Exploring Foodways as Embodied Knowledge and Multisensory Storytelling: A First Generation Canadian Making an *Andhra Pradesh Thali*

Food and the eater that is the extent of the whole world (Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣhad, 1.4.6)[1]

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Abstract

This article aims to consider foodways more deeply, permitting us access to latent, hidden, and inmost understandings of ourselves and our participants that happen plainly in front of us. It invites the researcher to be the utensil and suspend presuppositions about scientific inquiry in solidarity of communal discovery.

Keywords: Multisensory; Foodways; Multicultural; Embodied Knowledge; Arts-Based Research

Introduction

I was raised in a non-traditional home. I share this, only upon reflection, as I was blissfully unaware the rarity that was my parents. The traditional archetypes of 'mother' and 'father'(Ferro-Luzzi, 1977) did not apply to my household. Both, parentally ambidextrous. My Father[2], a computer engineer, was a self-taught home chef. Although my Mother did have her signature dosas, garelu, samosas and gulab jamun, it was my Father that would have to patiently bare the daily interrogation of, "what's for dinner?" This is atypical for Indian families of their generation where the women would have the primary, and in some cases, sole role in the kitchen (Ferro-Luzzi, 1977; Heine, 2004; Inness, 2005). Given these historical traditions, my Father was never taught to cook and had no opportunities to do so while living in India. When my parents immigrated to Canada in their twenties, my Father arrived before my Mother. My Father, living over 7,000 miles apart from family had to learn new ways of navigating the world on many fronts, one

My Mother and Father. The first holistic embodied knowledge researchers in my life.

[1] (*Food and Prasada – Heart Of Hinduism*, n.d.; "Hinduism", 2010; *History Of Ayurveda*, n.d.; Olivelle, 1998; *Principal Upanishads – Saivite Scriptures*, n.d.)

[2] When referencing my Father and Mother in text, both will be capitalized as a symbol of respect.

of these were, foodways. The purchasing of groceries, planning and preparing of meals, the cooking and commensality. Interestingly, my Father never purchased a cookbook, or used a recipe—and he taught me to do the same. To this day, I have never eaten better food than my Father's.

For us, the kitchen was for gathering, exploration and discovery. One both finds, and loses themselves, in the kitchen. For my family and my culture, food begins and ends the day. It is an expression of love and celebration. Food welcomes, apologizes, comforts and connects. Food speaks without ever needing to say a word. Food is how you know where you are from, where you have been and, in some cases, where you are going. Food is both an identity and an anthology.

As such, this article has a singular aim to move the research 'laboratory' to the kitchen, and to replace microscopes with measuring spoons. It invites the researcher to be the utensil, as is common in Indian foodways where eating is an embodied practice. Indian restaurants will often request their patrons to eat Indian food by hand as it tastes better. Chennai Dosa for example, "strongly recommends you to use your fingers rather than lifeless steel spoons and forks and feel the difference" ("Eating by hands", 2021, para. 4). This article makes a similar recommendation to the reader to suspend presuppositions about scientific inquiry in solidarity of communal discovery. To fully understand ourselves as researchers, and for participants to understand themselves is difficult, unspeakable and maybe even impossible (Laurier & Philo, 2006). To counter this 'impossibility' is to include our bodies as sites of knowledge (Dewsbury & Naylor, 2002) and to elicit embodied knowledge through multisensory storytelling and foodways.

This article is not suggesting a permanent relocation of fieldwork, or suggesting that the exploration of foodways is appropriate for all populations or research questions. I am instead proposing an approach to knowledge-making that speaks in the universal language of food. Doing so, I propose, permits access to latent, hidden, and the inmost understandings of ourselves and our participants.

Spilling the Chai

This article draws from both the experiential and embodied experiences of my culture to centre Indian ways of knowledge-making through Ayurvedic traditions. To do this, I will discuss Indian storytelling, balanced holistic sensory experiences and foodways as a methodology for exploration, discovery and understanding.

This article is also best paired with chai.
Cardamom pods, cloves, peppercorns, cinnamon sticks, fresh sliced ginger, milk of your preference, a bag or two of black tea, sugar to taste. The proportions are not provided as they do not need to be. Let the aroma guide you. Taste things along the way. Does the cinnamon stick invoke memories of the holidays? Does it provide you a sense of comfort and well-being? **Add more of that**. Do the cloves seem too intense? Bitter? Medicinal? **Add less of that**. Go

Steeping the Chai.

through each spice, how do they feel in your fingers? Examine the colour and the sensations in your mouth and chest. Crush the spices. Smell the fragrance. Put everything besides the tea bags into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from heat, add the tea bags and let steep. While your chai is steeping, we will move on to the next section of the article to discuss the Indian thali.

The Great Indian Thali

Thali is a circular metal plate or banana leaf that lunch, dinner, or both, is served on in India. While many regions in India have their own versions, it is said that thali originated in South India (Rane & Thali, n.d.; Shondelmyer et al., 2018) where my family is from. Thali consists of small bowls, upwards of 10-15, each containing essential items harmoniously paired together to form a single meal. Eating from a thali is quite common in most parts of India and is differentiated regionally by its eponym of the state of origin, in my case 'Andhra Pradesh thali'. For this reason, the thali transports you into Indian cuisine, culture and cosmology due in large part to its roots in Ayurveda (Rane & Thali, n.d.).

My Canadian version of an Andhra Pradesh Thali.

Ayurveda is an eternal science that first existed in the universal consciousness before it was passed from the creator to the ancient Indian mystics through meditation (*History Of Ayurveda*, n.d.). The origins of Ayurveda stretch deep into antiquity, literally translating to the science of life. 'Ayur', meaning life, and 'veda' meaning science or knowledge (Brooks, 2018; Chadha, 2021; Mukharji, 2020; Olivelle, 1998).

Making the thali, including sweet, salty, sour, bitter, pungent, and astringent.

In the Indian context, Ayurvedic philosophy is most often used for holistic health and well-being. However, this does not preclude its conceptual value for the scientific investigation of life with foodways as a cogent methodological companion. As an example, in Ayurvedic principles, each meal should contain a balance of sweet, salty, sour, bitter, pungent, and astringent which can be found, irrespective of regionality, on the thali (Mukharji, 2020). Many of the foods and spices associated with the thali, including rice, mung beans, urad dal, ginger, and turmeric, were already being cultivated in the ancient period from 3300–1300 BCE (*History Of Ayurveda*, n.d.). This

has relevance because in the Indian Ayurvedic philosophy states, *the whole person*—mind, body, and spirit—must be tended to with food as one of the primary means (Chadha, 2021; Mukharji, 2020). Embracing this ancient Indian bedrock as an ontological foundation, I will centre foodways as a holistic approach to knowledge-making that considers the whole person, their family and community.

Pramāṇas, Pratyakṣa and Burra Katha

Brooks (2018) and Mukharji (2020) detailed the epistemological framework for classical Ayurvedic philosophy that accepts perception (pratyakṣa), or perceptual experience, as the primary means of knowledge (pramāṇa). Perception (pratyakṣa) they educated, is etymologically rooted in the sense-faculty or the sense-organ (akṣa) and can be translated as sensory awareness. Pramāṇa, on the other hand, is derived from knowledge (pramā) and, literally means 'the instrument in the act of knowing'. However, the standard interpretation of perception accepted by classical Indian philosophers is a cognition arising *within* the self—the knowing subject. Expanding this further, I draw from Muriel Rukeyser's poetry, "the universe is made of stories, not of atoms" (Foundation, 2006, p. Stanza IX). Together, pratyakṣa and storytelling, may be regarded as a literal description of the Indian worldview (Brooks, 2018).

India is a land of storytellers and storytelling (*Indian Storytelling Network*, n.d.). Oral and literary traditions aside, ancient Indians employed stories in the most essential, influential and critical texts such as the Vedas (the oldest Hindu texts), Upaniṣads (philosophy), textbooks of Vedāgas (sciences), the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita (religion) (Patil, 2018; *Storytelling*, n.d.). Authorities on the topic indicate that there is no branch of the Indian knowledge-system that is untouched by story (Patil, 2018), evidenced by a storytelling regional taxonomy that delineates the different types of storytelling. The prevalent commonality between all Indian storytelling is the inclusion of pratyakṣa (sensory perception) through singing, dancing, art, costumes, dramatic enactments, diagrammatic cut-outs of characters on cloth with lamps, wooden boxes with figurines, and many other multisensory mechanisms (*Indian Storytelling Network*, n.d.). In Andhra Pradesh, the oral storytelling art form is called Burra Katha (Patil, 2018; *Storytelling*, n.d.). It is a full sensory experience. Classical texts of Ayurveda contain innumerable stories to provide explanation, reason and rationale. The stories here are not for casual entertainment, rather story becomes a powerful form to make sense of the world and experiences.

Puppets used in multisensory storytelling.

Your chai is ready now. Perfect timing.

A Multisensory Story of Embodied Knowledge

I was born in Orillia, Ontario—colloquially referred to as 'up North' or at least, north of Toronto. The population size the year I was born was approximately 24,000 and only 14 years prior was Orillia designated a city from its original village status. Orillia was cold and was gifted a considerable allotment of Canadian snow, quantifiable by the heights of snow forts that would last into April and turn wet into May. We lived on a corner lot with forested undeveloped land as primary neighbours. Streetlights were few, but starlight was plenty. The loudest sound was the quiet, or my oldest brother playing acoustic guitar—of which he was quite talented, at least to a 4-year-old. We were the only family from India that I had known and certainly the only family of colour. I looked out into the world and saw only faces of pale, or the faces of my Mother, Father and two brothers. My family did not look like people of colour, they just looked like, my family.

I had never been outside of Orillia.

Despite my parents being Hindu, I was enrolled in a Roman Catholic school, St. Bernard's. There was a public school, but St. Bernard's was a better school, so I went there. It was a long drive to school from our home. Google maps confirms it is a 6 - 8 minute drive, which I suppose at the time seemed extremely far or at least the farthest I had traveled. The school was across the street from my parent's business so in the future, I could walk by myself when I was old enough. School took us to church, Guardian Angels. The building was large and white with accents of grey. Mrs. MacDonald told us to be quiet like a mouse, so I was. We sang hymns in choir, and I watched as row upon row of people took part in the 'Lord's Supper'. We ate pancakes on a Tuesday, gave up chocolate and tried to give up cleaning up after our toys for Lent. I took dance classes—ballet, learned to swim in Lake Couchiching, skated and fell at Brian Orser Arena, put out cookies for Santa Claus and played with Jennifer down the street.

I was 5 years old the first time I visited India.

Mallepoolu, Jasmine flowers that would be made into garlands.

We landed in Hyderabad, a city of 2,487,000 people. The ground sweating from having to carry the weight of person, animal and every vehicle that you can possibly conceive. The sounds of horns, both melodic and affronting, seem in deep conversation refusing to be interrupted by rickshaw walas, motorcycles fit for two—but carrying four, and persons walking barefoot, both the oldest and youngest I had ever seen. My parents called out to some people running towards us. It was, unintelligible. Their mouths were moving I saw, however sounds escaped in languages I had never heard from them, or anyone. And when I finally released an exhale, not realizing I had been holding my breath, I am ensconced in brightly coloured layers of satin and silk,

sparkling beads and sequins, my aunt holding her niece she has never met before so tightly in a paradoxically cool embrace to the visible heat. Her waves of affection washed over my face in an expression I had not witnessed before. The mallepoolu, tied delicately in her braid, the smell of ceremony and rituals I had never performed. Gods of many arms, faces of Technicolor, vivid blues and orange adorn every shop, stall and street corner and none looked like Guardian Angels. The closest I had ever felt to this temperature in Orillia was when my Father opened the oven to pull out dinner. Stepping off that British Airways flight, I had experienced the true meaning of multisensory. The world had been turned inside out. The irony, and the proposition for this methodology is that I still felt 'at home'.

In reading this you may make the false, but understandable assumption that I was shown pictures or videos of India. Perhaps that I was given explicit instructions, explanations or that my parents spoke often of the place they were born. Or that I had extended family members or other Indian families to learn from in Orillia, which I did not. The advent of the internet and websites such as YouTube to access global, cultural information is a relatively new phenomenon so there was none of that either. There were no such outlets that could have prepared me for the culture shock it may have been. It is only now, in my later experiences, have I come to recognize the embodied knowledges passed along to me through foodways by my parents.

Vinayaka (Ganesh) on the last day of the Ganpati festival.

I recall peering over the edge of the counter, my eyes barely making it over the edge—just a bit of forehead and pigtails. So much was communicated to me by my parents' embodiment. So much was made known to me. Languages are easier to learn when you are immersed (Smith, 2018) and given the organic immersion of foodways, there were many opportunities to pick up the language of the soul. In all aspects of knowledge in Indian culture, which includes its scientific and scholarly activities, embodiment is crucial. The body is the site of knowledge production. The mind is not apart from the body but part of it (Brooks, 2018). Researchers' and participants' bodies can be a bridge that spans the chasms between mind and body, and between narrative and analysis. This offers exciting possibilities for robust understandings of life stories and human experience.

East Meets West: Embodied Research Frameworks

There are five frameworks identified by Carter and Doyle (1996, 2003) which involve telling and sharing stories. This article will draw from two of the five namely, narrative inquiry and collaborative autobiography. Narrative inquiry for its use of personal practical knowledge where the researcher and participant collect observations, utilize journals, conversations, documents, and the construction of mutually defined narratives. To complement this, the use of collaborative autobiography in which participants in a group setting generate autobiographies of

previous, current, and predicted future experiences. The researcher and the participants examine autobiographies for themes and patterns, then they merge their perspectives.

This article seeks to enhance these two frameworks to include pratyakṣa (sensory perceptions) and Burra Katha (multisensory storytelling) as this is integral to pramāṇas (knowledge). This is an intentional step, as the privileging of the mind over the body is deeply engrained in Western cultures. The invisibility of researchers' bodies is a product of the mind-body separation that posits "a clear division between mind, equated with self, experienced as proactive and unthreatening, and body, experienced as potentially troublesome" (Marshall, 1999, p. 71). Researchers have used the power of academic discourse to define their bodies as essentially irrelevant to the production of knowledge (Denzin, 1997).

Following the Ayurvedic holistic traditions, we may consider, instead of the body being positioned as a bar to knowledge, knowledge as produced *through* the body (Marshall, 1999). Trinh (1999) negated the precept of body as the mind's possession and appeals to the body as personhood itself. Noting we do all things with our bodies, minds and hearts, this is fundamental to Indian pramāṇas. Similarly, the focus on embodied knowledge is not limited to the participants, rather, the researcher's body is just as constructed and discursively inscribed with cultural meanings as any other body (Longhurst et al., 2008; H. Marshall, 1999; Trinh, 1999).

In discussing our own bodies as researchers and our participants' bodies, we can begin to establish relationships (Longhurst et al., 2010). We situate ourselves not as autonomous, rational academics, but as people who sometimes experience irrational emotions including during the course of research. In doing so, researchers begin to talk from an embodied place, rather than a place of power over participants. Bodies are political (Brady, 2011; Marshall, 1999; Trinh, 1999). It would be misguided and regrettable to disregard gestures, bodily reactions, reflexes, physical presence and tones of voice, all of which makes a significant difference to the research process (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ellingson, 2006; Mukharji, 2020; Padgett, 2017).

In Ayurvedic texts, thinking about the body means thinking about the senses. An example is India's discernment of eating with your hands. According to Ayurveda, each finger has spiritual significance and forms a mudra, a powerful symbolic and ritual gesture ("Why Indians Eat with Their Hands - Scientific & Vedic Reasons", 2017). As per Indian philosophy, the universe is made of five elements namely, fire (agni), air (varun), space (akash), earth (prithvi), and water (jai). It is said that fingers are the extension of those 5 elements and each finger connects to a particular element. The thumb finger connects to agni, the index finger connects to varun, the middle finger connects to akash, the ring finger connects to prithvi, and the pinky finger connects to jai. It is understood that while eating with hands all five fingers come in contact with each other and with the food. The amalgamation of all the 5 elements creates an energy that is a connection to the Universe. Apart from the energizing effects, eating with your hands becomes a multisensory experience adding to the existing sight, sound, smells and tastes ("Why Indians Eat with Their Hands - Scientific & Vedic Reasons", 2017).

The mudras engaged when eating with fingers.

While to some this may seem more akin to a cooking show than a research method, the sociologist William Bruce Cameron might respond, "not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted" (Cullis, 2017, p. 505). This is the very necessity to find other methods to discover that which cannot be so easily 'counted'. I recall vividly my Father sitting with me at the kitchen table mixing my food—by hand—because I was not yet coordinated enough to do so on my own. There was an ineffable difference. I remember my Mother making little balls of biryani and feeding me with her hands. Always the perfectly sized portion and she could have done it with her eyes closed. Being fed by the hands of my elders is also one of the things that carried over when I arrived in India with my aunts, uncles and grandparents. Meaning, culture, tradition, ritual, and ceremony is literally hand to mouth.

There is limited formalized scholarship in foodways (Counihan, 2018). There is one Canadian example of such a methodology, *Cooking as Inquiry: A Method to Stir Up Prevailing Ways of Knowing Food, Body, and Identity* (Brady, 2011), that sought to add layers to the typically disembodied practices of social research that have long overlooked the body and the mundane rituals of food making as sites of knowledge. Longhurst, Johnston, and Ho (2010) attested that researchers thinking *through* the body as a visceral approach extends beyond what can be said or read, to that which is felt and is sometimes inarticulable.

When it comes to the culture of India, nothing defines it better than food (*Food and Prasada – Heart Of Hinduism*, n.d.; Srinivas, 2006; Whitt, 2011). Food scholars have traced its origins to the genesis of the country itself. Its role is more dimensional than a basic necessity for survival. Many Indian rituals and traditions are conveyed through foods; for example, tying a lemon topped with green chillies on a thread in a doorway ward off negative energy and eating a spoonful of sweetened curd for good luck (Bhalla, 2006). The widespread gender disparity in India can also be seen through food as the woman of the house customarily makes and serves the food; however, eats last and eats away from the family (Roncaglia, 2013). Gender disparity with regards to this is changing with a modernising India and this alludes to another point, commensality. It is considered important in Indian culture when the whole family eats together (Bhalla, 2006; Ferro-Luzzi, 1977; D. Marshall, 2005). This act of togetherness signifies a balanced harmonious family life, and any dysfunctions can be instantly recognised when the family is not seen dining together (Mukharji, 2020; Srinivas, 2006). Likewise, as with the Indian thali, the food items on your plate are an indication of what part of India you are from and with 19,500 mother tongues and an incredible amount of regional diversity across the country ("More than 19,500 Mother Tongues Spoken in India", 2018), food is an identity. The phrase "you are

what you eat" holds very true in Indian culture (Whitt, 2011). Through foodways, I attempt to re-centre the cognition arising within the self as the knowing subject.

Foodways as a Multisensory Methodology

There is no single, precise definition for foodways. However, for our purposes, foodways can be thought of as relating to the food traditions and customs of a people (Brown & Mussell, 1984; Camp, 1982, 1989). This includes, what people eat, how they eat it, whom they eat it with, and the variant social aspects of eating such as, purchasing, preparing, consuming, cleaning and conversing. Charles Camp (1982; 1989) famously attested that foodways recognize the intimate relationship food and culture can have. He draws the unmistakeable connection to the inseparable relationship, since food and culture make use of, and require, the other. Food choice can be a product of cultural practices and one can observe certain cultural practices in another person by taking notice of what particular foods that person consumes. Foodways is also inclusive of the rules that govern cultures' choices of foods, such as ideas of health and cleanliness, foods that are especially esteemed or shunned and rules governing the contexts in which particular foods may or may not be eaten (Anbinder, 2002; Brown & Mussell, 1984; Diner, 2003).

Foodways open windows into private lives and diverse, complex cultures by literally putting it out there on the table. Utilizing foodways as a multisensory methodology undergirded by narrative inquiry and collective autobiography, is both an ancient and contemporary method that demonstrates how a seemingly trivial everyday activity, such as eating or preparing a meal, may reveal the richness of someone's worldview, religion and their group's power dynamics (Counihan, 2018; Curtin & Heldke, 1992; Diner, 2003; Heine, 2004). Food acts not only as sustenance for human bodies, but it can also act as a structure for human life. Days are constructed around the rhythms of mealtimes and different rites of passage are marked by consumption. For example, the first legal taste of alcohol, the first time we cook our spouse a meal, and even the 'last supper' (Anbinder, 2002; Bell & Valentine, 1997; Diner, 2003). "In all these different ways and more, food pervades our culture and gives meaning to our lives" (MacClancy, 1991, p. 5).

Miller and Deutsche (2010) explained that foodways have long been marginalized in social research. In their view, this is attributed to the gender politics within the academy that dismiss food topics as matters of domesticity and not, meaningful scholarship. Curtain and Heldke (1992) instead connected the longstanding disdain for food scholarship to the more deeply rooted binary thinking of Western, Cartesian philosophy that gender-codes as masculine and privileges reason, cognition, theory, and the mind over emotion, corporeality, practice, and the body. As manual work that is reliant on touch, smell, taste, and sound, food work has typically been relegated to women or otherwise marginalized peoples and excluded from the purportedly more sophisticated, abstract activities of knowledge production (Antonius, 2013; Curtin & Heldke, 1992; Diner, 2003; Longhurst et al., 2010)

Inness (2005) ewrote, "eating is an activity that always has cultural reverberations. Food is never a simple matter of sustenance. How we eat, what we eat, and who prepares and serves our meals are all issues that shape society" (p. 5). Moreover, foodway scholar Hasia Diner (2003) explained that "foodways include food as material items and symbols of identity, and the history of a group's ways with food goes far beyond an exploration of cooking and consumption.

It amounts to a journey to the heart of its collective world" (pp. 9-10). I would consider that anything that is capable of taking someone on a journey to the heart is a worthwhile area of study.

As indicated above, foodways may be considered as versatile as food itself. A set of basic ingredients may produce a myriad of rich and diverse dishes—and research methods. Using my personal experiences as an example, foodways played the following roles: foodways as social structure and communication, foodways as a transmitter of cultural knowledge, foodways as complex identity expression and, foodways as gastronostalgia.

Foodways as Social Contact and Communication. Foodways can create bonds and organize structure between family members, friends and communities. They bring people together even when arguments arise because food often acts as a type of communication mechanism. It is a communicative device that does not require words (Camp, 1982; Mukharji, 2020; Roncaglia, 2013).

Foodways and Religion: Organized means of social contact may appear through modes of religion. Hinduism places such great emphasis on the role of food that it has been called "the kitchen religion" (*Food and Prasada – Heart Of Hinduism*, n.d.). No religious or public function is complete without the distribution of food, especially prasada (food offered to God). The Upanishads declare that by creating different types of food, names, forms and functions, God manifested diversity (Mukharji, 2020; Olivelle, 1998; Whitt, 2011).

Foodways and Power: Food and eating are related to the power structures of a family such that, whoever regulates the food is then able to control others (MacClancy, 1991). This is especially applicable within the household structure. Power relations and family structures can be seen in the order of food service, type of foods served to whom, and where people are seated (Camp, 1989; Curtin & Heldke, 1992; D. Marshall, 2005). While I did not have the language for it as a child, I recognized the equality of power between my Mother and Father as there was a partnership of grocery shopping, with my Father likely doing more of it than my Mother, cooking, cleaning, serving and being served.

Foodways and Sex: While this was not fully realized during the memories I am reflecting on, I recall vividly experiencing my first Indian film experience. Due to India's cultural modesty, the films had no displays of physical affection, nudity or other sexually explicit scenes (Bajaj, n.d.). However, foodways were displayed prominently as symbols and signifiers of sex and romance. Peeling a sweet juicy fruit, or sharing a drink together was meant to symbolize the intimacy of the relationship (Bajaj, n.d.). Or the romanticising of traditions such as 'Karvachauth', where a woman fasts for her husband's well-being. Moreover, with having two older brothers, the communication of specific body parts to food, wieners to refer to penises, nuts as testicles and melons as breasts is perhaps a childish, but still relevant example of this.

Foodways and Identity: Foodways permit a person to perform a specific identity simply by talking about, buying, preparing, cooking, or eating certain foodstuffs (Anbinder, 2002; Camp, 1982; Diner, 2003). Spectators may infer that a person is Muslim or Jewish simply based on whether that person purchases meat at halal or kosher butcher shops. This may not always be the case, but because food can be performative, the act of buying halal or kosher meat often indicates a religious prescription.

Food and Commensality: Commensality, which is the eating of meals with other people can be the investigation of and implications of giving, receiving, and refusing food (Camp, 1982, 1989; Miller & Deutsch, 2010). Refusing food was forbidden in my household, but hiding it in the hole in your oldest brother's guitar was permissible—until you were found out of course.

Foodways as a Transmitter of Cultural Knowledges. Along with secret family recipes and meal ideas being passed down from generation to generation, traditions and family histories are transmitted as well. Foodways are special in that they can generate an atmosphere which brings people together. This can happen at the kitchen island, the local parks in the summertime, holiday dinners with extended family, or 'family of choice' meals with potlucks on a long weekend. Foodways maintain and prolong relationships by creating a space where children and adults can hear and pass down stories and traditions from person to person, thus, giving food the ability to act as a mode of cultural transmission. This may be especially evident in the case of immigrant families, like my own, growing up in a society vastly different from where their parents grew up. Camp (1989) explained, "the teaching process [of foodways] has an informal character; it transmits not only practical, hands-on skills but also social values that are regarded as related and inseparable elements of the same enterprise" (p. 51). Along with the possible diffusion of social etiquettes and wisdoms from parent to child taking place in the kitchen, younger generations also learn how to prepare foods their family values and eats regularly. While not yet discussed in the literature, the transmission of knowledges is not unidirectional. As in my case, butter chicken pizzas, masala macaroni and cheese, Christmas stuffed samosas and taco thalis was the exploration and discovery of intergenerational, multi-cultural familial knowledge-making and discoveries of the embodied self.

My Father made chicken curry regularly. I sat cross-legged at the kitchen table as he cleaned and prepared the meat. He would always begin by extending gratitude to the animal for giving its life. He never said this out loud, but bowed his head, eyes closed, and I would get the same sense as when he did his daily morning puja (prayers). I would watch him cut the onions, delicately with hands that looked like mine. Then the ginger, peeled first, garlic – smash – then slipping off the peels like they were wearing the same winter jackets he used to have to get me out of—the garlic gave him less trouble. The chopping sounded percussive, the tempo changing from an andante to a vivace in a matter of moments. Then, my favourite part, my Mother's spice tin, given to her as a wedding present from her family before she left India. It looked similar to my watercolour paints, circles of reds, yellows, greens, blacks and browns. I was not allowed to go over while the spice tin was out as I learned the hard way, turmeric did not come out of my dress. But my Father would give me a few cardamom pods, a clove stick or two and some coriander seeds to roll around in my hands and place close to my nose to smell. My Father placed the coconut oil in the heavy pot and once the oil was warm, he would place in the spices. I would often ask how you would know when they were ready, to which he responded,

Indian spice tins.

"they tell you when they are ready, you just have to listen." I listened for the spices to begin to pop and delighted as the aromas of supper filled the kitchen.

I can make that same curry today, easily, though my Father never gave me a recipe nor taught me formally. Simply being with my Father, being present in those moments in the kitchen, giggling with him as he made dinner taught me everything I know about food. Meyers (2001) explained that while none of the learning was formal, that I could make my Father's mouth-watering chicken curry by simply being in the kitchen and observing.

Foodways as Complex Expressions of Complex Identities. Food should be seen as one of the many possible outlets for complex identity expression. A person might express a great deal about themselves through their food practices because food has the capability of performing a person's or group's class, worldview, and place of origin (Camp, 1982, 1989; Counihan, 2018; Miller & Deutsch, 2010). That is, the identity of your food may reveal or allude to your identity as a member of a certain group or social status. We may consider people differently that shop at Whole Foods in contrast to No Frills. Or compare the grocery carts with the fresh wild salmon and scallops differently to the ones with instant noodles and foods in cans. While these indicators may not actually be related to class, status, socioeconomic status—food choices are often impacted by those intersections of identity (Brown & Mussell, 1984). Moreover, unique foods not normally eaten by the dominant culture engenders a response which illustrates that food can express and locate a person along various cultural axes. Certainly, this was the case when my family would go into larger cities to pick up Indian foods not found in Orillia. Inevitably, curiosity and subsequent assumptions from the food that would be on the counter, fridge or cupboards would follow from my brother's friends that might be visiting after school. Foodways are expressive and performative. Thus, people may draw certain assumptions and stereotypes simply by looking at what others consume. The foods one eats or does not eat and the time, place, and way one eats all are capable of indicating certain items about a person and her or his cultural community. For this reason, foodways can be an impactful, both positively and negatively, aspect of immigrant communities (Anbinder, 2002; Longhurst et al., 2010).

Foodways as Gastronostalgia. Food may act as a pantry where memories are held and kept for later remembering. Food rituals, according to some, have the ability to allow people, especially immigrants, to stay in touch with their roots (Meyers, 2001). Immigration is a life-altering experience and many immigrants use the kitchen table as an anchor and remnant of what their lives were before immigration (Brady, 2011; Diner, 2003; Longhurst et al., 2010). For immigrants especially, food may act as a way to keep an identity and a piece of their past alive in a new setting. Foodways enable immigrants, or anyone for that matter, to bite into a food and travel back in time to their childhoods or to their favorite memories related to holidays and family functions. Certain smells and tastes facilitate bringing 'home' closer (Diner, 2003; Longhurst et al., 2010; Srinivas, 2006). It did for my parents. It brought Andhra Pradesh, India to a home in Orillia, Ontario.

Saunf

After eating an Indian thali you will receive a handful of saunf (fennel seeds) to help digest your food. You may require some after reading this article as it may have been a lot to digest. The aim of article was to consider foodways to more deeply understand that which we do not know, but happen plainly in front of us. Foodways may be a vector for spreading cultural knowledges; expressing identity; it may be a tangible (and delicious) way to remember the past and one's 'home'. It may address power structures, globalization and migration, sexuality and relationships. Most importantly, it may act as a method to engage persons, like immigrant families that often have the greatest needs and yet it is their experiences that remain hidden (Longhurst et al., 2008, 2010). In increasingly culturally diverse populations, engaging viscerally with people's lived experiences through foodways, we might be able to bridge not only the mind-body duality, the East and West, but bring the wisdom of past into revolutionary new futures.

A Research Recipe for Pramāṇas Thali

Ingredients:

1 tbsp Classical Ayurvedic Philosophy (*aged is preferred*)

1 tsp Pratyakṣa (sensory perception)

1 tsp Burra Katha (multisensory storytelling)

½ tsp Narrative Inquiry

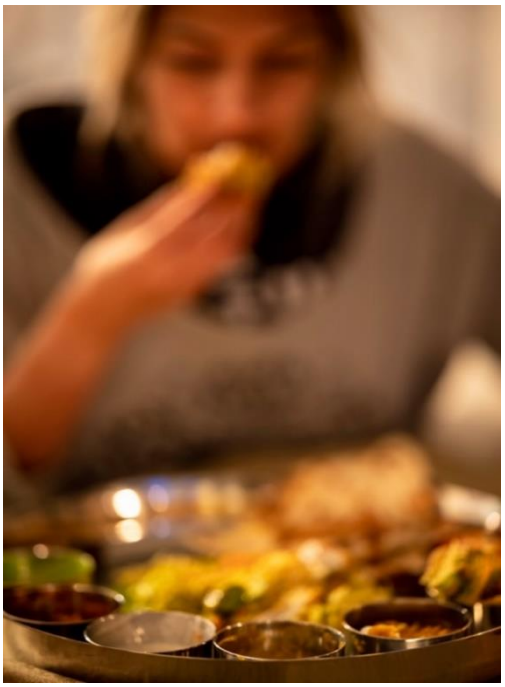
½ tsp Collaborative Autobiography

Handfuls of Embodied Knowledge from the researcher

Handfuls of Embodied Knowledge from the participant

Instructions:

Place ingredients into a bowl. Mix with fingers until well incorporated. Measurements may be adapted to personal preference. Once a uniform consistency, pour into individual bowls until in balance. Serve with rice or naan. Eat with hands. *Enjoy*.



Enjoying the thali.

Audio Files (in order):

Opening: https://vimeo.com/662040618

Introduction: https://vimeo.com/662040662

Born in Orillia: https://vimeo.com/662040705

My Father: https://vimeo.com/662044537

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