

Feminist Writings
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Remains of the Feast - Part 2

So, hello and welcome to the NPTEL course entitled Feminist Writings. We were looking at Geetha Hari Haran's short stories Remains of the Feast, which happens to be the final text for this particular course. Now, we have already had a lecture on this and we talked about how, we talked about the fundamental features, this, the main issues in the story that we were covering, which is about agency and the location of the female and the particular space.

In this case, a household space. And, of course, the cultural setting is very, very important. So you know, this, the family we are talking about over here is a Tamil Brahmin family and which is vegetarian, who have vegetarian foods. The food becomes a very important marker of identity, which will later become a marker of subversion in this particular story as we will see in due course.

So, you know, the whole idea, the whole issue about hygiene, morality and the whole morality associated with consumption of certain kinds of food. Those become very, very important issues in this particular story. And this very old widow, Rukmani who happens to be the protagonists or not perhaps the protagonists, but one of the two protagonists in the story.

She an access act of subversion through a certain kind of consumption, which is not hygienic, not morally sanctioned in the, as per the parameters of this particular family. And the other protagonists. You know, the one who in narrating the story, we are told that she is training to be a doctor and the Rukmini happens to be her great grandmother.

And there is some degree of empathic connect between these two characters because, you know, she is aspiring to be a doctor and she is on a cusp of womanhood. She is someone is about to become a woman. Whereas Rukmini is someone who is about to become a child from being a woman, because she is completely old and didn't really have control over her senses or control over her memory in a way that is rational in quality.

So in a sense, both of them are liminal characters. Both of them are characters who are sort of passing through a transition phase. But in two different phases of womanhood and you know,

that kind of transition between womanhood, between, for instance a womanhood become very important in this particular story, in a sense, in, in ways that connect the two characters and existential and experiential manners.

So, we are told, and like I said, the household setting, the household space becomes very important issue in this particular story because not least, because that space is mapped to discursively in terms of how the rooms are situated, in terms of how the functioning happens in the house, etc.

And also the whole idea of the inadequate male is an important issue, which keeps coming up in the story. And the male who is not quite adequate, is not quite powered, is not quite strong and that becomes a marker of this household in a way. There is a degree of masculinity crisis in the story, which is sort of subterranean, but it is very much there.

So you know, and then this whole reference to a young doctor who comes and checks Rukmini is a very symbolic in quality. The young doctor comes with young medical gaze, which is completely insufficient, inadequate in terms of matching up to the experiential, in existential content. The Rukmini carries, Rukmini embodies, that embodiment obviously becomes, you know far surpasses the gaze of the young doctor, in terms of training, in terms of knowledge. Okay.

So, we see, you know, he sorts of happens to get frustrated. He happens to get a bit restless looking at Rukmani, and then, of course, he declares that you know this is something which is almost fatal. This is something which, you know, cannot be cured. So, you know, keep her in the house. Okay. So, in a way, so that becomes a marker of a certain kind of identity.

So, you know, the identity about a womanhood, identity about incurability which is there in the story as well. Okay. So, and then we are told, when the doctor left, this should be on your screen.

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My father shifted uneasily in his cane chair. He is a cadaverous looking man, prone to nervousness and sweating. He keeps a big jar of antacids on his office desk. He has a nine-to-five accountant's job in a government owned company, the kind that never fires its employees.

My father pulled out the small towel he uses in place of a handkerchief. Wiping his forehead, he mumbled, "You know how these old women are. Impossible to argue with them."

"The neck," the doctor said, more gently. I could see he pitied my father.

"I think it was examined once, long ago. My father was alive then. There was supposed to have been an operation, I think. But you know what they thought in those days. An operation meant an unnatural death. All the relatives came over to scare her, advise her with horror stories. So she said no. You know how it is. And she was already a widow then, my father was the head of the household. How could he, a fourteen-year old, take the responsibility?"

"Well," said the doctor. He shrugged his shoulders. "Let me know when you want to admit her in my nursing home. But I suppose it's best to let her die at home."

When the doctor left, we looked at each other, the three of us, like shifty accomplices. My mother, practical as always, broke the silence and said, "Let's not tell her anything. Why worry her?" And then we will have all kinds of difficult old aunts and cousins visiting, it will be such a nuisance. How will Ratna study in the middle of all that chaos?"



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But when I went to our room that night, my great-grandmother had a sly look on her face. "Come here, Ratna," she said. "Come here, my darling little gem."

I went, my heart quaking at the thought of telling her.

She held my hand and kissed each finger, her half-closed eyes almost flirtatious. "Tell me something, Ratna," she began in a wheedling voice.

"I don't know, I don't know anything about it," I said quickly.

"Of course you do." She was surprised, a little annoyed.

"Those small cakes you got from the Christian shop that day. Do they have eggs in them?" "Do they?" She persisted. Will you, and her eyes narrowed with cunning. 'will you get one for me?'

So we began a strange partnership, my great-grandmother and I. I smuggled cakes and ice cream, biscuits and samosas, made by non-Brahmin hands, into a vegetarian invalid's room. To the deathbed of a Brahmin widow who had never eaten anything but pure, home-cooked food for almost a century.

She would grab it from my hand, late at night after my parents had gone to sleep. She would hold the pastry in her fingers, turn it round and round, as if on the verge of an earthshaking discovery.



Okay! But when I went to a room that night, my great grandmother had a sly look on her face. So, the sly look becomes important over here or because that slyness becomes subversive in quality, in terms of the things she begins to do, in terms of food she begins to ate. As act of subversion, as markers of subversion in a way.

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So, again, looking at the quasi erotic quality in this conversation. So sly, flirtatious, so all these adjectives become, they tell you something in terms about the character is becoming.

"Tell me something, Ratna," she began in a wheedling voice. "I don't know. I don't know anything about it," I said quickly. "Of course you do." She was surprised, a little annoyed. "Those small cakes, you got from the Christian shop that day. Do they have eggs in them?" "Do they?" She persisted. Will you,' and her eyes narrowed with cunning, 'will it get one from me?

Now this is the point in the story where consumption begins to become subversion, right? So she tells, I mean, of course there is a bit of a miscommunication over here. Ratna thinks, she is about to ask her about her medical condition. But you know, Rukmani couldn't care less about her medical condition. What she cares about is the fact that the cakes she had from certain Christian shop, here again, the location, the Christian shop is important.

The Christian shop is outside the parameters, and the moral parameters of consumption of this particular house, which happens to be a Tamil Brahmin house, which was completely vegetarian. And if no, non-vegetarian item, even a cake made with eggs, is a sort of taboo in this particular house. Now, what happens in the story? What begins to happen in the story?

Is that there is a very old great grandmother who had lived presumably her entire life as an embodiment of this taboo, as an embodiment of this moral parameters that she began to become, she begins to become subversive. So, she now is quizzing Ratna about the egg cakes that she got from the Christian shop that they, and she wants her to bring one for her.

And she tells her quite clearly, "Will you get one for me?" And then we are told, so we began a strange partnership, my great grandmother and I. So partnership becomes a, you know, an

important word over here, they almost become, you know, colluders with each other, they collude with each other in terms of what they wanted to do.

So the great grandmother and Ratna they begin to become partners, accomplices in some kind of activity and how, what kind of activity what there is, what kinds of activities were those? I smuggled cakes and ice cream, biscuits and samosas made by non-Brahmin hands into a vegetarian invalid's room.

So that one sentence, getting cakes, ice cream, biscuits and samosas made by non-Brahmin hands. Again, the whole idea, the whole issue of hygiene becomes very important over here in the sense that, you know, hygiene is obviously equated with morality, equated with certain kind of consumption, with certain cultural consumption.

And that begins to Get subverted, so, you know, she begins to get more and more food made by non-Brahmins and that becomes an issue, that becomes an enactment of a certain kind of subversion.

And of course the location of subversion is very important because she is doing that simply by staying in a room, invalid room, invalid room of vegetarian, invalid room of Brahmin vegetarian, invalids room, inside the house, but you know the act of subversion happens through consumption.

The fact that she is eating these things, samosa, ice-creams, cakes, biscuits, made by non-Brahmins, that immediately becomes something in a way which is subversive in quality.

To the deathbed of a Brahman widow had never eaten anything but pure, home-cooked food for almost a century. Right? So it almost becomes a bit of a paradigm shift in a way that for almost a century, she has not touched anything. She had not touched anything, which is not homemade, which is not pure, which is not moral and hygienic in quality. But now she finds herself eating all kinds of food and that becomes an important activity.

She would grab it from my hand, late at night after my parents had gone to sleep. She would hold the pastry in the fingers, turn it round and round, as if on the verge of an earth shaking discovery. So this becomes a very deeply experiential to her, it is not just eating food. It is about experiencing certain kind of sensation which is subversive.

I mean, she knows that she is breaking the rules. She knows that she is breaking the taboo in this particular case by eating certain kinds of food. But that becomes exciting for her. And so all the other chapters, flirtatious, cunning, sly, all these add together to make, to define, to inform this activity as some certain kind of activity over here.

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"I don't know, I don't know anything about it," I said quickly.

"Of course you do." She was surprised, a little annoyed.

"Those small cakes you got from the Christian shop that day. Do they have eggs in them?"

"Do they?" She persisted. Will you, and her eyes narrowed with cunning, 'will you get one for me?'

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"And does it really have an egg in it?" she would ask again, as if she needed the password for her to bite into it with her gums.

"Yes, yes," I would say, a little tired of midnight feasts by then. The pastries were a cheap yellow colour, topped by white frosting with hard grey pearls.

"Lots and lots of eggs," I would say, wanting her to hurry up and put it in her mouth. "And



Okay! And then she asks this question, "Does it really have an egg in it?" She would ask again as if she needed the password for her to bite into it with her gums. Right? So, the fact that it needs to have an egg in it and that, that discovery, that knowledge becomes important for her, because that knowledge will allow her to be subversive, that knowledge will allow her to savor this experience more fully.

And she said "Does it really have an egg in it?" She would ask again as if she needed the password for her to bite into it with her gums. "Yes, yes," I would say a little tired of midnight feast by the. The pastries were a cheap yellow color, topped by white frosting with hard grey pearls. So, these are very cheap pastries as you can understand, you know, cheap yellow color, topped by white frosting. So, not very, a good frustrating and hard grade pearls. Not expensive pastries at all, but that is the whole point.

The point is she is having cheap pastries made, made at local bazaar, made by non-Brahmins, and that becomes unhygienic food. And of course hygiene and morality are very carefully equated with each other, especially in this kind of a moral map. And the fact that she is eating

those kinds of foods that add becomes important for her and she keeps quizzing Ratna about the impurity of this food, the desired impurity in this kind of food.

So, you know, we can see that Ratna is getting tired at the midnight feast, but then, and it is, all these eating activities take place at midnight, which makes it even more clandestine in quality, secretive quality. And that clandestine quality, that secretive quality adds subversive quotient that this particular activity has.

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THOSE SAHAI CAKES YOU GOT FROM THE CHRISTIAN SHOP THAT DAY. DO THEY HAVE EGGS IN THEM?
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"Yes, yes," I would say, a little tired of midnight feasts by then. The pastries were a cheap yellow colour, topped by white frosting with hard grey pearls.

"Lots and lots of eggs," I would say, wanting her to hurry up and put it in her mouth. "And the bakery is owned by a Christian. I think he hires Muslim cooks too."

"Ooooh," she would moan. Her little pink tongue darted out and licked the frosting. Her toothless mouth worked its way steadily, munching, making happy sucking noises. Our secret was safe for about a week. Then she became bold. She was bored with the cakes, she said. They



So, she keeps asking Ratna "Whether or not these have eggs in it, eggs in them." "Lots and lots of eggs." I would say, wanting her to hurry up and put it in her mouth. "And the bakeries owned by Christian, I think the highest Muslim cooks too." So, if you can see, bakeries owned by Christian and they have Muslim cooks and they are making cakes which are, which have eggs in them. So all these add together. So she is trying to dramatize the departure from the kind of moral map that Rukmini has always been located in, just want to accentuate, there is subversion by, so adding on the different boxes.

So, it is owned by Christian and cooked by Muslim. It has eggs in it. So all these things make the departure even more dramatic in quality, you know, make the subversion even more dramatic in quality. More complete in the quality, in the sense of, you know, far from home-cooked vegetarian meals that she had, been allowed to have almost a century as a Tamil Brahmin widow in this particular case.

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"I'm thirsty," she moaned, when my mother asked her if she wanted anything. "No, no



"Ooh", she would moan. Her little pink tongue darted out and licked the frosting. So this is very, very erotic. As you can see. It is almost like an erotic adventure for her having this egg cakes at midnight with a knowledge that they come from a Christian shop and made by a Muslim baker. So, she would moan in ecstasy, she would moan in happiness and sort of subversive ecstasy.

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So the adjectives are very important way. So we are told that, she was happy with cakes for one week, but then she wanted more. Then she wanted to extend her subversion. And, but if you look at the way that she was eating the cakes, worked its way steadily, munching, making happy sucking noises, again, very erotic in qualities.

It has almost become sexual subversion in a certain sense. And then we are told that she was bored with the cakes and they gave a heartburn, she said, and she wanted to be more adventurous. Her cravings were various and unpredictable, laughable and always urgent. You know, all kinds of cravings began to happen at this point of time.

And again, the study, the consistent narrative across this cravings with the fact that she always wanted something which is impure, quote unquote, impure from the bazaar, from outside the home, made by impure hands made by non-Brahmin hands, made by Muslim and Christian hands.

So, that in her knowledge system, that will be impure, right? Because she had been, she had been born, she has born and brought up in that kind of knowledge system. And that knowledge system always told her that any food cooked outside the home or made by non-Brahmins is always impure by default.

And now she is craving for the impurity. Actually, she is claiming for the dirt from the bazaar towards the last league of life that she wants to sort of food, which comes from the outside, which is nothing to do with the purity of the homemade food.

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"I'm thirsty," she moaned, when my mother asked her if she wanted anything. "No, no, I don't want water. I don't want juice." She stopped the moaning and looked at my mother's patient, exasperated face. "I'll tell you what I want," she whined. "Get me a glass of that brown drink Ratna bought in the bottle. The kind that bubbles and makes a popping sound when you open the bottle. The one with the tizzy noise when you pour it out."



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The kind that bubbles makes popping sound when you opened the bottom. The one with the tizzy noise when you pour it out. So she wants fizzy cold drink. She wants a Coca Cola for

instance. And presumably, and again that, that foreignness of the drink is important, the aspiration for the taste is important because that becomes in a way very experiential thing.

That becomes an effective adventure for, she wants to affect, to sort of gather the effect, acquire the effect by consuming a certain kind of food, a certain kind of beverage over here. She doesn't want water. She does not want homemade juice. She wants it, you know, that fizzy drink that Ratan, great grandma, great granddaughter bought in a bottle. She has noticed it and she wants it right?

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"A Coca-Cola?" said my mother, shocked. "Don't be silly, it will make you sick."

"I don't care what it is called," my great-grandmother said and started moaning again. "I want it"

So she got it and my mother poured out a small glassful, tight-lipped, and gave it to her without a word. She was always a dutiful grand-daughter-in-law.

"Ah," sighed my great-grandmother, propped up against her pillows, the steel tumbler lifted high over her lips. The lump on her neck moved in little gurgles as she drank. Then she burped a loud, contented burp and asked, as if she had just thought of it, "Do you think there is something in it? You know, alcohol?"

A month later, we had got used to her new, unexpected, inappropriate demands. She had tasted, by now, lemon tarts, garlic, three types of aerated drinks, fruit cake laced with brandy, bhel-puri from the fly-infested bazaar nearby.

"There's going to be trouble," my mother kept muttering under her breath. "She's losing her mind, she is going to be a lot of trouble."



"A Coca-Cola?" said my mother, shocked. "Don't be silly, it will make you sick." "I don't care what it is called," my great grandmother said and started moaning again, "I want it." So again, the craving for something that is outside the home, the craving for something that is outside the moral parameter. The moral map becomes very symbolic over here.

In a sense that it makes up, you know, the whole aspirational quality. The whole aspirational occasion becomes important over way, and that is obviously connected with subversive occasion that she happens to be enacting, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps unintentionally, but the experientiality is the most important thing.

And again, what we are looking here is a very interesting combination, a very interesting entanglement about an experientiality and discursivity because you know, this experience,

also discursive in quality in the sense that you know, she is craving for foods that is outside at home.

She wants to have food, which is sort of non-hygienic in quality and that is almost making a statement. That is almost telling herself that she is adventurous. She is experiencing an adventure, which is quite exciting in quality.

So, she got it, and my mother poured out a small glassful, tight lipped, and gave it to her without a word. She was always a dutiful, great daughter-in-law. “Ah,” sighed, my great grandmother, propped up against the pillows, to steel tumbler lifted high over lips. So if you visualize this image, she is having Coca-Cola and a steel tumbler.

And that image, again, this is very interesting because, this is why we can apply something like thing theory, a very effectively. So it is a thing, it is a marker of certain kind of, it is a container for something, but it becomes metaphorical. It becomes iconic over here. The steel tumbler is something with which, you know, someone of her situation would drink from whether it is water or juice or something like that.

But what she is doing is, she is pouring Coca-Cola into it, into the steel tumbler for Brahman household and that steel tumbler then becomes, it opens up as a vessel. It opens up as a thing. It begins to take, it begins to acquire new markers of subversion, new markers of identity, new markers of functionality. So no longer is it a container, a tumbler for containing water or any homemade beverage.

It is not containing Coca Cola, which is sipping the great grandmother, in a, in a very, very satisfactory and very satisfied fashion. The lump on her neck moved in little gurgles as she drank. Then she burped a loud, contented burp and asked, as if she had just thought of it. “Do you think there is something in it? You know, alcohol?” So, I mean, look at the dark humorous way in which the subversion is proceeding or extending, you know beyond, you know, the familiar parameters.

So, she had originally thought, she originally wanted to have a beverage, a normal beverage. She has seen a beverage from the bazaar and she wanted that cold beverage, fizzy beverage. Now when she has had it, she is asking her, she is wishing or hoping that it contains alcohol

and then which will completely accentuate the subversive activity that she is enacting at this point of time. And I do think there is something in it. You know, alcohol.

A month later, we had got used to her new, unexpected, inappropriate demands. She had tasted by now, lemon tarts, garlic, three types of aerated drinks, a fruit cake laced with brandy, a bhel puri from the fly-infested bazaar nearby. So again, the fly-infested bazaar becomes very, very important because that becomes the marker, that becomes a very iconic symbol of non-hygienic space, fly-infested bazaar is as far from home as possible, as from the purity and hygiene of home as possible.

And she has had all kinds of food, lemon tarts, garlic, different kinds of aerated drinks, fruitcakes laced with brandy which is again, almost, she is almost consuming alcohol now, and behl puri from the fly-infested bazaar. So, you know, if you take all these things together, these become markers of certain kind of consumption, consumption which is non-hygienic in quality, consumption which is impure in quality and the impurity, the non-hygienic quality, becomes the part of the, like I said, part of the experience of, you know, this adventurous consumption or effective adventure that she is having or happening to have at this point of time in her life.

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"There's going to be trouble," my mother kept muttering under her breath. "She's losing her mind, she is going to be a lot of trouble."

And she was right, of course. My great-grandmother could no longer swallow very well. She would pour the coke into her mouth and half of it would trickle out of her nostrils, thick, brown, nauseating.

"It burns, it burns", she would yell then, but she pursed her lips tightly together when my mother spooned a thin gruel into her mouth. "No, no," she screamed deliriously. "Get me



"There's going to be trouble," my mother kept muttering under her breath. "She is losing her mind. She's going to be a lot of trouble." And she was right. Of course my great grandmother could no longer swallow very well. She would pour the coke in her mouth, and half of it will

trickle out of the nostrils, thick, brown nauseating. So she couldn't even drink Coca Cola any more, and she would pour it in her mouth and it 'll come out, it will spill over, it will spill out of her nostrils, in a nauseating site, thick, brown, nauseating.

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Then we knew she was lost to us. She was dying.



"It burns, it burns" she would yell them, but she pursed her lips tightly together when my mother spooned a thin gruel in her mouth. "No, no," she screamed deliriously. "Get me something from the bazaar. Raw onions, fried bread, chickens and goats. Now she wants chicken and Mutton.

And this becomes an ecstasy for her, this becomes almost like a psychedelic experience for her, and that psychedelic experience is a part of the subversion in a way. And she is, she's demanding that she has non-vegetarian food. She is demanding to have fried bread, raw onions, chickens and mutton from the bazaar.

And this coming from a very typically conservative, a Tamil Brahmin household, becomes a very, very symbolic act, becomes very symbolic desire, you know, and the, and obviously the word used desire in all these connotations because there is an erotic quality about consumption as we have said. The word moan keeps coming up. The visceral pleasure and experience in this kind of food becomes very important as well.

And also, you know, it is part of the discursive mapping. You know, so, this is a very old Brahmin widowed, who had been subjugated, to a certain kind of moral parameters all her

life. And that subjugation is now coming to an end because her life is coming to an end effectively and now she demands to have different kinds of food and the food becomes, like I mentioned the food becomes markers of subversion, markers of identity, markers of appropriation in a certain sense.

And of course the appropriation is quite visceral in quality. But what is interesting for us as students, of Feminist Writings and culture studies is how the viscosity of this consumption is quite discursive in quality. So there is a commonality, there is a mapping to be done between viscosity and discursivity, which is where the story is all about.

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loud, contented burp and asked, as if she had just thought of it, "Do you think there is something in it? You know, alcohol?"

A month later, we had got used to her new, unexpected, inappropriate demands. She had tasted, by now, lemon tarts, garlic, three types of aerated drinks, fruit cake laced with brandy, bhel-puri from the fly-infested bazaar nearby.

"There's going to be trouble," my mother kept muttering under her breath. "She's losing her mind, she is going to be a lot of trouble."

And she was right, of course. My great-grandmother could no longer swallow very well. She would pour the coke into her mouth and half of it would trickle out of her nostrils, thick, brown, nauseating.

"It burns, it burns", she would yell then, but she pursed her lips tightly together when my mother spooned a thin gruel into her mouth. "No, no," she screamed deliriously. "Get me something from the bazaar. Raw onions. Fried bread. Chickens and goats."

Then we knew she was lost to us. She was dying.

She was in the nursing home for ten whole days. My mother and I took turns sitting by her, sleeping on the floor by the hospital cot.

She lay there quietly, the pendulous neck almost as big as her face. But she would not let the nurses near her bed. She would contort and wriggle like a big fish that refused to be caught. The



Then we knew she was lost. She was dying. She was in a nursing home for 10 whole days. My mother and I took turns sitting by her, sleeping on the floor by the hospital cot. So now we are told that she was coming to the last phase of her live, the last bit of her live, really the last league of her life and then she was dying and then, she was in a hospital bed for 10 days. My mother and I, Ratna's mother, the narrator's mother and she took turns in terms of sleeping on the floor by the hospital cot.

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A month later, we had got used to her new, unexpected, inappropriate demands. She had tasted, by now, lemon tarts, garlic, three types of aerated drinks, fruit cake laced with brandy, bhel-puri from the fly-infested bazaar nearby.

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Then we knew she was lost to us. She was dying.

She was in the nursing home for ten whole days. My mother and I took turns sitting by her, sleeping on the floor by the hospital cot.

She lay there quietly, the pendulous neck almost as big as her face. But she would not let the nurses near her bed. She would squirm and wriggle like a big fish that refused to be caught. The sheets smelled, and the young doctor shook his head. "Not much to be done now," he said. "The cancer has left nothing intact."



She lay there quietly, the pendulous neck almost as big as her face, but she would not let the nurses near her bed. She would squirm and wriggle like a big fish, then refuse to be caught. Again, if you look at the metaphor used over here, a big fish that refused to be caught. So again, a non-vegetarian food, illusion to a non-vegetarian food.

It is like a big fish that is not, doesn't want to be caught and that, that wriggling becomes important over here, that squirming had becomes important over here. That becomes an act of resistance through a certain extent. And again, we find that this commonality, this is something which we see across text in this particular course, we saw that in Tulips by Sylvia Plath, we saw that in The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. And we see that, again we saw that was an extent in Jhumpa Lahiri's A Temporary Matter.

The locations of female body in the medical space becomes a very important issue throughout this course, throughout the texts, different texts we did in this course. And we find that there is always an act of resistance, there is always an active unhappiness, unhappy, negotiation with the medical space, which is almost always very male in quality, which is almost very sort of phallogocentric in quality.

And that phallogocentricity of the medical space is situated, as pitted against the experientiality of the female body, the experientiality of the female experience and the female life or the life narrative and the two are pitted against each other and the two are sort of

conflict with each other in a certain sense. So this whole idea of wriggling and squirming becomes important in this particular context.

The sheets smelled and the young doctors shook his head. "Not much to be done now," he said. The cancer has left nothing intact. So the cancer, again, that too becomes an act of consumption. So she is sort of, it is almost like an auto cannibalistic quality, about, auto consumptive quality, auto cannibalistic quality about herself, where she is almost eating herself up, the cancer is eating her up.

And that in a way, one can read this as her act of eating foreign food, her act of eating exotic food, her act of eating non-hygienic, immoral food becomes in a way resistance to cancer, cancer which is eating her body. So that act of eating bhel puri and samosas, cakes with eggs, aeriated drinks, that becomes a desperate resistance, a desperate you know, retaliation against cancer, against being eaten up.

So, it all becomes very consumptive quality. The different orders of consumption happening over here. And like we mentioned the whole idea of the Brahmin widow eating out or demanding to eat food from the bazaar becomes very subversive in quality, becomes almost a retaliation to a certain extent. The young doctor, so again, the young doctor is important, the young doctor, the youthful doctor is important because that keeps telling us, you know, in a sense that, you know, this is a young man and the young man's medical knowledge is pitted against this old woman's experience of femininity.

The old woman's experience of morality, the old woman's experience of subversion. So, that becomes very interesting dialogue to a certain extent.

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She lay there quietly, the pendulous neck almost as big as her face. But she would not let the nurses near her bed. She would squirm and wriggle like a big fish that refused to be caught. The sheets smelled, and the young doctor shook his head. "Not much to be done now," he said. "The cancer has left nothing intact."

The day she died, she kept searching the room with her eyes. Her arms were held down by the tubes and needles, cross-cross, in, out. The glucose dripped into her veins but her nose still ran, the clear, thin liquid trickling down like dribble on to her chin. Her hands clenched and unclenched with the effort and she whispered, like a miracle, "Ratna."



So the young daughter keeps shaking his head. "Not much to be done now," he said. The cancer's left nothing intact. So, you know this is the point where they get to know, everyone gets to know that she is about to die. And everyone gets to know that the act of consumption is now complete, so you know, the cancer has eaten her effectively and the act of being eaten up becomes a very-very, sort of a visceral thing, of course.

But that is also part of discursive thing because then she also ensures, she eats food from the outside. She eats things like Bhel Puri, samosas, and Coca Cola and all the other kinds of food from the bazaar, sort of fly-infested bazaar. It is a very important space in the story because that is a complete ontological opposite of the pure Brahman household where everything is mapped and hygienic and hygienically maintained, so that that becomes very important spatial counterpoint to the homes.

So it is almost like an uncanny outside the home, to a certain extent. And we saw again, the whole idea of being outside the home, becomes a very important issue in the course. Especially, if you think of the text such as Goblin market, which is entirely about the uncanniness of being outside the home. The danger of the uncanny, the danger of being seduced by the uncanny, that becomes very important, at that particular poem as well.

So, that is the reason why I have been very careful in terms of selecting the text in the course because there are several issues which run across this text. There are several things which run across the text, which is something which we have, must pay very careful attention to. Okay.

So, I stop at this point today and we will conclude this text in the next lecture. Which would be a shorter lecture, but we know will finish the story and we will wind up with certain issues which have already covered, but we will take a look at it retrospectively, which will help us get a fuller view of what the story is all about. So, I will see you the next lecture where we conclude this particular shot story Remains of the Feast. Thank you for your attention.