parents that you're not eating fish?” (112). Their parents are the great holders of culture and it had made them neglect nutritive foods to the widow who was carrying.

One cannot live a long life without consuming food and it must also be of a balanced one for good health. The culture must not be brought to intervene between the food and consumers. Culture portrays a group and must not be the factor to put down the group. Cooking being the essential one and is a fine art in the hands of women. The men of the household can help by lending their hands to women to withstand the smoke and the barriers in cooking. The denial and the cooking which are associated with women should be broken off and culture can be reframed as a good one suiting all.

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S. Sneha Sri M.A., M.Phil.,

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Periyar University

Salem-11

Email Id: [snehasri@gmail.com](mailto:snehasri@gmail.com)

Contact no.9443773300

V. C. Revathi

II M. A. English

Periyar University

Salem-11

Email id: [revathicnvr@gmail.com](mailto:revathicnvr@gmail.com)

## **Symbolic Significance of Selected Fruits in the Holy Bible**

**Dr. A. Rosilda Manju, Assistant Professor**

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Fruits form an integral part of food for all the living beings. Fruits are of various sizes, shapes and colours. Cultivation of a particular fruit depends on the climatic conditions and the soil wealth of that area. The word fruit derives from the Latin word 'fructus', which means 'enjoyment', 'proceeds', 'profits', 'produce', 'income', etc.

This paper tends to present the symbolic significance of some selected fruits referred in the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible is the word of God and it comprises of 66 books in it. It is divided into The Old Testament consisting of 39 books and the New Testament consisting of 27 books. The Old Testament dates from the day of creation of the world to the time before the birth of Jesus Christ. It is about the history of mankind especially of Israelites, songs, lamentations and prophecies. The New Testament consists of the four Gospels about the birth, teachings, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the spread of gospel by his disciples, the epistles of St. Paul and other disciples and the book of Revelation about the last days.

The word fruit appears almost 72 times in the Bible. It appears first in the book of Genesis as *"Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.*" (Genesis 1:11). The word 'fruit' appears last in the Bible in the book of Revelation as *"On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of nations. No longer will there be any curse."* (Revelation 22: 2, 3)

God created Adam and Eve and put them in the Garden of Eden and commanded them not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Satan came in the form of a serpent and deceived them. Eve saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate and gave some to her husband and he too ate. Thus, man disobeyed God, his creator and sin entered the world. Man lost the glory of God and was destined to be cursed forever. *"To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life."* (Genesis 3:17).

God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden and placed cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. That is the most pathetic and

tragic event in the history of mankind. Man can lose anything in this world but not the favour of his Lord. Once he loses the love of God everything is lost.

However, God is all merciful. Though not mentioned in the Bible, it makes me think that when Adam was chased out of the Garden of Eden, maybe he would have turned to God with a pathetic look, asking if there could be any way of redemption for him. And God, the Almighty and the perfect embodiment of mercy, melted for Adam whom He created in his own image; God would have told him that there is a way and the only way for redemption of mankind – that is, He (God) himself will come in flesh in the form of man and will shed His blood and through that is the salvation to mankind. That is the reason, from the time of Adam the ‘Messiah’ was expected to be born of a virgin. As Isaiah, the prophet tells, *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign; The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”* (Immanuel means God with us). (Isaiah 7:14). And the prophecy comes true by the birth of Jesus to Virgin Mary. When Gabriel, the angel of God appears to Mary, he tells, *“Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High”* (Luke 1: 30-32).

And Jesus when he preaches, says that *“I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.”* (John 14:6). Through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the salvation to mankind. The blood of Jesus cleanses the sins of those who repent and pray to him. Thus, the sin that led to the curse was removed by the blood of Jesus Christ and there is no more curse as in Revelation 22:3.

Other fruits mentioned in the Bible include apples, dates, figs, grapes, almonds, olives and pomegranates. The word apple appears nearly 11 times in the Bible. Apples (Scientific name - *Malus pumila*) are high in protein, vitamins, carbohydrates and fibre. They give energy, stimulate weight loss, balance the blood sugar levels, strengthen one’s immunity power, improve brain function, lower cholesterol and strengthen teeth and gums. In Solomon’s Song of Songs the Beloved wants to be comforted and refreshed with apples as she is sick of love. (Song of Songs 2:5) and the lover compares the fragrance of the breath of his beloved to that of apples. (Song of Songs 7:8). In Proverbs 25: 11, a word aptly spoken is compared to the apples of gold in settings of silver. Apples with their red alluring colour are symbolic of temptation, immortality and knowledge.

Figs (Scientific name -*Ficus carica*) are mentioned in nearly 52 places in the Bible. Figs are rich in calcium and have good content of fibre. They control cholesterol and lower blood sugar. They are symbolic of national wealth, prosperity, well-being and security. God promised the Israelites a land of all wealth. Moses tells his people, *“For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land – a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey.”* (Deuteronomy 8:7-8). Prophet Jeremiah in his vision sees two baskets of figs- one basket of good figs (first ripe) and other basket of bad figs, that could not be eaten. The good figs symbolise those Jews who were

good and obedient and have found favour in the eyes of the Lord and the bad figs symbolise those who disobeyed God and are put to the wrath of God.

Dates (Scientific name - Phoenix dactylifera) have been a staple food from ancient times. Dates can be eaten just like that when ripe or can be made into a syrup or juice. Dates are highly nutritious, and they contain in them energy carbohydrates, sugar, dietary fibre, proteins, vitamins and minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, sodium and zinc. The first reference to the date palm in the Bible is when the children of Israel enter the desert after leaving Egypt. *“Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy (date) palm trees and they camped near the water.”* (Exodus 15:27). Dates symbolise fertility and sweetness in life. Psalm 92:12 considers the righteous people to flourish like a palm tree and in Song of Songs 7:8, the lover tells, *“I will climb the palm tree, I will take hold of its fruit”*. Here it symbolises uprightness and victory.

Almonds (Scientific name - Prunus dulcis) are referred nearly 8 times in the Bible. Almonds are considered to be a delicacy and are eaten all over the world. Almonds contain proteins, vitamins, calcium, magnesium, potassium, riboflavin and fibre. It is a low glycemic index food. In Genesis 43: 11, the almond is described as ‘one of the best fruits’ and Israel asks his sons to carry with them some of the best products of their land to Egypt to be given to Joseph. Almonds are symbolic of resurrection as we see in the blossoming of Aaron’s dry staff. *“The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Testimony and saw that Aaron’s staff, which represented the house of Levi, had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds”* (Numbers 17:8). God uses almond as a symbol of his watchfulness in Jeremiah 1:11,12. *“The word of the Lord came to me: “What do you see, Jeremiah?” “I see the branch of an almond tree, “I replied. The Lord said to me, “You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled.”* The Hebrew name for almond is ‘Shakeid’ which means to wake or watch and it is symbolic of new beginnings and God’s watchfulness. Almond blossoming is also an apt symbol of old age, with its silvery hair and its barren and unfruitful condition.

Grape (Scientific name – Vitis vinifera) is mentioned nearly 43 times in the Bible. Grapes are highly nutritious, and they contain in them potassium, vitamins C, A and K, pyridoxine, riboflavin, thiamine, carotenes and B-Complex. Noah is the first recorded human being to grow grapes in the Bible. *“Noah, man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent.”* (Genesis 9:20-21). In Genesis 19: 30, Lot’s two daughters make him drink wine and lay with him so that they can become pregnant and have children; Lot was completely unaware of what happened because of the effect of drinking wine. Here wine, that is got from grapes, is symbolic of a seductive element. It seduces and makes people lose their consciousness. However, it has been consumed with great love and applause from ancient times. In Judges 9:13, wine is considered to cheer both Gods and men. Genesis 14:18 tells that Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine to Abraham. The lover in Solomon’s Song of Songs compares his beloved’s breasts to clusters of grapes. (Song of Songs 7:7). Raisins, (dried grapes) are also widely used either stored or as pressed cakes.

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In the New Testament, wine was used during the Passover and Jesus Christ used it with unleavened bread in the last supper with his disciples. He used the bread as a symbol of his body and wine as the symbol of his blood, thus foretelling his death by crucifixion the next day. Christianity believes that Jesus Christ is the son of God and if a person repents for his sins, and prays to Jesus, his sins are cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ and this leads to the salvation of his soul. Jesus' first miracle of changing water into wine in the wedding at Cana in Galilee is symbolic of an ordinary life being made precious by God's power. Wine has symbolic connection with victory, wealth, abundance, transformation and fertility. Finally, the harvest of grapes in Revelation chapters 16 and 17 is understood as symbolic of God's judgment against the wicked and the people of disobedience.

Olive (Scientific name – *Olea europaea*) is mentioned nearly 56 times in the Holy Bible. Olives are highly nutritious, and they contain in them vitamins, amino acids, oleic acid, polyphenols and minerals like sodium, potassium, magnesium, iron, phosphorous and iodine. Olives balance the blood pressure and cholesterol in human body, improve the immune system, and enhance the reproductive system. Olive can be eaten raw when it is ripe as fruit or it can be stored for many days submerged in liquid or refrigerated. Olive oil is also used for many purposes. In the Bible, Olive oil is used widely for the anointing of kings and priests. King David in his Psalms refers to this as “*You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*” (Psalms 23: 5,6). Olive oil here is symbolic of the Holy Spirit who leads the children of God. When a person is anointed with Holy Spirit, goodness and love will follow him all the days of his life and will take him to his eternal abode, that is, the Heaven. In Exodus 27: 20, God tells Moses, “*Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning.*” Olive oil symbolically forms an offering to God here. In Genesis 8, Noah sends a dove to find out if the water in the land has dried up. “*When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf!*” (Genesis 8: 11). Olive is a symbol of peace and victory. It also signifies the goodness of love and charity.

Pomegranate (Scientific name -*Punica granatum*) is mentioned nearly 33 times in the Bible. Pomegranates contain in them ample amounts of vitamins (A, B, C, D, E), proteins, carbohydrates, dietary fibre, sugar, minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, sodium and zinc. Pomegranates are good for the prevention of cancer, arthritis, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, etc. It improves sexual performance and fertility. It lowers blood pressure and fights off infection. Pomegranate has a rounded shape with a thick and reddish husk. The fruit is full of seed, each seed surrounded by a little pulp. There is a structure of a royal crown in the top of the fruit. God commands Moses to make pomegranate shaped structures in the robe of Aaron and also in the tent of Testimony. King Solomon also used the structure in the construction of the temple for the Lord. In Song of Songs, the lover goes to see if the pomegranates were in bloom. (Song of Songs 6:11). Pomegranates are symbolic of fruitfulness, fertility, blessing and prosperity. It symbolizes royalty with its crown like structure and royal colour.

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Finally, Galatians 5: 22 says, “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*” If only the world is adorned with these fruits of the spirit, the world will become a paradise in itself.

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Dr. A. Rosilda Manju  
Assistant Professor, Department of English  
Emerald Heights College for Women  
Finger Post, Ooty - 643006  
Email: [manjuwils33@gmail.com](mailto:manjuwils33@gmail.com)

**Healing Power of Food in Erica Bauermeister's  
*The School of Essential Ingredients***

**Dr. V. Sangeetha  
S. Dhivya, II M.A. English Literature**

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Food is an essential part of human life as shelter and clothing and it is necessary for survival. A person's basic drive for food is to satisfy hunger because it gives the required energy for all kinds of human activities like growth, repair and reproduction. Food acts a tension reliever too. Different levels of food consumption help people to feel free from loneliness, boredom, anger and frustration. Moreover, food is interlinked with the physical, economic, psychological, intellectual and social activities of a person. Therefore, nothing could be possible without food because it makes human beings to stay strong and be active in day to day life. "One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well" (Woolf 14).

The importance of food in making human beings to stay healthy is well expressed in the novel *The School of Essential Ingredients* by Erica Bauermeister. The entire story progresses with 'food' as its centre which is expressed through the character Lillian and her eight students of the cooking school. The common theme of the novel is the ability of food and cooking in connecting people together. Through this novel, Erica suggests that the act of cooking gives opportunity to people to stay focused, which people miss in their day to day life. She also adds that those who pay attention to their senses are leading a fulfilled and a happier life. Through her evocative cooking terms, Erica Bauermeister has added flavours to her characters in the novel and to the reader's appetite.

The emotions of Erica Bauermeister in describing 'food' has helped her to describe the characters in the novel. For example, the character Lillian sees that the softness and warmth of the cookies satisfies the need of the human beings than the food which is crisp and cooled. Erica also adds that the spices are the carriers of emotions and memories and it plays a vital role in generating the reactions of the people towards their fellow beings. "She discovered that people seemed to react to spices much as they did to other people, relaxing instinctively into some, shivering into a kind of emotional rigor mortis when encountering others" (Bauermeister13).

Food is considered as a natural healing substance which is proved in the novel through the character Lillian. Lillian has a strong belief in food as some people have in religion. After the death of her father, Lillian's mother hid behind the pages of a book. During that time, Lillian discovered that a perfectly prepared dish and a few 'essential ingredients' has the ability to bring her mother back to reality. So, Lillian with the help of Abuelita, who is the owner of the grocery shop treated her

mother's illness by giving her potatoes, adding milk chocolate in coffee and apple in her meal. Gradually, Lillian started the cooking school and restaurant. Her students brought their complicated lives to the class and got healed with the help of food.

The students of Lillian's cooking school include Claire, a young mother who struggles with her family conditions; Antonia, an Italian kitchen designer who is struggling to adapt to American life; Tom, a widower who lost his wife because of breast cancer; Isabelle, who suffers from short-term memory; Carl and Helen, a married couple whose union seemed to be a surprise to the other students in the class; Chloe, a young woman who is working as a busser at the restaurant and Ian, a computer programmer who is socially isolated. Chef Lillian's flavours and techniques in creating new dishes transformed the lives of her students because she has made food as a solution and a source of diversion for her students' problems.

Isabelle, who suffers from short-term memory loss in her old age got recovered from her illness when she consumed the nourishing and delicious food from Lillian's restaurant. Claire acquired the ability to take control of her life and herself while preparing the crab dish. In the same way, the lessons on baking cake brought back Helen's memory that helped her to join with her husband.

Food heals not only the body but also the mind. In the novel *The School of Essential Ingredients*, kneading a dough is compared to swimming and walking, which keeps part of the mind busy and allows the rest of the mind to go anywhere it wants or needs to go. The art of cooking teaches the lesson that the simple things can become an extraordinary one if it is prepared with great care. Cooking comforts not only the people who cook but also the people who taste the cooked dishes. The food cooked by a loved one for someone special exhibits the love and care shown for their fellow beings. Thus, food helps to create bonding between people which is similar to the union that happens in Lillian's cooking school.

The characters in the novel has entered the cooking school for various reasons and they find there the 'essential ingredients' that help to change their life and analyse what they lack in their life. Thus, it proves that food acts as a medicine for people in day to day life.

Many people in the world are eating just to fill their stomach and satisfy their hunger, without taking care to choose the right food. The right choice of food gives energy and vitality to a person. So, the food should be a nutrient rich one. "The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison" (Wigmore 9). Eating food either heals or harms a person. But harmfulness of the food too can be avoided by consuming right quality and quantity of food. Thus, food should be eaten as a medicine from the early years of life otherwise medicine should be eaten as food during the last years of life.

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Dr. V. Sangeetha  
Professor and Head  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
Salem 636 011  
[sk19@periyaruniversity.ac.in](mailto:sk19@periyaruniversity.ac.in)

S. Dhivya  
II. M.A. English Literature  
Periyar University  
Salem 636 011  
[jothisengodan191@gmail.com](mailto:jothisengodan191@gmail.com)

## **Haute Cuisine of Memories: A Reading Of Anita Nair's *Alphabet Soup For Lovers***

**Salma, A. S., Guest Faculty**

Food has a universal appeal that won it a prominent place in literature. Food literature is now a popular genre. It is usually said that literature reflects society. This reflection is more vivid, when it comes to food literature because food reflects culture and mode of living in a better way. "... to write about food is to deal with the most important and most basic of human needs and desires." (Schofield 1)

This paper is entitled *Haute Cuisine of Memories: A Reading of Anita Nair's Alphabet Soup for Lovers*. *Haute Cuisine* is a French culinary term which literally means high cooking. "It is characterised by meticulous preparation and presentation of food." (*Haute Cuisine*). Anita Nair in this novel makes the narrator and cook, Komathi, prepare and present her memories, induced by different food, she comes about in the kitchen. Komathi the main narrator of the novel presents memories about Lena her mistress, Lena's husband KK, the actor and lover of Lena, Shoolapani, Komathi's partner Raghavandra. The role of food here, is that of a trigger that evokes memories. Secondly, the role of food as an aid in learning is analysed. Finally, the position of food as a mode of communication is studied.

Food is reminiscent of persons, events, places or a certain period in life. This relationship is mutual, as sometimes, people or events can evoke memories about food. That is how Kerala reminds one of Sadya, Tamilnadu that of Pongal and North India that of Daal. Some adjectives used with food evokes different meaning. A homely food is expected to be traditional and pure. Bachelor cooking is something easy, that saves time and that uses minimum ingredients. Jane Lawson in her book *Grub: Favourite Food Memories* observes, "...it isn't just the food, it's the emotions attached to it" (Lawson 7) Thus food is a medium for recalling memories. What appeals more about a food is obviously the memories and emotions attached to it.

Each chapter of the novel is given the title of a food or an ingredient, in the South Indian cuisine and each of those title is in the alphabetic order. Thus, it becomes the alphabetic book and the memory book of Komathi, the narrator. The basic thread of the novel tells the story of Lena and her mechanical and loveless married life with KK and Lena's love affair and elopement with the actor Shoolapani Dev. This is a common place theme of many novels. Telling this story by making food as a major theme is a different approach.

Food in this novel is a prominent element in teaching Komathi English letters. It is contradictory, because, a woman destined to be in kitchen has less chance to think about polishing her academic skills. But Komathi, the cook is so enthusiastic about learning English alphabet. A child is introduced to alphabet through an alphabet book with the usual A for Apple, B for ball, etc. in it. Komathi's alphabet book is different. Being a cook, she cannot have a better medium to learn letters. She says, "Food, I know. Food will never elude me, unlike everything else that has. Be it men, wealth, happiness and it seems, the Alphabet.... Perhaps the Alphabet can be coaxed to stay within my grasp. Perhaps food will teach me to make sense of these lines, curves and curlicue" (Nair 4) She grasps each letters with the help of food names an idea put forward by her granddaughter Selvi and Lena is her guide in this matter.

The first chapter is given the title *Arisi Appalam*. This dish made Komathi think about the nature of relationship between Lena and KK. She says they "are like store-brought appalam" (Nair 5). Their life lacks genuine flavours and it is an artificial one. Appalam brought to her memory, Lena, during her childhood, the day Komathi took charge of Lena's care and her decision to call Lena as Leema a portmanteau of Lena and Amma.

When Komathi saw a *Badam*, Shoolapani Dev, the actor came to her mind. He is not a familiar person to her. Except one time, she had seen him only from a distance. Hence she says, "... he is sheathed himself and it is impossible to peel of the covering"(Nair 18)

Komathi remembers Lena again, when she saw *Cheppankizangu*. She compares the nature of Lena with this tuber. "Take Leema. She pretends to be hairy, knobbly person when what she is, is plump and rounded. There is a huge reservoir of feelings within her, which she keeps hidden behind that stiff exterior." (Nair 28)

In the chapter entitled *Dungaarchutney* a Marathi dish - she remembers her partner Raghavandra Rao. That is why she opted for *Dungaarchutney* to the commonplace *Dosa*. It is Raghavandra – Rayar, as Komathi calls him- who taught her to make this chutney and as she expected, their relation ended in heartbreak and she even forgot how to make the chutney.

*Eeral* or liver reminded Komathi of Lena's grandmother who is of the opinion that people love with the liver and not with the heart. Komathi quotes her words, "Without the liver we are nothing but a mass of flesh. So, it is with the liver we love." (Nair 43)

In the chapter entitled *Filter Kaapi*, Komathi remembers how she made *Filter Kaapi* for Lena and KK, and how KK preferred *filter Kaapito* tea or instant coffee, thereafter.

*Godumai* took her back to the day she was rejected by a man who came to her as a part of a marriage proposal. Her aachi comforted and said that she deserves a *Godumai dosa*. The very memory of the "... godumai dosa, crisp yet chewy, sweet and salty, that burnt sweet smell of jaggery turning to syrup on a hot cast –iron tava..." (Nair 62), made her mouth watering and makes her forget

the pain. Godumai dosa reminded her about how Lena and KK spoiled a tava, that her dosa ended up like a G instead of a being a perfect round.

*Inji* according to Komathi is the best thing to get rid of the irritation created by too much sweetness. That is why she decided to make inji kozambu for Lena, as she is in the over sweet world of Shoolapani. Inji reminded her of the oft asked question of Lena during her childhood, that why the fox in the story said that the grapes are sour just because he could not reach them.

The narrator learns her J through *Jeera*. It led her think about Lena. She loved to have jeera muttai than a toffee or chocolate.

Komathi learns K through *Karuveppilai*. She remembers the myths connecting *Karuveppilai* and women, that a woman should not touch it when she is bleeding. The progressive woman in Komathi comes to the front when she ask why a rapist or a murderer is allowed to touch this leaf. She also sees a probability for Lena being deserted by the actor, like a *Karuveppilai*.

*Ladoo* is the next food that made her go back to her memories. She thought about those days in which she prepared up to two hundred *lados* for Lena's first wedding anniversary, and it is impossible for her now. She doubts whether the ability to cook fade out with fertility when a woman gets aged.

Komathi shares the traditional belief that *Muringakai* increases libido. This obviously turned her thoughts to her partner Rayar. She remembers the day she made *Muringakai* Sambar and her Rayar made love to her. But Komathi came to the realization that a woman gets aroused only when she comes to know that her man loves her.

Rayar comes to her mind when she made *Nande curry*. It is not the curry, that made her think about him, but its smell that clings over there for much time. It is like the memories she keeps about her Rayar. They are still a part of her life even though the the relation is over. At present, that smell irritates her because it is now merged with the illicit relationship between Lena and the actor.

Komathi reminds of some rules about the dish *Oorkai*. It is somewhat similar to that of *Karuveppilai*. *Oorkai* is made out of large lemon called *Narthanga Oorkai* should not be made on Sunday, Tuesday or Friday. It should be made before moon disappears completely on *Amavasi*. A bleeding woman and a woman after being with a man should not touch it. Though these are the general beliefs, Komathi has only one rule concerning it. There should be no moisture and it should not be heated after it is seasoned.

It is a common experience of everyone that the most hated food items during childhood become one of the favourites when grown up. It is a lesson that food teaches everyone. During childhood what matters about food is its colour and taste. Slowly it is understood that its benefits are important. *Pavakkai* is such a food. Komathi remembers that Lena hated *pavakkai* not because of its

bitterness but because she thought that it is a baby crocodile caught from the river. Later in life she devoured *pavakkai* juice just as she did with a glass of milk.

Komathi thought about *Qollu* or Horse gram and she remembered the moment she expressed her anger for Lena's illicit relation with Shoolapani. When Lena came to know that Komathi is going to prepare a dish with *Qollu*, Lena expressed her dislike and Lena is startled to hear the unexpected reply from Komathi.

It is *Rava* that made Komathi remember that unforgettable day in which her Rayar part with her, because of Lena. *Rava* evoked in her the memory of *Kesari*, the dish that Rayar hated the most. When Lena heard Rayar complaining about *Kesari* and calling it "baby's vomit" (Nair 148). Lena felt sorry for Komathi and forcefully fed him all the *Kesari* in her plate. When Lena's mother came to see this, she interpreted the situation falsely and fired Rayar from there. Though Komathi pleaded, it did nothing good. Thus, Lena became a reason for the misfortune. Years after Komathi decided to make *Kesari* for Lena to seek her forgiveness for her harsh talk to Lena. "I'll make *rava Kesari* and when Leema comes for breakfast, I'll serve it to her. My *Kesari* will say, forgive me, better than words can." (Nair 145). Food here is a language which is much more expressive than spoken language. In such cases food not only functions as a physical entity but they function as a series of expressions like that of apology, gratitude, request, love, etc.

*Sora*, is a river fish which gave Komathi an opportunity to go back to one of her memories in her childhood. *Sora* is believed to be good for lactating mothers and she remembers her father bringing it to her Aachi. As she does not like the fish, Komathi had it in plenty. She also remembers a movie they watched thereafter, that also about a *Sora* fish, which eats human beings. That led her to stop eating *Sora*. These are all presented as vague memories of Komathi related to the fish. *Thayir* reminded Komathi of her days after Rayar left her. She had a difficult sleep those days. She knew it is good to eat hot rice with *Thayir*, to induce good sleep. Another person comes to her mind is KK's mother who was an expert in making *morukaachiyathu*. Komathithinks, "She died a couple of years ago but her *kashyamam* and *morukaachiyathu* lives on." (Nair 160)

*Varak* or the gold foil on a *peda* is closely connected with one of Komathi's memories about Rayar. When she tasted the *peda* that Rayar gave her, after his bite on it, it tasted like nothing to her, but like his mouth.

Another sad memory is connected with *Wendiyum* or Fenugreek. For Komathi *Wendiyum* is reminiscent of her days after which she aborted Rayar's child. Lena's mother prepared *Uluvachoru* for her to regain her strength after the abortion.

Komathi uses the letter X to explain the dangers of being lazy and complacent in kitchen, rather than for a food. She remembers some moments when KK, Lena or some other guest avoiding some dishes, saying that it is not cooked enough, or it does not taste as usual. It is then she became conscious about that fatal mistake she had made. She forgot to taste the dish. That is what the letter X reminds her.

*Yera* or prawns made her think about a question asked by Lena, when she was cleaning it. Lena asked her what she is thinking about. Komathi replied that her mind goes a trip without telling her, while cleaning prawns.

The final chapter is entitled *Zigarthanda*. It was a new experience for Komathi to have it. Before having it, after the compulsion from the part of Rayar, she had no idea about what it would taste like or what would it do to her. That is why Komathi used the metaphor of *Zigarthanda* to explain her uncertainty about the future life of Lena with Shoolapani after they eloped. Komathi was equally uncertain about what to expect from KK after hearing the news of elopement of his wife.

All these memories prove that food is not a mere appetizer, mouth filler or pass time, but it proves to be a strong medium to recall memories. Food also gives some lessons for life, they carry myths, superstitions and emotions. This particular novel presents food as an educator too, giving its narrator basic lessons in English language.

*Appalam* is her word to remember the letter A. She says, “I prefer the pleasing fullness of *Arisi Appalam* to the dull crunch of the A for Apple” (Nair 2). The B in Komathi’s alphabet book is that of *Badam*. C stands for the hairy dark *Cheppankizangu*. She cannot remember a D through *Dosa* because it reminds her of a folded *Dosa*, which is not good. That is why she opted for *Daangar Chutney*. E is for *Eeral*. F is for *Filter Kaapi*. G is for *Godumai Dosa*, because despite her hard work in taking out the *Godumai Dosa* from the tavaa little left there, and it looked like a G. H stands for *Hayagriva*, because for Komathi, Honey or *Halwa* does not sounds like an H. I is for *Inji*. J for *Jeera*. K can stand only for *Karuvepilai* in her alphabet book. L for *Ladoo*. Lena had made an M out of the *Muringakai* pieces Komathi had chopped and she decided that her M stands for *Muringakai*. N for *Nande*. O for *Oorkai*. P for *Paavakai*. Komathi clarifies her doubt that whether *Qollu* starts with Q or K and learns that Q is for *Qollu*. R for *Rava*. The *Sora* fish resembled the letter S, so her S is for *Sora*. T for *Thayir*. U for *Uzunthu*. V for *Varak*. W for *Wendiyum*. X stands for the dangers related to laziness in kitchen. Y stands for *Yera* and Z for *Zigarthanda*.

Komathi, thus gives completion to her alphabet book that contains A to Z. She makes it unique by giving a shade of memories to each the pictures in her book. She takes her own freedom in deciding which food should represent each letter. “I know the *Zigarthanda* should start with J, but this is my alphabet book. What is right for the world may not be right for me” (Nair 202).

Food is a language sometimes far more effective than words. Intonation and stress in the language of food, is the way in which the food is presented. Words and food, that comes out of love, taste good. So, what is Food for Komathi? Obviously, it is not only a tool in her profession as a cook neither is it a sustenance. It is indeed her world. It is her window to memories, her outlet to the world of progress and her language for expressing emotions. Thus, the novel views the concept of food from a different perspective.

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Salma. A. S

GUEST FACULTY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

B.J.M. GOVERNMENT COLLEGE,

CHAVARA,

KOLLAM

KERALA-691583

[salma.22salam@gmail.com](mailto:salma.22salam@gmail.com)

## **Analysis of Food and Gender Roles**

**D. Selva Abirami**

### **Introduction**

Food is an essential part of everyone's lives. It gives us the energy and nutrients to grow and develop, be healthy and active, to move, work, play, think and learn. From ancient to modern times, we are aware of our food practices. We have varied varieties of food for each and every season. Some foods are meant only for men as well as some for women. The diet which men use are different from that of women. Women want to be fit and slim, so they always are fond of taking more fiber foods during their dieting, like green vegetables and fruits, whereas men want to be more strong to do every sort of heavy work, so they take many fatty foods.

This kind of dieting is practiced not simply in modern era. If we see history, men used to go for hunting and eat raw meats whereas women did plantation works and tended to eat vegetables. If we are born as women we have to be fit and slim, otherwise we may not get married and survive in this society.

Samah Visaria portrays the marginalization and suppression of fatty women through her character Madhurima Pandey in her book *Encounters of a fat bride*. This paper portrays how fatty women face problems in the society.

### **Fat Girls**

I always think why all the works including sculptures in our world portray women as thin. Does it mean to say women are frail or beautiful? Is that being fat means to say they are firm or ugly? Even in literature writings, it is hard to find fat female protagonists. There are all around restrictions for them including food. Being fatty does not solely depend on their food practices, but also on their genetic cause.

"I spent my whole single life trying to be thin just to find someone who'd love me once I got fat" -Stephanie Klein.

### **The Marginalization of Fatty Girls**

There is all around the world we could see the suppression and marginalization of fatty women in many fields. There won't be any interconnection between knowledge and physique.

But in many fields, they tend to select the members through their appearance not of their knowledge. Women are considered as the pleasure giving machine. If they want to shine in their fields, they not only want to improve their knowledge but also want to be fit. These kinds of restrictions are not for men in many fields. Because of these restrictions, women face many health and mental problems.

India is popular for dowry system. If the bride was overweight, then they have to give more dowry to satisfy the groom. But it's not the big issue in the case of a groom. The groom may be of good or bad character, handsome or ugly, black or white, thin or overweight but that won't be a matter for concern. But the bride should be thin and beautiful. If they were not, then they have to do many workouts which their body couldn't tolerate. They have to be in heavy dieting, here I mention heavy diet not healthy diet. The groom and their family need only thin and beautiful bride not healthy and chubby bride. Because of satisfying their future fiancée and his family, all the women will undergo this challenge. This leads them to face many physical problems in their future.

Even they don't have liberty to eat foods as of their choice. Before they order their food, they have to think of their work place and about the society. Though they are intellectual and positive attitude women, others commenting on their physique make them to think inferior. They will feel mentally ill and become frail both at their work place and at home.

“If any female feels she needs anything beyond herself to legitimate and validate her existence, she is already giving away her power to be self-defining, her agency.”

- Bell hooks, Feminism is for everybody

### **Samah Visaria and Her Story**

In the novel, we could see the general struggle of fatty women through the character of Madhurima who is 25-years-old with 93 kg weight. In India there has been the age limit for both the gender to get marriage. For girls they have to marry before the age of 25. But Madhurima didn't get married because of her overweight. For her surprise Harsh accepts to marry her; she thought that he may be an alien or homosexual. The topic of dowry also began. A car was bought, with the plan to be given to the boy. Talks, between the parents seemed never to end. And so, the engagement is broken off by Madhu, when she does find out about the dowry.

Anyway, with time comes calm in Madhu's life. She begins her own journey and discovers many things. But most important she does find love in Harsh. She may have rejected him before, but now with knowledge and insight gained, she loves him. Where once both

families were enthusiastic about the marriage, now both are opposed to the union. But all's well that ends well.

Despite her many accomplishments, society will still limit her being called a “lovely, sweet girl. Fair complexion. Big eyes, healthy figure, heavy chest, long hair. Respectful, graduate”. These words are ones that her grandmother used to describe her on her matrimonial profile.

“You’re not too fat. You’re not too loud. You’re not too smart. You’re not unladylike. There is nothing wrong with you.”

– Jessica Valenti, Full Frontal Feminism

### **The Lessons from Madhurima’s Life**

The most important thing from this story is that none of us is perfect. Nothing is perfect. We can dream about perfect clothing, romances, because we need everything perfect in our life. Madhurima also wanted romance, a perfect figure, a perfect life. But once she realized that not having a slim waist doesn’t undermine her worth, she is happy. As of her, grass will always be greener on the other side of all our lives.

“The only way for a woman, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by creative work of her own.”

-Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique

### **Conclusion**

Encounters of a fat bride exposes the struggles facing by the fatty women in the society. Every woman is physically weak and mentally strong than that of men. Everyone can’t be perfect in all the way. We shouldn’t judge the book by its cover likewise the fatty women always won’t be firm or ugly. There is no interconnection between physique and knowledge. we shouldn’t be judgmental in our physique. Life is given by God. All human beings have the rights to live, eat of their wish. We should live our life in healthy and happy manner. The external flaws won’t judge our nature. The pure heart and helping mind are important to shine in our life. I conclude by saying that life is that one lives as you wish, not to impress others. There is difficulty to live as you are. So, don’t change your character or physique for anyone. No one can’t play the role of yours. So be you always with all positivity.

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D. Selva Abirami  
Bharathiar University  
Coimbatore  
[dsabirami0710@gmail.com](mailto:dsabirami0710@gmail.com)

## **Shakespearean Recipes**

**J. Gangapriyadarshini, Research Scholar**

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### **Introduction**

The Elizabethans had three main meals a day like us. Breakfast was eaten earlier in the morning, usually between 6 to 7, dinner at midday, and supper between 5 to 8 evening. The kinds of food eaten depended very much on wealth and status. Poor people, in general, had humble and unvaried diets, whereas the rich of Elizabethan England ate well and enjoyed all kinds of meat, including beef, pork, lamb, mutton, bacon, veal, and deer, and fancy fowl such as peacock, swan, and goose. Their diet also included freshwater and sea fish, which included the varieties such as salmon, trout, eel, pike, and sturgeon, and shellfish such as crabs, lobsters, oysters, cockles and mussels. For the poor, bread was the ideal food and it would be eaten with butter, cheese, eggs, and pottage. Poor people could not afford much red meat, like beef or pork, so tended to eat white meat, like chicken, rabbit or hare, and birds they could catch like blackbirds or pigeons. As Queen Elizabeth made a law in 1563 that compelled everyone to eat fish on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, hence the poor also regularly ate fish. This law was made to support the fishing industry.

### **Popular Recipes of Shakespearean Age**

As water was considered unsafe to drink, the Elizabethans drank ale instead. Even children drank ale as it was not very strong. Strong ale was reserved for times they wanted to make merry! The rich drank ale too, but also wine, which was very expensive. Popular wines were claret, malmsey, and sack. They drank milk of sheep as well as cow, but was mostly used to make butter, cream, and cheese. As well as a good meal, the Tudors were fond of desserts. They enjoyed pastries, tarts, cakes, cream, custard, and crystallized fruit and syrup. The rich, who could afford to buy sugar, were very fond of sugary desserts, so much so that their teeth turned black! In fact, having black teeth became such a status symbol that people would deliberately blacken their teeth, so it looked like they were rich enough to buy sugar! Marzipan, known as marchpane, was also popular. For special feasts, or banquets, the rich would have all kinds of novelties made out of sugar and marzipan, such as animals, birds, fruits and baskets. They would also sometimes have wine glasses, dishes, playing cards, and even trenchers made out of a crisp modelled sugar called sugar-plate.

### **Food as a Status Determinator**

The food eaten by people always differentiate them by their status. Even today wealthy people prefer to eat variety "Thali"(multiple food items) but the downtrodden people mostly have a simple food, mostly a single recipe for the whole day. The same situation prevailed even in the Elizabethan era and it was well depicted by Shakespeare in his plays. Poor people in Elizabethan Age had a humble and unvaried diets with lot of vegetables, whereas the rich people enjoyed all kinds of meat, soup, starters, expensive fruits and desserts.

Feast is a huge and delicious meal served in a party or celebration. Probably, the word feast and its description in Shakespeare's plays portrays the grandeur of Elizabethan kitchen and its food recipes. There are at least 2000 culinary references in his works and the word "feast" is mentioned in more than 100 places. "The Winter's Tale" helps us to know the entire food style of the Elizabethan age.

The delicious food recipes mentioned in Shakespearean plays depict the culture and identity of the people of that age. Among the delicious food recipes, this paper deals with the following recipes and its usage and impact in the society. They are: Shrewsbury Cakes, Gooseberry Foyle, Periwinkles, Marchpane, Posset, Sallet, Warden Pies and Junkets.

### **Shrewsbury Cakes**

A Shrewsbury cake or Shrewsbury biscuit is a classic English dessert named after Shrewsbury, the county town in Shropshire. It is prepared from dough which contained sugar, flour, egg, butter, dried fruit and lemon zest. Shrewsbury cakes were served as dessert.

In *Twelfth Night*, Sir Toby Belch mentions about the Shrewsbury Cake as:

"Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous,  
there shall be no more cakes and ale?"

Usage of cakes mentioned by Sir Toby is believed to be Shrewsbury Cakes. William Congreve mentioned Shrewsbury cakes in his play *The Way of the World* in 1700 as a simile.

### **Gooseberry Foyle**

A **fool or Foyle** is an English dessert. Traditionally, fruit fool is made by folding pureed stewed fruit (traditionally gooseberries) into sweet custard. Modern fool recipes often skip the traditional custard and use whipped cream and adds a flavouring agent like rose water. The origin of gooseberry fool dates back to the 15th century. The reason why the word "fool" is used as the name of this fruit dessert is unclear. Several authors derive it from the French verb *fouler* meaning "to crush" or "to press".

In Henry IV Part 2, Falstaff will declare, ... all the other gifts appertinent man, as the malice of this age shapes them, are not worth a gooseberry.

Though this recipe is mentioned only once in Shakespeare's plays, gooseberry fool is depicted as an excellent Elizabethan dessert.

### **Periwinkle**

Periwinkle is zoologically, a small marine snail which belongs to the family Littorinidae. Periwinkles are widely distributed shore (littoral) snails, chiefly herbivorous, usually found on rocks, stones, or pilings between high- and low-tide marks; a few are found on mud flats, and some tropical forms are found on the prop roots or mangrove trees. Of the approximately 80 species in the world, 10 are known from the western Atlantic. The common periwinkle, is the largest, most common and widespread of the northern species. It may reach a length of 4 centimetres, is usually dark gray, and has a solid spiral (turbinata) shell that readily withstands the buffeting of waves.

In *As You Like It*, Orlando states: "Of a snail!" (IV.1).

According to Shakespeare, Periwinkles were likely cooked up and served as a kind of starters/snack.

### **Ambergris**

Mistress Ford in **Merry Wives of Windsor (II-1)** states about someone having lied to her, but she talks about ambergris indirectly when she says,

What tempest, I trow, threw this whale,  
with so many tuns of oil in his belly,  
ashore at Windsor?

Ambergris is whale vomit. That's right. The Sperm Whale tosses his lunch, and it was used in Elizabethan England to season their food There's a huge industry around ambergris, with the rare Sperm Whale secretion being used for perfumes and could also be used to dilute alcohol.

### **Marchpane**

A highly-decorated disc of marzipan, typically about 1in thick, supported on a wafer or thin cake base. Since its heyday in the 16th and 17th centuries it seems that the cake base has got thicker while the marzipan has thinned, so that Marchpane has transmuted into the iced fruit cake.

The forerunner of modern day marzipan, this edible treat was used to make ornate center pieces at events. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the First Servant sings and praises:

"Away with the joint-stools, remove the court-cupboard, look to the plate.  
Good thou, save me a piece of marchpane; and, as thou lovest me,  
let the porter let in Susan Grindstone and Nell."*(Act I Scene V)*

Marchpane was a popular dessert item, often involving almonds ground into a flour, made into a paste, and used as a kind of pie with various fruits.

### **Posset**

From 16th-century and later sources, it is known **possets** are generally made from lemon or other citrus juice, cream and sugar. ... The word "**posset**" is mostly used nowadays for a cold set **dessert** based on the 16th century version of the drink, containing cream and lemon, similar to syllabub. According to Shakespeare, Posset is another dessert. This one is mentioned four times in Shakespeare's works, especially, this invitation from the Page in the "*Merry Wives of Windsor*":

Yet be cheerful knight: thou shalt eat a posset to-night at my house;  
(Act V Scene 5) is the most notable one.

Posset was often flavored with Ambergis. Posset is made with sugar, eggs, and white wine, all combined into a type of pudding.

### **Sallet**

While tracing the history of Salad/Sallet, it is found that originally it was enjoyed by ancient Romans and Greeks. As time progressed, salads became more complicated. Recipes varied according to place and time. The basis for the word salad is 'sal', meaning salt. This was chosen because in ancient times, salt was often an ingredient used for dressing a dish. The most popular salad in the days Queen Elizabeth is the Salmon Sallet as everyone was required everyone to eat fish. It was made by mixing onions, violets, and salmon to make a "salmon sallet."

Sallet is mentioned in Shakespeare's plays three times, with the most favorable review of sallet coming from Jack Cade in "*Henry VI Part I*":

"I climbed into this garden, to see if I can eat grass, or pick a sallet another while, which is not amiss to cool a man's stomach this hot weather. And I think this word "sallet" sallet, my

brainpan had been cleft with a brown bill; and, many a time, when I have been dry and bravely marching, it hath served me instead of a quart pot to drink il and now the word "sallet" must serve me to feed on." (Act IV Scene 10)

### **Junkets**

During the Tudor period, preparation of gelatin was hard to prepare. It was used for the preparation of delicacies like jellies, and junket, were prized culinary items. Baptista Minola in "The Taming of the Shrew" has mentioned junket as a dessert during a wedding:

Neighbours and friends, thou bride and bridegroom wants  
For to supply the places at the table, You know there wants  
no junket at the feast. (Act III Scene 2)

Junket, a type of jam, was popular and well liked and is made by mixing gelatin, sugar, and cream then molding the mixture into a wine glass to make a wobbly dessert not unlike jello or more closely resembling flan.

### **Conclusion**

If we analyse Shakespeare's plays, we could find that the Tudor period of history contains a wide variety of fun culinary surprises from junkets to snails that is delightful both for the food enthusiast as well as the brave adventurer. Through the plays of Shakespeare, it is well known that people in the pit were munching on walnuts, hazelnuts, plums, cherries, peaches, and raisins, as well as mussels, periwinkles, and cockles. The upper classes, ensconced in the balcony, chowed down on crabs and sturgeon steaks, along with less common fruits like peaches and figs. Most of the people consumed Oysters, which in Shakespeare's day were dredged out of the Thames and considered a staple food of the poor. Shakespearean plays are the visual portrayal of knowing about the Elizabethan food. It is the place where we come to know "to feast or not to feast" in which the word wine is mentioned in 26 out of Shakespeare's 37 plays.

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J. Gangapriyadarshini, Research Scholar  
Periyar University College of Arts and Science  
Mettur Dam, Salem Dt., [jgangapriyadarshini@yahoo.com](mailto:jgangapriyadarshini@yahoo.com)

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

**J. Gangapriyadarshini, Research Scholar**

**Shakespearean Recipes**

## **Kitchen as a Battlefield in Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*: A Psychological Study**

**Dr. T. Latha, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Assistant Professor**

### **Introduction**

Postmodern literature has been greatly influenced by food images and the usage of food as a metaphor. Theme of food takes a major role in Literature especially in women's writings. In ancient literature, theme of food is used to show the manifestation of togetherness. On the contrary the theme of food in contemporary literature is used to show emotions, character of a person and personal vengeance. Food image also shows one's emotional, psychological and social disorders. Food symbolises identity and culture. Food is essential to life. No one can survive without food. In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Duke Orsino says, "If music be the food of love, play on" (1). Here, he compares music to food which is essential to life. To Orsino, music is essential to his life. To all human beings, food is essential to their life. If there is no food, no life and no happiness. If there is no kitchen, no women, and then no life.

Eating is a human activity. Eating habits and eating with friends and relatives helps to understand human society. Recent psychoanalytic theory suggests that eating practices are essential to self identity. There is no culture without food. One can gain identity through our food. The well-known saying stresses the idea of food and identity as, "You are what you eat." Food gives energy and power. One who does not have enough to eat is powerless. So, food and kitchen are inseparable. Kapur uses the image of food and kitchen to show the distinct identity of her characters.

### **Metaphor of Food in *Difficult Daughters***

Social and psychological factors have influenced people's food habits and choices. Food and domesticity have been a central place in many works of women's literature. Food metaphors are used to characterize people and their position in society. Food shows one's personality, mood and temperament. In order to strengthen their theme, writers use food images in their works.

This paper tries to analyse the metaphor of food presented by Manju Kapur in her novel *Difficult Daughters* and to connect personal identity. Manju Kapur used food as a vehicle to express Ganga's emotion. Food and its preparation dominate Kapur's books. It brings forth various connotations of food in relation to individual and familial identity. The popular saying is, "The best way to reach man's heart is through his stomach." Majority of women agree that food plays an important role in their relationship. Because food helps to stabilize emotions and balance psyche. To Kapur, kitchen is an important place where various power plays are enacted. Food in Kapur's novel shows the cold war between two characters Ganga and Virmati.

To show the life of women Kapur uses the image of food. The significance of food is explained by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esteric in *Food and Culture: A Reader* as: "Food is life and life can be studied and understood through food. Food is both a scholarly concern and a real-life concern." (1). In *Difficult Daughters*, Manju Kapur takes up the issue of the necessity of

women's mastery of cooking in Indian scenario. Kasturi is an expert in cooking. Her training in culinary skill makes her a good housewife. Kapur explains the skill of Kasturi as:

With all the breads she could make, puris with spicy gram inside, luchis big as plates, kulchas, white and long, tandoori rotis, layers of flaky flour, paranthas, crisp and stuffed. With morrabas, never soggy, and dripping juicy sweet. With seasonal pickles of lemon, mango, carrot, cauliflower, turnip, red chillies, dates, ginger, and raisins. With sherbets of khas, roses, and almonds, with hot and cold spiced milk, with sour black carrot kanji, with lassi, thin, cool and salty, or thick and sweet. With barfis made of nuts and grains soaked overnight, and ground fine between two heavy stones. With sweets made of thickened milk. With papad, the sweet ones made out of ripe mango, the sour ones with raw mango, the ones to be fried with dal and potato . . . ” (*Difficult Daughters*- 62-63).

It not only shows Kasturi's skill in cooking but also shows her family status in society. From this, it is clear that her family is a wealthy one and they eat and enjoy all the dishes they like. In *Difficult Daughters*, Kitchen is a metaphor for the daily life of the women in the household. It is a very important place in Kapur's fictional world and plays a dominant position in establishing power rules in the house. In this novel, often the kitchen becomes a battlefield and family politics take shape there. Ganga, the first wife of Professor takes revenge on Virmati, her husband's second wife.

Virmati occupies herself with her studies, does not know cooking well. She often cuts her hands while peeling and chopping vegetables. Whereas Ganga is an expert in cooking. Ganga shows her hatred by adding extra sugar and salt to Virmati's food. Virmati finds out this and complains it to her husband. Her husband complains it to his mother Kishori Devi. She replies that because of Virmati, Ganga's work is increased. Virmati should understand and tolerate it. Virmati explained the result of this issue as: “ In the end Virmati gave up drinking lassi, or eating anything that her husband didn't eat, because hers was always too sweet, too salty, too fried, too soggy, too stale and, if possible, too dirty.”(*Difficult Daughters* -230). Here, Ganga wins the battle. Virmati who spends her time in studies has to depend on Ganga and her mother –in –law Kishori Devi for food.

After some days, Virmati plans to go to kitchen and to prepare the food for her. Ganga establishes her superiority by not allowing Virmati to use the kitchen. The reaction of Ganga was portrayed by Kapur as: “She had once tried going into the kitchen, but there had been such weeping and wailing that day, such ritual rinsing of every pot and pan to wash away her polluted touch, that she felt intimidated. It was clear that not an inch of that territory was going to be yielded.” (*Difficult Daughters* - 230). As a traditional wife, Ganga wants to dominate by taking the kitchen in her hand. Her only weapon is kitchen. She feels that Virmati already conquered her husband. So, she does not allow Virmati to prepare anything for her husband. Kitchen is the only weapon she has in her hand. So, Ganga never allows Virmati to prepare her food. Again, Virmati complains it to her husband. He consoles her by saying, ““Poor thing, you have me, let her have the kitchen.”” Again, Virmati loses her kingdom of kitchen. Virmati is not satisfied with his answer. She wants to share food with the family. Because dinning together at the table has some significance. It strengthens relationship. Relationship towards food symbolizes relationship towards life.

Indian women's world is around family and Kitchen. Kitchen plays an important role to bond a family. Moreover, Kitchen and food are linked to identity. Virmati tries to share her rights in the

kitchen but it was a failure. She wins the favour of Professor. But she wants to win the favour of others by doing household duties. She expresses her position in Professor's house as:

When his friends came, he sent orders to the kitchen that their favourite samosas – kachoris-pakorras –mathris should be made. Along with the khas, almond or rosewater sherbet of the season. All the effort of pounding, grinding, mixing, chopping, cutting, shaping, frying was hers . . . And what about her? What kind of wife was she going to be if everything was done by Ganga?'. (*Difficult Daughters*-216).

Though Virmati is Professor Harish's favourite mistress, she wants to show her skill in cooking and to win the favour of others. But she fails miserably. Virmati tries to forget everything that Ganga did for her. But she could not. To take revenge on Ganga, Virmati started behaving cheap and mean to Ganga. She asked her husband Harish to get sweets for her and then asked him to share the remaining thing with others. Kapur explains Virmati's state of mind as:

While she was working, she felt herself strong, and when she thought about home, ideas of revenge came into her mind, which she slowly put into practice. Her only weapon was her husband, and she started to use that. She displayed her power over him, needling him about Ganga, so that he would lose his temper with his mother over her. She asked him to get sweets and savouries for her, and then magnanimously made him share them with the others. She would make a show of dressing up to go out with him, and he loved flowers in her hair, asked him to tuck a sprig of jasmine or a rosebud into her bun, just as they were leaving. She even took care to dress better than she usually did and smiled seductively at Harish at least once a day in full view of others. (*Difficult Daughters*- 232-233).

Because she does not know what is happening to her. She loved everyone in the house. But no one talks with her except her husband. Moreover, she realized very lately that Ganga did all the works for Harish. Virmati started searching her identity as a wife. According to Vandita Mishra,

Kapur never permits Virmati any assertion of power of freedom. Because, even as she breaks free from old prisons, she is locked into newer ones. . . Her relationship with the Professor, for instance, . . . Even years of studying and working alone do not give her the confidence to strike independent roots and grow . . . Eventually, marriage to the man of her choice is no triumph either, As second wife, she must fight social ostracism outside the house, and compete for the kitchen and conjugal bed with Ganga, the first wife, inside it. (4)

Obviously, Virmati fails in the battle of life. Ganga, an expert in cooking fails to win the favour of her husband. Though, she does all the works for him, he treats her as his maid servant. Ganga learnt cooking and Virmati learnt books, but both fail to learn life. They are psychological and social victims. As an illiterate wife, Ganga needs financial support from her husband Harish. As a modern wife, Virmati needs some emotional support from Harish because her family avoided her for her marriage with a married man.

## Summation

In the battle, neither Ganga nor Virmati wins. The winner is Professor Harish. Kapur portrays the real attitude of the Professor Harish who enjoys his life with two wives. His first wife Ganga serves him like a maidservant and fulfils his needs. His second wife Virmati satisfies his academic

urge. Even though he is an educated person, he never cares for moral values. He emotionally threatens Virmati as: “Co-wives are part of our social traditions. If you refuse me, you will be changing nothing. I don’t live with her in any meaningful way”. At first Virmati fights. Later on, she accepts. Because she has to live with him because of a single word “marriage”. Moreover, she does not have the guts to live alone.

Through the image of kitchen and food Mukherjee presents the world of traditional and modern women through Kasturi, Ganga and Virmati. From this metaphor it is clear that whether they are traditional or modern, they are cheated by men in the name of marriage. Both Ganga and Virmati love each other. In the course of the novel, Virmati feels sorry for disturbing Ganga’s life. She feels for Ganga and expresses it to her husband as: ““I should never have married you,’ she said slowly, ‘and it’s too late now. I’ve never seen it so clearly. It’s not fair.” (212). It shows her good nature. In the beginning her intention is to marry Professor Harish and to get social recognition. After marriage she realized the truth that she is disturbing the life of innocent Ganga. When Virmati goes for higher studies leaving her husband Ganga says, “Poor Virmati. What woman wants to exchange a home for a classroom?” (29). Both Ganga and Virmati love each other. But without knowing his true nature they fight for “Professor Harish”, who is the villain in this novel. To explain the nature and feelings of two women Ganga and Virmati, Kapur uses food metaphor in this novel.

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Dr. T. Latha, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of English  
NKR. Govt. Arts College for Women  
Namakkal-1  
[tlatharamesh@gmail.com](mailto:tlatharamesh@gmail.com)

## **Food as a Social Force in the Select Works of Mahasweta Devi**

**U. Shankari, Ph.D. Research Scholar (PT)**

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Since time memorial, eating has been a basic human activity, an activity which is not only necessary for human existence but also associated with their economical status. Eating is both a necessity and a pleasure. Eating habits and rituals help the better understanding of their standard of their living. Poverty is not a personal choice, but a reflection of society. Our culture does this to the point that it ignores the effect of root causes shaped by society and beyond the control of the individual. Food carries multiple meanings that serve to derive the action of the plots and the characters. Through food writers reflect on the aspects of Indian culture. The present day writers use food and eating to symbolize cultural issues of acceptance, resistance, and preservation of culture, as well as symbols of memory, emotions, narrative history, relationships, power and consumption.

Mahasweta Devi has critically reflected on the social class position in her literary works exploring the dilemma of the bourgeois intellectual's social loyalties. Devi's writings have a pronounced class consciousness in her writings. Devi used the image of food in her writings to highlight the acts of local resistance to aggression and oppression of the people. In her introduction to *Agnigarbha* (1978), Devi explained her mission for writings as thus: 'I find my people still groaning under hunger, landless, indebtedness and bonded labor. Anger, luminous, burning and passionate, directed against a system that has failed to liberate my people from these horrible constraints is the only source of inspiration in all my writing.' The present paper is going to explore strive of people for their food and hunger for using all their means of power. By using four short stories, *Rudali*, *Breast Giver*, *Salt and Statue* of Devi, the paper portrays the idea of poverty and how the characters in the story tackle their hunger in different ways.

*Rudali*, one of her most impressive short stories represented the miserable condition of a low-caste starving family in Indian society. Sanichari, the central character of the story, is an untouchable by caste. The very opening of the story introduces Sanichari along with her socio-economic environment: "In Thahad village, ganjus and dusheds were in majority. Sanichari was ganju by caste. Like the other villagers, her life too was lived in desperate poverty (54)." This story centers on the two women who develop a partnership for survival. Sanichari was in need to go for the profession of a pain mourner (*Rudali*) because there was nobody to provide her with

basic necessities of life like food and shelter. She had to sell her tears which she never shed at the death of her own people but the death of the landowners so that she could earn her daily bread.

Even the rituals in this society became a financial burden for the poor people who are struggling for their daily bread. Every death in the village is mediated by certain rituals created by the rich people, which are bringing a burden to the poor people. In one occasion Sanicahri exclaims, “Was one to weep or worry about how to burn the corpses and feed the neighbors cheaply at the shradh? (55).” The author in an ironic vein pictures here the pathetic predicament of the under privileged people, who do not even have time to mourn the death of their family members owing to their busy efforts to meet the religious demands. Sanichari was unable weep even at her husband’s death. Because she has to shoulder the responsibilities of pooling up the expense of the funeral of her husband. So she do not time for mourning.

But at the other hand when someone died in a malik mahajan household, the amount of money spent on the death ceremonies immediately raised the prestige of the family. The status of the Rudali also rose, “We can offer worship after all sever rupees! (73).” Funeral wailing has turned up to be a means of survival for Sanichari. Devi sarcastically points out how the domestic under privileged people are forced to put off not only their pleasures but also their personal sorrows due to their socio-economic constraints. There is a sense of freedom from their sad life in this alternative profession of funeral weeping that earns them cash and food grains which satisfy both their mind and body.

In the next story *Breast Giver* from the collection *Breast Stories* the problem of poverty and survival has been handled by Devi in a new venture. In this story Jashoda, the protagonist is indulging herself in professional motherhood only to satisfy her family’s hunger and poverty. She is a foster mother and breast giver to her master’s house and her breasts are the only means to manage food for her own family. Here Jashoda’s reproduction turns to be labor which leads to her survival. In order to have milk all the time, she needs be giving birth to child, which in turn secures her job at the master’s house. Jashoda in this story play many roles of sufferings as a wife, mother, wet nurse and an alienated breast cancer patient.

Devi in this story explained Jashoda’s means of survival which has transformed into a commodity. Though Jashoda goes to the Haldar’s house for feeding, Haldar’s mistress being a lady shows jealous on Jashoda by calling her as a legendary cow of fulfillment for her family. The difference between the luxury of rich class and the poverty of poor class is exposed by the writer very explicitly. The Haldar family women become traitors of Jashoda by escaping even their basic duty of feeding their own children. Instead they praise the lord for sending Jashoda as the cow of fulfillment. One can notice the economic oppression that can be seen in the lives of

poor people, “Haldar’s mistress sees Jashoda’s mammal projections in a charmed envy and says, and the good lord sent you down as the legendary cow of fulfillment (48).” The wives of Haldar’s family felt happy to wear European cut and they no need for feeding a child of their own. They never felt the pain of Jashoda in doing such activity. It is clearly stated in the following lines: “The wives have no excuse to say ‘no’. The wives are happy. They can wear blouses and bras of European cut...they are no longer obliged to breast feed their babies (52).”

Devi places her mother-goddess Jashoda as a metaphor for India as ‘mother for hire’. The breasts not only historically represented as a meaning for temptation of rape and exploitation. But it is also having a personal meaning of resistance. At the end of the story, Jashoda’s breasts which fed twenty of her own children and fifty others can no longer deliver to the demands of her hungry consumers. Jashoda’s breast milk has dried up and she has lost her only means of production, her “left tit” “flaming red” “like a stone pushing inside (62).” Towards the end of Jashoda’s life, no prophetic dream comes to guide her. Though she fed many sons and daughters, nobody was there to take care of her during her last days. Her body is revealed as a mere vessel that man through his religious symbols spurs on. All those sons and daughters used her for her will and now left empty and lacking. At last Jashoda suffers a painful and sickened death. Her plentiful breasts now become a gaping wound.

Devi’s short story *Salt* is printed in her collection *Bitter Soil*, which holds a special symbolic place for salt in Indian literary and cultural traditions. According to the ancient saying, ‘Love like salt’, is said to have originated in India. Love is like salt the flavoring that makes all food valued from ancient times, makes life palatable and beautiful while it adds incalculable value to living. This symbolism is applied to Devi’s stories about the outcast and the oppressed of the indigenous tribes of India. This story of her speaks of the love that these rejected ones deserve that should be demonstrated through equitable political, social and economic advantages. Here Devi portrayed the story of a poor tribal community that steals the salt and licks from a reserve forest for their survival.

Exploitation is the predominant theme in this story, highlighting the problems of the innocent tribal people who are taken advantage of, not only by Uttamchand, but also by everyone in the position of power. Yet, after the deaths of “three men and an elephant”, the headman feels that “someone else was responsible (113).” Where life is reduced to a bare struggle for survival, conventional morality ceases to apply. Purti the protagonist’s role in the tragedy highlights the impossibility of making black and white moral judgments in certain situations. The headman accuses Purti of endangering the lives of his entire community through his carelessness in allowing the elephant to see him stealing salt.

*Statue* a story collection from *Old Women* is a tragic tale of forbidden love, which returns to haunt Dulali, now an old woman pre-occupied only with her day-to-day substance. The children in this story spend their life by doing some menial works for their survival. The primary motto of their life was to pacify the hunger of their bodies and not the needs of their brains. Hunger is presented as the greatest reality in the life of Dulali. “She has accepted hunger pangs as chronic and inalterable reality (13).” Dulali is found sitting by her hearth even in the hottest months of Bengal. The major reason behind that was “with her belly always empty or three-quarters empty, there is nothing left in her body. She likes the fire warmth and for lack of blood feels chilled all the times (14).” All her thoughts and dreams are only belly-centered.

Dulali in this story is suffering from injustice all her life. She is kept on ration by her family members, “Some rice-salt-oil-lentil at month’s end, two sarees yearly (13).” She tries to solve her life’s problems in different ways. She starts to collect the pots that are left at Monasha’s shrine and sometimes steals lentils from the other compound. She wanders in the dense jungle of the Thakur and eats whatever she gets due to her poverty. In this socially secluded state, her mind oscillates with complicated thoughts. Dulali finally realizes that as time passes, for a woman, the ideology of love remains a memory, but she acknowledges defeat in the hands of hunger.

As the revolutionary Tamil poet Mahakavi Bharathiyar stated “Thani oru manithanukku unavu illai yenil intha jagathinai azhitiduvom!”, food is common and basic necessity for each and every human being in this world without any inequality. The greatest reason for poverty is the structure of the society. Without structural changes in this society it may be very difficult to nullify the disparities and poverty.

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U. Shankari  
Ph.D. Research Scholar (PT)  
Dept. of English  
Government Arts College (Autonomous)  
Salem-7  
[shankariliterature@gmail.com](mailto:shankariliterature@gmail.com)

**Chocolate, Cookie, Pancake, etc.:**  
**A Fresh, New Recipe for Fear, Murder, and Detective Fiction**

**Dr. Smita Verghese, Assistant Professor**

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In the use-up-stray-ingredients economy that good caterers invariably subscribe to, I noted egg whites left over from making Babsie tarts, a couple of oranges that I'd ordered along with the lemons, and several unopened jars of poppy seeds. I pounced on these ingredients. I'd assemble a cake-like orange poppy-seed bread. Or die in the attempt.

As always, cooking lifted me from the doldrums. While the egg whites were whipped into a froth, I measured the dry ingredients and then delighted in the fine spray of citrus oil that slicked my fingers when I scraped the zest from the oranges. Outside, the sun shone brilliantly in a deep blue sky and a warm breeze swished through the aspens. I opened the window over the sink. The boys' music reverberated along the street. Out back Jake howled an accompaniment. I smiled. If the music made the boys happy, I wasn't going to say a thing.

I was folding the poppy seeds into the batter when John Richard Korman jumped in front of the window. I screamed and dropped the bowl in the sink. The bowl shattered. Jake howled. Locked out back, the dog couldn't help me. I'd disarmed the security system. I hadn't turned it back on. Oh, God.

Unthinking, I wheeled around wildly for the phone. But by then John Richard had pulled off the screen, reached through the window, and grabbed my wrist. (305, Diane Mott Davidson, *The Grilling Season*)

Thus, Goldy Bear-Schulz's perfectly happy moment, which Goldy works very hard to achieve against all odds, comes to a crashing end with the entrance of her ex-abusive-husband John Richard Korman. The JERK, a name Goldy and Marla (John Richard's other ex-wife) christen him with and use while referring to him in conversation (incidentally, a name that is inspired by John Richard's initials), enhances his sudden, violent entrance on to this scene of serenity with further viciousness. Twisting Goldy's wrist painfully, slapping Goldy hard, "yanking her hand over the window frame" (306, Diane Mott Davidson, *The Grilling Season*) resulting in a bleeding forearm, threatening her relentlessly (all of which comes very easily to him), John Richard Korman continues to "make his presence felt" until Goldy decides to protect herself from his abuse with the help of a "...heavy piece of ham..." (307, Diane Mott Davidson, *The Grilling Season*) lying "...on the counter" (307, Diane Mott Davidson, *The Grilling Season*). This move by Goldy, in the absence of

knives at hand, brings food which always remains the centre of Goldy's life into sharp focus. Its food to the rescue for this caterer turned sleuth.

Diane Mott Davidson is the creator of a popular culinary mystery series, revolving around an amateur detective named Goldy Bear-Schulz. The detective in this series Goldy Schulz, once Goldy Bear, is a caterer by profession. She runs a successful catering business called "*Goldilocks' Catering, Where Everything Is Just Right! (Sweet Revenge, 6).*"<sup>i</sup> It should be noted here, right away, that this success, both professional and personal, for Goldy is a very slow build and is hard earned; in fact, a fairly relaxed Goldy<sup>ii</sup>(both in her personal and professional life) only partially emerges by the thirteenth and the fourteenth books in the series.<sup>iii</sup>Goldy is initially seen trying to run her business all on her own, and later teams up with her loyal, and long-suffering, fellow-caterer-assistant Julian Teller. Along with Julian, her best friend Marla, her second husband and the love of her life Detective Tom Schulz, and her son Arch, Goldy keeps falling into sticky situations involving murder, mayhem and more and inevitably ends up solving (the) mysteries and catching the perpetrators of the crimes committed.

The series is exclusively set in a fictional town called Aspen Meadow in Colorado and we find Goldy dealing with bitter winters, complicated "falls"<sup>iv</sup>, snowfall, tricky winding roads, lakes and other water bodies, snowboarding areas precariously perched off awkward mountainous terrain, and many more of such geographical hurdles and impediments. These become issues of interest because the story winds itself around how Goldy and Julian have to deal with the above mentioned obstacles or snags, placed in their way both by geography and weather, while working their way around recipes, mounds and mounds of cutting, slicing, dicing, cooking, pre-prep for a do, getting the dishes just right, moving cutlery, and cooking utensils to their venues, cleaning up afterwards, looking out for more help when it comes to serving food at their parties and "dos", and so much more. Throw in an unplanned<sup>v</sup> murder at any one of Goldy's catering stints, and a few unaccounted-for bodies, and the recipe for this series of murder mysteries proves to be more than its share of mouth-watering adventurous— rich, delicious, and delectable.

As one reads Davidson's culinary series and gets to know Goldy better, it becomes apparent that this caterer is no stranger to fear. As seen earlier, dealing with an abusive ex-husband who stalks her life and continues to abuse her, even after her second marriage to a policeman (no less), is the reality and base of Goldy Bear's life. That fear defines everything that Goldy does, like getting trained on Med Wives 101, installing a high-end security system, carrying a gun, dealing with one crisis over another, and cooking. Every time fear rears its ugly head, Goldy starts cooking—either for a do she has signed up for or to try and come up with a new recipe which she can use in her next catering stint. Interestingly, the fear that is a part and parcel of Goldy's personality progressively changes form and shape with each book in the series. From getting a catering business going with slim chances of success, to having no money, from getting away from John Richard Korman one fine night son in tow, to alternately worrying about whether her son Arch will turn out to be like his father and/or cave into the undue pressure set by John Richard Korman, time and again, from dealing with complex father-son relationships to finding love and having to deal with a son-and-stepfather

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

Dr. Smita Verghese

Chocolate, Cookie, Pancake, etc.: A Fresh, New Recipe for Fear, Murder, and Detective Fiction

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relationship on a daily basis, from friends to family to assistants, right back to friends and family again, from cranky, over demanding customers to those who leave everything to the caterer, from dead bodies to getting her business shut down time and again because of murder or attempted murder—this lead protagonist of the Davidson culinary series lends a whole new meaning and definition to fear. And the ready weapon she uses to fight fear, constantly, is her cooking. On an occasion when someone shoots at her house, for example, the following is Goldy’s train of thought:

Again, the gunshot echoed in my ears. I couldn’t stop trembling. Where were the cops? Why was it so cold in here?

I needed comfort. I was going to make *scones*.

I felt better immediately. (Davidson, 12, *Sticks and Scones*)

Another example may be seen in the very first book in the series *Catering to Nobody*, where Goldy’s business gets shut down when her ex-father-in-law, a guest at the wake Goldy is catering, gets poisoned. The investigating officer handling the case, Detective Tom Schulz, decides to visit Goldy for some routine questions and on entering her kitchen observes, “It sure smells good in here” (Davidson, 64). A little while later he says, “Just calm down...Let’s start over. You can begin by offering me a nice cup of espresso and some of those rolls they’re eating out in the kitchen. I don’t ordinarily take refreshment at a suspect’s house, but I am going to make a large exception, since it smells so good in here” (Davidson, 65).

Similarly, in *Double Shot*, Davidson’s twelfth book in the series, Goldy’s ex-husband John Richard Korman gets shot at and killed and Goldy, after being attacked and her food being sabotaged, gets framed for the murder. So, after her statements at the police station, she immediately gets to cooking the very next day. “I checked on the vanilla yogurt: It had drained and left behind a thick, smooth, custard-like mass. I whipped a mountain of cream, folded it into the yogurt, and set the soft mixture back in the refrigerator to chill. Then I trimmed and chopped peaches, nectarines, and strawberries to layer with the yogurt mixture in crystal parfait glasses when I arrived at the country club” (Davidson, 168, *Double Shot*).

Thus, any occasion that is structured around fear finds Goldy cooking to deal with her immediate fears. Throughout the series, one can map the specific areas where Goldy is most likely to start cooking for herself, family, friends, and neighbours, or preparing for a client/customer signed on. Temporary loss of *Goldilocks’ Catering*, financial crisis, dealing with John Richard Korman, emotional issues concerning Arch, Tom, Julian, Marla, and other characters dead or alive who are friends and neighbours, her past and its abusive patterns<sup>vi</sup>, and the discovery of a dead body—these are key areas of distress for Goldy which always sees her in her kitchen, or other locations where her job takes her, cooking away to glory.

It is important, interesting, and fascinating to note that there is one other fundamental area where Goldy’s cooking becomes significant in terms of a sign and representation of not only what the character stands for but what the genre<sup>viii</sup> in general is looking for in terms of a definition. Once

the bodies are discovered, once a crime is committed, the detection is what leads any reader to want to get to the end of the book. This is the underlying format, grid to any good detective novel. The “how” of the detective’s method, carves a unique niche for her/him in this genre. And it is in this detection that Goldy cooks the most. While solving a crime, piecing and gathering information learnt in random order, Goldy always moves towards a recipe and executes it (sometimes perfectly and sometimes not-so-perfectly). The process of the cooking is always interspersed with the execution of an ongoing recipe, which is *how* she solves mysteries surrounding crime. “I peeled the potatoes, dropped them in the water, and checked on the enchiladas, which had begun to bubble. Next, I nuked the chicken stock. After slicing a mountain of celery, I began chopping onions. And that was when I again saw the blood on the rock, the map floating downstream” (Davidson, *Sweet Revenge*, 359). This scene is followed by the execution of a new recipe Goldy titles the *unorthodox shepherd* while she keeps revising unanswered questions that could solve a murder committed. While working on both the recipe as well as the several clues, facts that she has gathered so far, she also keeps wondering about the involvement of Sandee Brisbane the victim turned murderer responsible for Goldy’s ex-husband’s death. One may see, therefore, the winning combination of putting ingredients together for a dish to be served up for dinner along with serving up a murderer to the police.

It is further remarkable that this Episcopalian caterer turned sleuth, moves from recipe cards to booting up the computer for her recipes, and the novels in themselves moved from showcasing recipes in the middle of the books, interrupting the narrative as a structure from time to time, to listing out the recipes (all at once) at the end of the book. The idea in the initial run of the books was perhaps, to engage the reader gripped with the wanting to know who the murderer is, to relax, calm down, and experience a culinary delight in the mouth-watering recipes that keep coming into play time and again throughout the novels. The solve, impactful as it is, gets help, much like the detective in the series, from the cooking, food, recipes, ingredients, and the overall culinary experience the books aim to achieve and offer out there for its readers/audiences.

A third enthralling aspect of this mix, and melange is the fact that Goldy’s profession as a caterer helps her in her detection, sleuthing, and/or detective work. Everyone wants to gossip with the caterer. This is another recurrent and visible pattern within the Goldy Bear-Schulz’s culinary mystery series. Goldy right from the beginning is extremely confident about solving crime, which Detective Tom Schulz finds extremely appealing, alluring, and attractive in the good cook turned investigator. It is, in fact, important to note that this is the kind of confidence lacking in Tom himself, despite or because of his professional limitations. While Tom is bound by the word of the law, the people he meets surrounding a crime are immediately on the defensive because of a man in uniform. The truth that needs to come out when there are no more secrets can never happen in Tom’s experience as everyone tends to hide something from the police. This hurdle, however, does not exist for Goldy at all. She belongs to a working class that should be seen working silently, listen to everyone’s troubles and woes in life but never be heard. This disregard as well as an innate trust in one’s caterer helps her solve cases more often than most cops. Consequently, her true profession as a caterer lends a helping hand to Goldy in her sleuthing, detection, and crime fighting, which incidentally is not her chosen job or profession. This makes her a unique detective in her own right.

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**Chocolate, Cookie, Pancake, etc.: A Fresh, New Recipe for Fear, Murder, and Detective Fiction**

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The real question is, will Ms. Goldy Bear-Schulz who helps feed other people's "little grey cells" ever be allowed to take her seat amongst the upper crust, stalwart detectives like Monsieur Poirot, Miss Marple, Sherlock Holmes, Tommy and Tuppence, Dr. Watson, Auguste Dupin, or any other detective from police stations and precincts? Does Goldy Bear have "little grey cells" that are working all the time, "mon ami?" Could she be a classic Hercule Poirot? Yes and no. In terms of the "little grey cells" yes; in fact, her "little grey cells" seem to be overworked and are also in perpetual espresso effected overdrive.

But fundamentally she is no Hercule Poirot. For one, she is not a man and for two her exclusive skills at detection are not her *only* asset (as has been noted earlier). This is what makes Goldy Bear-Schulz exceptional and considerably different from detectives established in the genre of detective fiction. For our detective does not have the luxury of time, energy, financial stability, or the ambience required to be a full-fledged detective, who sits back to eat some exotic dish cooked by someone else, wondering why one must have only one stomach, and then to get the grey cells into working mode. Goldy Bear ends up cooking for herself and others, serves up the dishes she whips up for paying customers and their guests, cleaning up afterwards, eating the dishes that she indulges in, and figuring out who could have committed a particularly grizzly murder while driving her *truck* all over Aspen Meadow. Along the same lines, one can never mistake Goldy Bear-Korman-Schulz to be a Sherlock Holmes either. Too many responsibilities and worries over how to deal with bringing up a young son who has already witnessed many an emotional upheaval in his young life already, Goldy cannot afford to indulge in any narcotic stronger than caffeine<sup>viii</sup>.

It may be also said safely, that Goldy Bear-Schulz can be no Miss Marple either; for she is no elderly woman with excess of time on her hands working out mysteries over dainty cups of tea. She does have the small-town life, thought process, attitude, as well as the observant personality she shares with Miss Marple but that is where we can say the comparison ends. From that point Goldy Bear-Schulz deviates radically, for she does not match up to any aspect of the image that Miss Marple inspires in her audiences' minds. In conclusion, it would be easy to claim that Davidson's culinary mystery series is a creation which readers might consider romancing over a weekend, rather than allow into an intellectual arena of any sort. That would be "elementary dear Watson", for Goldy has an "unscientific estimation" (Davidson, *Sweet Revenge*, 338) along with cuisine and catering as tools to help in her detection<sup>ix</sup>.

In a move to belong to the big guns of detective fiction world however, one cannot ignore this single mother, a victim of physical abuse within a marriage, a divorcee trying to put a failed marriage behind her, a woman who marries a second time and chooses to wed a cop, a woman with a broken thumb in three different places, a woman who has the courage to make another ex-wife of her ex-husband's Marla Korman her best friend, a woman who makes a success of her life in the same town where she has failed utterly, miserably, completely, a woman who chooses not to run away entirely but face her nemesis head-on, a caterer dealing with insults of different shades on a daily basis<sup>x</sup> to a successful caterer/detective who is sought out to help solve crime committed, a financially poverty stricken individual to a financially independent woman of her own standing, a woman who moves

from hand written recipes on cards to firing up a computer for her recipes typed out and stored—this is no ordinary woman, mother, wife, friend, mentor, cook, or detective. Our caterer turned sleuth, completely out of shape, robust, freckled, with locks of gold on her head, waking up to yoga routines, overstressed otherwise, glugging down cups and cups of espresso, working and cooking all the time while solving mysteries and crime is all at once lovable, irresistible, unavoidable, and un-ignorable; a detective with a heart and the courage to make her own unique place in the world of detective fiction.

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Dr. Smita Verghese  
Assistant Professor  
St. Francis College for Women  
Begumpet  
Hyderabad-500006  
Telangana  
[verghese.smita@gmail.com](mailto:verghese.smita@gmail.com)

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End Notes:

<sup>i</sup> This success, in terms of running a business, is seen only by the fourteenth novel in the series. By this time, we also see Goldy's relative success in her personal life as well.

<sup>ii</sup> Calling Goldy "relaxed" in this context is high exaggeration because this central character of the series is never seen completely relaxed or stress-free ever.

<sup>iii</sup> A series which incidentally ends with book seventeen.

<sup>iv</sup> Falls as in one of the many seasons, not falling down which Goldy manages to do most if not all the time.

<sup>v</sup> It needs to be noted here that these murders are "unplanned" as far as Goldy is concerned; however, these murders are quite planned as far as the murderer is concerned.

<sup>vi</sup> The books in the series always revisit Goldy's dark past with several recollections of Goldy's abuse at the hands of the JERK, which almost always includes a reference to her thumb which will not bend properly because it was broken in three places with the help of a hammer by her ex-husband John Richard Korman.

<sup>vii</sup> The genre in focus being detective fiction in a broad framework and culinary mysteries specifically.

<sup>viii</sup> "I went down to the kitchen. When other people's lives get chaotic, they smoke, they drink, they exercise, they shop. I cook. At the moment it seemed we all needed the comfort of homemade bread" (Davidson, *The Cereal Murders*, 195).

<sup>ix</sup> "Nothing equals mixing and baking to clear the head..." (Davidson, *Catering to Nobody*, 91)

<sup>x</sup> "Julian had graduated from Elk Park Prep with high honors; he had been at Cornell before transferring to the University of Colorado. But clients inevitably treated us as if we were uneducated dunces" (Davidson, *Sweet Revenge*, 252)

## **Kitchen – the Real Companion**

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

Food is the third most important requirement to live in this world after air and water. It is common to all living beings. It is the basic and essential need for survival. It reveals a person's culture, personal identity and social origin. Dishes are tasty when a person cooks with love, interest and patience. Mostly people's celebrations are centered on good food. Preparation, production and serving of food are culinary art. One who enjoys cooking would definitely experiment with various flavours and combinations. It has been scientifically proven that tasting good food can lift a person's mood and it produces endorphins.

Food offers a powerful imagery. Food and literature are inseparable in life. After world war, Japan, the land of rising sun was crushed with no identity. But they sought intellectual identity and they found the purpose of life with their hope. Food in contemporary Japanese literature helps one to understand their tradition, religious perspectives and cultural background. Eventually, Japanese literature started developing their unique style.

This paper focuses on Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen*, which combines traditional Japanese culture and American influences. She used kitchen and food as symbols to overcome pain. Her sharp observation on society and culture is remarkable. Kitchen is the symbol of comfort, support, warmth, security and peace for Mikage Sakurai, the protagonist.

Companionship plays a major role in everyone's life and the same is shared by Bertrand Russell in his *Marriage and Morals* which states that those who had never known the deep intimacy and the intense companionship of mutual love have missed the best things that life gives. Only a real companion would brighten up the soul when one is in a difficult situation. Yoshimoto portrayed kitchen as the real companion for Mikage Sakurai when she was in distress and lonely. Only the kitchen inspired her soul up.

Pain of losing dear ones in life is quite difficult to overcome. Yoshimoto helps the reader to overcome such pangs of loneliness through her young characters. Though Mikage felt no connection with the outside world, she questioned about her purpose of living. When she was in deep grief she helped herself to overcome through the kitchen and cooking. The opening line of the novel *Kitchen* is "The place I like best in this world is the kitchen. No matter where it is, no

matter what kind, if it's kitchen, if it's a place where they make food, it's fine with me” (Yoshimoto 1).

Mikage Sakurai lost her grandmother, the only surviving relative in the beginning of the novel. She was in such deep depression and had no strength. She spent all her time in her kitchen. She slept in the kitchen besides the refrigerator- the hum of it kept her away from loneliness by comforting and giving her company. Kitchen is her only supporter. Mikage says, “Now only the kitchen and I are left. It's just a little nicer than being all alone” (Yoshimoto 1). She always wanted to breathe her last moments in her kitchen.

Yuichi Tanabe, classmate of Mikage visited her home. He had a part-time job in her grandmother's favourite flower shop. He helped Mikage during her grandmother's funeral. He visited Mikage's house to mitigate her grief. He also invited her to his apartment for dinner by telling that he and his mother were looking forward to her coming. When she was in Tanabe's home, Mikage found that his mother looked different and beautiful. She felt in her, a strange beauty. Later she comes to know that his mother is not his real mother but his father. After Tanabe's mother died Yuji changed his gender and became his mother and father. Tanabe's transsexual mother Eriko-San was a kind hearted woman.

When Mikage visited Tanabe's house, instead of gazing at the architecture and interiors she keenly observed the kitchen when he prepared tea for her. Though the kitchen was not arranged she still fell in love at first sight. For Mikage kitchen is not just a place but her companion. The following quotations portray her observation of his kitchen, “I took everything in: the good quality of the mat on the wood floor ... A Silverstone frying pan and a delightful German-made vegetable peeler— a peeler to make even the laziest grandmother enjoy slip, slipping those skin off” and the finest quality of “Porcelain bowls, gratin dishes, gigantic platters, two beer steins” (Yoshimoto12). Opening his small refrigerator, she found it neatly packed. There were no table and carpet in the kitchen. Through Mikage's observations one can feel the admiration.

Being an elderly woman, Eriko invited Mikage to stay with them in their house because she liked her. Mikage too liked her. As she felt is too expensive for a single person to stay in her grandmother's house, so she shifted her things to Tanabe's house. This shows the transformation as it is unusual for a woman to stay in somebody's house in Japanese culture. She planned to stay until she was able to find a convenient and secured house for herself. Eriko bought a packed magnificent juicer for her and insisted that freshly squeezed juice gave good health and beautiful skin. Along with it she also gifted a pretty glass that was decorated with a banana motif and insisted Mikage to drink lot of juice. Further Tanabe told her to drink banana juice in it.

After the huge loss Tanabe and Mikage understood that they cannot change their past but they can change their future. They both found food to be a great healer. They both had lost their dear ones and neither family nor relatives are there to support them. In this terrible situation they heal themselves through food. Yuichi asked Mikage to make him a professional dinner and she planned enthusiastically a magnificent feast. She started listing out in a paper to buy the needed items. To overcome such grief they both planned to deviate themselves through cooking. Food made them feel better. It healed their miseries. Kitchen and food played the role of a true companion and helped them to overcome their grief.

As kitchen was close to Mikage's heart she once dreamt about his kitchen- she listened to the sound of water splashing on the stainless steel, scrubbing the sink in his kitchen and Tanabe is mopping the floor and they both are singing a song and enjoying in that silent kitchen. He asked her a dish, ramen in that dream. When she woke up in the middle of the night, she saw Tanabe. She told him about her dream but there was no response. She did not stop there by explaining her dream. The love for food tempted her to cook in that midnight. So she went to the kitchen and chopped vegetables to make ramen in her favorite place - the kitchen. When she slipped the noodles into the boiling water, she felt amazed.

As Mikage found her love for kitchen, she begins her career in the culinary field after many painful and lonely nights whereas Tanabe takes to alcohol to escape from the real world. Here Yoshimoto presents a new woman through Mikage. Though she herself was in deep grief she comes out of her pain and helped Tanabe to overcome from his pain and the habit of alcohol. For Mikage kitchen is the representation of some distant longing which engraved her soul. She is a culinary teacher and she had an inborn interest for cooking. She had taught herself. She indulged in cooking to distract herself from the worries which have happened in her life, so she bought three books to learn cooking; they were fundamentals, theory and practice. She read one by one to improve her skills in culinary arts. She showed her involvement and started reading theory, memorizing caloric content, temperatures and raw ingredients. Her leisure time was spent on cooking.

Cooking gives Mikage a great feel and enthusiasm. She spent all her earnings from the part-time job into it. Whatever her mood though happy, sad, angry or cheery she spent her time solely in cooking. In the beginning, she learnt cooking with biggest flaws. It lacked precision. Her dishes turned out bad because of lack of proportion. For example, when she cooked in an oven before it had come to its temperature, she took the dish out for chopping and it got spoilt. She was confident that her dinner was not worse than those of the average house wife. Initially, she started cooking dishes like boiled pork, cold Chinese noodles, cucumber salad, omelets and vegetables.

Mikage would wipe out bowls carefully and replace those caps on the spices every time. She arranged everything neatly after use. She had the habit of charting out the steps in advance to avoid mistakes. As days passed, she learnt to handle situations patiently by correcting her mistakes. This shows her understanding towards life and how her love for cooking toned her. She not only taught in cooking classes but also worked in the television and magazine. She became famous. In Mikage's perspective those who learned cooking would never know the real joy of cooking as herself. She felt the value of cooking and realised its tremendous positive impact on her life. However, these students learnt only for the sake of marriage, without realizing the value of culinary art. "Dressed in their aprons, their smiling faces like flowers, learning to cook, absorbed in their little troubles and perplexities, they fall in love and marry. I think that's great." (Yoshimoto 83).

Mikage was never afraid of burns and scars while cooking. She no longer suffered from sleepless nights. She was thrilled with the simple pleasures of everyday. She spent her days by eagerly waiting for the challenges and to face them boldly. Both Mikage and Tanabe suffered from the loss and death of their loved ones. They both avoided talking about such sufferings and pains. Instead they stepped forward with hope in their life. They both had deep understanding and a kind of telepathy. They were not sure about their relationship whether they are friends or lovers, but they acted like a brother and sister of the same family.

Mikage planned to go to Izu peninsula to do some research with her fellow assistants Sensei, Nori and Kuri. Nori and Kuri are Mikage's seniors by one year. They had graduated from the same university after completing four years of culinary study together. They are best friends and they both have good taste for dressing. They are good friends and supporters of Mikage.

Before Mikage goes on a trip she met Chika who was a head girl at Eriko's night club. She called Mikage to Sarashina, the soba shop. They spoke about Eriko's death. Meanwhile Chika enjoyed soba noodles with fried bits of tempura batter and Mikage ordered extra thick noodles with chicken. Chika spoke about Tanabe's emotions after his mother's death. Chika made her realize that they are in love. But Mikage did not concentrate on that talk though Chika gave her address to visit him because he was faraway.

Mikage called Tanabe over phone when she was in the restaurant; she remembered him and asked about him and his food. Yoshimoto expressed places and food in Japan. Tanabe described about the place and food in Isehara:

“Well, there’s a Denny’s. Ha, ha, just kidding. Let’s see, there’s a Shrine on the mountaintop; I guess it’s famous. At the base of the mountain there’s this inn that serves nothing but tofu— what they call ‘monk’s food’ – which is what I had for dinner.

“What kind of food is that? Sounds interesting.”

“Oh, right, taking a professional interest, are you? Well, it’s tofu, tofu, and more tofu. Savory custard, tofu baked with miso, fried tofu, citron, sesame seeds – everything with tofu. Even the clear soup is served with – surprise – egg tofu floating in it. (135)

After the call, she had a katsudon in that restaurant. She never tasted such delicious katsudon in her life time. She perked up and split her chopsticks. When she tasted it she felt the taste was incredible with good quality meat, the eggs and onions cooked well, excellent broth, rice with right degree of firmness. Overall the taste was excellent. She felt like calling the cook and appreciate for the delicious dinner. It was flawless with unusual skill. She ate well and told him to pack one more katsudon as parcel. She bought that for Tanabe. She hired a taxi to Isehara where he stayed. Throughout the night she travelled to meet him. When she enjoyed the taste of katsudon she remembered him. She reached his place after many struggles and finally she met him. He was shocked and surprised seeing her. When he tasted the katsudon he just put down his chopstick and looked straight into her eyes and said, “This is the best katsudon I’ve ever had in my life,” “It’s incredibly delicious.” ” (Yoshimoto 151). The very night she returned to her place.

In Izu, Mikage enjoyed her research work. She ate sashimi, prawns, wild boar and gained weight. When it was time for her to leave for Tokyo after completing her research, her love for Izu food made her parcel jam with wasabi, pickle and eel pies and sent them all to her apartment in Tokyo through express mail. Despite sending the courier she also phoned Tanabe and conveyed her arrival and also about the food. She was also generous enough to share her favourite food with him.

Thus, Banana Yoshimoto has effectively portrayed the personal tragedies of the two young characters Mikage and Tanabe, in her *Kitchen* with the symbolic representation of food and kitchen. The solace that the protagonist Mikage attains through food and kitchen has been the central part of the novel. She not only overcame her pain but also helped Tanabe to recover from his mother’s loss. The companionship with food made them both escape from the miseries of the living world.

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Dr. V. Sangeetha  
Professor and Head  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
Salem 636011  
Tamil Nadu  
[sk19@periyaruniversity.ac.in](mailto:sk19@periyaruniversity.ac.in)

M. R. Sripriya  
Ph.D. Research Scholar  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
Salem 636011  
Tamil Nadu  
[sriyasublime18@gmail.com](mailto:sriyasublime18@gmail.com)

**Cooking as a Remedy for Stress in Amulya Malladi's  
*Serving Crazy with Curry***

**Sophia Mary, Ph.D. Research Scholar, English**

Amulya Malladi is a diasporic Indian writer in English and she is very famous for her seven novels. In Malladi's *Serving Crazy with Curry*, Devi Veturi the young heroine and protagonist lives alone in a flat undergoes a great psychological depression. In her late twenties she struggles for her identity and experiences a life of professional and personal failures. Devi attempts suicide but gets rescued by her own mother. In the beginning of the novel Devi has a verge to commit suicide, she creates a list on a spreadsheet having two categories namely reason to die and reason not to die:

**REASONS TO DIE**

1. Have disappointed the father and grandmother who love me
2. ~~Laid off again~~
3. ~~Completely in debt~~
4. ~~Can't pay rent~~
5. ~~Have had only failed relationships~~
6. ~~Slept with a married man~~
7. ~~Had a relationship with a married man~~
8. ~~Fell in love with a married man~~
9. Lost a baby

**REASONS NOT TO DIE**

1. Have a loving family (sort of, if mother and sister are not included)
2. ~~Have my health~~
3. ~~Hmm...~~ (Malladi 4)

The reasons that are crossed out in the list are the reasons that Devi found senseless to kill herself in suicide. But they are not erased, only stricken and this shows that she is still grieving over them melancholically with depression. Devi's losses did not take her to a simple kind of mourning but devours her own self accomplishments and self-developments. As Malladi states about the depression that Devi undergoes, "She knew that the losses she incurred had eaten away everything joyous within her" (Malladi 4).

Devi's desire for suicide pictures that her love for these lost objects especially her lost baby have turned into hatred on herself thus made her to contemplate but also pushes her to execute the attempt of committing suicide. When all her expectations turn into disappointments, the overwhelming frustrations lead her to the only final choice named suicide. Devi considers suicide as a personal business, a private affair and it is not needed to give any explanation to anyone, "Her parents may have brought her into the world (and that, too, without her permission), but it was her choice when she left" (8). Devi became self-destructive by whatever she recalls her affair with her sister's husband, Girish.

After her attempt of suicide Devi's parents took her to their home for recovery, after that Devi completely stops talking to anyone at the home and starts cooking. She expresses all her emotions only through cooking which clearly shows a critical transformation not only in Devi's personal life and character but also in her family. She does everything with intensity and consistency which made Veturi's family speechless. The stress and pressures inside her are well reflected in her dishes and in the ingredients that she uses. Devi portrays herself as a traditional stereotypical model of femininity by her cooking and silences.

In the beginning, Devi lived a westernised life she wanted liberty from her family. She wanted to be free and independent in her career and life, her father was her role model. She wanted to be successful like her father Avi Veturi, who was serving Indian Army earlier, then successfully started a technological company with his friend and gets semi-retired and enjoys a comfortable happy life in Silicon Valley. Devi also wants to be a self-made woman like her grandmother Vasu, who was a doctor in the Indian Army got retired as a Brigadier. Her elder sister Shoba is the vice president of engineering for a software company in her young age of thirty-two. Her husband Girish is an excellent man, working as a professor in Stanford University. Malladi comments this as "Talk about overachievers, her (Devi's) family was loaded with them" (6).

Devi compares her life with her mother Saroj. "She wanted to be like her grandmother: strong, independent, and smart. Instead she was more like her mother: a complete failure at everything...life, love, children, job, relationship, finances, everything" (6). Devi is also jealous on her sister Shoba due to her success in both career and life but later she becomes glad on knowing that Shoba cannot become a successful mother. Two years after marriage, Shoba undergoes a surgery for endometriosis and that result in her infertility.

Devi becomes silent whenever she was upset, because she does not want to tell anything to anyone, she finds it useless and she hates recalling bitter events, "After that Devi went into

silence mode for a few days..., whenever she got upset or whenever she didn't want to say anything to anyone" (62). First time Devi went into silent mode when she was studying grade four, she was accused for stealing her classmate's "one dollar and twenty- three cents" (29). She also broke her classmate's nose "pretty as Barbie" Lilly's nose for "calling her a thief and brown- skinned refugee" (62). She found peace in being silent, "Devi had found solace in silence... she maintained silence rather than defend herself" (62). Lilly's words meant more to Devi that she considers it as a truth inside her heart. Her racial grief made her to stop speaking, but it does not mean that Devi is subversive. Devi has experienced racial melancholia for the first time in her life.

The heroine Devi Veturi becomes very silent and engages herself in cooking as an output of her stress, depression and sadness. She conveys her emotions to her family only through cooking, here cooking acts as an agency:

Two things happened after the Devi "incident," as everyone in the Veturi household started calling it:

1. Devi completely stopped talking.
2. Devi started cooking.

Two things she did with such intensity and consistency that it drove her already shaken family up the wall. (12)

The kitchen was in the hands of her mother Saroj, Devi was never allowed to try cooking before, "Saroj lived in fear that Devi, Shoba, or even Vasu would put things away in the wrong place or ruin her perfectly managed kitchen" (70). Saroj considers kitchen as her great domain and cooking as her only way to feel her homeland India. But now, Devi disturbs the orderliness of the kitchen by her cooking but Saroj could not interrupt her. Here Saroj's culinary citizenship to India gets cancelled. Through suicidal attempt Devi got an opportunity to enter her mother's kitchen, "it gave Devi immense pleasure to walk into her mother's kitchen and start cooking" (70).

Malladi describes Devi as a closet feminist and the two daughters of Veturi are totally contrasted to each other. Shoba brings out her attitude towards the homemakers that they are happily sitting at home doing nothing. Malladi states, "Because Saroj never worked, both her daughters had developed a healthy disrespect for homemakers" (132). Devi does not voice her opinion as loudly as Shoba did, but she has not appreciated women who gave up lives outside their homes to be wives and mothers. It was woman like that, she believed, who made it hard for career women like herself to break the glass ceiling. According to Devi, "Everyone has to have a

role in society, and in her book of definitions a homemaker was defined as a lazy woman who sat home pretending to have a full- time job” (133). Thus, Devi emphasis gender equality in both family and in society.

Kitchen serves as a space and a personal stage to exercise creativity and to express identity. Devi gets a new experience, “She, who had never cooked, never been part of the kitchen militia, was a general now. She loved it.” (133). Cooking is an individual identity and also communal act that connects people across generational, racial, gender, regional, ethnic and class boundaries. Cooking is an art and it is also a stage to express a person’s personal taste and creativity. One’s nature, quality or character can be predicted by the food that he/ she cooks.

For Devi, cooking, creating recipes and new dishes not only acts as a way to come out of her trauma of suicidal attempt but also her childhood and her failure of post adolescence trauma that she maintained as a secret to her family. Her mother’s old notebook of recipes acts as an initialization for Devi where she found a goat curry recipe of a woman called Girija from Jorhat in India in the second page, “GIRIJA’S GOAT SABZI” (66). Devi identifies it as her mother’s famous goat curry that she never reveals the recipe to anyone and she keeps it as a secret. Saroj changes the name of the food from goat sabzi to goat curry because she wants to make the recipe as her own creation. The goat curry recipe was the first and last recipe that Devi found in her mother’s old notebook.

Cooking acts as a medium to pass cultural knowledge and wisdom from one generation to another. When Devi starts to write her own recipes in her mother’s old notebook, she not only creates a tie with her own mother but also starts her diversion and self- realization. It is the place where she really identifies herself. She really wants to come out of her stressful past. Devi’s recipes were totally different from her mother’s dishes. Thus, the heroine breaks the typical rules of cooking and innovatively thinks as a creator of her own world of dishes. Through the character Devi, Malladi shows that the changes can be brought in both food and literature because they both do not have any definite standards or set of rules that has to be followed appropriately. A change is more important to add more spices to life and to make it more colourful and interesting.

Although Avihher father trusted Devi a lot she violates everything by her Suicidal attempt. The first recipe that Devi created is the anti- Saroj’s chutney and it acts as a direct challenge to Saroj’s way of cooking chutney. She made it different by adding apricot and chipotle chili peppers. The other recipes differ in their unconventional tastes. In the beginning of the cooking the recipes are greatly unusual that they had unexpected ingredients like curry and blueberries and do not have typical elements such as ingredients list or numbered list of steps.

Devi however cooks more and starts to get good appreciations from her family. Her recipes are totally a contrast to the first recipe, in her mother's notebook, it was more contemplative and less instructional. In anti- Saroj's chutney Devi purely expresses her hatred and antagonism towards her mother. Her complex feeling towards Saroj is clearly executed through this chutney. Devi's Cajun prawn biriyani is subtitled as, "Day after coming home from hospital" (93) and her dosa with sambhar as, "The day I decided my future" (211). The turning point of this novel is Devi's lamb clitoris recipe because her miscarriage is revealed to her family through this. Jay, Devi's former friend and lover comes home and informs her family about her miscarriage when she is in a therapist appointment. Devi told him to keep this as a secret but after knowing about her suicidal attempt, Jay decided that it is better to tell the truth to her family.

Devi named "the recipe lamb clitoris as in honour of Jay, the clitoris, and of course the day when my wall of secrets fell apart around me" (163). And she gives the subtitle as, "The day everyone found out" (163). It is considered as the most sexual recipe in this novel because it expresses the heroine's traumatic feelings about her miscarriage. The death of the innocent baby and her affair and relationship with Jay and her brother-in-law creates a transgressive feeling inside her. The structure of the recipe is between her transgressive sex and the baby. The thoughts of the lost baby linger in the heart of Devi, her trauma is well expressed in the last paragraph of the recipe and her feelings are totally exhibited through her cooking.

Saroj's response towards Devi's secret miscarriage is entirely different and this brings a critical change in their relationship. It creates a great transformation in Veturi's family. One by one all other secrets come out as a chain along with this, the affair between Devi and Girish, the failure of Shoba and Girish marriage etc. Although Devi tries to rebuild the relationship with her mother, Shoba confronts Devi's affair with Girish. Then Shoba decides and undergoes some life changing events such as leaving her job, wants to divorce her husband Girish and to return to her parental home. Even though the two daughters of Veturi took different paths and decisions about their lives, they both end at the same point at their parental home. They both are in need of a new beginning and the support of their family to start a new life. Here it is clear that either married life or being single cannot fulfil the expectations of a young woman it can neither exactly tell nor define that what they really want. Thus, both the daughters did not receive the true happiness that they expected in their life. People think that marriage is the ultimate and the ideal goal of women, here Malladi challenges that myth.

Through the character of Devi, her recipes and cooking Malladi shows that women can enjoy happiness and contentment even inside her home. She also supports the idea of cooking ethnic foods and it is not gender limited that anyone can cultivate their interest for this great art

and cooking also acts as a way to reach one's heart. Thus, in this novel through cooking the heroine comes out of her stress and depression and it acts as a therapy and a tool to cure the young woman Devi.

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**Sophia Mary**, Ph.D. Research Scholar, English  
Department of English  
Sri Sarada College for Women (Autonomous)  
Salem - 16  
[Princesssophia1993.sm@gmail.com](mailto:Princesssophia1993.sm@gmail.com)

## **The Irish Famine Eviction: Destitution and Survival of Irish Migrants in Sebastian Barry's *Days Without End***

**V. Suganya, Research Scholar (Ph.D.)**  
**Dr. B. Padmanabhan, Assistant Professor**

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The role of food in the history of humanity ultimately provides cultural processes for ethnic identity. Along with religion, language, folklore, food has also been one of the most significant creators of ethnic and regional identity. The invention of cooking allows human beings to make it as a cultural product which is formed by the climate and environmental geography of a nation and also denotes the characteristics of the places. People from different parts of the world eat different varieties of food but certain types of food and culinary tradition are considered as one of the significant cultural symbols and pride of an ethnicity. The production, ingredients, methods, preparation, preservation and consumption of food explain the history of the dynamic ways people opted for living. It creates human bonding and at the same time it preserves the cultural disparity. The enlightenment indigenous food and its ingestion construct identity and claim the individuality of the people from the outsiders. Moreover, the food predilections vary within an ethnic or regional group according to their class. The concepts of food and food system make clear perception about the relationship between the people and food, and their creativity in the preparation. The traditional way of production and ingestion of food is passed down from one generation to other generation. The implementation of richness in food making is the supreme manifestation for the reinterpretation of cultural identity and it also reflects the intellectuality of human civilization from classical to contemporary age.

Food plays a vital role in the development of social structures and the tradition of a society because food is culture; it is medicine; it determines the economy of a nation. In his article Jean-Jacques Boutaud states that “food becomes a central identity marker, defining personality, social class, lifestyles, gender roles and relationships, from family, to community, to ethnic groups or nationality, changing through time and place” (1). The history of gastronomy is conserved and utilized for ethnic pride, national identity and symbolism, familial and regional inheritance.

At the same time the scarcity of food can take away the livelihoods of people. Food is essential to live but the decline of food production will bring terrible and prolonged hunger. During the famine the population of a country will be decreased that people will die due to malnutrition, starvation and acute diseases. Generally, famine does not prevail perpetually, but the effects will be severed, and the scars of the famine live eternally in a country. Famines can come from war and epidemic such as Chinese Famine, Ethiopian Famine, and North Korean Famine. Some famines are provoked by natural disaster like drought, flood, insect infestations and plant diseases. Likewise, in

Ireland, the Great famine was a natural catastrophe which brought drastic change in the economy and livelihood of people. Apart from that there was some political inability that made the people to suffer vulnerably by the famine.

Culture explores the excellence of human knowledge towards moral values, fine arts, belief, customs, behaviour and human attributes which are shared by the people of a particular society. The culture of Ireland is concocted and steeped in myth, literature, religion, music and language that helped to establish the land as a single national identity. Along with these cultural elements, food had also been an epoch-making in the embodiment of national and cultural identity. However, in the period of seventeenth century due to social and political changes in the land, Irish cuisine represented different cultures. Jean-Pierre Poussou wrote in his essay that “Irish food was essentially based on milk products, butter in winter, curds and whey in summer. The diet included meat, and in coastal areas fish, with oat gruel as a supplement” (Web). The dairy products, wheat, peas, beans and oats were the staple food of the ancient people of the land. During the British regime variety of Potatoes were instigated into Ireland and in the beginning, it was cultivated as vegetable garden plant. The benefit of potato was that it grows where the cereals cannot be cultivated. Therefore, the amount of cultivation and ingestion of potato were increased two times and soon after it had taken over the staple foods such as oats, meat and dairy products. Eventually potato became the essential food of the Irish diet in the second half of the eighteenth century. People from lower and middle class society used potato as main foodstuff extensively, the result of which lead to indigenous food items of Ireland became cash crops and were exported to England. The protagonist, Thomas McNulty in *Days without End* recalls his past to explore his life in Sligo County, Ireland and explain the changes in the food system from the arrival of potato. His father had exported their indigenous food and the family was completely depended on potato.

My father was a butter exporter man in a small way sending butter in barrels out of Sligo port into England. All good things were sent there. Cows, beeves, pigs, sheep, goats, wheat, barley, English corn, beets, carrots, cabbages, and all the rest of the paraphernalia of existence. All that was left in Ireland was the potato for eating. (28)

The exportation of indigenous food, complete dependency on potato and larger cultivation of potato was later found erroneous by the propagation of the fungus *Phytophthora infestans*. In the middle of the nineteenth century the fungus spread rapidly and ambushed the potato crops without any caution. This leads to the great catastrophe which is known as a Gorta Mor, i.e. the Irish Potato Famine. Paul F. State explained the situation in his book *A Brief History of Ireland* that “In 1845 the blight spread to encompass about half the country, destroying about 30-40 percent of the crop. In 1846, it was apparent that the blight had returned, this time destroying almost the entire crop nationwide” (185). The one third of potato crops were completely annihilated by the fungus and people ventured a great hunger. In the novel, Thomsan mournfully envisages the death of his mother and sister when there was nothing left to eat in Ireland except the blighted potatoes.

All that was left in Ireland was the potato for eating and when the potato was lost there was nothing left in old Ireland. She starved, in her stocking feet. In '47 the harvest was so bad even my father had nothing then. My sister died and my mother, on the stone floor of our house in Sligo town, in a street called the Lunguey. (28)

The common Irish people had historically confronted the denial of rights, been the victims of famished and chronic diseases, and experienced the devastation of their livelihoods for so many years. Though the Great Famine was a natural disaster its repercussions were aggravated by the activity and inactivity of the Whig government which was led by Lord John Russell. Paul F. State referred in his *A Brief History of Ireland* that,

Russell believed that his government should leave relief to the local workhouses and the buying and distributing of food supplies to private merchants and speculators. The administration closed the food warehouses, except on the ravaged western seaboard, suspended public works, and forbade local relief committees from selling food at less than prevailing market prices, which soon soared out of reach of the desperately poor. (186-187)

The inequality approach was also one of the reasons for the famine. The lower and middle class people were the majority to confront destitution and starvation. Through colonization and dissociation of land poor farmers could not cultivate their food crops but people of upper class survived which is observed in Paul F. State's *A Brief History of Ireland* that "large landlords survived' (189). People from upper class utilized the situation and developed their wealth. They took land from the poor tenants in order to provide food for them.

According to Indian economist Amartya Sen, food availability decline is the root of famines. He talks about the entitlement failure in his work *Poverty and Famine* that has connection to the Great Famine. The lower and middle class people largely had entitlement on potato, but the infestation of fungus crops was destroyed, leading shortfall in food production. They could not sell the potato and became penniless which took them into destitute and starved for a prolonged period in the country. The exportation of indigenous food caused food decline and brought into a Great Famine.

The people had been living in extreme poverty, dying of extreme hunger and deprived of their sense of identity. The common people of Ireland experienced larger amount of health disparities and their longevity was decreased than the upper class society. They found difficulty to obtain enough food to eat. So, the people ate whatever they found and died of the consumption of infested food they had. Here, Paul F. State visualizes the terrible situation of people to the reader in *A Brief History of Ireland*.

People ate raw turnips; seaweed; half cooked Indian meal; nettle tops and wild mustard; the carcasses of dogs, horses, and diseased cattle; and even grass, so they

died of dysentery, the fatal bacillary dysentery called the “bloody flux”. Irish men, women, and children succumbed to hunger edema (“famine dropsy”) from lack of food, to scurvy from vitamin C deficiency. (188)

According to Paul F. State, millions of people perished of destitution, starvation and unexpected diseases. When seeing the weakening and devastation of livelihood millions of people started to evacuate the native land for the sustenance of their family. Paul explain the horrible condition of the people during the famine in *A Brief History of Ireland* that “Many among those who were poorer sailed first to Canada . . . the 100,000 who sailed to Canada, about one sixth died on the voyage” (189). In the novel *Days without End*, the narrator Thomas also had the traumatic experiences of famished, witnessed the death of his own people and millions of migrants during the famine. He lost his family, wealth and identity, and travailed for survival.

I say my sister and mother perished. They perished like stray cats, no one caring much. But the whole town was perishing. The old ships started to bring ruined people to Canada, people that were so hungry they might eat each other in the holds. I am not saying I saw that. But I was thirteen or so and I knew in my heart and soul. . . I was among the destitute, the ruined and the starving for six weeks. Many went overboard, that’s how it was. (29)

Even during the voyage many people died of hunger and fever. They could not resist the situation. The hunger not only took away their land, wealth and family but also took away their identity, pride and ethnicity. In *Days without End*, during his voyage to Canada the narrator Thomas felt that he was afraid of revealing his identity because of the hunger as the Canadians see them as diseases and like shit animals

Into the fever sheds with us and that’s where hundreds died. I’m just writing all this down. The point is we were nothing. No one wanted us. Canada was feared of us. We were a plague. We were only rats of people. Hunger takes away what you are. Everything we were was just nothing then. Talk, music, sligo, stories, future, past, it was all turned to something very like the shit of something. (29)

The Great Famine made the people lose their national pride and other people had seen them as dreadful animals. They lost all their cultural identities such as stories, music, land and left with nothing prevailed but hunger. In Canada people did not find job to feed enough food for their family. The lower income in the country had made them to leave the place and wandered the world for survival. Paul in his book *A Brief History of Ireland* stated that “Many among those who were poorer sailed first to Canada, where fares were lowest and from there made their way south to the American republic” (189).

In the beginning of migration Thomas in the novel *Days without End* reached Canada but he could not find a job even to get enough food. Then he moved to America. There he had started his

life as female dancer when he was a teen-ager. He recalls that “Men shaved for us, washed for us. And put on the finery for us, such as it was. John was Joanna, myself was Thomasina. We danced, and we danced. We whirled, and we whirled. Matter of fact, end of all we were good dancers” (13). He felt that after so many days he wore good clothes and ate good foods. “This was the cleanest I had been in three years, maybe ever” (10). But later, in his twenties, he could not disguise himself as a woman and moved into the American army for survival. He writes that “Yes the army took me, I’m proud to say” (2). Then he lived his life as an army man till the end of his life. Though he struggled a lot he survived in some way. But the effect of famine, the feeling of hunger, still persists in his heart. Thomas tells that “but you were glad to get work because you didn’t work for the few dollars in America you hungered, I had learned that lesson. Well I was sick of hungering” (2). The sick of hungering refers his retrieval about the effects of famine which made people die of hunger and poverty.

As from the reference of the novel *Days without End* the narrator Thomas put forward the struggle of the Irish for the sustenance of their family during the Great Famine. In that period the entire country was shattered by the destitution, starvation, and chronic diseases. This forced the people to leave their native land in order to get good food and essentials for their life. The paper has attempted to explore the loss of food and the complete dependency on potato and the infestation of fungus which took the lives of the people for many years. It also tries to bring to out the other reasons for the great famine apart from natural factors such as inequality, colonization, entitlement failure, shortfall in food production which took the country into a great crisis. Moreover, the paper deals with the traumatic experience of the narrator in famine, his loss of identity and his travails to make both ends meet in the migrant country.

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State, Paul F. *A Brief History of Ireland*. Checkmark Books, 2009.

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V. Suganya, Research Scholar (Ph.D.)  
Department of English and Foreign Languages  
Bharathiar University  
Coimbatore- 641046  
[sugikavi9320@gmail.com](mailto:sugikavi9320@gmail.com)

Dr. B. Padmanabhan, Assistant Professor  
Department of English and Foreign Languages  
Bharathiar University  
Coimbatore- 641046  
[padmanabhan@buc.edu.in](mailto:padmanabhan@buc.edu.in)

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**The Irish Famine Eviction: Destitution and Survival of Irish Migrants in Sebastian Barry's *Days Without End***

## **Myriad Hues of Culinary Experiences in the Novels of Khaled Hosseini**

**Susy Antony, Assistant Professor**

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Culinary experiences in literature are mines of personal and social trends. They enrich the readers with the cultural aspects of the places where the novels are set. Food fosters a deep bond among people. At times food becomes symbolic of the state of mind the characters are in. Khaled Hosseini's novels, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *And the Mountains Echoed* offer myriad ways of exploring food metaphors. They enhance the readers' comprehension of personal, social and ethnic mind frames of the people of Afghanistan. The Diaspora in *And the Mountains Echoed* takes culinary experiences to a different level. The therapeutic value of food needs to be ascertained in this context.

The communal aspect of Afghan life revolves around the common *tandoor* (stove), where the women get together to cook food for themselves and their families. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam's transformation from a girl to a wife happens when she takes the dough to the common fireplace to bake bread. The women of the area come together, exchange stories of their lives with the *tandoor* as the backdrop. Mariam is transported from her native village Herat to the vibrant city life of Kabul. This has great significance as she was born a *harami*, an illegitimate child and was living with her mother in the outskirts of Herat, as a social outcast, before being married to Rasheed from Kabul. So, from a marginalised girl, she gains acceptance when she becomes Rasheed's wife. Here culinary experience becomes a source of support and strength for her. The *tandoor* is the focal point of communal living in Kabul. It becomes an initiation ground to city life for Mariam though initially she is intimidated when the women of the neighbourhood swarm to her, all of a sudden to get details of her personal life.

Communal living in Afghanistan is yet again exhibited during *iftar* (breaking fast) during the month of *Ramadan*. After her marriage, Mariam relishes consuming bread and a date during *iftar*, "tasting for the first time in her fifteen years the sweetness of sharing in a communal experience" (77). It has great significance in her life, as being a *harami*, she lived on the fringes of mainstream society so far. Her father, Jalil, used to get back to his real family consisting of three wives and a number of children for the real *Eid* celebrations after bringing gifts for Mariam and having tea with her and her mother. But due to her outcast status, she dreaded *Eid* as it is the time of hospitality and ceremony.

The role of food during both happy and unhappy occasions cannot be underestimated. Food takes the centre stage at any celebration. Even though Mariam lived on the outskirts of Herat, Mullah Faizullah, her Quranic tutor and well-wisher, used to present her with chocolate candy, dyed boiled

eggs and cookies on the occasion of *Eid-ul Fitr*. In Rasheed's household also, many dishes are prepared for *iftar* - rice, lamb and okra *qurma* besides bread and radishes to name a few. The rich and the poor alike do their best by preparing various dishes to mark happy events. On an unhappy occasion like death also, food has a key place in Afghanistan just as in other parts of the world. Laila's brothers, Ahmad and Noor become martyrs fighting with the Mujahideen against the Soviet invasion in their home country. Women flock to the household to console Laila's mother. A *khatm* dinner is organized where people from the neighbourhood come together in Laila's home to mourn the deceased.

Later on, in the novel, Rasheed stresses the need for family members to eat together. When he marries Laila, there is friction between Mariam and her. Rasheed points out that Laila could not avoid Mariam as they have to sit across the table when they have their meals. Laila used to enjoy having food at her friend Tariq's home before at peaceful times. She mentions how they ate together with light hearted talks going around. She disliked eating alone at her own home. All these point to the fact that food is a binding factor which keeps families and communities together. Consumption of food as a community is part of the ethnic identity of the people of Afghanistan.

Cooking becomes a pleasure or pain according to the attitude to the person for whom the food is being cooked. The reverse is also true. If one does not like a person, one tries to find fault with the food he/she prepares. Mariam's first attempt at cooking for her husband is detailed by Hosseini with great care. She makes *dal* (lentil) and white rice. She is very much worried about the consistency of the *dal* she has made. Her fears are allayed only when Rasheed approves it with his words, "A little under-salted but good. Maybe better than good, even" (68). Mariam falls from Rasheed's heart as a result of failing to give him a child. The food she cooks becomes too salty or too bland, too greasy or too dry under the changed circumstances. Mariam no longer looks forward to cooking for her husband.

Personal mood swings and political turmoil contribute to the way one perceives food. Long hours of fasting during the month of *Ramadan* throw Rasheed off gear. He is irritated and finds fault with the food prepared by Mariam. He accuses her of undercooking the rice and as punishment, he makes Mariam chew some pebbles which he forcefully puts on her mouth. As a result, two of her molars are broken. Here food becomes a source of oppression. Even political unrest in Afghanistan adds to Rasheed's state of mind. The civil war has taken its toll on his mental health. Finding fault with food becomes his means of coming to terms with his own life.

Another character who extends her mood to culinary experience is Laila's mother. She projects her mental state through cooking or abstaining from it. When her sons die for the cause of driving away the Soviets from Afghanistan, she withdraws from life by not taking any interest in cooking. She does not think about the well being of the two surviving members of her household – her husband and Laila. But later, when the Soviets are finally uprooted from Afghan soil, Laila's mother celebrates it by re-entering the kitchen after a long gap of five years. She cooks a lot of dishes, "*aush* soup with kidney beans and dried dill, *kofta*, steaming hot *mantu* drenched with fresh

yogurt topped with mint” (159). Thus, there is a huge transformation in the mindset of Laila’s mother, the outward expression of which can be seen in her enthusiastic cooking. Thus, food becomes a symbol.

Food is also a symbol of patriarchy in the novel. Rasheed asserts his power on Mariam through food. She is scared, at the beginning of her married life, whether she will be able to please her husband through her cooking. In the initial years, there are only a few complaints about her culinary skills. Later on, Rasheed complains on a regular basis about Mariam’s cooking depending on his state of mind. He even inflicts physical pain on her, accusing her of not preparing the dishes according to his preferences.

The simple activity of enjoying food as a sign of normalcy can be seen towards the end of the novel. After a lot of turmoil in Laila’s life, she carries on her life with Tariq in a near normal way as a refugee in Pakistan. Once again there is mention of eating meatball sandwiches with cucumbers and drinking cold ginger ale (377). The characters try to lead a normal life even though their status in Pakistan is that of refugees. But it is a huge relief for them to be away from the battle field of Afghanistan. They find comfort in the simple pleasure of eating familiar food. When Tariq and Laila with their children go back to Afghanistan, they eat at a *kebab* house. They count their blessings and enjoy their food. “It’s a small place, with sticky, vinyl tablecloths, smoky and loud. But the lamb is tender and moist and the bread hot” (392). After finishing their food at the joint, they go out and the children enjoy rose-water ice cream from a street vendor. All these point to the fact that human beings since time immemorial and across borders have found comfort in food.

In Hosseini’s *And the Mountains Echoed*, the therapeutic value of food is endorsed. Abdullah migrates from his native Afghanistan to far away US. As a means of livelihood, he starts a restaurant and names it “Abe’s Kabob House”. The dishes on the menu are reminiscent of his native land – Caravan *Kabob*, Khyber Pass *Pilaf*, Silk Route Chicken. The dishes are prepared by Abdullah’s wife. When each table is served, he rings the copper bell placed behind the register counter. It is supposed to add to the Oriental charm. The ambience of the place reminds its visitors of Afghanistan. All these are Abdullah’s ways of keeping his mother land close to his heart.

The restaurant has therapeutic use not only to Abdullah but also to other Afghan people displaced from their homeland. Idris, a doctor by profession, visits Afghanistan with his cousin Timur to sort out some property matter. When he gets back to the US, he rushes to Abdullah’s restaurant in an attempt to hold on to his memories of homeland. He orders ethnic food such as brown rice, *bolani* and *chapli kabobs* for his family (161). Ethnic identity is reinforced even in far-away US through food. Afghans fondly visit ethnic food restaurants in the hope of salvaging their memories of homeland through tickling their taste buds. On occasions of grief also, the Diaspora community finds consolation by consuming ethnic food. When Idris’ father passes away after a long bout with cancer, his relatives gather in his home to pay homage to the departed. Idris orders rice and lamb from Abe’s Kabob House. Khaled Hosseini, himself being part of the Afghan Diaspora population in the US, would have become nostalgic while portraying Abdullah and his eatery.

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

Susy Antony, Assistant Professor

Myriad Hues of Culinary Experiences in the Novels of Khaled Hosseini

Culinary experiences have a major role in defining people, communities and nations. Food offers comfort to people on a personal level. It becomes a solace to a community at trying times. Moreover it offers an identity to ethnic groups outside their native lands. Thus the therapeutic value of food cannot be ignored in creative works. Hosseini has portrayed these areas minutely in both the works under discussion.

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Susy Antony  
Assistant Professor, Department of English  
Iqbal College, Peringammala, Thiruvananthapuram  
Kerala PIN 695 563  
[susieant@yahoo.co.in](mailto:susieant@yahoo.co.in)

**Through the Door of the Castle in J. K. Rowling's  
*Harry Potter Series***

**J. Swetha, M.Phil. English**

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**Abstract**

Magic, an apparently created influencing event by mysterious or supernatural forces. It relates to the existence of mystic elements in and around us. It is all about the connectivity of the mysterious forces and the inner soul of a person because they take hold of the laws of physics and of energy conservation. Wizards who possess these create their own glorious life and those who are obsessed walk through the dark state of ecstasy. The interpretation given here by the researcher is all about one great room referred as The Great Hall of Hogwarts and the relationship between the food (the classic British cooking) and the hall in the potter canon of wizard and wizardry in "Through the Door of the Castle in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter Series*". The great hall refers to various historic events and is also the most conspicuous room in the entire series of Potter. The paper analyses the significance of the Great Hall along with the British cultured cuisines served. Food of the Wizards and the Muggles are the world classic dishes except two Non- British dishes. The anticipation over imagination is elucidated by the historical traces it holds on and enlightening Potter's world with house feast treat. The more you understand, you call J. K. Rowling as the world of reverie.

Magic is quite something relating to the supernatural force or element that is being heard by many till date. The allure forces feast our hearts invisibly with its modern features. The pleasure of the glittering beauty is apparently noted as 'the feel of wonder'. Getting drowned into the ocean of the magical world it will definitely, be hard to show us on the shore of reality. The real world will absolutely make a magical collision; connecting it with the actuality. All these are outspoken in books, media, journals and periodicals. Books take the first cover up for magic especially in fictions, relating itself to the world of literature. Through this door of transaction, magic took a permanent stand up in literature. Many books came on with stuffs relating necromancy, sorcery, white magic, black magic, witchcraft, wizardry, spell working and incantation. Taking a closer look, it is perfectly clear that witchcraft and wizardry played its role with utmost perfectness and spectacularly in Children's Literature. It seems to be the long-lasting ingredient for so many writers starting from Homer and extending to contemporaries like C. S. Lewis, Derek Landy, J. K. Rowling, J. R. R. Tolkien and Robert Jordan.

Speaking of the contemporaries, there strikes the lightning rod of one breathtaking writer who created her own fan world across the seas with the release of fabulous books depicting the whole

world of magic in her *Harry Potter* Series written by Joanne Kathleen Rowling pen named as J. K. Rowling.

The soul of magic has created uniqueness in the works and is seen in very lines of the books as she goes on describing the world of *Harry Potter*. The whole of Potter's world is covered up with two main places the London city and the school of Hogwarts for Witchcraft and Wizardry referring commonly as Hogwarts in the book. We see the entire book takes us through the eyes of Harry. Through his eyes, we walk into the magnificent castle in the Harry Potter's world of wizardry which is first introduced in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone* neglecting itself from the Muggle world. Though, the castle is covered with seven storey building it is entirely raised with magic with One hundred and forty two staircases each holding several rooms in it and is surrounded by Great lakes in the south, the Forbidden forest in the west and the entrance hall which leads to the Great Hall in the west, along with grounds filled up with greenhouses and vegetable patches. As there are so many doors, only one plays an extensive role in this castle called 'the Great Hall' which is next to the entrance hall. It refers to various historic events and it is the most conspicuous room in the school. This overwhelming Great Hall in Hogwarts is largely meant for teachers and students gathering, their course meals are provided here. The large hall is covered with Floating Ceiling, is bedazzling like the sky. Enlisting all the events there is one prime element seen for whole of the time. Each book reflects its changes in the hall and the hall is dressed up with its historical events of Start-of-term-feast, Sorting Ceremony, Halloween feast, Christmas feast, Yule Ball, Duelling Club, End-of-term-feast and the Final Battle.

'Food' is the essential course for all the celebration in the castle and the food provided are named to be the 'Traditional Britain Cuisines'. Each celebration holds a history behind it and distinct seasonal dishes are prepared during the feast and celebrations. Food is served in high tables with Golden plates, spoons and cups for students and teachers similarly one, per house for all the four houses of Hogwarts- The Rowena Ravenclaw, The Godric Gryffindor, The Helga Hufflepuff and The Salazar Slytherin. Food served is prepared by the twist of the wand in the kitchen of the elves in the school. Potter's food canon is entirely covered with Classic British Dishes which stands as an eye opener for the readers. Although the British classics had landed on the tables, it also came up with two non- British dishes: 'Blancmange' seems to be a strange kind a European origin and 'Bouillabaisse' a French origin. All the meals served become a rich and regular part of Hogwarts and it is no doubt it is a wonder for Harry during his first meal in the school in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and is not easy-breezy to forget.

The most inspired British traditional menu for the people of Hogwarts is The Sunday Roast, which is one of the traditional weekly meals in London and in the Castle and is often compared to the Christmas meal. It stands as a major influence in English world. The Sunday Roast is completed with its sub-courses of Potato Roast crisp, Beef roast is a signature dish of England in other words can be noted as 'the Roast Beef of Old England', Yorkshire Pudding an English side dish from North of England and Brussels Sprouts. A customary preparation is underdone during the Christmas fest where we see Flaming Pudding along with Turkey roast including Brussels that are large leaf green

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

**J. Swetha, M.Phil. English**

**Through the Door of the Castle in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* Series**

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vegetable took Mediterranean region as its native but then first appeared in the Northern Europe of Thirteenth Century, Potato roast and Bread Sauce. Tart is more adorable by Harry and by his friends and Treacle Tart is British traditional dessert seasoned over with Golden Syrup and Black Treacle. Rowling prepares the menu for Breakfast dine with Sausages, Roast Beef, Tomatoes fried, and with Steaks, Trifle is a cuisine dessert made with fruits. Tart enclosing with a Fruit pudding covering up with hot Steam of Custard Sauce. The British aromatic Syrup Treacle is relished and refined with Sugar Cane. Since it is the Molasses it probably appears in either form of Golden light or of Black dark. Everywhere in the book it is the wand and spells that refreshes the place of Hogwarts in each aspect specifically when it comes to the Great Hall. Throughout the table we find Steaks, Puddings, Jellies, Fresh Salad, Sandwiches, Meat balls, Bacons, Ice Creams, Stew Goulash, Pie's, Oranges, Apples, Chicken roast, Pumpkin juices, Hamburgs, few amount of Sea foods and Water are seen on the table. Water is rarely seen when Harry drinks in his room and nowhere.

Alcohols are quite kept hidden because people of England does not have a greater intension over consuming alcohol and few sequence are revealed in two of her books *The Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Social drinks are arranged in Hagrid's home and are not seen in the breakfast seat.

Shifting on to the feast and events of Hogwarts, it usually begins with a Start of Term feast which is considered to be the first launch seen in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, *The Chamber of Secrets*, *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, *The Goblet of Fire*, *The Order of Phoenix* and in *The Half Blood Prince*. It is the ceremonial feast of the castle taking place in the Great Hall. Food in the Start of Term feast is Yorkshire pudding, Pork Chops, Sausages, Bacon and Steak, Peas, Carrots, Gravy, Treacle Tart and Peppermint Hamburgs. Harry's mouth is found wide open since it is his first feast and he had never enjoyed the pleasure of eating such delicate and delicious cuisines.

By the time of Triwizarding Tournament, Halloween arrived. The Great Hall is festooned by large enough Pumpkins, Juices, Bats, Orange Streamers, Black Cauldrons and Coloured Candies of Goblet. The ceiling is engulfed with thousands of bats. Professor Dumbledore arranges for the skeleton dance during the feast. It is a highly envisioned feast by the students who would look forward each year. The Halloween party is seen in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, *Chamber of Secrets*, *Prisoner of Azkaban* and the *Goblet of Fire*. After all the parties and championship tournament the season for home has arrived along with Christmas. It's the first time; the Hall dressed up with splendour of tall Christmas trees in dozens and tables packed with Crumpets is a Griddle Cake. The Christmas Cakes, Roast Turkeys, Chipolatas, Cranberry Sauce is a relish made of cranberries served on Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. All these are arranged for the students as a mid-day meal.

The Yule Ball party is started as a part of the Tournament arranged for students. "All the Gryffindor had learned to treat food anybody else offered them with extreme caution, in case it has a canary cream concealed in the centre, and George confided to Harry that he and Fred were now working on developing something else" (Rowling 262). Tables were decorated with Stew, Goulash,

Snacks representing Durmstrang and Beauxbatons. The Great Hall nearly also includes the Apparition lesson classes to be held here for the sixth-year students, Ordinary wizarding level examination for the fifth-year students, Nastily exhausting wizarding tests for seventh year students and finally comes up the End of Term feast.

The Great Hall is enchanted with good memories of the school including colourfully flavoured cuisines which is considered to be the Classic Cuisines of British Society and Rowling has created her own Traditional frame charts for the Hogwarts people. The researcher has found that the author has given feast to our eyes and appeases our appetite.

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J. Swetha, M.Phil. English  
Sri Sarada College for Women (Autonomous)  
Fairlands  
Salem-636016  
[swethajayapal278@gmail.com](mailto:swethajayapal278@gmail.com)

## **Food Aesthetics in Literature: A Select Reading**

**Dr. K. Thamizharasi, Associate Professor of English**

At every point of time, the needs of human race have kept on changing –but food remains the life sustenance forever. It is very appropriate to think on these lines in the present scenario where farming procedures, food procuring activities, food making industrial functions have undergone a radical change due to scientific and technological inventions. In consequence, it is the need of the hour that the traditional and proven methods of the past are redeemed and re-oriented for the welfare of progeny.

This paper aims at presenting the multifarious functionality of both overt and inadvertent food symbolism in literary texts. Accordingly, the focus is on the aesthetics of delineating select literary texts such as, *The Mistress of Spices*, *Bhoma*, *Evam Indrajit*, *Macbeth*, “Hunger”, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Road*, from multiple literary and critical perspectives. The chosen excerpts and extracts in relation to food bring out a panoramic view of the world and its social structure in miniature from ethnic, social, political, economic and moralistic dimensions in particular.

A deeper understanding of the concept of food in relation with individual and society reveals the fact that behind the domain of food there remain many great virtues and issues. Food not only nourishes the body but is inextricably yoked to one's culture. Just like language, food is culture specific. Each culture has its own unique cuisine. Diaspora literature brings out the longing of the immigrants for their home and food which increases the homing desire and creates fractured identity in them. For instance, in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* the aromatic ingredients of Indian cuisine, such as cinnamon, cardamom, fenugreek, etc. are offered as a cure to heal the fractured selves of the immigrants. Each herb has a unique place in setting things right. The names of spices become titles of chapters in the novel, as they hold truly magical and healing powers. They are from the birth place of Tilo, the mistress of spices who owns an Indian store and helps the immigrants to overcome their psychological traumas.

The chapters narrate, “Tilo's interaction with her customers, and how she gifts a particular spice to them to solve their specific problems in life. Tilo and her spices are at the centre of the interaction between races, cultures, even various Indian cultures, with people of all ages, prejudices and expectations” (Yadav n. page. web). The very name Salad Bowl theory is an indicator that food is an inseparable part of any culture. It is a concept in United States to signify the integration of many different cultures for unique and peaceful co-existence of races. The application of Salad Bowl

theory to this novel is appropriate and denotes the characters, the residents of the US who combine like a salad in a bowl.

The denial of food and hostile environment are directly proportional to each other when it involves politics between man and Nature or man and man. Both *The Oldman and The Sea* and *The Riders to the Sea* depict man's star crossed struggle against Nature. In the same way, Bhoma, the village peasant, is a victim of man's hegemonic mania for economic and social glory. The exploitation of the agricultural labourers and the contemporary social ills are dealt with in *Bhoma* by Badal Sircar, a legend and doyen of Third Theatre. It presents the poverty-stricken life of the peasants who grow food grains for all. They are paid meagre wages which are not regular and do not suffice to support their large families. They starve and remain foodless for many days. This condition of the rural peasant is sharply contrasted with the well-fed, easy-going bourgeoisie of Calcutta. Bhoma is not only an individual but represents the oppressed peasant. The hungry villagers' blood transforms into food for others as, "Bhoma's blood, red blood, blossoms into white jasmines of rice in our plates. Twice everyday" (76). The blood imagery exposes the oppression and exploitation of the economically weaker sections of the rural masses and also stand testimony to the exploitation of the underprivileged by the elite. Here, the significance of food communicates relevant social messages pertaining to immediate contemporary situation.

Food is precious, the dearth of it results in hunger, famine and lawlessness. There is a saying in Tamil, 'Pasivandhal patrum parandhu pogum', which means, one who is afflicted with hunger will ignore devotion towards dignity, morality, and even divinity. Jayanta Mahapatra's poem "Hunger" is an apt example to prove the aforesaid maxim. Here a fisherman sells his 15 year old daughter to a stranger to keep himself and his daughter away from starvation as if she is a commodity.

The fisherman said: Will you have her, carelessly,  
draining 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. (2-4)

These lines decisively tell upon the flesh trade for want of food, which is a shame on the nation and humanity. The poem exposes three types of hunger – starvation of the father and daughter, the emotional starvation of the stranger, and unethical masculine hunger for female body. Objectification of woman is barbarism anywhere.

Food and its related concerns with feminine identity and domesticity from the perspective of two great writers, John Milton and Badal Sircar proffer a glimpse of the world view of women in general. Satan in *Paradise Lost Book IX* uses his diabolic tongue as a ruse to make the first pair on earth to err, by tempting Eve, to eat the forbidden fruit. Eve's feminine identity is taken advantage of by both Satan and Patriarchy. Man's fall from innocence to guilt is thus achieved by means of food in the name of knowledge.

The protagonist of the play *Evam Indrajit*, represents the intellectual aspirations and dilemmas of the urban middle class youth of the 1960's. He is both a rebel and a victim of his society. Though the seminal theme of the play is existential predicament, the writer, a humanist presents a glimpse of the position of women, through the rules that bind women and the duties expected of them. Indrajit, despite being a rebel who opposes the laws of the society which keep women subservient, also is a chip of the old patriarchal order. His wife looks after the house and he works in the office. Whenever she goes to her parents' house, he eats in the restaurant. This exhibits the patriarchal mindset that kitchen is a platform only for women, and subtly brings out the politics of food preparation at home.

There is no literary aesthetics without touching upon Shakespeare's contributions. Food symbolism abounds in the play *Macbeth* with many dimensions. For instance, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth receive their royal guest king Duncan with his retinue and offer them a ceremonial dinner with all humility and hospitality hiding their dark intentions. The richness and grandeur due to the royal personages is beautifully exhibited. Though it is a sumptuous royal banquet, there is no humanity in it. The evil intentions of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth find a corresponding wavelength with the witches. In Act IV Scene i, the witches prepare a broth in a big cauldron using the wile, ugly and poisonous creatures and dance around the cauldron. Macbeth, who comes there to know the verdict of his present and future, shares the broth unhesitatingly with them. This devilish banquet brings out the evil innate in (man) Macbeth. Killing a king is regicide and it unleashes the depletion of self-culture in Macbeth due to his vaulting ambition.

Wherever natural justice is at stake, where the atrocities of man go unchecked, nature is exploited, and it brings about unnatural happenings, massive destruction and desolation not only to humanity but also to other creatures. In Act II Scene iv, Ross talks with an old man, who reports the unnatural happenings that took place on the previous night when Duncan, a noble and god-like king was mercilessly killed. To cite an example, the king's horses in the stable began to eat one another in tune with the horrible event as a result of the disturbance and calamity.

In an apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic world, food is prioritized over everything – as Jean Paul Sartre says, “existence precedes essence” when survival or existence itself becomes a question mark – all other things including ethics become secondary. Throughout the novel *The Road* the remnants of the lost old world due to a catastrophe is depicted. McCarthy classifies humanity as a material object and places it along with electricity and running water, but the consolation is that humaneness might be existing at a lesser level. The boy and his father, the protagonists of the novel are “good guys” as they carry the fire – they follow the ethical standards of life. On the other hand, the “bad guys” plunder and kill the others to fill their stomachs. When the meagre store of food is also depleted, they become cannibals; they capture, torture, and eat the people whom they meet. The “bad guys” roast the newborn infants over campfires. Their act destroys the only hope of new life for humanity. On the contrary, the Father and the Son feel sorry for the lost life. This encounter provides answer to the question of the boy “Are we still the good guys? The father replied, we're still the good

guys. And we always will be” (64). The burnt infants demonstrate desperation and the total decline of man as a civilized being.

The man is able to find some food as he is the “life keeper and death dealer” to protect the boy. In a house, he discovers a bunker full of supplies, crates of canned food, two iron cots, hundred gallons of water and a chemical toilet. They stay there for some days. Even during times of adversity noble souls do not deviate from the moral codes. The boy and the man thank the people who left these things and express their gratitude: “Dear people, thank you for all these food and stuff. we know that you have saved it for yourself and if you were here we wouldn’t eat it no matter how hungry we were and we’re sorry that you didn’t get to eat it and we hope that you’re safe in heaven with God.” (p. 154-155).

During calamities, the “good guys” who are noble and ethical, are protected by the Supreme Being. Both the protagonists have adequate food until they meet their ends. At the end of the novel, the father dies but the boy finds a good family with children as his caretakers. Nature never hurts the heart that loves it, at the same time there is no escape from the wrath of nature, when troubled by unethical, selfish human intervention. The apocalyptic/ post-apocalyptic novel *The Road* is a testimony to this.

Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* also deals with the relationship between man and nature. The common thread that connects both the novels is the issues relating to natural or manmade disaster, famine, move towards greener pastures, problems of survival, conflicting ethical standards of humanity during and after the catastrophe, degeneration and revival of hope for humanity at individual and collective level. Steinbeck emphasizes the importance of maintaining self-respect in order to survive spiritually. The Joads in *The Grapes of Wrath* prove their humaneness: Tom and Casey sacrifice their lives to restore justice for a common cause, Ma Joad, a strong matriarch takes a lead role in her family and Rosh of Sharon exhibits universal motherhood by her act of feeding/suckling a starving man from death – a gesture of nobility and kindness.

The common purpose of uniting America around a morality-based economy that values people, places and work is another core element of *Grapes of Wrath*. While talking about the importance of man’s connection with nature, American agrarian philosopher Wendell Berry in his *Another Turn of the Crank* defines a healthy community as follows:

People who take a generous and neighbourly view of self-preservation, they do not believe that they can survive and flourish by the rule of dog eat dog; they do not believe that they can succeed by defeating or destroying or selling or using up everything but themselves. They want to preserve the precious things of nature and of human culture and pass them on to their children. They want the world’s fields and forest to be productive; they do not want them to be destroyed for the sake of production. . . They know that things connect – that farming, for example is connected to nature, and food to farming, and health to food – and they want to preserve the connections. . . (17-18).

*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* which is a modern classic of fantasy genre is a moralistic novel of Roald Dahl written in 1964. It teaches children values of human life and morality from adults' perspective. The plot exploits the love of children for chocolate to teach them human values. For instance, the boy Augustus Gloop, is intrigued to falling into the chocolate river, which is flowing, for his vice of gluttony. Another child Violet, the world's champion gum chewer, eats away the sample, to be tested gum ball, and bloats like a giant balloon herself and becomes blue in colour. These two instances show that the disobedient children are punished by their own actions. Charlie Bucket, the little hero of the story becomes a role model to the youngsters. He is the only child who wins the competition and proves himself worthy among the rich whimsical children. His family is literally starving with seven members to be taken care of by one bread winner, his father. Charlie's father could provide only enough for, "bread and margarine for breakfast, boiled potatoes and cabbage for lunch, and cabbage soup for supper" (5).

Though Charlie, the only child of the family, is not well-fed, he is well-brought up with all virtuous qualities. His parents, despite being poor, take care of both their parents and behave decently and in a dignified manner. The grandparents entertain the child with stories. His upbringing is an example of good grooming that too in a society where values are declining. By observing the adults, children learn and also teach the adult world. "Child is the father of man" is not only philosophy but reality. "To Cook and Eat" is a poem written by Emma Richards, a twelve year old child reads thus:

To cook and eat  
is an art,  
yet a part  
of everyday life,  
we take it for granted  
not knowing  
not caring,  
that others  
may not have this thing  
which we so foolishly waste. (100)

Though simple, the poem throws light on the need to conserve, preserve, and share food, responsibly and lovingly for today and tomorrow.

To conclude, it is a universally acclaimed altruistic statement that food nourishes the body and literature nourishes and cultivates human minds. Food as life sustenance and its significance take humanity to different levels, with different layers of meaning in human history. All literatures disclose the essentiality of food and denote multiple meanings and functions. Vallalar, a saint poet of Tamil Literature and humanist, of the modern age, founded 'Suddha Sanmarkka Sangam' and looks upon food as substance which satisfies hunger and sustains energy to perform good deeds in life. He

considers offering food to the needy as ‘Jeeva Karunyam’ – unconditional love and compassion for all living beings, kindness and grace – the action of which elevates the soul. He seconds the idea that ‘the one who offers food, offers life too’, which is equal to ‘Where there is love there is life’ by being human. The same action is viewed by Bharathiyar, a great revolutionary Tamil poet of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as social justice as follows: ‘If a single person doesn’t get food, let the world be destroyed’. He talks about everyone’s right to food on earth. He tries to establish humanity and social justice through equality.

In accordance with the dictum of Bharathiyar, sharing food with others shows hospitality and humanity. A virtuous habit of sharing food is quite common even among children in South Africa and is popularized by the term “Ubuntu” which is a Nguni Bantu term meaning humanity. It is often translated as “I am because we are”, and also “humanity towards others”, but is often used in a more philosophical sense to mean “the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity” (Wikipedia n.pag.).

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Dr. K. Thamizharasi  
Associate Professor of English  
PG & Research Department of English  
Government Arts College (A), Salem – 636 007  
[mythurosh@gmail.com](mailto:mythurosh@gmail.com)

**Exploring the Power of Food as a Vehicle of Identity and Ethnicity:  
A Study of the novel "The Hundred-Foot Journey" (2010) written by Richard C. Morais and  
the Film Adaptation (2014) of the same directed by Lasse Hallström.**

**K. Unnamalai, I Year MA in English with Communication Studies**

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**Introduction**

Food, like language, exists as a vehicle for expressing culture. It has the power of being both a biological necessity as well as a deeply symbolic cultural artefact, the one that connects us to one another on several levels. It is stated to be agreeable that "food is a mechanism for expressing an identity that also has a social purpose.". The scholar Robin Fox argues that are food choices serve to symbolize how we define ourselves in terms of religion, ethnicity, social class and so on. That is not to say that food and identity are static, which is evidenced by the current phenomenon of globalization that has increased human interaction and the overlapping of cuisines. The powerful act of food sharing involves simple everyday foods to extravagant ritual foods, to be inherently layered with meaning for cultures throughout the globe.

**The Theory of Food Culture and the Neurocognitive Adaptation Criticized Over the Novel**

The theory of Food culture involves common foods prepared often which varies across cultures and plays a major role in defining culture as well as identity. Individual cultures often see their everyday foods to be ordinary and plain that they are unworthy of study, but these foods often give not only insight into the cultures they belong to, but also to the foods and palates of outsiders of that culture. Cultures can both shape and are shaped by the foods they eat and the foods they consider to be stapled. The everyday foods can illustrate cultural identity, they can also create a space for individual identity as well.

The "Food" has unique histories related to their Preparation, production, consumption, and ultimately how they are used as vehicles to express identity. The themes of food fusion, the classifications of every day vs. ritual or seasonal foods, and the manifestation of cuisines like Haute, Molecular, Oriental, Continental, French and so on outside of their sphere of origin will stand as the guiding principles which delve into studying a diverse set of cultures. "The Hundred-Foot Journey" seeks to find how food retains its ability to act as a mechanism of identity and establishing cultural, ethnic, spiritual, and social belonging. The paper takes on a culinary journey of the globe, making stops infusion of Indian and French cuisines.

"The Hundred-Foot Journey" is an experiential narrative of Hassan Haji, who is a born chef of middle age. He recounts his life's journey from his family's modest restaurant in Mumbai to his

elegant restaurant in Paris where he conquered the insular world of French Haute Cuisine. A tragedy at home in Mumbai pushes Hassan's boisterous family into a picaresque journey across Europe, where they ultimately settle opposite a famous chef, Madame Mallory, in the remote French village of Lumiere. After a series of hilarious cultural mishaps, the grand French chef discovers, much to her horror, that the young boy cooking in the cheap Indian restaurant across the way is a chef with natural talents far superior to her own. A culinary war ensues, full of plot twists, pitting Hassan's Mumbai-toughened father against the imperious Madam Mallory, a battle *royale* that finally reveals to young Hassan his true destiny in life. The novel filled with eccentric characters, vivid settings, and delicious meals, Hassan's charming tale lays bare the inner workings of the elite world of French haute cuisine. In the process, however, Hassan also discovers a truism that bedevils any man who has got out into the world to make his mark, the true costs of rising to the top are only revealed later in life.

In the narration of Hassan's life at Mumbai, the protagonist is so close to his mother from whom he learnt his style of Indian cooking with spirited flavours of Indian spices. His mother taught him the cultivation of taste in the food preparation which gives away the taste of Indianness.

Hassan tangles between his own identity and ethnicity as an Indian cook well-known the spirit of flavours which seen in the lines "Life has its own flavour hidden in a nutshell", Hassan's Ethnicity as a cook gave him an education for all his senses. His school of learning as a cook started from his childhood in Mumbai restaurant where he has learnt to prepare meat with the spices and herbs giving away Indian flavours. It was a cuisine of 200 years old which his mother passed on to him as a generation's authority. She taught him the preparation and the cultivation of the taste in *Caviar, Sea Urchin, Machli and on*. The travel towards his dream to become a chef to serve all apart the cultures made Hassan make a culinary journey of an Indian cook to become a grand chef of the "Le Saule Pleureur", the French restaurant of Madam Mallory.

The cultural mishaps made Hassan find his own identity as a chef, the theory of food culture is brought into the learning process in Haute Cuisine, a classic Fusion cooking where he tries to convince his father who was obsessed with his Indian spices. Hassan has a passion for innovation and taste where his education cultivated the taste for all his senses. The fusion of Indian Spices like "Dhania, Elaichi, Saumph, Adarak, Laung, Kalonji, Dalchini and Madras Masala, Haldi and on..." along with the Five mother French sauces " *Béchamel (milk-based sauce, thickened with a white roux), Espagnole (a fortified brown veal stock sauce, thickened with a brown roux), Velouté (light stock-based sauce, thickened with a roux or a liaison, a mixture of egg yolks and cream), Hollandaise (an emulsion of egg yolk, butter and lemon or vinegar), Tomate (tomato-based)*" in the meat, truffle or even the sausages of the meat, battles with the taste buds. The conversation between Madam Malory and Hassan portrays the Fusion Food exploration where the food culture is evident as a theory, beautifully cooked through the essence of the lines woven by the author as:

*"What is this flavour that is fighting against the chicken?  
I added some spices to flavour to the sauces, and coriander for garnish and freshness.*

*But why change a recipe that is 200 years old?  
Because, madam, maybe 200 years is long enough”*

Towards the last part of the story, Hassan reaches two Michelin stars for the French restaurant where he is called at La Baleine Grise, the very highest level of the Cuisine Restaurant in Paris for Fusion Food and experimental food combinations. Hassan reaching his final stage to achieve his third Michelin star battling to create his own recipe along to prove his identity found his true love in the tastes of spices and innovation in them to make dishes with “*petals cooked in hay-infused chamomile, Cauliflower Ice-cream with a skim of egg yolk and capers, the appearance of Coriander, Fenugreek and masala, glutinous sauce resonant of tandoori, with a marinade of tamarind and smoked chilli, the oysters with nitropearls of sturgeon and oyster dust made exceptional by the addition of ground cardamom seeds, the sugar-coated beetroot with carrots, also garam masala a molecular cuisine, all appear to have discovered the spice of life.*” The above lines bring out the fusion Food culture where finds his own identity as a Chef de cuisine, a culinary star.

Sidney Mintz has shown how the Food culture’s symbolic meanings change with different cultural, ethnic and class considerations. Food, geography or place and identity are intertwined from a symbolic perspective. Wenying Xu makes the important perspective that food is one of the ways that we engage with, and understand, other cultures: “Food operates as one of the key cultural signs that structure people’s identities and their concepts of others.”

*"Up here, Cooking is no longer an art but it's a science. At La Baleine Grise, we believe that eating is a multi-sensory experience, and a certain combination of flavours and aromas activate enzymes and stimulate specific parts of the brain, evoking pleasure, and also recollections of pleasurable experiences. Like a certain scent will remind you of your first love. This is the beast with a thousand mouths, that must be fed twice a day, and what does the beast like? Innovation... Innovation...INNOVATION.*" These lines bring out the Neuro-Cognitive adaptation of Hassan to find a way to own himself. The Neurocognitive adaptation is a way of life where a person adapts oneself with the new place and surrounding to create an identity of one's own, where one diverges from their ethnic culture and tries to intertwine and fuse to create a new self.

Globalization, in combination with other forces, has created a global food system that has advanced distribution capabilities and the rate at which foods change contexts; but understanding how these forces come into play can be challenging. Kayatzyna J. Cwiertka has produced a series of works focused on understanding these forces. Cwiertka asserts that "the ways new foods become distributed as luxuries, curiosities, necessities, or status enhancers are described through the lens of modernization" (Cwiertka, 2008, pg. 409). The modernization of common food preparation or the occasional foods are at one lens that will help understand how the meanings of food change as they are distributed. These processes can also be viewed in terms of Food Culture and Neuro Cognitive adaptation. Expressions of culinary authority, and innovation claim ownership of culture, convey authenticity and even promote national identity and finally, the authority of food takes over its rule.

## **Conclusion**

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

**K. Unnamalai, I Year MA in English with Communication Studies**

**Exploring the Power of Food as a Vehicle of Identity and Ethnicity**

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Thus, the paper provides instances and it revolves around the Food Culture and Neurocognitive adaptation where the protagonist, Hassan Haji explores his authority or the power of food as a vehicle to own his self and a create a new one. The owing of oneself portrays one's cultural ethnicity and creating a one displays one's personal identity which is completely visualized through the exotic lines woven by Richard C. Morais in his gastric style of narration and picturized in the movie adaptation of the novel "The Hundred-Foot Journey".

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K. Unnamalai  
I Year MA in English with Communication Studies  
Department of English  
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)  
Hosur Road, Bengaluru - 560029  
[k.unnamalai@eng.christuniversity.in](mailto:k.unnamalai@eng.christuniversity.in)

## **Hunger and Crime: An Analysis of Crimes Related to Hunger in Indian Literature**

**Yadu R Krishna, M.A. English**

Hunger is a major issue that had been dealt in various literatures through the ages. Poverty and hunger has served and is still serving as a major theme for most of the writers in the world. There are various works of literature around the world that deals with these and various other issues that are caused by them. One such major issue is crimes related to hunger. Hunger is a powerful element and the pangs of hunger can even bring out the brutality in humans. Crime and hunger had always been proportional to one another, a society where the rate of hunger is high the crime rate also tend to increase. Crimes that are related to hunger range from petty thefts to brutal murders and such cases have been reported in the course of literature.

Indian writers started to give a realistic and modern approach to novel writing only after the contact with British writers until then the main of the Indian literature was to teach moral values. In the book *Indo-Anglican literature: 1800 to 1970*, H.M. Williams says, "It is undoubtedly the most popular vehicle for the transmission of Indian ideas to the wider English-speaking world." Following this change the writers began to write about themes that were more realistic and one such major issue is hunger. Hunger according to *Macmillan English dictionary* means a lack of food that can cause illness or death. Famines, revolutions, wars, partitions, unemployment and many more can be named as the major causative of hunger in Indian history and many of the Indian novels have portrayed these incidents. Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, K. S. Venkataramani, Arundhati Roy and Bhabani Bhattacharya are few of the writers who have dealt with the theme of hunger and an intense study into their novels would reveal them dealing with contemporary Indian society and the problems it faces. One such problem is crimes that are caused by hunger. Most of the novels that deals with poverty and hunger, one could find characters that are forced to commit criminal activities like stealing and physical abuse for the sake of food. The main objective of the researcher in this paper is to identify and analyse such crimes that are engendered by hunger and how food insecurities and hunger are portrayed in Indian novels. The researcher has incorporated situational analysis and a case study analysis to identify these types of crimes in the Indian society. The case study that the researcher has selected is that of a tribal youth who was beaten to death by a mob for stealing food from a shop in Kerala.

Indian English novelists such as Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, K. S. Venkataramani, Arundhati Roy, Bhabani Bhattacharya and many others have portrayed poverty and hunger with at most truth and realism in their novels. Mulk Raj Anand has showed exquisitely a realistic picture of poverty and hunger in the lives of untouchables and downtrodden through the

novels like *Untouchable*, *Coolie* and *Two leaves and a bud*. Kamala Markandaya also portrays the theme of hunger in her novels *The Nectar in a Sieve* and *A Handful of Rice*. The novels *Kandan*, *The Patriot* and *Murugan*, *The Tiller* by K. S. Venkataramani also show the poverty-stricken life of peasants and their striving for food. Among all the other writers Bhabani Bhattacharya has dealt the problem of hunger in a much more humanistic way. His novels *He Who Rides a Tiger* and *So many Hungers* presents a gruesome picture of the Bengal famine in 1943. Quoting the words of the author- "... the plague of hunger in the wave of war... no rationing of food-grains, no price control, no chocking of giant sharks who play cornering game on a stupendous scale... barns are empty — the peasants had been induced to sell off their grain. Markets are empty-the grain is hidden away... And now the rice was five times the old rate, weavers sold their looms to traders from big cities... Artisans sold their tools. Fishermen's boats were chopped up for fire wood to sell... The plague washed up in fierce tides" (*He Who Rides a Tiger*, p.15).

Although all these novels focus on the theme of poverty and hunger, in most of these novels there are occurrences of incidents where a character in the novel commits a criminal activity as like stealing or physical abuse for the sake of food. As like in the novel *He Who Rides a Tiger*, the protagonist of the novel Kalo steals three ripe bananas from a lady, during a train ride, to satiate his hunger but he is arrested for this offence and tried. During which he pleads guilty and says "I was hungry, sir. A Madness came upon me. It was because I thought I had to eat, or I would die. A madness came upon me. I had to live." (*He Who Rides a Tiger*, p.31).

Similarly, in the novel *So Many Hungers*, Bhattacharya, as the title suggests, presents a horrendous picture of hunger and poverty engendered by the Bengal famine of 1943. The novel portrays certain brutal crimes that were caused by hunger like a mother burying a new born baby alive as she doesn't have enough breast milk as she herself is starving, men fighting and hurting each other like dogs for the food in dustbins and women fighting with the cleaners so that they can get food out of the waste before the cleaners remove them. The author paints a picture which shows how brutal hunger can make a man. Similar incidents can be seen in most of the novels dealing with poverty and hunger as like a man killing another man for the sake of a loaf of bread or mob robbing shops and godowns for food supplies etc... These incidents are not just part of literature. These incidents are not just history, such incidents and crimes still happen around the world. Literature even today discusses about them as like in Arundhati Roy's novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) shows how youngsters join terrorist groups because of their poverty and they are ready to even give their lives for decent food.

There were many such real-life incidents reported in many parts of India. One such incident occurred in 2018 where a tribal youth, Madhu was beaten to death by a mob of youngsters. Madhu was allegedly beaten by a mob for stealing and even before the arrival of police the mob had killed Madhu by repeated assault. When the police enquired they found that the man had stolen some food supplies, accusing him for stealing food supplies the mob had mercilessly beaten the man to death. This incident throws light on the crimes people commit for the sake of satiating one's hunger and the societies view about such crime. India being the birth place of the poet Subramanya Bharathi who

sang “ThaniOruManithanukkuUnavuIllai EnilInthaJagathinaiAzhithiduvom” which means if a person doesn’t have food, the entire universe will be destroyed, is where such a gruesome act of inhumaneness has occurred. This particular incident also teaches the attitude of the society towards starvation and poor. What he stole is rice. The reason why he did that was hunger. The constitution of India provides the right to food under the Article 47, according to it “The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purpose of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health.” In spite of all these the country still has lot of issues related to poverty and there are crimes that are caused by hunger still prevalent and the incident of the tribal youth, Madhu is one such.

Hunger can be defined differently depending upon individual’s choice, it may be an act of sacrifice for few or may be an act of prayer or even an act of protest but for some people it is a reality and not by their choice. The plights of such people who are forced to commit crimes just to satiate their hunger are still left unattended. Stealing the property of others or physically abusing someone are all crimes under the laws of judiciary but on a humanitarian ground such acts that are committed for the sake of food to satiate hunger should never be considered as a crime. The researcher doesn’t promote these crimes but recommends a humanitarian outlook to these crimes and the only solution to prevent such crimes are the eradication of poverty and provision of better food supplies to the population.

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Yadu R Krishna, M.A. English  
Bharathiar University  
[madyof.r2@gmail.com](mailto:madyof.r2@gmail.com)

## **Flavours of Malabar: The Love Story of Kareem Bhai And His Untold Kitchen Tricks in the Malayalam Movie *Usthad Hotel***

**Nivedita R Karun, M.Phil. Research Scholar**

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Food plays a vital role in the life of human beings. The word 'food' is derived from the old English word 'Foda' of Germanic origin. It is an essential part for the sustenance of life and has gained a prominent place in the film industry. For instance, movies like *The Lunchbox*, *Stanley Ka Dabba*, *Chef*, etc., had chosen the central theme as food.

The movie *Usthad Hotel* had made a huge impact in the lives of foodies. The movie begins with the narration of Faizi's birth by an unknown narrator. His father who had always longed for a son got much happier after Faizi's birth. After the demise of Faizi's mother Fareeda, his father flies with him and his elder sisters to Dubai. Here he indulges in the kitchen activities with his sisters which were often denied by his father. The grown up Faizi will fly to Switzerland as per his wish to study for Hotel Management Course. He returns as a Chef from there and this agitates his father. Faizi's father will snatch his passport from him to prevent him from going to UK. Heartbroken Faizi leaves to meet his grandfather Kareem Bhai to *Usthad hotel* which is located near the shores of Arabian sea in Kozikode. The main plot of the cinema begins from *Usthad Hotel*. The "*Usthad Hotel*" is run by *Usthad Kareem Bhai* and is famous for the Malabari food cuisine specially *Dum Biryani*. The movie portrays the difference in attitudes of the owners of two hotels. One the local restaurant named *Usthad Hotel* and the five-star hotel *Beach Bay* which is built near the *Usthad Hotel*. *Kareem Bhai's* hotel is- run for poor feeding and those who struggle to get a day's food whereas the five-star hotel is run to gain maximum business profit. *Kareem Bhai* helps in fulfilling his workers dreams through his earnings from this hotel. He meets their daily ends as well as supports their family to come up in their lives.

*Faizi*, *Kareem Bhai's* grandson joins him and becomes the part of the *Ustad Hotel*. He helps his grandfather in running errands over there. *Faizi* learns to make Kerala *Porotta* from *Ustad hotel*. He uses the technique of making *Porotta* with Spanish omelette for a fusion fest held at *Beach Bay Hotel* later. When he makes his first *porotta* his grandfather says "Son anyone can fill anyone's stomach but those who eat should be satisfied mentally too. That ability makes a great cook". With the recommendation of *Kareem Bhai*, *Faizi* gets a job at the five-star hotel *Beach Bay*. Here he impresses the foreign Chef with his creative kitchen tricks and techniques.

*Sulaimani* is the metaphor for love in the movie *Usthad Hotel*. It reminisces *Kareem Bhai's* wedding day where he met his first love (his wife) for the first time. Both of them elopes on his

beloved's Nikkah and begins their fruitful days. He memorizes the day he went to cook Biriyani for his beloved's wedding and talks about Kismath to Faizi:

“Everything that happened in my life before seem to have converged to that point.”

They begin and end their conversation with a small cup of Sulaimani. Kareem interconnects love and sulaimani and says that:

“a little bit of love should be added with every sulaimani.”

Food and love are the are themes of the movie Usthad Hotel. In Malabar, Mohabath is the term used for love. Faizi and his grandfather connects food with love and remarks that “love should be added with food to feel tastier.” After a cardiac arrest, Kareem sends his grandson Faizi with a letter to Tamilnadu to meet his friend Narayan Krishnan. The letter requests Narayan Krishnan to teach Faizi the reason behind our need for cooking. Narayan Krishnan takes Faizi along with him the next day and distributes food to the poor and also shows him how to create a rapport and feed them each day. This scene will become an eye opener for Faizi and realizes the reason for the preparation of food. After a while, Narayana Krishnan begins to narrate his story and points out to an old man and says:

“You see that old man! He changed my life.”

The above quotation really made a huge impact on his life. When Narayana Krishnan was working as an executive chef in Taj, he came across a man on the roadside who was unable to endure appetite and was eating his own human waste. Then he questions himself the purpose of his life and realizes that working in a star hotel feeding all his guests whereas in his native place he finds people without means to have food for at least once a day. This made him quit his job and started feeding poor. Faizi then decides to be in his native land after serving food to special children. His eyes will get wet when a differently abled child appreciates his preparation. He goes back to his grandfather's hotel and will make a stern decision to renovate Usthad Hotel. The movie ends with Faizi's interview and the camera gets focused on Usthad Hotel's special Dum Biriyani prepared with untold secrets of Kareem Bhai served with love.

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Nivedita R Karun

M.Phil. Research Scholar

St. Teresa's College Ernakulam [nrk355@gmail.com](mailto:nrk355@gmail.com)

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**Flavours of Malabar: The Love Story of Kareem Bhai and His Untold Kitchen Tricks in the Malayalam Movie Usthad Hotel**

## **Kerala Food Cuisine: The Story of Joan's Rainbow and the Multi-Layered Cake's Exploration in the Malayalam Movie *Salt N' Pepper***

**Niveditha B Warriar, M.Phil. Research Scholar**

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The writer Alan D. Wolfelt relates the image of food and love to highlight the fact that the combination of food and love can express more than words. Now days, umpteen number of movies are coming up based on the theme of food and they add love to the subject of food. The relationship between human love and food transcends than dialogues written in the script for the cinema. The Malayalam movies such as Salt N Pepper, Spanish Masala, Rasam, Usthad Hotel, Mr. Butler, etc has centralized the imagery of food and have picturized food as a symbol to fall in love with each other. The Malayalam movie Salt N Pepper is one of the best instances for the food movie among all the movies in Malayalam industry.

The movie Salt N Pepper directed by Aashiq Abu has proved that any relationship can be developed through food. The story revolves around two main characters who cultivate fondness through food conversations. Kalidasan, the protagonist will receive a phone call not intended for him and slowly they develop feelings for each other once they start their conversations on food. They use derogatory words towards each other before they start their discussion on thattil- kutty- dosa. Kalidasan will gradually understand her interest in cooking and eating food. He sees himself in Maya and gets attracted towards her interests in cooking food. The movie begins with the introduction of Kalidasan's childhood days and the classroom scene. The director focuses on the child Kalidasan reply to his class teacher that "we live to eat food" when the teacher teaches them food chain and we eat food to sustain our life. The title song "Chembavu" features the visuals of famous eateries of Kerala and the hotels in Kerala. The eateries such as Kuzhal Putt, Biriyani, Pazhampori, Kulukki Sarbath and variety dishes of Kerala are shown on screen. The Malabari hotels like Paragon, Bombay, Amma, Sagar, Rahmath and the three-metre tea stall in Kumbalangi are screened in the movie.

Salt N Pepper is a 2011 Malayalam romantic comedy movie which talks about Kerala Cuisine. The most attractive reference to food in the movie is the preparation of cake called Joan's Rainbow and the romance between Maya (Shwetha Menon) and Kalidasan (Lal) while Kalidasan dictates the recipe through telephone to prepare Joan's Rainbow. The movie says that there will always be a reason to prepare a dish and it would have been created a history in some way or the other. Here, the director traces back the history of World War II to give this message to his audience.

He took this information from an article titled “Feast on Romance” written by Nita Sathyendran in The Hindu in the year 2011:

“The story goes that at the end of the Second World War, a French soldier’s wife started baking a strawberry cake to give her husband when he returned from the War. He didn’t turn up that day, nor did he the next day when she had added a pistachio-flavoured layer to the cake. On the third day she baked a third layer, one in orange flavour, but he didn’t come that day either. On the fourth day when she was about to lose hope, her husband arrived bearing a box of chocolates! The woman is said to have melted the chocolates and made a fourth layer, and served the rainbow of layers to her husband, sealing their bond of love forever” (10).

Here, the central characters Kalidasan who is an archaeologist and Maya who works as a dubbing artiste set out to prepare this delicious cake. They motivate each other and gets involved in their food conversations for about four days and slowly falls in love. The director says that the title of the movie is significant because it is in fact “a celebration of food that peppered as it is with many clippings that mentions about authentic Kerala cuisine” (10). The movie proved that even a multi-layered cake could unite two hearts and could make their life more colourful when their love was added with their fondness in food. Romance plays a vital role in almost all the scenes in the movie. The romance between Kalidasan and Maya was shown to make the audience understand that a foodie can also become romantic through their food conversations. The movie also depicts the local Kerala cuisines like Achppam, Unniyappam, Mambazha Pulisseri and Palada Pradhaman through the story of a chef named Babu (Baburaj) who will later become the chef at Kalidasan’s home. The other characters in this movie are Manu (Asif Ali) and Meenakshi (Mythili). Manu is a happy-go lucky management graduate who gets attracted towards Meenakshi for her smartness whereas Meenakshi works as an IELTS teacher who dreams to immigrate to Canada. But at the end of the story both of them falls in love and decides to get married. A cup of coffee becomes a reason to re-unite their hearts. Hence, food is a symbol to unite and re-unite lovers and it could definitely become a major reason to preserve long distance relationships.

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Niveditha B Warriar

M.Phil. Research Scholar

St. Teresa’s College, Ernakulam [26niveditha26@gmail.com](mailto:26niveditha26@gmail.com)

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**Kerala Food Cuisine: The Story of Joan’s Rainbow and the Multi-Layered Cake’s Exploration in the Malayalam Movie Salt N’ Pepper**

## **Politics of Food Culture: A Study Based on Advertisements**

**Devi N., Research Student**

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We may call food as anything that help living beings, including human beings, for their physical existence or enjoyment. Every culture or other civilization has its own way of food. We may even call the evolution of culture has its origin from food. That which learn the primal homosapiens to live a social existence could be traced as with food or to be more precise, the discovery of agriculture. The variety of food materials or their availability as well as climate of particular place, influence the food habits of the people who reside in that particular area. For example, we may notice that the menu of the people of cold countries finds greater prominence for non-vegetarian food. The food culture of people is the result of social, economic, political or agricultural factors evolved during various stages. It does indeed have a political backbone. Looking at Kerala, we may take it that the primary food of the Keralites is rice based, the land or the climate of this State should invariably be suitable for that. The reason for the great importance for agriculture in this land the people of the state get fish profusely from Arabian sea, back waters and rivers with which the state is blessed with. People are here relish on different varieties of meat as well, which are available in plenty. The free availability of spices and coconut has made significant influence in the food habits of the people. Attraction to fast and junk foods is gathering momentum at a tremendous space among the people. Kerala has become a place which attaches great value for fast food. Television and advertisements, we exhibit through it, has played a very significant role in making the conditions to this extend.

### **Television Advertisements and Kerala Society**

Advertisement has become a medium that has found a place in the private life of men. Television has been playing a pivotal role in the process. It is the primary aim of television to address various human issues. It is because of the understanding of the power of television to enter in to the world of family and their privacies that made global capitalism to use advertisements through television to get into the private world. It is precisely because of these advertisements get great relevance in the society.

‘Advertising is a marketing communication that employs an openly sponsored, non-presence message to promote or sell a product, service or idea (William J Satio, np:465)’

Advertisements are a part of day to day life. It has come to the point that advertisements use people rather than people use advertisements. Advertisements do have a psychological and social influence beyond simply an economic significance. Most of the values of modern way of life and values get rival first in advertisements. Advertisements show as how scientific and technical methodologies can be rented to harvest desired goals in ordinary life. It gives prominence to experience their concern in the realization of product. The sights that give prominence to experience suggest the relationship between the product and the consumer. The basic way of modern advertisements is to reproduce as experience of the importance of products that have potential marketability through representation.

### **Television Advertisements and Food Culture**

Advertisements have grown to the level of influencing many people and develop thereby an upper hand on the society. It gets best expressed in terms of food-based ads. The world of advertisements with regard to food habits has reached a level to ignore even studies on food related matters. The modern food advertisements create a beautiful blend between what is tradition and what is current. Modern advertisements encash love, affection, desire and the like human feelings to attain desired economic ends. Love occupies a central position in almost all conceptions of modern world advertisements. Love is a feeling that gets reflected through the relationships like husband and wife, mother and kids, father and kids, brother and sister, friends, neighbors and so on. And because of the same love and its various ramifications find deserving places in the food-based consumptions. Advertisements make use of the basic principle that tasty food can be an easy way to human mind.

Advertisements about food were available even in olden times. But they did not have the popularity as they have been found today. Mohanlal's taste bud ad is an example for that. It bares the tagline that ' the skills of a thousand mothers are there behind it'. Still another ad was that of Shama curry powder. Its tagline was this: 'a pinch is enough to make you happy '. In the similar lines go the ads of Whirlpool, Kanandevan tea, Rasna, Frooti, etc. Their primary aim was to present products of potential marketability. But today things are changed, and different methodologies have to be employed to attract the minds of potential consumers.

### **The Politics of Modern Ads**

'Hunger for the good ' is the line of ad published by Kerala government to survive the flood disaster we experienced recently. This line of advertisements makes man think there does exist a hunger which can be bad or good. This piece of advertisement gets interacted with the Kerala society which considers food as a matter of celebration and luxury. There does exist a clear politics that piece of advertisement reminds the people of Kerala that there survives a group of people with severe difficulties though the initial bottlenecks. The flood which was brought in

have been reasonably tided over. As a matter of fact, such an idea becomes more understandable to such survivors. The invocation to keep aside the money for a meal to support the flood hit people suggest the changed socio-political surroundings, evolved as a result of the disaster. Most of the ads getting released today center around modern taste habits.

An advertisement of Nestle released in 2014 says 'good food, good life'. It tells the society that sharing of foods doubles joy. 'Let's stand together with Kerala ' is an ad that got released in 2018 through which Nestle interacts with the spectators.

The site of Kerala's favorite fare chips the ads of Horlicks oat's stating ' A change for health', that of Milma 'the goodness of milk, goodness of the land' etc. come for living behind traditions. Advertisements like these that destroys traditional values talk more to the modern world. Ads like these embrace the highlights of the modern world. The ad of Nirapara highlighting rice steam cake to the people. The ad highlights Kerala's own fare which has got the support of nature and tradition. Most of the ads today reveal diametrically opposite ideas to wish one can only look at and wonder as to how ingenious things could be if they are rented for serving sheer commercial purposes. In an ad about Sambar powder the caption is this: 'certain pure relations are those cannot be expressed with words'. Taste that the dishes carrying when they come from mother.

Sambar is depicted as an epitome of mother's love. 'Good food is good medicine' is another ad which tenders around food. Fast food has become as the life style of the Malayalees. Fast food has made the world a single market, acceptable to middle class people. Domino's Pizza hut, Chick king, Burger King and the distributing agencies like Swiggy, Ubereats, Zommatto, etc. can be found around. Marking change like these exist based on their primary statement that availability is in your fingertips, as the fares are being brought to our doorsteps. The modern nuclear families find it as a great boon.

## Conclusion

Food comes in advertisements as an evident symbol of Socio-political dominance. It communicates certain very definite meanings in front of the consumer or viewer. It is a fact that there does exist in Kerala a sector of people, which is unable to digest this change in spite of the ardent of the new consumer culture that has taken strong roots within the state. Those who are suitable to change like these are not but poor victims of the influences that capitalist tycoons inflict the society with their profit and interest. The marginalized are still marginalized. Even in ads. They find no place in the world of the ads. It still reminds a question as to whether we will have to redefine human passion and relationship, in the light of the kind of picture the world of advertisement that has brought in the world today.

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Devi N., Research Student  
Department of Malayalam  
Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University  
Tirur, Kerala  
[devimurali94@gmail.com](mailto:devimurali94@gmail.com)

## **Representation of Food in Media**

**Kowsalya.V, II M.A., English and Dr. B. J. Geetha, Assistant Professor**

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Food is an important thing in everyone's life. Without food human beings and every living being cannot lead their life healthily, not only that for every human being food shows their culture and tradition to the world. Food can be everything like media. Media delivers each and every news to the people so through media people can know the importance of food. In this paper, through the movie *Kaaka Muttai*, the researcher has analyzed the impact and influence of the representation of food in media in the present situation. This paper focuses on the role of media about food and strategies involved in the commercialization of food. The movie *Kaaka Muttai* projects on the trashy ghetto poverty-ridden children and also about the class divide, it also highlights on the role of media bias amidst other evils. How the two kids who are known as Periya Kakka Muttai and Chinna Kakka Muttai were teased by the pizza shop owner who got political and economic power to indulge in callous treatment of the two who wanted to eat the pizza. The article is focusing on the debacle of poverty and the impact and influence of media in this paper.

The paper has found that media as a major source that affects and attracts people easily because even a simple advertisement spreads across to the public and it creates ripples on the onlookers a desire to buy products showcased. Media does not mind whether the audience are elite or poor. Nor it bothers about media ethics. Since food is the elixir of life, advertisement on food products are very lucrative and enticing by the way they are presented and represented. Such advertisements in a way become enforcement irrespective of the purchasing power of the people. The glamour attached with celebrity snobbishness makes people to blindly acknowledge any stupidity without rationalizing on them.

In this particular movie a pizza shop was opened by a celebrity and the media has presented pizza as a grand, modern and an inevitable food of the twenty-first century. It does not bother about the economical status of the people and so on. Through advertisements those shops wanted to pull the crowd to buy them and become addicted to the foreign food variety through their advertisement without minding on the quality of such food varieties whether they are good or bad, healthy or unhealthy. In the movie *Kakka Muttai*, the visuals of the pizza create a burning desire for the two penniless poor boys.

Television is a major tool to reach the home and affect the mind of people's food choices. Mostly children are influenced by both healthy and unhealthy food items. In the movie *Kakka Muttai*, the two poor boys' suffering is caused by their unquenching desire to taste the food item which is economically inaccessible to them. They do all sorts of odd jobs to earn the money to buy a pizza. As they struggle more, their quench to taste it grows in leaps and bounds and drags them to indulge in full swing by procuring what little money that they could grab at.

When the two brothers watch the advertisement and thereafter the pizza shop through the television, they do not bother whether they have money or not and also if it is healthy or unhealthy. Their only motive is to want to eat those foods for that they would do anything. In the movie *Kakka Muttai*, the two boys were ready to steal coal from the yard with the support of a known person. Due to media the current generation can do anything to have these kinds of foods. Here the media plays a major role. Media makes others to do everything and that will definitely spoil their future. The best example is that, how the two poor boys were ready to steal the coal from the yard. Media is the major reason and not only that the two poor boys start to speak lies to their mother. Here food is the major reason for everything and also food can do anything in the world. The advertisement of food can change the future and life of the people in the world.

People can watch or hear the advertisement about food, if they have a enough money it will be easy for them to buy otherwise it will not happen. This is the major reason where the people involve themselves in engaging to acquire bad habits. It also spoils their future, this is how a person's life will be ruined. Another way is that, the person or people do not have enough money and they cannot eat healthy foods and it will also spoil their physique because of media; Poverty plays an important role in everyone's life and it ruins everything. In the current generation poor people suffers a lot by media. It does not focus on the economic background and mentality of others in the world.

In the movie *Kakka Muttai* the two poor boys suffers both mentally and physically because of media. In the movie the manager of the pizza shop slaps one of them and it was recorded in a mobile phone and spread to everybody. Nowadays no one can understand the situation of others. How the two boys avoided by the shop manager though they wear new clothes and also, they had enough money to eat pizza because of their family background. Respect is reserved for the rich but poor is always looked down. A rich will get noticed but the poor scantily be recognized, and their desire is always looked unimportant.

The present situation, no one likes a healthy food but everyone has a lot of desires for eat food. For example, In the movie *Kakka Muttai* the two boys scold their grandmother when she prepares a homemade pizza at the beginning stage, but at the end of the movie they realize their

mistake. Everybody dislikes healthy foods nowadays and they want to eat unhealthy foods like fast foods. This is the major reason for ill health of the current generation. So, media is a major reason for every problem in the life of human beings. Media affects others both mentally and physically. Influence of media affects the minds of children and also adults. In the movie *Kakka Muttai*, the two poor boys think only about pizza and not about their imprisoned father. Their mother needs money for get her husband out on bail but a simple desire of eating pizza make the two poor boys not to have any sentiments. This the best example on the impact of media on poor children.

The media breaks the relationship of the people. The representation of food in media does not focus on the health of people. It focuses only on the money. Marketing is a major thing for everyone. Media plays at times plays a worst role in the world . Even both literate and illiterate people can be easily disappointed by the falsehood advertisement which is given by the media. A researcher can analyze these things through the character of the two poor boys in the movie *Kakka Muttai*. No one bothers about their health and also their future. Nowadays media spread a lot of advertisement about unhealthy foods only. Media does not think about the future generation this is the main problem for having poor health condition. In ancient times foods were healthy and it was the reason for people to have good health, but in modern days every food is not a good thing and it will not definitely give good health too. Media is a major tool for advertising food items to people. Media does not focus the poverty of many people. In the movie *Kakka Muttai* the two penniless boy suffered a lot. The one and only major reason is that they belong to poor family [kuppathu pasanga]. So media is the major reason for each and every suffering. The movie *Kakka Muttai* expresses the real face about media marketing. How marketing plays a problematic role in human life likewise the researcher also demonstrates the problem of poor people’s life and how they suffer for simple and small desires. Food is the major thing, but media ethics on advertisement should be tended with responsibility beyond money. Marketing is the major part for media and not concern about the good health of the people in the world. In the current situation no one considers about the problems based on the people’s economical background.

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Kowsalya.V, II M.A.,English Periyar University Salem-11 <a href="mailto:Kowsivenkat28@gmail.com">Kowsivenkat28@gmail.com</a>	Dr. B. J. Geetha Assistant Professor Department of English, Periyar University Salem -11 <a href="mailto:geetprem05@gmail.com">geetprem05@gmail.com</a>
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## **Food as Personal Gratification and Public Insinuation**

**Dr. V. Anbarasi, Associate Professor**

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One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well. (Woolf. np)

There is a most serious need to remember who we are so that we may assist other people in remembering who they are. Ethnic cooking in our time is not 'in' just because it tastes good. It is **historical and meaningful on its own**. (Smith np)

Without proper diet, medicines are of no use.

With proper diet, medicines are of no need. (BAPS 196)

All the three quotations cited above very clearly highlight the essentiality and the inextricable inevitability of food invariably for all living beings as the most vital sustenance measure. Nourishment is what makes life livable and possible. When one is fed adequately with nutritious food, he begins to take care of himself, helps himself and also tries to contribute to the extent possible for the welfare of his dependents. Hunger, being the natural instinct of all living beings including plants and other sub-human beings, due attention should be paid to satiate the same. When famished, hunger leads one to be bereft of finer sensibilities and become bestial in temperament, attitude and actions. Literature has manifested the repercussions of this basic instinct in all its glory and atrocities.

Food is identified not only as a basic necessity but more vitally as a symbol that exemplifies one's social status, personal dignity, aesthetic sense, and humaneness. Bharathiar in one of his verses stoutly proclaimed that when there is no food for a single individual, the world should be destroyed. Of all the creations of Nature, the single sensed organism, namely plants alone are able to sustain on their own. All the other sub-human livings depend on others for their food and living. Based on the food habits, living beings are grouped as herbivores, carnivores and omnivores. Governed basically by this helpless instinct, insects, birds, reptiles and animals pounce on each other and without any qualms about the consequences they survive. Human lot is different and from the time they become sensitive and sensible, they begin to differ, and it is this difference that eventually has led to separation and division.

Charles Lamb in his “Dissertation upon Roasted Pig” has very humourously narrated how the succulent flesh of the burnt piglets’ once tasted has resulted in the frequent burning of the huts. The tasty juicy flesh can very easily enslave even the judge. Such is the power of food. After such accidental discoveries, cooked food attained the status of cultured life style. From the advent of such habits, man aspired to be nurtured by man invented activities which also eventually led to his deviation from Nature. Food, eating habits and table manners begin to exemplify the quality of life and people. Food thus has been inextricably interwoven with the living style of people.

Man, during the early days, enjoyed akin to the other living beings, raw food. When hunting became mandatory for sustenance and as fear was an unknown factor then, human beings hunted their preys with glee and enjoyed the flesh heartily. This hunter instinct has got merged within the psyche of all despite the acculturation, adaptability and process of civilization. Hunting wild animals is revered as mark of manhood, bravery and chivalry. Hunter with the hunted object displays his mastery, skill and supremacy claiming both applause and headship. When there is no supervisory power to maintain man made moral etiquettes, unruliness usurp the place and the mind easily adopts that. Jack, the strong willed youngster in William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* is the appropriate example. Jack, observes Xiaojang Li, “is always associated with shadows and obscurity ... From the start of the story, he claims to hunt for meat. Actually his argument is a filmy pretext for the fact that he needs blood. He wants to share the pleasure of conquest and killing more than eating meat” (120). Eventually he evolves into an undisputed chief burying all shades of culture, civilization and ethical values with which he had been brought up. Hunting for meat, a crucial source of life sustenance in this context, is just a guise beneath which one can sense insensitivity and inhumanness.

Food in the form of feast and liquor added in the menu mostly prove to be manipulative. P. Sivagami’s *Grip of Change* best exemplifies the crafty exploitation of the headman Kathamuthu. This saviour of the clan makes hay while the sun shines. Thangam, the young widow, seeks justice for all the wrongs underwent by making an appeal to the headman. Kathamuthu’s earnest efforts result in financial redress, and the compensatory money is also used by him for his family’s welfare. As a mark of gratitude and happiness, he arranges for a sumptuous lunch with meat. He invites his two wives and Thangam and generously offers them liquor only to make Thangam submit herself for his carnal desire. The hunger and poverty stricken needy people are very easily deceived with succulent food. This is yet another trait of food.

A grand feast means celebration. To celebrate the much longed for coronation, Macbeth, in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, arranges for a grand banquet. All the invited Lords, Nobles and

Members of Royal family have gathered to enjoy the glorious moment. Since none other than Macbeth knows about the murder of Banquo and Fleance, the banquet hall is suffused with a festive mood. The inner craving for absolute power is converted into inexplicable fear and dreadful guilt in Macbeth. While everyone rejoices and is about to enjoy the feast, the appearance of Banquo's ghost perplexes Macbeth and the inner conflict prods him with hallucinations driving him on the verge of insanity. Feast is offered by Macbeth to bury deep his crime whereas the same banquet instead of being a place of revelry turns out to be revelatory.

While Shakespeare has used a banquet scene to delineate Macbeth's well sealed guilt, Sharon M Draper in her *out of my mind*, uses a dining scene to create awareness about the anguish, discomfort and sense of humiliations experienced by an intelligent, sensitive but inexpressive young girl namely Melody affected with cerebral palsy. Quite a genuine human tendency is that none wants any of their weakness to be noticed or let known to the public. Melody has proved her mettle in the quiz programme after a lot of efforts and training. Her struggles eventually result in success, adoration and admiration by others. As part of the celebration, the entire team is taken out for dinner. Melody's anxiety and restlessness are so picturesquely captured. Her thought process is:

Usually, eating out doesn't bother me. Mom and Dad take turns spooning food into my mouth, and I ignore anyone who is rude enough to stare. But this was different. At school I eat in a special area of the cafeteria with the other disabled kids. The aides put bibs on us, feed us, and wipe our mouths when we're done. ... nobody on the team had ever really seen me eat. Rather, be fed.

I didn't know what to do. My food sat there getting cold. I looked at Mom. She looked at me. She picked up the spoon and looked at me with the question on her face. I nodded. Very carefully, she placed a spoonful of pasta in my mouth. I swallowed. I did not spill.

I saw Molly poke Claire, and they exchanged looks.  
... Nobody said anything, but I saw them look down at their plates with way too much attention. It got quiet. Even Connor stopped talking. (235)

Such is the intensity of feelings of embarrassment and helplessness experienced by differently abled people. Through such realistic narration, the writer is successful in communicating the unexpressed woes and sufferings of the differently abled. That food, the essential ingredient for life sustenance itself could be a thing of annoyance is brought to lime light.

Shaw in his *The Apple Cart* has used vegetable imagery to identify the qualities of people. In this political extravaganza Shaw has created King Magnus, an extremely poised and sensible ruler. With flawless prudence and accurate judgement the King is able to thwart all the possible attempts made by the Ministers to subdue him. His mistress Orinthia tries to influence him and refers Queen Jemima as an old cabbage. Unmindful of the sarcastic undertone, Magnus instantly retaliates that in day today life a cabbage is of more useful than a rose. Orinthia regards herself a beautiful rose. Beautification process will be of any avail only when one sustains and is healthy. The shapeless cabbage proves its worthiness through its utility value. Shaw, the subtle and wise thinker, has very clearly distinguished the essentiality of wife by associating her with a food item and the inessentiality or the unimportance of a mistress by equating her to a beautiful, graceful and colourful rose.

*Sakharam Binder*, one of Vijay Tendulkar's most controversial plays, has kitchen to be an important place. It is in this room that the new entrant Laxmi actively interacts with an ant. The playwright is able to peep through the aesthetic sense of the lady and kitchen is where her personality blossoms. Kitchen is her exclusive domain and she feels her hold over the house through exercising her power in the kitchen. The conventional concept is that kitchen is the soul of any home and it is through cooking the desired food and feeding the members with concern and care, the female could win over and assert herself. This notion is well iterated and the docile and seemingly meek Laxmi gains boldness and moral courage to question and convince the non-committal Sakharam. This is the safest place for her and in the end it is there, she persuades Sakharam to bury the next victim Champa. Tendulkar in this play has used food and kitchen as symbols that signify the place and power of women.

What is so striking about the concept of food is the way it is looked upon by Marsha Norman, a noteworthy American playwright. In her play *Getting Out*, food is used as a means to fatten up the prospective young girls. The wronged female protagonist Arlie serves her sentence of imprisonment owing to the murder she committed unwittingly. Even before attaining puberty, she was molested by her father. She intends to harm him by applying toothpaste to his sandwich. When a cab driver tries to rape her, she happens to kill him and is convicted. In the prison too she is harassed. She begins to detest food as it is found to be a source to fatten her. The following dialogue between the Guard and Arlie brings out the wilful intention and the hapless state:

GUARD (CALDWELL): Gotta see you get fattened up.

ARLIE: What do you care?

GUARD (CALDWELL): Oh, we care all right. (*Setting the food on the table*) ... Eat. (*Pointing to the food*) We sure do care if you go gittin' too skinny. (*Walks away but continues to watch her*) Yes ma'am. We care a lot hog-lickin' lot. (I, 14)

The audacity of patriarchal power structure and the utter helpless state of the ‘other’ gender is well exemplified through the above mentioned sample. Despite hunger, she detests food as that would ultimately victimize her. She does not want to nourish herself as that would only make men ogle at her.

Aringer C. N. Annadurai’s concern for fellow human beings is a known fact. His short stories and plays are eye openers that change the outlook and attitude of people towards life and people. A story entitled “Sevvaazhai” narrates the combined commitment of the members of Sengodan’s family. Sengodan is a coolie worker and he has nurtured a red banana tree in his home garden. As he is poor and certainly cannot afford to spend any money to buy costly fruits and snacks for his dearest children, he has taken all possible care to nurture the tree and serve his children with this great fruit. The writer has very realistically portrayed Sengodan’s attachment with the plant, the interest he has evinced, the pride he has brimmed with, the ways he has employed to sing its glory, the promises he has made to his children and the plans of the children to enjoy the fruit more than the other siblings. While all of them have been waiting with utmost longing and curiosity, down descends a bolt from the landlord that quality fruits are required to celebrate the daughter-in-law’s birthday. The bitter and sharp disappointment and the utter helplessness in gratifying the genuine needs of the children really make Sengodan shrink within himself. The exploitive nature of the upper social class over the lower class and mute cries of the lower class society are poignantly portrayed in this story. Fruit that stands for food despite having been grown up in one’s own garden, becomes an unattainable luxury to the lower class. Such is the miserable state of affairs with the working class. What is unendurable is the sale of the same fruit in the shop and the cost is too high to buy and eat. The ignorant and hard working class is unaware of the power politics and they mutely accept their misery.

A short film entitled “Our Parukkai” insists on the importance and significance of every marshal of food served on the plate. The entire process of cultivation is touched upon and also the involvement and commitment of many in the process is mentioned. The hard work of all those involved right from sowing the seed to the cooking process is cited to stress upon the fact that the food one enjoys at any point of time is owing to the relentless efforts of many unknown persons and that of the mercy of Mother Nature. This short film very strongly imposes that no one has any right to waste food.

Mother Nature is so merciful and based on the climatic conditions various crops are grown so as to fulfil the needs of people. Food on the whole represents and designs the culture of the people. Though food is primarily to gratify one’s sense of hunger and help the consumer to continue his tenure on the earth, it attains different meaning and represents different significations in the public. Now more than ever the relevance and appropriateness of the ethnic

food items and eating habits are insisted as deviance from that result in health hazards. We eat, so that we live. Food though is primarily meant for eating, adds taste to life. Food greatly influences the quality of people. Food symbolises many things and the paper has tried to bring out its pastel shades. Adherence to conventional agricultural methods and eating habits will make life really liveable. It is high time every sensible person should realize that relevant ethnic food style by cultivating the same on the agricultural field and on the psyche of the inhabitants of the earth will only make us live a hearty, healthy and happy life.

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Dr. V. Anbarasi  
Associate Professor & Head  
Department of English  
Government Arts College (A)  
Salem – 636007  
[dranbusundar@gmail.com](mailto:dranbusundar@gmail.com)

## **Food and Social Difference in *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Adichie**

**Dr. K. Sindhu, Assistant Professor of English  
K. Lydia, II M.A. English Literature**

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The paper focuses on the food in the social class that assists people to realize the different manners followed in various classes during dining. All aspects from the cooking to eating vary in all methods. The upper class follows strict etiquettes and has servants for cooking and serving while the lower class does not have servants and enjoy cooking and serving by themselves which follows etiquettes not strictly but according to their contentment. This aspect of cooking and dining foods can be traced in the novel *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie through various Nigerian cuisines. In the novel *Purple Hibiscus*, there are two different class families. The family of Kambili is depicted as the upper class and that family of her Aunt Ifeoma as lower class.

In the upper class family of Kambili, dining takes place as a ritual following strict etiquette. Sisi is the servant who cooks the food and also arranges the dishes in the dining table in a sensible way. Kambili explains the arrangement as “Sisi had set eight places at the dining table, with wide plates the color of caramel and matching napkins ironed into crisp triangles” (PH 92). Everybody in the family sits in their respective places at the dining table; Kambili and his brother Jaja sit opposite to their father.

The father of Kambili usually tells the grace of the meal for twenty minutes and prays for a variety of titles intoned to Blessed Mary. After the prayer, they ate silently and Kambili describes it as “silence hung over the table like the blue-black clouds in the middle of rainy season” (PH 32). During the dining, if there is any need for service or any drinks Kambili mother calls Sisi by pressing the ringer that is dangled above the table on a transparent wire from the ceiling and she appears to fulfill their needs. After eating, nobody is allowed to leave, and the children express their gratitude by saying thank you lord, thank you papa and thank you mama and fold their arms and they wait for everyone to finish their meal. The father of Kambili again prays after the meal.

In the family of Kambili, this is the usual dining ritual that takes place and it slightly changes during the vacation for Christmas to Abba. They carry their foodstuffs like bags of rice, garri, beans, vegetables, cartons of juice and also huge iron tripods. The wives of Umunna come to their home in order to make the cooking for all the guests. Sisi provides them with salt and all utensils. The family of Kambili always had dishes like fufu, jollof rice, onugu soup, egusi soup and azu. They had enough quantity of food and always had cool drinks and wine with their meals. Kambili and Jaja are brought up with the strict etiquette and they follow the table manners. It can be witnessed by the question of Amaka “do you always eat rice with fork and a knife and napkins?” (PH 97).

The family of Aunt Ifeoma is not privileged as the family of Kambili and she leads a common life with her children Amaka, Obiora, and Chima who are depicted as lower class and she does the cooking and is helped by Amaka and her sons to set the table. Later she invites Kambili and Jaja to her home in Nsukka. Kambili and Jaja visit their home with yams, rice and also gas cylinders. There is scarcity of gas cylinders in Nsukka and the mother of Kambili sends it through them. Ifeoma welcomes Kambili and Jaja warmly and tells that “today we’ll treat Kambili and Jaja as guests, but from tomorrow they will be family and join in the work” (PH 119).

Kambili is upset to see the uneven arrangement of the table and explains that the table was made of wood that cracked in dry weather and the dining chairs were mismatched as four were made of plain wood and the other two chairs were black and padded. Ifeoma said the grace for few minutes and Kambili still closed her eyes and then Ifeoma informs her that the prayer is finished, and they do not say mass in the name of grace like her father with a chuckle. Kambili could not concentrate on eating the jollof rice and tried to focus but saw that the plates were mismatched. Kambili was surprised to watch the conversation and thought that they would not speak or indulge in a conversation without purpose in her home, especially at the table, but here her cousins seemed to keep on speaking. Kambili did not speak but listened to every word spoken and followed every cackle of laughter and mockery.

Kambili was sensing the change of atmosphere and compared the foods at her home and she started to suffer due to the new experience and thought that her parents would be sitting alone in the wide dining table and they always had leftover rice and chicken. The crates of coke, fanta and sprite were always full at her home. At the home of Ifeoma they also had dinner watching TV in the living room and that was totally strange to Kambili and Jaja as they had not risen from the dining table during meals.

Kambili noticed that Aunt Ifeoma dissolved spoons of dried milk in cold water in order to give the children. She used to have as much creamy peak milk. They had breakfast as okpa and Kambili knew that they never had it for any meals and ate it as snacks along with steam cooked cowpea and palm oil caked. Kambili and Jaja adopted themselves to the etiquettes and Kambili realized that:

Laughter always rang into Aunt Ifeoma's house, and no matter where the laughter came from, it bounced around all the walls, all the rooms. Arguments rose quickly and fell just as quickly. Morning and night prayers were always peppered with songs, Igbo praise songs that usually called for hand clapping. Food had little meat, each person's piece the width of two fingers pressed close together and the length of half a finger. The flat always sparkled Amaka scrubbed the floors with a stiff brush, Obiora did the sweeping, chima plumped up the cushions on the chairs. Everybody took turns washing plates. (PH 140)

Kambili and Jaja appreciated the works that was done by the children of Ifeoma and also accepted the change and took part in the various chores.

Kambili and Jaja returned home. During dinner, Kambili realized that the chunk of chicken on her plate would be divided into three pieces at Aunt Ifeoma house. She also felt that the silent was different and missed the conversation of her cousins at the table. She learned about companionship and unity of doing the work dividing it among family members in order to eat a meal with happiness. The performing of different works helped Kambili and Jaja to recognize their own capacity and responsibility.

To conclude, Kambili from the upper class family realized that they follow strict etiquettes, have servants and perform dining as a ritual. They have enough quantity and quality of food and do not share happiness and laughter with the family members. In Aunt Ifeoma's family, she finds that true happiness is not in the quantity or quality of food but in sharing the works like cooking and eating together as a family. Through the character of Kambili everyone can learn that following strict table manners and having various dishes will never give happiness but cooking, serving, sharing the food and treating etiquette according to the comfort of all the members and working and talking together as a family will reflect the love, care and will create ecstasy during dining.

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**Dr. K. Sindhu, Assistant Professor of English and K. Lydia, II M.A. English Literature**  
**Food and Social Difference in *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Adichie** 291

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Dr. K. Sindhu  
Assistant Professor of English  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
Salem –11

K. Lydia  
II M.A. English Literature  
Periyar University  
Salem –11  
Email ID – [lydiaprincyrose@gmail.com](mailto:lydiaprincyrose@gmail.com)

## **Tracing the Economy and Cultural Circuit through Food in Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance***

**Dr. K. Sindhu, Assistant Professor and R. Gunasundari, M.Phil. English**

Consuming food is a common human activity. Food is necessary for living. It is directly related to socio economic status of the people. Food taken by people shows their family, class and also their ethnic identity. Food items have meanings and some cultural values attached to them. Regional food habits also exist in nations, but they change time to time. Religion, caste and economical condition such as cost, income, and food availability are some of the factors that influence food habits. Different religious ceremonies are being practiced by offering various food items in front of God's idol. The above factors show their culture and socialization. Middle class people maintain their dietary than the lower class people. Society is not formed by equal structure. It is constructed with different classes of people.

Rohinton Mistry is an Indian born Canadian writer. The different cultures followed by Indians and Indian politics are the major themes in his novels. Mistry's strength is to connect diverse background into a single straight line. In his second novel *A Fine Balance*, he exposes the changes in the Indian society through his protagonists, Ishvar and Omprakash from Chamaar caste, Dina Dalal from a traditional family and Maneck from a mountain town area.

In an interview, the author explains the way he chose the background of his characters:

After writing my first two books, I became aware that they were stories about a very particular and special kind of city and even then, I had focused only on a very small part of it the Parsi community. I made a conscious decision in this book to include more than this, mainly because in India seventy-five percent of Indians live in villages and I wanted to embrace more of the social reality of India. So, I made the tailors come from a small village and Maneck come from a hill station in the North. While the city is certainly important, I wanted to give a strong sense of the different locales and I wanted to root the reader those places so that he or she has a very clear sense of where these people are coming from and what their difficulties are now. (Nasta 204)

The situation becomes more complicated when the subject is not actual food but food within literary texts, and food, like literature, looks like an object but is actually a relationship. (Aoyama 2)

In this novel, Mistry said a little about Parsi's food culture in marriage ceremony. Three basic things are needed for each wedding celebrations, the couple, their loved ones and the food. Food is in the list because it is emotionally satisfying, it touches everyone's senses. Food served in the celebration shows their hospitality and is an expression of happiness. The author portrays Parsi marriage culture through the marriage of Dina and Rustom. They had simple preferences on marriage. They did not want a grand function. But Nusswan, brother of Dina arranged a grand dinner party and served the dishes with real care. He suggested everybody to take more food. He enquires each and everyone whether they had food or not.

“Nusswan examined the plate that passed before him. . . What's this, Mina, you must be joking. Even my pet sparrow would go hungry with this quantity.’ He spooned more briyani for Mina. ‘Wait, Hosa, wait, one more kebab, one more, come on, be a sport.’ (38)

Actually, Nusswan did not have any interest in this marriage. But in the case of the wedding dinner he whole heartedly spends the amount lavishly. And his warm words towards him guests are a showcase of his Parsi culture. Not only in Parsi culture, all caste in India have some traditional way of providing food in celebrations.

The Same day, after three years Dina and Rustom arrange a small house party for their wedding anniversary. Dina wore the previous year's wedding frock and she prepared food on her own and everybody enjoyed the meals. Rustom went to buy ice cream after the meals. Unfortunately, he met with an accident while returning from the shop. Dina and Nusswan searched Rustom. On the way to the shop they found Rustom's bicycle and heard about accident. Dina was totally heartbroken. At that time a street dog was licking the ice cream near to bicycle. Police inspector kicked the dog. But Dina screamed at him and asked him to allow the dog to eat.

Dina was first to spot the bicycle. ‘It's Rustom's,’ he said. Her voice had strange into a stranger's, sounding unfamiliar to her own ears. . . a stray dog lapped at the thick pink puddle near the bicycle. The policeman kicked the sand coloured mongrel. . . when he kicked it again, she screamed ‘stop that! What harm is it doing to you? Let it eat!’ (45)

From this incident economic level of Dina and Rustom is exhibited. They were not able to order food from outside. They did not have money to buy new dresses and did not have iceboxes to keep ice creams previously. Food served in the celebration clearly describes financial level and their life style. Her humaneness is exhibited when she raises her voice for the sake of the street dog.

In this novel, Mistry shows the situation of lower caste people through their struggle for food. When Ishvar and his brother were kids, their mother Roopa steals milk from cows and filled her sack with oranges of upper caste orchard. This shows readiness of mother to take risks to gratify her children's hunger. “But for this child she did not hesitate to steal either. And there was not a mother she knew who would not have taken the risk for her own son” (97).

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**Tracing the Economy and Cultural Circuit through Food in Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance***

**294**

After Narayan and Ishvar were well trained Narayan opened a tailoring shop in the village. Ishvar settle down with Asraf Chacha. Narayan developed his shop and got married. After a few years he wanted his son Omprakash to learn tailoring. He sent his son to Asraf Chacha at the age of eight. Omprakash was paid a lot attention by his mom and grandmother during his weekly visit. His sisters resented his visit because of special treats like cream, dry fruits and sweet meats offered to him. His sisters were not given much attention. They secretly sobbed at night. Here author manifest Indian culture of giving more authority to male child than female child while serving food.

When Ishvar and Omprakash were searching for tailoring work in Bombay, Ashraf Chacha arranged their stay with his friend Nawaz. He proved to be far from hospitality and friendly. Nawaz accepted to shelter them, but he was not happy with the situation, so he allowed them to sleep in a filthy shed and behaved strangely. He did not ask them to eat in his house. This incident shows the city culture. People who lived in cities like Bombay do not believe other people and not even take care of neighbours.

They could smell food cooking, but Nawaz did not invite them to eat. . . Light from the house spilled out through the kitchen window. They sat below it and finished the chapattis Mumtaz Chachi had packed, listening to noises from the buildings around them. . . There was no offer of morning tea from inside the house, which Omprakash found quite offensive. (154-55)

The character of Maneck was exposed in his first meeting with Ishvar and Omprakash. Maneck offered watermelon sherbet to them in the railway station. They refused his offer. Maneck deeply examined their appearance and understood that they actually wanted to drink but they refused. He told them that he had drunk as much as he could, and he did not want to waste the remaining. So, he offered the drink to Omprakash. Then Ishvar and Omprakash accept the sherbet. After finishing the drink, they thanked Maneck.

He drank and said, "I'm full. You want it?" they shook their heads. 'It will go to waste'. Okay, Yaar, in that case, 'said Omprakash and took the sherbet. . . How much gratitude for a little sherbet, thought Maneck, how starved they seemed for ordinary kindness (7-8).

Here, Mistry clearly shows the economic condition as well as the helping tendency of Maneck. Actually, he was not able to buy two more glasses, but he gave his drink to them. This attitude shows that he was born and brought up in a well cultured family.

Dina Dalal is the only female protagonist in this novel. She is from a traditional family. Ishvar and Omprakash worked under her. At first, she did not care about Ishvar and Omprakash per day per meal policy. After knowing their story, she felt ashamed of herself. She allowed them to sleep on her verandah and to use her bathroom, and she offered them tea, so, at the end of the second week the two tailors decided to share the daily cleaning, in return for her kindness.

Their work went well for a year. Unfortunately, the Prime minister declared a state of emergency. This made their life catastrophic. Dina has no other way, so she stayed with her brother. Ishvar and Omprakash became beggars. They met Dina during weekends. She gave them food and money when there was no one at her place.

The discrimination of upper caste and lower caste is revealed using the symbol of food. Migrant's suffering for food is clearly showcased. The author gives importance to the nature of food which is consumed by the people of various religions. Thus, Mistry deals with the economy and cultural circuit through food. Mistry is well known for his realistic frame work. He analyzes deep into the effects of emergency and how people suffered to get everyday meal. He portrayed the truth how voiceless are dominated by the supremacy.

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Dr. K. Sindhu  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
Salem-11

R. Gunasundari  
M.Phil English  
Periyar University  
Salem-11  
[gunasundarichandru@gmail.com](mailto:gunasundarichandru@gmail.com)

## **Food as a Literary Device in Lucy Diamond's *The Beach Café***

**Somiya Soman K., Guest Lecturer**

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### **Introduction**

“There is no sincerer love than the love of food”, said George Bernard Shaw. It is true that food is not just something that people and animals eat for survival. It, in fact, binds a society or a culture together. It is closely related with the harmonious existence of various people, bringing them under the same taste preference.

Eating a wide variety of healthy foods promotes good health and helps us to protect against diseases. It has been given a very significant place in our lives because it is our primary requirement and basic need. Thus, the importance of food is incontestable. Yet, because it is so close and obvious, we often fail to pay attention to it. Food, in many cultures, brings people together and connects them on multiple different levels. For example, the tradition of eating with the family around the table represents togetherness with one another. Therefore, food itself could symbolize something greater than what it is. Many contemporary dietary practices are shaped not only by culture, but also by religious beliefs. Across the world, people make the choice to eat or avoid certain foods based on the laws of these beliefs, leading to a vast collection of fascinating, culturally and theologically significant foods.

This very same food often appears in literature and it cannot be dismissed as something trivial. The tea-party in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1866) is clearly uncivilized, but lets the protagonist come to terms with the new world. Similarly, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) describes the gathering and cooking of the food in anticipation of a party and how the party becomes the cause of the family's 'fall from grace'. Hence, themes related to food are common among all types of writing. The writers use food and eating to symbolize issues of acceptance, resistance, and preservation of culture, as well as memory, emotions, history, relationships, power, and consumption.

### **Food as a Literary Device in Lucy Diamond's *The Beach Café***

Food plays an important role in our lives, not only in the physiological, but also in a psychological sense. Emotions are also closely connected to our eating habits. Food has been a constant source of inspiration in literature, hence portraying human emotions vividly through parties, dinners and feasts. In this sense, it is interesting to examine a literary work regarding the element of

food involved in it. *The Beach Cafe* (2011) is a similar work, revolving around food, which has the aroma and taste of British beach side dishes.

Written by Lucy Diamond, the novel is about Evie Flynn who inherits a cafe on the Carrawen Bay in Cornwall. The first-person narrative begins with how Evie is considered as the 'black sheep' in her family. She is a wild spirit and fails to keep up to the expectations of her family. Her sisters are married and settled with kids, whereas Evie still struggles to carry on with any job. When her aunt, Jo, passes away, she inherits her cafe. She tries to manage her career in Oxford as well as the cafe. Finally, she decides to follow her heart and runs the cafe. Though she has to labour in the beginning, she gets to bring the whole village community together through her cafe and eventually, makes it up to her parents.

When Evie's family comes to know of the accidental death of Jo, they are grief stricken. In association with the tragedy, the family drinks to commemorate Jo. This is a custom seen in many cultures when death strikes. When Evie comes to know that her aunt has left her the beach side cafe, she is dumbstruck, just like her family. Her sisters suggest her to put it on the market, but she is doubtful. Her career, meanwhile, goes downhill. She hates her superior, who is a pervert, and her ungrateful colleagues. Her only solace is an occasional beer with her best friend, Amber. Here, the drink serves as a stress remover. Moreover, she loves the time being spend with Saul, her live in partner's son. They enjoy reading sessions with food. It is a way by which she relives her childhood and enjoys the company of the kid.

Once Evie quits from her job, she heads to Cornwall. She finds the cafe in a state of degeneration. The chef, Carl, is selfish and does not care about the cafe, while the other two staff are not up to the mark. While Saffron steals food for her buddies, Seb is a novice in table service. Evie badly needs a reviving coffee to lift her up but is disappointed with the café. She decides to cook for the café. Her scones, initially, are disasters. But, the third batch seems to be yummy. She becomes confident as she feels that she can bring up the café. However, she bakes a carrot cake forgetting to have any icing at home. This shows how inexperienced she is with cooking. She manages to get hold of some icing before bringing the cake to the café, but it is accidently dropped down by Seb. Evie is much disheartened as not even she could have a taste of the cake. She has to be the chef and waitress when her staff is late. Her bacon rolls are not up to the mark, though she manages to keep smiling at her customers.

Evie finds running the café a nightmare. The rumour that she is going to sell the place is heard by her when Ed, a newbie to the village, comes to the café. She serves him bacon rolls and he is quite specific with the toasting and right amount of butter. The crispy looking rolls taste better than her previous ones and are appreciated by him. She tries to bring more variety into the menu much to the displeasure of Carl. Once she is invited to her home by Annie, Jo's friend, she gets to know more about the village people. Here, she tastes Annie's chocolate cake with hazelnut and chocolate icing. The sweetness of chocolate, the crunch of the hazelnut and the fluffiness of the sponge cake hit her taste buds, leading her to recruit Annie as the cake maker of the café. We see how tasty food can

influence people in taking right decisions. This right decision to have Annie on board makes the café to attract more people, serving them the true taste of sundry cakes and cookies.

Evie returns to Oxford as Matthew, her live in partner, and Saul beckon her. She joins a pharmaceutical company, but it never works out. She realises with a broken heart that Matthew has accustomed to a life without her. More sadness creeps into her life as her whole family, including Matthew, pushes her to sell the café. She decides to run the café and break away from Matthew, but her love for Saul makes her keep mum about this. The final nail in her coffin is Matthew's decision to break up. She is heartbroken and is nursed back by a slab of Dairy Milk from Amber. Chocolate, especially the dark variety, is known to be a good stress reliever. It is found to keep Cortisol, the stress inducing hormone, at bay. Evie's brunches and lunches with her friend let her introspect. She tries to find her true self in these occasions. This is where food acts as a catalyst in looking into oneself. To her dismay, she finds that Carl has quitted without giving her any notice and the café has been closed. Annie's cakes lie as sole survivors in the deserted café. She, then, gears up to her café with Amber as her sidekick.

Evie and Amber try hard to run the café, after firing a thieving Saffron. Evie, later, meets Ryan, her love from the past, whom she had met in her teens while waitressing at Jo's. It was a stable one with the delish pastries and mellowness of flapjacks. It is interesting to note that she had met Matthew too over food. Things become more compelling when she finds that Ed is a chef. He fills in Carl's position and cooks delicious dishes for the customers. Annie's cakes return with more complaisance, while Rachel and Louise come in as the new staff. Evie gets interested in cooking and baking more than ever with Ed by her side. Her true love blooms amidst creamy coffees and toffee crunch ice creams. The café turns to be a place for Jamie's painting exhibition and where the book group meets as does the local band. Visual treat, music and literature blend in with food. It begins to hold a regular "girls' night in" for the women of Carrawen Bay.

Once Evie and Ed break up, the food loses its magic touch. Her grief takes a toll on her cooking as Ed leaves the café. To spice up the tragedy, the café is damaged in a heavy storm and the ceiling falls down. A disheartened Evie cheers up with the whole village working tirelessly to resurrect the café. Ed returns and the couple mend things. They serve Cornish pasties and sandwiches to the village people as they bring back the café within a short time.

## Conclusion

The novel, *The Beach Café*, is all about Evie Flynn and her self-realisation through food. The woman who knew nothing about the intricacies of food was considered as a failure. But, as she learns to survive in the café, she becomes able even to be a chef. The food that she serves undergo a lot of transformations. When she has Carl as her chef, the dishes are not that best. He is interested only in preparing curries and spicy food, only to serve his poker friends. With Ed, things change. A wide variety of dishes by Ed attract tourists as well as the locals. Wendy comes in as a temp chef adding a wildness and vigour to the café.

Rachel and Leah become waitresses and fall in love with the food. Phoebe, a run-away kid, is taken under Evie's wings. The teen helps her in ways she could in managing the café. She reunites with her parents and friends in the shelter of the café. It is uplifting to see the girl becoming considerate with hot chocolates and cheese toasties. Florence, an old widow, apprehends peace at the café and makes new friends over Victoria sponge. Jamie gets to exhibit his paintings and earn money through the café, while it becomes a centre for the book club, local band and women.

Evie and the café were disliked in the beginning, but once good food rolls out people become affectionate. Here, food brings in a good change among the villagers. It brings them together when adversity dawns. They learn to forget and forgive over food. It is really lovely to see the warmth of fellow-feeling emerging slowly. Food encompasses music, paintings and literature, here. Art reflects through food and it enhances people's connection with food. Loneliness disappears with palatable food and friendship flowers. It becomes not merely a means of employment for Rachel and Leah, but also something that brings in love and life. Hence, food is a great element in modifying people and stories.

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Somiya Soman K.  
Guest Lecturer  
General Department  
Government Polytechnic College  
Mananthavady, Wayanad  
Kerala - 670645  
[somiya.92@gmail.com](mailto:somiya.92@gmail.com)

## **Soul Curry: Re-reading of Gourmet Rhapsody**

**Dr. M. Shanthi, Associate Professor**

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Hemingway said, "I have discovered that there is romance in food when romance has disappeared from everywhere" (<https://www.terriwinding.com/blog/2014//12/literary.html>). Food is the ultimate source to link people with one another. Food and eating habits are the universal experience of the human beings. Food and the behavioural pattern are closely related to each other. Involvement with food would vary from person to person, people who are more involved would be better in understanding the people's emotions. Good food attracts everyone, and it would be admired by all. It is a wonderful feeling for the tongue and for the eyes. It depicts one's culture, tradition and it reflects people's identity and it also defines the class of a person. The psycho-analytical theories portray the eating habits which display self-identity and the routine habits of the society.

The French gave the world the bench marks in cooking standards, etiquette as also a vocabulary to go with it. For the French, food is a religion they practice with ardent devotion and public display of adoration. Restaurants and chefs are rated in terms of Michelin stars and have a cult following. Food is not only nourishment of the body, it is also a nurturing of the soul. From the bare ingredients to the final flourish of plating and serving, food is a sensual delight. Much before food porn became the norm, French chefs were dishing up meals fit for the aristocracy. Innovation and sophistication in the combination of flavours and delectable presentation of food is akin to religious ecstasy. Two antithetical terms that have entered the English language are *gourmet* and *gourmand* which represent the discerning connoisseur and the greedy hog.

This is a telling comment on the philosophy of French cuisine which privileges a discerning palate above a savage satisfaction of hunger. Domain of food includes appetite; pleasure and it defines a society's structure and the world vision. Food has played an integral role in our culture and it has invariably crept into our writings and entertainment. Literatures of the world not only depict the themes of romance, relationships, struggle for survival, jealousy, hatred, wars, murder, moral values, identity crisis, caste and class discriminations, justice, anger, oppression, gender inequality and so on; but also, the importance of food and its implications. In children's Literature it is displayed through tea parties. Lewis Carrol's *Alice in Wonderland* presents the uncivilized tea party which Alice was forced to attend, describes the wine, tea, butter and bread. Charles Dickens' famous novel *Oliver Twist* speaks about Oliver's childhood in the orphanage. In the orphanage, the children demand more porridge as what is served is insufficient to meet their hunger. This is viewed as a call to rebel and he is sent away from the orphanage. It is a turning point in many ways for Oliver.

During the calamitous events like droughts, food as survival is a crucial theme in adult Literature. Food is the major symbol described by John Steinbeck in his epic novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. It depicts the fertile American land turning into a dust bowl as all cultivations fail. The still born baby is a metaphor of the death of possibility in an environment which is reduced to dust. The struggle of the family to stay together and survive the drought is the major leit motif of the novel. The novel *Les Miserables* by Victor Hugo narrates the story of Jean Valjean, a convict who serves a prison sentence of 19 years for stealing a loaf of bread to feed the children. He is treated as a criminal throughout the novel. In *Great Gatsby*, Gatsby's dinner parties are famed. He defines his status through his dinners. Toni Morrison uses food metaphors to delineate status symbols. Through food images her novels depict the survival for an African-American identity.

Food thus is a measure of civilizational standards and is a tool for exerting cultural dominance. This food war which represents a cultural war is facilitated by the high priests of taste—the food critic. He is by no means a fly by night operator or an amateur. His palate is his weapon and if he is pleased, he will bestow his favour upon the eatery; if his exacting standards are not met, he will unleash his ire through his pen. The well-known animation film *Ratatouille* portrays Gusteau, a popular chef feels that anyone can cook; but unfortunately, he commits suicide due to Anton Ego, the food critic's acidic comments about his restaurant. Food critics wield an enormous power in French society; they can make or break the restaurant industry that relies heavily on reputation and public patronage.

The author of a well-known novel **The Elegance of the Hedgehog**, Muriel Barbery's debut novel **Gourmet Rhapsody** depicts a food critic as an unlikely hero. The novel showcases a plethora of flavours of life and how the human soul acts in an unexpected situation. The novel illuminates his incandescent power as mere flotsam and leaves him facing a reality check when he is unexpectedly informed about his imminent demise. All his life, he has lived for the pleasure of food and the everyday human relationality of life is denied in favour of his love of food. Nothing mattered to Monsieur Pierre Arthens except the delight in food. His devotion to food finally devours his entire life and he is left with the illuminating moment of discovery that food is nourishing in the relationships built around this most basic act of nurturing. The novel intimates that the importance of small pleasures in life is more important than either power or pelf in society.

Pierre's doctor declares that he has just 48 hours to live and he finds himself in a state of horror. He spends his final few hours in his yearning for a long-forgotten taste which he has forgotten for years, yet he does not find it. He yens for the long-lost taste spirals into a quest for the real meaning of life as he goes into self-introspection mode. The disposition of his character is disclosed through the self-analysis of his life from his childhood onwards. Through 29 chapters, Barbery wrenches the hero's inner thoughts in the form of confessions. Pierre describes his journey to Greece, Tangiers and Brittany. Barbery not only uses Pierre as the narrator but he is also seen through his wife, his mistress, his son, his maid and his cat. He understands that power and position in society has only fetched him more ego rather than companionship.

Pierre as a narrator exposes his real nature: how he spent his time with his relatives shows that from his childhood he loved food and his quest had led him to reach a position as a food critic. He says, “I find that I have always loved eating” (Barbery, 4). He remembers how he used to love to be in his grandmother’s kitchen. The aroma of various flavours cemented him there. “We could already catch a whiff of the heavenly aroma from the corner of the street” (Barbery, 50). A beautiful picturesque description about the grilled chicken prepared by his grandmother makes Pierre get nostalgic enough to re-live the past. He says, “I did not hear another thing. My eyes open wide, I stared at the object of my desire; the grey, blistered skin. It elevates the grilled sacrifice to the rank of culinary apotheosis, is at the best like evoking the soporific virtues of opium” (Barbery, 51). Grandmother had the power to conquer the men of the house through her cooking. She conquered the men through their taste buds. The men experienced paradise “Via the taste buds” (Barbery, 43). He realises, “No chef can cook, nor has ever cooked, the way our grandmothers did” (Barbery, 43). Pierre feels that the women in the house lured, seduced and charmed the men through their cuisine. He remembers, “yet under the influence of her expert hands, the most banned substances were transformed into the miracles of faith” (Barbery, 49).

Pierre’s reminiscence of the past showcases his attachment for food rather than for his relatives. He remembers his visit to aunt Marthe’s house where he had the experience of fishing with his uncle Jaques and how he avoided the bread and the salted butter but “devoured relentlessly the strips of fish, the grilled sardines suffused my palate with its track and exotic bouquet with each mouthful I grew more mature, and every time my tongue caressed the marine ash of blistered skin I felt exalted” (Barbery, 52). His uncle used to take great pains to cook himself a little mouthful of paradise and he used to refine himself and lived everyday as an authentic aesthete.

The one who loves food only can become a good cook. Pierre devours what he eats. He defines the cook as, “Those who claim to be cooks must resort to all five senses to be truly cooks – a dish must delight to the eye, the most, and the taste of course – but also to the touch, which directs the chef’s choice on so many occasions and has its part to play in the celebration of fine food” (Barbery, 52). Pierre is proud to boast that even his Dalmatian dog could have dreary tasty buds and could smell the food correctly.

Pierre recollects his visit to Burgundy, the land of wine, with his grandfather. He remembers the company of his grandfather and his first taste of whiskey recollects the first time he experienced the power it has to wake the dead. He meets Gaston, the wine maker who is considered as the prince among princes because he feels, “In any activity, whether noble or reviled, there is always room for an all-powerful flash of realization” (Barbery, 126).

Only a good cook can become a good food critic. Pierre felt, “Tasting is an act of pleasure and writing about that pleasure is an artistic gesture, but the only true work of art in the end” (Barbery, 82). He recollects how he had visited Ms Marquet’s restaurant for 20 years as she was known for her creative perfection. His positive critical comments made her restaurant famous in the town. Though she disliked him, yet she shares her bed with him to safeguard the customers in her restaurant. He likes her because inspite of being well established in her field; she does not rest on her laurels but

continues to establish herself better amidst her competitors. When Pierre orders the food in her restaurant in a form of Anthology he realises, “Naturally, it was a feast of an anthology and it was perhaps the only time during our lay co-habitation as food lovers that we were truly united in the fervour of a meal, neither a critic nor cook, only high-flying Connoisseurs sharing their allegiance to a same emotion. But while this memory of noble lineage may flatter above all my self-importance as a creator that is not the reason why I have caused it to re-emerge from the mists of my unconsciousness” (Barbery, 135).

Anna, Pierre’s wife had no emotional attachment, but had taken care of him and his family. She loves him for the sake of her children; Pierre had only used her to fulfil his needs. She regrets to see his pitiable condition and says, “He would no longer see me, would pierce my haunted soul with his falcon’s eyes in order to embrace a view that was beyond the sight” (Barbery, 111). She has seen him grow professionally and at his deathbed she feels, “Everyman, in a way, is master of his castle. The coarsest peasant, the most uncultured winemaker, the most miserable employee, the shabbiest shop keeper, the greatest pariah” (Barbery, 125).

Paul, Pierre’s son neither received the father’s affection nor his love but obeyed his father’s orders from his childhood. He does not feel sad at his deathbed as he does not have any emotional attachment towards his father. When Pierre asks him to get chouquettes, without uttering a single word, he runs to the shop. He regrets obeying the orders all the time. Pierre regrets that he has forgotten his past and realises that he has led a life without any meaning as money and fame had preoccupied his mind. He repents missing something in life. A man who ruled the food industry remembers very minute details of his past and the emotional bondage what he had with people in the past prods his awakening, “The emotions attached to it that remains precious, and that might reveal to be a gift for living that I had not previously understood” (Barbery, 52).

In the last chapter of the novel Pierre realises that his wish was to have chouquettes from the shop and confesses that he has written a bad review which had brought the business down. He regurgitates the taste of the chouquettes on his tongue and in that moment feels that he had attained God. He says, “I have lost him, sacrificed him to the glorious desires which were not mine and which in the twilight of my life, have very nearly succeeded in concealing him from me again” (Barbery, 155). He realises that if one loses everything it can be found but the precious moments in life cannot be retrieved. So, one should lead a life full of meaning. His soul craves to re-live a new life but the knowledge that death is round the bend powers his yearning for the last taste which he had condemned in his life time.

Pierre’s identity is well known in the town and his arrogant nature is exposed by Rick, his cat, where it proudly says that the only positive side in Pierre is his love for his cat. He took everyone for granted. Even after his trips abroad, when he comes back home, he does not enquire about his children or his wife but spends a few minutes with his cat. The cat keenly feels that Pierre’s end is his end.

Search for perfection and search for taste enslaves Pierre. He has sold his soul for the taste. On one side it is the food Industry and on the other, the people who make him the arbiter of power. His powerful status is not fixed by others. He is the one who decides who should be raised to the lofty perch or thrown to a frivolous situation. He is the one who defines the power equation in the culinary world. Powerful status depends on the hierarchical position of an individual. The very word 'power' is viewed as a means to 'oppress' or even 'constrain'. Power is concentrated in the hands of Pierre and the others become powerless and, most significantly, he suppresses the powerless. Foucault's contribution lies in the analysis, "...of the way that power operates within everyday relations between people" (Mills Sara, Michel Foucault, 33). Since time immemorial the power structures in society are viewed as a common theme. Various theories are proposed to propagate one's authority either in private or public. Power is a soft insinuating presence used in order to show one's authority. Those who are in power seek attention of the public and gain personal happiness and benefits.

Powerful personalities do not mind common destruction. As long as they gain or maintain the highest position in society, they use the power by any and all means to perpetuate for posterity and their privileged status. They are not worried about the negative consequences which would affect the society in which they live. Pierre uses his power as a food critic and exerts it even on his family. He strives hard to maintain his ego at any cost in order to exploit their Achilles' heel to his own advantage. Power is indeed a concept of one-upmanship and this is best portrayed through Pierre. Foucault feels, "Power is conceptualised as a chain or a net, that is a system of relations between the oppressed and the oppressor. And the individuals should not be seen simply as the recipients of power, but as the 'place' where power is enacted and the place where it is resisted" (Mills Sara, 35). He realises on his deathbed that power is not conducive to healthy relationships. Exertion of power causes isolation, conflicts, personal problems, professional dissatisfaction and psychological stress to Pierre.

Foucault says that if there is resistance in power conflict, the person who shows his power misuses his authority and displays his real nature. Ms Marquet is the victim at the hands of Pierre. His family members too suffer due to the arrogant nature of Pierre. Power slowly destroys Pierre. He tries to exert his authority over the food industry and gets entangled in the complexity of life. Unfortunately, Pierre awakens to his myopia at his deathbed. Foucault opines, "a power relationship can be articulated on the basis of two elements which are indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship; that the 'other' (the one over whom power is exercised) be thoroughly recognised and maintained to the very end as a person who acts: and that faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results and possible inventions may open up" (Subject and Power 220). It happens in Pierre's case as he realises that his reign over the food industry and the family does not yield anything in life except short-term satisfaction; but in the long run only amicable relationships matter the most.

Apart from depicting the themes of social class, philosophy of life and innumerable flavours and various types of food as major themes, the novel also displays the theme of thirst for power, its

abuse and the moment of reckoning, the role of ego, self-identity and self-realization through confession. Pierre acts as a real connoisseur of good food and an authority to comment and to express his real feelings about food. The title of the novel *Gourmet Rhapsody* suits the plot of the novel as Pierre, an expert food critic describes the food in an authentic manner which entranced the novel's characters as also the readers.

Freud opines that the personality of an individual is determined by the unconscious mind. Our wishes, needs, fears and our emotional feelings in our unconscious mind make us behave in a certain manner. Our ego is based on reality principle and the super ego in us decides to follow the morality of life. Id, the instinct in us, perforce makes us react to a given stimulus. The healthy balance between id, ego, and super ego determines healthy behaviour of a person. When one is overpowered by one or the other, then the conflict arises. The aggressive nature also erupts. Any display of our behaviour is due to inner impulses. People show power on the powerless due to imbalance of the ego. Pierre's superiority complex makes him not to show his emotional attachment to his colleagues or his family. His ego interrupts his getting close to his wife or children; at his deathbed he admits his fault when he recollects his intimacy with his grandparents, aunty, uncle and his close associates. He was on the top of the arena where he used to visit the elegant restaurants and the food courts; yet the thought of death pushes him into self-analysis to regain his normal instinct of attachment with his family members. His soul also craves for the simple taste for a sweet mint whose taste he denied himself during his career as the most famous food critic. Lacan says, "The ego being the result of a conflict between one's perceived visual appearance and one's emotional experience. This identification is known as alienation" (*The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho Analysis*, 220). Pierre alienates himself from his family due to his preoccupation with fame and glory; only to realise that life is simple with simple things.

The paper describes the moment of existential angst faced by Pierre to validate the necessity and significance of human relationships. In a world of seeking success in a competitive arena, it is companionship, affection and love that take the enjoyment of food to a meaningful level. A single flavour which he wants to devour forces him to re-evaluate the value of life. The loneliness and isolation of modern living is cloaked in an aura of power. The reminiscence of memory recalled is a confessional journey from childhood to adulthood and Pierre's disenchantment with his life. It is in a moment of self-realisation that Pierre acknowledges that it is the people, relationships and the small everyday things in life that truly matter. The paper analyses the power hierarchy inherent in the French food industry and the psychological need to associate food with identity.

Rather than exclusively dominating over a larger sphere in search of a space to contain his ego, Pierre would have extended his sphere of influence better had he the humility to respect and adore the people in his life in equivalent terms of his slavering discernment for food. This ability and capacity to judge good taste is sorely lacking in his relationships which are structured on his need to seek tasteful food. His obsession for just the right taste in food borders on an obsessive-compulsive disorder; this assures him qualitative culinary experiences while simultaneously denying him the bliss of intimacy. Excessive power in one sphere of life throws the other aspects of life out of kilter.

The critic knows that refinement in food is an elixir; the same refinement in relationships would have gifted him the harmony of la dolce vita. However, his ego and his lust for power stop him short of the power of the aesthete in every aspect of his life. Gourmet Rhapsody waxes eloquent on his pet obsession, while hemming him out of satisfying human relationships to leave him wanting and saddened by guilt.

Power radiates from Pierre; everything is erased as he sits in judgement of whether the latest originator of taste should be given a free hand or if it did not hold out the possibility of future delights, shouldn't their race be stopped at the starting line itself? Having exercised this dilemma with utmost precision for most of his life not only in matters of culinary ecstasy, but also in his relationships, Pierre faces his own selfish and snobbish choices. His early memories are no doubt about food, but these very same memories evoke the warmth of family too. Somewhere along his climb to the pedestal of power, he lost his bearings and judged his relationships on the same parameters as his professional frames of reference. His pursuit of the epicurean maxim of "eat, drink and be merry" sidelines family and friends who are slotted in the brackets for their utilitarian necessity than in satisfying his emotional needs. Food had replaced the need for both family and friends: through food, he met his deepest need of self-actualization in his capacity to wield immense power to make or break careers.

Yet on his deathbed, he craves for chouquettes—a simple, even plebian treat—to satisfy his intense longing for taste before his final curtain call.

The language descriptive of food is as close to religious ecstasy that the title is justified. The sensual plane is at once orgasmic and blissful: the material satiation of the body is also the path to an intimate knowledge of true unadulterated bliss.

This seeking and knowing confers on Pierre the status of arbiter of taste. Pierre embodies power, yet the power that leaves him weak-kneed in supplicatory enslavement is for chouquettes.

In this admission lies his acknowledgement that the simple pleasures of life are truly everyday reassurance of routine acts done repeatedly. In his last confession and of demanding the gourmand eating of chouquettes, his mantle of power dissipates as he indulges in the last act of satisfying his craving for the simple everyday chouquettes. The gourmet has displayed the chink in his armor; a lesson that rhapsodies the simple.

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Dr. M. Shanthi  
Associate Professor  
Department of English  
Dyanprassarak Mandal's College and Research Centre  
Assagao, Mapusa, Goa  
[shanthimuninathan@gmail.com](mailto:shanthimuninathan@gmail.com)

**Recognition and Identity through Culinary Art: Hassan Haji's  
*raison d'être* in Richard C. Morais' *The Hundred-Foot Journey***

**Dr. V. Sangeetha, Professor and A. Divya, M. Phil Scholar**

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Contemporary literature has dealt with the theme of food. Food is the representation of one's psyche, culture, identity and individuality. Eating is a biological process which is the most important factor for survival. Francis Bacon states in his famous essay *Of Studies* "Some books are to be tasted, others are to be swallowed, some few to be chewed and digested" (Bacon and Whitely 422). *The Hundred-Foot Journey* is a famous novel by American writer Richard C. Morais. This novel belongs to the genre, bildungsroman which means 'novel of education' and 'novel of formation'. It focuses on the protagonist's psychological development and identity. Morais narrates the life journey of a young Indian boy Hassan Haji and his incredible growth as a star. Hassan Haji, the protagonist, begins his life as a boy who belongs to a poor family in the slum area in Mumbai and later, he becomes a famous chef in Paris.

In *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, Hassan Haji's family runs a restaurant in Napean Sea Road in Mumbai. People who belong to Haji community are specialised in cooking like how Halwais are specialised in sweet-making. Hassan's grandfather is a dabba-wallah and sells snacks on bicycle. Selling snacks is the main source of survival for Hassan's grandfather. "They sold sweets made of nuts and honey, milky tea, but mostly they sold bhelpuri, a newspaper cone of puffed rice, chutney, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, mint, and coriander, all mixed together and slathered with spices" (HFJ 5). He had great culinary skill and knew every nook and corner of Indian cuisine.

Childhood skills and beliefs play a vital role in the formation of an individual's identity. People have some innate qualities through their forefathers than acquisition. Likewise, Hassan Haji has inherited culinary skills from his ancestors. He states that his interest for culinary art started from his birth. "I suspect my destiny was written from the very start, for my first sensation of life was the smell of machli ka salan, a spicy fish curry, rising through the floorboards to the cot in my parents' room above the restaurant" (HFJ 1).

In the earlier stage of Hassan's life, his family moves to London where they want to get a better life. Hassan's father searches for a suitable place for his restaurant but in London Hassan feels lonely and he terribly misses his mom who died due to the local communal riot in Mumbai. He searches and questions himself for creating his own identity. "I wanted to blurt out, Yes, help me. Help me find my Mummy. Help me find myself" (HFJ 44).

He was ready to work as a sales-boy in a jalebi shop where his minds feels soul satisfaction. He feels joy through the sounds of simmering oil and his own voice during selling. He tries to find his identity through his job. According to Erik Erikson, personality development is the most important factor for acquiring an identity. Quest for identity is considered to be a major focus in the adolescence period. “The person becomes aware of individual inherent characteristics, such as likes and dislikes, anticipated goals of the future, and the strength and purpose to control one’s own destiny” (Campbell et al. 201).

Hassan’s father Abbas Haji finds that Hassan is the best cook like his grandfather and selects a better place for his restaurant in Lumiere. He names it Maison Mumbai in front of the famous French inn Le Saule Pleureur. Hassan was skilled in cooking non- vegetarian foods especially fish curry and chicken. Cooking and eating non-vegetarian food do not appear strange to Hassan Haji because eating non- vegetarian is widely practiced among Haji community.

Madame Gertrude Mallory is a chef’s chef. Her restaurant Le Saule Pleureur had won two Michelin stars. She comes to know that Hassan has an excellent skill in culinary art. “Talent that cannot be learned. That skinny Indian teenager has that mysterious something that comes along in a chef once a generation. Don’t you understand? He is one of those rare chefs who is simply born. He is an artist. A great artist” (HFJ 93). She offers Hassan the post of chef in Le Saule Pleureur. She tells her opinion to Hassan’s father that, “This is a chance for your son to become a truly great French chef, a man of taste, a proper artist, not just some curry cook working in an Indian bistro” (HFJ 126). Madame Mallory’s offer brought a huge change in Hassan’s life. His decision directed him to earn his identity.

Hassan was ready to accept Madame Mallory’s offer but at the same time he feels for leaving his restaurant Maison Mumbai and his family members and his spices, kitchen and everything related to it. He expresses his complexity. He was ready to come out of his comfort zone to reach his goal and get his identity. “I crossed the street. A lot of emotion went into that hundred-foot journey, cardboard suitcase in hand, from one side of Lumière’s boulevard to the other” (HFJ 133).

In Le Saule Pleureur, Hassan learns the intricacies of French Cuisine. He follows the proverb When in Rome, do as the Romans do. He is completely moulding himself to become a great chef. His experiences enrich his culinary skill. After his apprenticeship in Le Saule Pleureur, Hassan moves to La Belle Cluny, a Michelin star restaurant. His arrival elevates and gives one more Michelin star to that restaurant. He wins two Michelin star and is ready to start his own restaurant Le Chien Mechant. He prepares food with the touch of French and Indian cuisine. His fusion gives recognition to him. He is a French chef, but his dishes have a touch of Indian cuisine.

That means no cleverness, no fireworks, no fads. Our mission, from now on, is to make a simple boiled carrot or a clear fish broth sing. Our mission is to reduce every ingredient down to its simplest, deepest nature. We will draw on the old recipes for inspiration, yes, but we will renew them by stripping them back to their core, removing

all the period embellishments and convolutions that have been added to them over time.  
(HFJ 204)

Hassan's expertise in cooking fetches him another Michelin star. "The third star! Michelin has just given you the third star!" (HFJ 227). He is the first Indian to have won three Michelin star in France. "You are the first immigrant ever to win the third star in France. It quite an honor" (HFJ 229). He killed those who criticised and humiliated him with huge success. Hassan strongly believes his mother's words. "Never be afraid of trying something new, Hassan. Very important. It is the spice of life" (HFJ 24).

In the post-modern era, hybridity is inevitable. It refers to the cross breeding of two different things. Adaptability and fusion are the key concepts of hybridisation. It applies to music, fashion, culture and cuisine. Hybridity plays a vital role in the modern world. Hassan adapted the French cuisine and fused it with Indian cuisine. His adaptability and passion made him a renowned chef in Paris. He gets recognition and identity through culinary art which makes him a super chef star.

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Dr. V. Sangeetha  
Professor and Head  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
Salem 636011  
[sk19@periyaruniversity.ac.in](mailto:sk19@periyaruniversity.ac.in)

A. Divya  
M. Phil Scholar  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
Salem 636011  
[divyaanbalagan123@gmail.com](mailto:divyaanbalagan123@gmail.com)

**Analyzing the Food Habits of Current Era with Reference to Ainthinai in  
Tamil Literature**

**Dr. V. Sangeetha, Professor and R. Pathmapriya, M.Phil.**

Food is one of the basic necessities that are needed for human beings. All the living things give more importance to food because food is an important source for survival. Hence food brings goodness to one's health. It emphasises a beneficial eating habit that helps to prevent humans from illness. It offers dynamic fitness and vitality.

The traditional food method plays a vital role in maintaining better health. Ancient people followed a typical farming method. Those methods helped them to lead a long life and preserve food for a long time as well. Drying food is one of the ancient methods practiced preserving food for an extended period. Healthy foods help to maintain effective mental health and energetic spirit. In ancient times, people stayed energised both mentally and physically which emphasizes the importance of nutrition.

The present landscape and the recent developments in food varieties are affecting the psychological structure and cultural identity of a person. In the current era, most people consume fast food. It lacks good amount of carbohydrate and proteins. In the ancient time, food growing environment seemed to produce high quality food products.

In Sangam literature, poems deal with subjects of Akam and Puram. Each poem is the representation of moral ethics which is based on the relationships with nature. In Akam, Thinaï appears as a collection of poems of Sangam literature. Thinaï is classified into seven and Ainthinaï is one among the seven types of thinaï.

Thinaï is derived from the root word tin or tit which means a surface of land. The word Thinaï refers to earth's surface land, which is divided into five natural regions named as Kurinji, mountain tract; Paalai, deserted land; Mullai, pastoral tract; Marudam, fertile land; Neithal, seashore land. The other two types of Thinaï include Kaikilai, one-side love and Perunthinaï, mismatched love. All these lands are established by the people of Tamil Nadu. The indigenous Tamil people in South India follow it for years together. Traditionally they developed the practices of growing crops and raising cultivation in the five landscapes. The evolution of human culture was first understood by the culture of the five regions around the five geographical lands.

Tamil people noted that the habitual parts of the earth's surface were divided into five natural regions. Each region is named as a terrain or mode. These landscapes associated with specific

aspects of a relationship or specific stages in their development of a relationship. The literary studies on Thinaï gave birth to Thinaï poetics written by indigenous Tamil people.

In Sangam period, Tamil people followed the three kinds of human culture such as Mediterranean, Alpine and Nordic inherent food habits. Food habits based on the five landscapes and their culture evolved the occupation of the people of the five regions such as hunting, robbery, honey collection, farming and trade.

Kurinji region is the earliest surface in Ainthinaï, the tract of mountain which stands in thick woods and dense forest. Kurinji land people were living in the foot hills of mountain tract and lived their lives firstly with fruits, nuts, tubers, jackfruit, honey, rice, bamboo rice and foxtail millet. These varieties of foods supply got changed with animal flesh. They are expert in hunting, in mountain regions. Namachivaym in his work *தமிழர் உணவு* stated “தடியும்கிழங்கும் தண்டினர் தரீஇ ஓம்புநர் அல்லது உடற்றுனர் இல்லை”, (9) as the food used by Kurinji people as referred in *மலைபடுகடாம்*.

Man’s first profession was hunting which was also the occupation of Kurinji region. On the hills the wild boar was hunted for food by the Kurinji people. Despite of hunting the ancient women started planting seeds in soil. The people were killing them using bamboo fire and throwing poisoned thorn on them. The earlier kuravar invented fire, the greatest invention ever to cook animal flesh. Cooked food made people healthy and strong.

The barren area was one of the habitual regions of the earth surface which is called ‘Paalai’. These people were chased by the wild animals; therefore they hunted the animals for continuing their lives in the desert. People of Paalai lead an adventurous life and took risks to overcome their starvation. People of Paalai feasted on Porcupine which was referred as *முளவுமா வல்சி யெய்னர்* (Namachivayam 18).

Mullai is the forest terrain and the extended region of Kurinji. People provoked the development of human civilisation through the usage of their habitual food. In Mullai land they consumed millets, rice, boiled vegetables, cereals, panicum sumatrense and red grams. Different types of millets gave nutrition to ancient people to become physically strong. Millets are grains which contain the power of fibre, calcium, minerals and iron. It has high value of nutrition when compared to rice and wheat. It is a suitable food for people in the preserve who are aiming for weight loss and who are diabetic and cardiac patients.

In this land people cultivated and consumed various types of millets like finger millet, kodo millet, foxtail millet, little millet, barnyard millet, pearl millet and sorghum. The Mullai people followed pastoral life style of living. Their lifestyle developed by the civilization of culture and cultivation of food from the forest land. The consumption of rice and millets of Mullai region people is referred as “அரி செத்து உணங்கிய பெருஞ்செந்நெல்” (Namachivayam 13).

The next among the five geographical landscapes is Marudam. It closely denotes the early phase of the Stone Age Paleolithic and beginning of Neolithic age of modern civilization. During that time people of Marudam were working as ploughman and peasants. They grew their habitual food such as plantain, sugar-cane and mango which were their habitual foods. “தீங் கரும்போடு அவல் வகுத்தோர் மான் குறையொடு மது மறுகவும்” (Namachivayam 15). They also grew fresh vegetables, tasty rice and cereals. Despite usual crops, people also started to grow bananas, nuts, tapioca and cassava. These food habits were healthy.

People there learnt the tactics of farming life and what crop to grow and when.

The last among the five regions is Neithal, the seaside landscape. Neithal land people practiced the art of fishing. They consumed fish, dry fish, shells, sea food and salt. “மீன் தடிந்து, விடக்கு அறுத்து ஊன் பொரிக்கும் ஒலி முன்றில்” (Namachivayam 17). Their main occupation was fishing and salt preparation. Food of this land had high level nutrition, protein and minerals. These resources provide information about food practices of Tamil people. It also presents information about traditional food.

The basic human needs which remain unchanged for ever are food, water and oxygen. To acquire food farm lands are cultivated but the food produced feeds only to half of the current population. Food scarcity will not lead to healthy active life. The food pattern followed in the present era is also bad since it has no nutritional values. Huge factories sell fast food for affordable cost but with no nutritional value.

People of all age group love junk food. In the present era people are attracted towards affordable food. But it brings harmful effects to people. It results in lack of learning and many other health problems especially to the teenagers. It also increases the chemical changes in our body that can result in depression, which is the root cause for many diseases. Eating packaged food is the cause for low level nutrition in the body; it's connected to mental stress and induces health hazards such as blood pressure, diabetics, overweight because of the excessive cholesterol, fat and sugar content. They only provide pleasure. Most of these foods affect women rather than men. They bring infertility in women.

Candies, bakery products, pizza, fried fast food, ice cream, salty snacks, drinks, burger and spicy food are considered as junk food. Nowadays human activities destroy the environment and natural resources. Farmers are using insecticide to eradicate the insect which induced chemical changes on plants. A pesticide acts as poison and affects both plants and people who consume it.

Ancient people were very strong both physically and mentally because of their healthy food habits. But the present people ignore good eating habits. Junk foods are enclosed with the unessential layers that make people suffer from various kinds of illness. Eating grains and pulses are solution to equalize the absence of the nutrition in human body. Human body needs raw food

which was followed by the ancient people in Tamil Nadu. The traditional way of agricultural pattern which is followed in some parts of the country has to be widened to acquire healthy lifestyle.

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Dr. V. Sangeetha  
Professor and Head  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
Salem-11  
[sk19@periyaruniversity.ac.in](mailto:sk19@periyaruniversity.ac.in)

R. Pathmapriya  
M.Phil.  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
Salem-11  
[pathmapriyarv@gmail.com](mailto:pathmapriyarv@gmail.com)

**Food:**  
**A Source of Voice and Power of Northeastern Women in**  
**Mary Kom's *Unbreakable***

**T.S.K. Shalini and S. Sneha Sri, Assistant Professor**

Food is one of the most basic components of human life. Every muscle, every fiber and every cell of human body relies on food for energy to survive. Sports hold a sacred place in most of the cultures and literatures. Great literary works capture the broad appeal of sports and its ability to transform individuals and society. Sports is one of those areas where food plays a vital role. Nutritious diet is very important and is ineluctable, irrespective of the nature of sport. Women of all society need more nutritious food to be strong physically and mentally. Northeastern women depend more on nature for their food.

Lately sports nutrition is one of the main areas of research which deals with consumption of food and its impact on a performance. The type of food consumed by an athlete during the training session and prior to performance plays a direct impact on the performance. Food that is required for a player depends upon the age, gender, place that one lives in and also by the game played. But it is wistful that, in India, a proper diet for any player is given only in few international tournaments and for very few professional players. Sports Authority of India was established in 1982. One of its major ideas is to provide nutritious food for the players and give professional training. Unfortunately it is done only to a certain extent. Mary Kom, on Aug 2, 2016, expressed her grievance in Rajya Sabha how players are provided with the required food supplements only during the competitions and not in the practice session.

Sports nutrition is a field which tells how nutritional knowledge adds fuel for any physical activity and how a player's performance can make a tremendous impact. A normal human requires about 2,000 calories per day. However for an athlete it will not be quiet sufficient. At least 3,000 to 8,000 calories will be required for them based on their field of sport. Proper nutrition not only develops the skill and performance of an individual but also helps in a speedy recovery from every injury, which is inevitable in sports.

A country, where we claim to be the largest producer of various food products, it is heartbreaking to see that it gives least importance for its athletes. Not even an Olympian is given proper nutritious diet during the part of their training. Diet for them is maintained only during their matches. Many of the players are not economically higher for taking care of their calorie supplements. It is the responsibility of the government to take care of such players. Not even the University and National level players are given proper food supplements that are required for the

players. Some organizations like SAI (Sports Authority of India), NIN (National Institute of Nutrition) take minimum care of player which is okay to a certain level. Calorie requirements depend upon the game we take up. Games like Basketball, Boxing, Football, Swimming burn a lot of calories per hour. Around 650 to 980 cal per hour is burned in such games.

Northeast Indians mainly Manipuri's have been giving confidence and is being a constant role model for the rest of the country in the field of sports. One of the biggest advantages of the people can be referred to the food they take in. Staple foods of Northeast Indian are fish and rice. Leafy vegetables, herbs and roots are very much included in their diet. Soaking, boiling and steaming are the methods they normally use. Modest amount of oil is used in their diet. Mostly these people use pepper and chilly instead of spicy masala. Deep fry is also mostly avoided by them. It can be said that these Organic food items have helped Kom in her later years. She strongly believes all her strength is from her hard work of early years. "I am tough because of my background. They made me who I am today. They gave me the strength to keen fighting. Indeed, they made me want to fight in the first place" (Kom 3).

India is known for its culture and traditional food. Just by having those traditional foods in proper supplements, according to the nature of sport, gives the desired result. The Ace Boxer, M.C. Mary Kom in her autobiography said how she has suffered all along in her childhood even without proper food. The autobiography *Unbreakable* tells about her heart rendering achievements amidst many stumbling blocks of her Boxing career and her personal life. It is the traditional food that helped her to come this long way. She says:

I remember that, after a whole day of hard work, like digging trenches, Apa earned just enough to buy rice for one day. When he could, he leased farms and cultivated rice. As a child, he had learnt how to hunt, fish and grow vegetables. When we had no money to buy rice, he would hunt and fish, and sell the fish to buy rice. (Kom 11)

Rice and wheat being the staple food for majority of India, it is more than enough to stay fit and healthy just by consuming this. In view of Kom, just the regular exercise and proper food supplement is more than enough. In one of her interviews she said: "Mostly, its boiled rice or sticky rice. Without rice, I won't be able to survive. Sometimes, I eat sweets like Jalebi, ice cream and all too. But no masala or spicy food. I take regular supplement and that really helps me" (Khare).

Food of Northeastern people is mostly organic even in this business world. It is very much healthy when compared to the rest of Indian foods. People there grow their own food items. They normally eat whole grain dishes, unpolished rice and fresh fruits and vegetables. Using minimum oil is one of the biggest advantages of Northeastern people. An herb used in their food is used to treat a lot of ailments, even without consuming them separately as medicine.

Lately there are details of Kom's daily diet how she takes home-cooked Manipuri food, protein, multi-vitamins and vegetables with meat. Many a time players are not provided with proper

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food during their international tournaments. Once during such tournament Kom tells the experience of how she used both her hands to hold the chop stick to pick up the food.

One time, in China, we were given chop sticks to eat our meals with. Just when I had painfully begun to master the art of using a knife and fork, I had to use two sticks to fill my stomach. I ended up using both my hands to hold the chop stick to pick up the food and push it into my mouth. My team mates asked for spoons, but I tried to manage with the sticks. It helped that I really enjoy Chinese Food. I was hungry enough that I managed the complex work required- I ate enough to eat my appetite my palate. After five years of travelling, I started taking along some packed food from home. (Tamil Nadu, Dept. of School Education 36)

This shows how sports personalities have to adjust with their food habits in a foreign land and also take care of their health and weight. Kom, even though born in poor family, worked hard, ate what she got, hunted her own desired sport and reached heights. At some point of time it was her will power and her hard childhood that kept her going in the boxing ring. One such point is doping test where cautiousness is needed. She remembers: “I had a cold and fever through the tournament, but for fear of doping charges, I did not take medication for it. It was my will power that saw me through it all.” (Kom 73)

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T.S.K. Shalini

Department of English

Periyar University

Salem – 636 011

[shalinisalem95@gmail.com](mailto:shalinisalem95@gmail.com)

S. Sneekha Sri

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Periyar University

Salem – 636 011

[sneekhasri@gmail.com](mailto:sneekhasri@gmail.com)

## **Food Habits of Indians in Khushwant Singh's Novel *Delhi***

**P. Kavitha and Dr. B. J. Geetha, Assistant Professor of English**

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This article focuses on the food habits of various periods through different eye witnesses in Khushwant Singh's novel *Delhi*. Singh was born in Hadali in 1915, he wrote novels, short stories, and non-fictions. Singh was a fine historian, novelist, political commentator, an outstanding observer, and a social critic. He had a successful career as a writer. His profound knowledge and understanding of Indian history, political systems, and literary heritage were reflected in his prose works. Khushwant Singh's third novel *Delhi* is a mix of history, romance, and sex. It gives the history of the capital city of India, Delhi.

As an Indian writer he should prefer Indian food, but he likes Anglo Indian foods like ishtoo or sawset with kashtar for a putteen. When he tells about Hoity Toity, cousin of the Queen, guest of the president, a foreign lady, takes gins, and tonics and a plateful of tandoorichicken and Russian salad, at that time he prefers to eat chilled lager and some kababs. Singh wants to communicate with his cook bearer by lightening the candles on the dining table. One candle refers to no need of dinner, two candles for no need of bed tea in the morning.

Bhagmati, Singh's hijda whore wants to take lentil soup and a chappati. She wants to taste saffron pilaf, some oven baked chicken, and kulfi (ice-cream) from a hotel. Singh takes her to Moti Mahal and ordered a packed meal for two. Singh carries saffron pilaf and naan, chicken and baked fish and rabdee of thick clotted cream. Bhagmati says to Singh, "Will Huzoor kill me with hunger? Take me to a nice hotel and give me some saffron pilaf, some oven -baked chicken and kulfi (ice-cream) and I may tell you more" (37).

Ram Dulari, wife of Mussadi Lal, hits the hearth to warm up the morning food. She served the meal to her husband and she went back to the kitchen to eat hers. They take food in brass plates. Singh beautifully portrayed the traditional way of taking food by wives. When Singh told about Prophet Muse, he accepts a shepherd as his true servants because the shepherds liked to give goat milk to God. God replied to Muse that if you give food to somebody you can find me in them. Here Singh depicts true religious faith on God. The symbol of true religion is portrayed by Singh through Muse. When Singh talks about Bhagmati, he tells about how they have coffee. He mixes a cup of coffee with rum. Bhagmati does not notice the smell of rum and

difference in taste. “By the time she has drained the mug she is as warm inside as she is toasted on the outside.” (104).

When Singh talks about Georgine, she wants to taste a carton of milk of cock. She drank two bottles of cock, after drinking she felt good. By seeing this Singh ordered to cook for her the next time. When he talks about untouchables, the poorest of poor, Jaita Rangretra, narrates the story of Badshah. When Badshah Jahangir’s death was heard in Delhi, no poor was allowed to light a lamp or kindle a fire in their hearth for some days. Badsha was a drunkard. He drank more wine than uncle Raloo who was drunk most of the time. Badshah could drink twenty cups of arrack and eat tolas of opium every day. The Queen put some magic powder in his cup of wine and made him fall madly in love with her. As a poor, Jaita and his uncle Raloo drank lots of sherbet which was served free outside the nawabs’ mansion, they ate lots of sweet meats which was given free by rich men. Sometimes the sweepers were provided with an extra large portion of the left overs. Begum Zeenat Begum made the arrangements to Bahadur Shah Zafar.

We quoted Saadi: I am hungry and opposite hungry and opposite to a table of foods; I am a lusty youth at the door of a hamaam full of females.’ This brought the colour of pomegranates to her cheek.

We notice that Zeenat Mahal had prepared our favorite dishes: vension kababa with nauratan chutney made of nine condiments; roast wings of peacocks and quails; kulfi covered with gold leaf and garnished with slices of mango. She helped us wash our hands. She picked the food with her own fingers and placed it in our mouth. We could not recall when last, she had shown such tenderness towards us. When the meal was finished, she rolled a betel-leaf, mixing lime and catechu paste with scented tobacco, and placed it in our mouth (263).

In the chapter Meer Taqi Meer, he tells that it was the first time in his life that besides sherbet, wine was served at a Mushaira. He has tasted wine made from Kandahar grapes chilled in snow brought down from the Himalayas. He always drank wine. He becomes a drunkard because of the Kandahar grapes. The people who lived in this period used to take maghaee leaves like our betel leaves. In the fifteenth chapter, Singh listed out his favorite foods: raw onion, mangoes, cheekoos, ice-creams, cakes, rice, lentils, potatoes, and fried foods. He used to take black coffee and vitamin B complex tablets too.

When he talks about farting, he tells the reason for farting. Some people did not take fleshy fruits and no fibrous vegetables. Poultry, fish, and meat are some foods which produce farts. Vegetables like potatoes, radishes, carrots, garlicks, onions, cabbages, turnips, and cauliflowers are some fart producing items listed by Singh. Another type of fart is called the scrapers which are a product of eating too much tamasick food. Raja’s food does not produce much wind. If they eat highly spiced tamasick foods, they become the world champion farters.

In the sixteenth chapter, Alice Aldwell, Singh gives the importance of mangoes. Begum Zeenat Mahal gives a trayload of watermelons and mangoes as a gift to Alice. These mangoes were taken from the Talkatora estate. He also describes the mango season. He tells that the best time to enjoy mangoes is between mid mornings and afternoons. After their meal they wanted to taste mangoes. Then they also wanted to taste the ice cooled leaves with saffron. Alice told about the coarse chapattis and meat curries. Singh gave his view on mangoes as such that the Alfonsa are the most delicious mangoes from TamilNadu.

Singh tells about Bahadur Shah Zafar’s favorite dishes – kabas with Nauratanchutney. After the meal they take betel leaf, mixing lime, and catechu paste with scented tobacco. He tells that mangoes are incomparable fruit. Nearly a thousand varieties of mangoes are available there, but very tasty are Dussehris, Landas, Ratan’s farm orchard of Uttar Pradesh. These mangoes were also Bhagmati’s favorite. During the mango season her visits were more frequent. She tells that these mangoes are good for digestion and are the best thing to take for constipation.

The traditional way of Indian food habits was portrayed by Singh. As a whore Bhagmati takes her coffee with rum. Whenever she feels hungry, she wants to taste coffee or rum whereas Georgine wants to taste coke. Through Ram Dulari Singh gives the picture of Indian food habits. She always takes food after her husband takes his. In olden days people used brass plates for taking food. Likewise Ram Dulari and her husband take food in brass plates. After taking meal the Hindus use betel leaf for digestion. In many places Singh talks about the usage of betel leaf.

Even today we give the leftover foods to poor. In the chapter Jaita Rangretra, Singh shows the difference between rich and poor by giving the leftovers. Fart producing foods are also rightly described by Singh. Various tastes of mangoes were appropriately differentiated by Singh. Not only as a historian, but also as a good humanitarian Singh points out the food habits of an Indian in an interesting manner.

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<p>P. Kavitha Ph.D. Research Scholar Department of English Periyar University, Salem. <a href="mailto:kavisek99@gmail.com">kavisek99@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>Dr. B. J. Geetha Assistant Professor of English Periyar University Salem <a href="mailto:geetprem05@gmail.com">geetprem05@gmail.com</a></p>
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## **The Unification of Family through Food in Afghan Culture in the Select Novels of Khaled Hosseini**

**U. Maria Liny Jenifer and Dr. B. J. Geetha, Assistant Professor**

The richness of every culture is determined by their art, architecture, and traditions. Every occasion is fulfilled by the feast. Food plays a very important role in every culture. The level of hospitality determines the level of honour and pride over their country or ethnicity. Due to this reason, food and hospitality are considered as the prime factor in a society. Generally, food is seen as one of the basic needs of a citizen. In particular, food classifies and points out their status of living.

Traditionally, the values of human being, customs, traditions, and culture are passed on to the next generation through women. In the same way, the art cooking are taken over to the next generation through women. Basically, food is considered as one of the factors of the material world. The material world is surrounded by men and women, yet men are seen as the breadwinner of the family.

In every culture, family is seen as a single entity. Family is the basis for every behavior and practices. Every single attitude of a child is the result of their family members' behavior. In the current era, there are numerous deficiencies and disorders with regards to the food habits. Many people focus on healthy diet rather than spending time with their family members' in order to be a healthy family. From ancient times, food was served by women and everyone in the family sat together to have their meal. Either rich or poor, they had the habit of dining with their family which strengthened the love and sharing between them. Family is the nest which is built up by good values and binded together with love and care. Food plays an important role in binding the family.

Food has an important role in culture. Many anthropologists consider culture within the sense of beliefs, values, and customs. Nancy Dupree, a historian, defines culture as:

Culture embraces those shared ideas, beliefs, emotions and customs that mould behavior and place value on creative artistic expressions, such as art, music, literature, architecture and relationship with the environment.... It encompasses all members of society- men, women and children, old and young. It embodies individual and community aspirations. It influences in decision-making. Having a strong sense of one's own culture permits

individuals to develop an inner strength that inspires them to reach out for more fulfilling lives for themselves, to their families and their communities. (Tapper 5)

Every culture is maintained and nourished by families. This paper highlights the importance of food and how the food becomes a medium of unification in Afghan family and society.

Afghanistan is a multiethnic country. Each community adhere their set of rules and beliefs. In spite of their differences in ethnicities, they have strong belief in Islam. In particular, every ethnic community has their way of living and in preparing food dishes. The preparation of food is seen in two folds: at first, it is prepared to fulfill the appetite, and second, it is prepared with the shades of particular ethnicity. Afghan food is steeped in tradition and plays very important role in defining its culture.

The history of Afghanistan records massive attacks and invasions of different countries. In spite of these issues, they followed their rituals and traditional values. Nancy Dupree in Afghan National Human Development Report states that:

Afghans are noticeably distinct from their neighbours and take pride in their uniqueness. It was their determination to remain true to the essence of their cultural ethos that enabled the Afghans to endure years of economic and social hardships with forbearance and courage. The nation was utterly traumatized, but the culture survived. (Dupree 232)

Food is seen as the heartbeat of the culture and family. Even though Afghanistan was defeated by developed countries, it tried to sustain in the richness of their tradition. Food is one of the key factors that help to connect within the family:

Eating is also a mode through which we exceed our individuality and join with others: forms of commensality and communion join despite individuals both to each other and to the realm of the spiritual. Food rules and covenants are thus often way of joining the self and the community to God, either by following law or through sacrifice. (Tompkins 246)

The pride of one's culture starts with the notion of hospitality. Afghans give more importance to culture and hospitality, either by following religious rules or through their sacrifice. One of the ways to determine the richness of a culture is by knowing the country's literary contributions. In Afghanistan, most of the literary contributions are related to religious and oral story telling.

Khaled Hosseini, an Afghan born American novelist, celebrates the richness and tradition of Afghanistan through his works. He has written three novels and a short story namely: *The Kite Runner* (2003), *Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013), and *Sea Prayer* (2018). His

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novels reflect the realities in the society. The settings of *The Kite Runner*, *Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *And the Mountains Echoed* are alike. Basically, these novels give more importance to Afghanistan's culture and traditions. As Nancy Dupree says Afghan culture is unique in its nature. Hosseini narrates the pride and richness of Afghanistan's culture by describing the dishes and the festive in Afghanistan.

In *The Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini, mentions many of the delicacies eaten by the typical Afghan people. Moreover, Afghan food is influenced by the Persian, Indian, Chinese, and Mediterranean foods. Afghanistan mainly harvests wheat, corn, barley, and rice, which is displayed in their choice of food. In this novel, the protagonist, Amir marries Soraya and after a month, she cooked, "sabzichallow- white rice with spinach and lamb" (Hosseini 173). Afghan dishes also contain yogurt, nuts, coriander, garlic, onions, tomatoes; and dried and fresh fruit. Lamb and chicken are preferred kind of meats that are used in Afghan dishes. In this novel, the choice of meat by Afghan people are displayed when Amir and Baba visit Kaka Homayoun's house in Jalalabad, Amir described, "had lamb kabob with freshly baked naan from the tandoor" (85). Lamb is one of the main ingredients in food that mentioned in *The Kite Runner*.

In Afghanistan, majority of the people belongs to the religion, Islam and they have Halal foods:

The word "Halal" comes originally from Arabic language meaning: allowable, acceptable, permitted, and/ or permissible. The concept of Halal is not only related to food or food products (as most people will expect or think), but it goes beyond food to cover all the aspects of a Muslim person's life (male or female). (Khan 33)

Generally, Halal foods are allowed depending on what the food is and how the food is prepared. Foods specified are mostly types of meat and animal tissues. Amir and his friend Hassan are Muslim, and their religion supports following the Halal rules. Amir's teacher told in his class that, "Islam considered drinking a terrible sin; those who drank would answer for their sin on the day of *Qiyamat*, Judgement Day" (Hosseini 16). Halal foods very much determine the type and content of the Afghan cuisine. Moreover, it is considered as the way of being pure in this world.

When Amir and Baba visit Kaka Homayoun in Jalalabad, Amir explains as, "The wives and daughters served dinner-rice, kofta, and chicken qurma-at sundown. We dined the traditional way, sitting on cushions around the room, tablecloth spread on the floor, eating with our hands in groups of four or five from common platters" (85).

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the central characters are Mariam and Laila, who are born and brought up in different families and environment, but they are married to Rasheed. The friendship and familial bond between Mariam and Laila starts in their kitchen. Though these women undergo the

struggle and beatings from Rasheed and Taliban, they share their love and care which is started from the kitchen and they spend their time together with eatables and little gossips. Food and cookery are seen as a means of communication to express care and familial love.

In society, food plays an essential role in determining the status of living. The scarcity of food makes an individual to know their worth of living. In Afghanistan, children are sent to orphanages because they can have their meal at least once for a day. Parents send their children to orphanages as orphans by breaking down the physical attachment within the family and more binded (or) bounded by emotional attachments. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Laila forces her little girl, Aziza to be in an orphanage for the guarantee of food.

In the modern era, people are more interested in connecting with the materialistic world and fail to recognize their attachments in the family. Many youngsters and adults, all of a sudden, they are emotionally driven by their desires and they tend to lose their life. Loss of communication within the family members leads to breaking up of unification in relationships and misunderstandings. The unification of family starts from the point of dining with the family. In Afghanistan, this unification is questioned because of the result in the search of food. Sometimes, the unification of the family becomes an irony because it is considered as the unification of the family with happiness or the unification of loss of the family with sadness. In order to satisfy their basic needs Afghan people flee to other country. Due to many wars in Afghanistan, the death rate is increased and they are scattered to many places within and outside the country. As a result, there is separation and sadness in the families. Children become orphan as Laila in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Later, only the memories of togetherness are unified than the physical existence of the family.

In this era, the young generation should get to know the importance of being together, spending time, and dining with the family. Hosseini through his novels described the food items in Afghanistan. In addition, through his writings, he depicts the incidents and situations regarding the celebration of food and the deterioration of food within the family and the society.

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U. Maria Liny Jenifer  
Ph.D. Research Scholar  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
[linyjeni@gmail.com](mailto:linyjeni@gmail.com)

Dr. B. J. Geetha  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
Periyar University  
[geetprem05@gmail.com](mailto:geetprem05@gmail.com)

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**The Unification of Family through Food in Afghan Culture in the Select Novels of Khaled Hosseini**

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