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# The Taste Of Destiny: Exploring Food Culture In It's All In The Planets

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**ABSTRACT**

*This research investigates the intricate arena of food culture across a variety of planets and examines how the food systems modify according to variations in sociality, technology, and the physical environment. Beyond sustenance to human and alien life, food also acts as a carrier for social processes, culture, and history. Considering how various civilizations perceive and cultivate food from their planet, environment, and resources, the essay analyzes food habits on Earth. Considering how Martian, Moon, or interplanetary societies may adopt traditional eating habits or create entirely different systems due to alien [1]environments, the article proceeds to take this question into science fiction and imaginary interplanetary food systems. The research explores the way food configures social stratification, community, and sustainability and emphasizes its symbolic significance in forming a feeling of global identity. The research forecasts possible hindrances and challenges as humanity reaches into space through examining emerging developments in food technology, space farming, and food culture. It emphasizes how central food will be to shaping the ecological, cultural, and economic features of interplanetary societies in the future.In an interdisciplinary forum, the talk provides a wide-ranging overview of food as a unifying element that brings civilizations together on Earth and across the universe.*

***Keywords:*** *interplanetary food systems, sustainability, food culture, planetary identity, and space exploration.*

## Introduction:

In the broad and dynamic discipline of Cultural Studies, mundane activities and encounters are identified as fundamental sites in which meaning is produced, contested, and negotiated. Food culture is one such significant and instructive site. In Cultural Studies, food is understood as a dense cultural phenomenon that communicates identity, power relations, class relations, gender relations, and memory, far from being a simple biological need. Academics can develop profound knowledge about how societies function, how identities are established and expressed, and how cultural meanings are conveyed through everyday activities by learning food culture.

## Food as a Marker of Identity

One of the organizational issues of Cultural Studies is identity-making and negotiation. Food cannot be separated from personal, regional, national, ethnic, and religious identities. What and how one eats and with whom one eats communicates information on belonging and difference. For instance, food like biryani, pizza, or sushi is not just a meal but a cultural text that carries tales of migration, colonization, globalization, and adjustment. Within a

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multicultural community, food comes to be utilized as a strategy for maintaining tradition and heritage, most notably in diaspora communities. Consuming traditional foods serves as a way to maintain immigrants' cultural memory as they relocate to new cultural situations. As such, in Cultural Studies, food is approached as a performative act whereby individuals perform and keep being who they are.

**Food and Power Structures**

Cultural Studies, through the likes of Michel Foucault, is interested especially in the ways in which power is exerted in a day-to-day and insidious manner. Food culture is a lush terrain in which power relationships are brought to life. Whether or not one has access to particular kinds of food, is able to choose organic or foreign products, or even has time to prepare a traditional meal all depend on structures of economic power and social class. Dominance of fast-food chains in emerging economies, corporate promotion-driven food trends, or the favoring of "authentic" foods by global elites show how food is intertwined with capitalist and neo-colonial power structures. Globalisation of food also results in cultural homogenization, where local food cultures are commodified or relegated to the margins. Thus, food culture offers a lens through which class inequalities, global capitalism, and cultural imperialism can be examined.

**Food, Gender, and Social Roles**

In Cultural Studies, attention is also paid to the way in which food practice reifies or resists gender. Traditionally, women have been associated with food preparation and serving, reinforcing domestic labour and unpaid labour. Cookbooks, kitchen advertisements, and food television shows tend to reproduce feminine ideals around caring and nurturing. Nevertheless, recent developments e.g., men as cooks or feminist reimagining's of cooking have also begun to subvert these stereotypes. The study of food culture thus enables researchers to follow the interplay of gender, labour, and cultural representation, and to elucidate how traditional roles are both reiterated and subverted in society.

**Food as a Site of Memory and Resistance**

Food is also an influential bearer of collective memory. Certain dishes, rituals, or flavours evoke histories of migration, colonisation, resistance, or resilience. For subordinate groups, preserving traditional food ways is a means of resisting cultural erasure. Indigenous food ways, for instance, are gaining recognition as political acts of resistance to settler colonialism and ecological destruction. Cultural Studies recognizes food culture as a living, evolving practice rather than simply a re-presentation of memory but one that is a form of active resistance and recovered identity. For this reason, food is interpreted as dynamic, not simply a inherited tradition but one that can disrupt hegemonic story-telling. Food culture within Cultural Studies is far more than a backdrop to human life; it is a dynamic, efficacious site for identity formation, power relations performances, and history remembrance or contestation. By examining what people eat, how they eat, who cooks, and meanings placed on food, researchers delineate the rich ways in which culture operates within everyday life. Food is intimate and political, comforting and contentious. So then, the examination of food culture invites us to significant dialogue regarding belonging, inequality, resistance, and the ongoing negotiation of meaning in society. It is because food crosses all spheres of human life, emotion, body, economy, memory, and imagination, that it finds a central location within the ever-shifting discipline of Cultural Studies.

In Preeti Shenoy's It's All in the Planets, food is not just physical nourishment; it becomes a symbolic lifeline connecting people to their family, relationships, memories, ambitions, and even their mental well-being. Shenoy uses food culture not just to create a living picture of Indian life, but also to mirror her characters' emotional states - happiness, anxieties, confusion, and epiphanies. Food, snacks, and even casual eating habits subtly map the emotional landscape that the characters traverse in the novel.

Aniket (Ani), the Bangalore techie, takes comfort and solace in food, which reflects his easy-going and indulgent personality. His preference for fast food like pizza when accompanied by girlfriend Trisha signifies an informal, contemporary urban lifestyle. Ani's dietary options are frivolous and reflect his original carefree outlook on life. Shenoy, however, illustrates that food serves as an emotional anchor once Ani goes back to Chennai. The act of consuming his mother's vegetable pulao invokes ingrained emotions of belongingness. Ani says, "There was something about my mother's vegetable pulao that no five-star hotel could replicate" (p. 102). This sentence summarizes not only a flavour comparison but a warmth of feeling comparison: no restaurant or outside world even comes close to the love invested in a mother's cooking. It is at home, during family dinners, that Ani's authentic self emerges - vulnerable, wistful, and in search of emotional sanctuary.

The use of food comes full circle to be used for first meetings and starting. Food serves as an early shared element that unites two strangers when they sit together in Nidhi by Ani on the Shatabdi Express. They both order veg. meals, something simple and convenient but strongly symbolic of what they have in common, revealing their shared ethics and childhoods. Describing, "The Khara-bath was delicious and piping hot, the smell of ghee teasing" (p. 35). The shared enjoyment of the humble yet hearty Khara bath fosters a sense of comfort and familiarity between Ani and Nidhi even before their relationship truly begins. Thus, food functions as an ice-breaker, a silent communicator that eases social barriers.

Nidhi's domestic life further exemplifies the emotional power of food. Her stepmother Tara invests care and creativity into their meals together. Tara's immaculately laid dinner tables - with fresh flowers, crystal glassware, and attractively placed dishes are testimony to her devotion, discipline, and commitment towards a peaceful domestic life. The detailed description, "The table was set with a black embossed tablecloth, and fresh lilies ornamented the centre. The food was superb, aromatic curries, warm naan, and soft rice pilaf" (p. 145), show that Tara takes meals as seconds of beauty and togetherness. The food, the ambiance, and the surroundings all mirror Tara' s emotional tranquility and warmth that she tries to offer to Nidhi.

Throughout the novel, the eating of food or absence thereof successfully describes the mood of the characters. During times of turmoil in Ani's relationship with Trisha, his eating pattern alters. His mother's concern. "You're eating so little, Ani. Are you alright?' (p. 134) indicates that emotional unrest tends to manifest physically. Ani's reduced appetite here is a metaphor for Ani's befuddlement, disillusionment, and inner discontent. The use of this subtle detail is a hallmark of Shenoy's careful style of evoking emotion without stating it openly. Likewise, Nidhi's inner unrest is evoked at mealtimes. Struggling with uncertainty regarding her future and her engagement, she cannot eat normally: "I pushed the food around on my plate, appetite deserting me, my mind elsewhere" (p. 192). This small but telling action shows how psychological issues can disengage one from one's bodily needs.

In Shenoy's world, when the heart is disturbed, even the most delicious food lacks taste. Conversely, moments of emotional fulfilment are typically illustrated together with warm, comforting food. When Ani feels at home with his parents, he dines contentedly and savours the familiar tastes. As Nidhi passes cozy nights with Tara and her father, the food is hearty but comforting, symbolizing acceptance, care, and emotional fulfilment. Food thus emerges as an emotional indicator: if the characters feel safe on the emotional level, they eat their food generously in gusto; and when they're disturbed, their food is distasteful or simply absent. Moreover, Shenoy uses food to symbolise personal growth and emotional maturity. As Ani and Nidhi develop during their emotional cycles - heartache, career choice, and responsibilities at home - their food attitudes do as well. They learn to appreciate not only the food itself, but the emotional contexts with which it is eaten: a hot plate of home-cooked pulao, a convenient snack on a train ride, a well-cooked meal at home.

Thus, food becomes a silent witness to their transformation from irresponsible young adults to self-conscious grown-ups. Finally, Shenoy's food presentation captures the emotional richness of Indian life, from the carefree lunches with friends to the heavy emotional meals filled with unspoken fears. Through meals, she maps the subtleties in mood, belonging, loneliness, and love, making food a vital component of the novel's emotional fabric. In It's All in the Planets, food is never mere background description. Food substitutes for memory, comfort, anxiety, hope, and personal change. Shenoy masterfully uses food as an emotional gauge, so the reader can not only taste the meals her characters eat but taste the complex feelings they experience. She shows us that sometimes a meal is so much more than a meal,it is a map of the soul.

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