

**Indian Fiction in English**  
**Dr. Merin Simi Raj**  
**Department of Humanities & Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology – Madras**

**Lecture – 31**  
**Riot: A Novel by Shashi Tharoor**

Good morning everyone, I am happy to welcome you to yet another session of the NPTEL course Indian fiction in English. Throughout the discussion of this course as part of our engagements with various kinds of novels written from the 1930's onwards something which has been very hard to miss is a novel's engagement with the nation and we will also notice how in multiple ways history, slights and a fiction.

There is a way in which the actual history is re-narrativized and there is also an understanding of the background of the nation which has been provided through this narrative space and the novel that we are here about discussed today write a novel, written by Shashi Tharoor, there is no exception and we find that he; Tharoor has been an exemplary in narrating the story of the nation through the framework of the Mahabharata which is exemplified in his one of his best novels the great Indian novel.

And in this work, he limits his canvas to a certain locality in the northern part of India and he also particularly engages with a very critical point in the history of India and as we have noticed in a number of the writings by Rushdie and Koch, we have also seen that there is an imminent need especially from the point of view the Indian English novelist to engage with the story of the nation as it has begun to unfold especially from the late 1970's onwards.

In that respect from the event of emergency, we find that there is a need to present the nation in a different way altogether, we have also noticed how there has been a way in which the Nehruvian secular self, the idea of the Nehruvian nation has begun to collapse and we find that the novel; the space of the novel trying to in some form or the other reclaim the lost identity and also present the post-colonial identity of the nation in one form or the other.

So, write this novel by Shashi Tharoor, he has yet another exercise in that regard and we also find the many ways in which history and fiction come together and this is something which the novel does rather consciously as well as we have noticed in the other writers such as Rushdie

and Koch as well and Tharoor as many of us know, he is one of the Stephanian writers though he is among those who have not really acknowledged the existence of a particular kind of a school of writing such as Stephanian.

But nevertheless, he has in multiple sources, he has acknowledged the kind of indebtedness that he has towards his alma mater, St. Stephen's in shaping him as an individual and also in nurturing him as the kind of writer that he has become today and if you began reading this work Riot novel which also has an alternate title; write a love story, you will also realize this belongs to a different kind of a league all together.

This is not as demanding and as laborious as say a work like midnight children or shadow lines yes, on the other hand this employs rather simple narrative skills but it also engages with in a very interesting kind of experimentation, Tharoor himself had noted in one of his writings. In this novel, he actually attempted to do something novel, something new in that sense.

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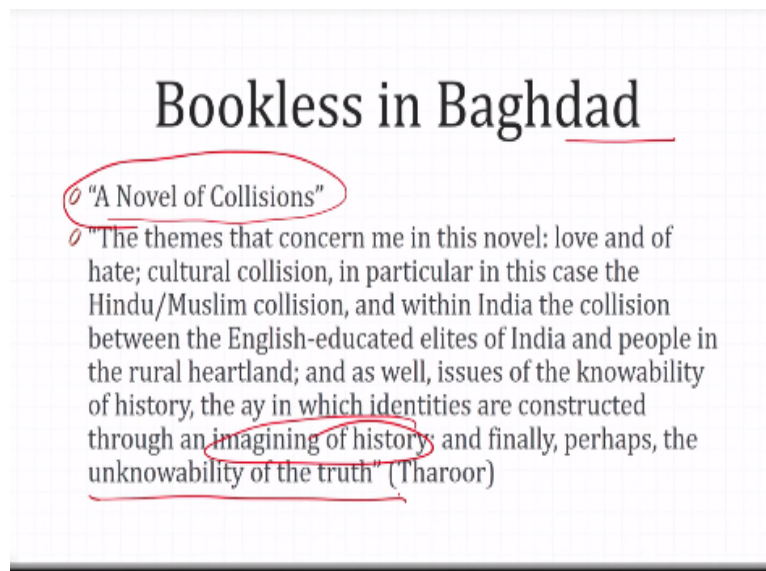
So, this is one of those novels which had different cover pages, targeting different kinds of audience, it was titled write a novel in the for the Indian readers and we also find that there are these images of Riot, images of turbulence, images of communal disharmony and very graphic descriptions of violence. On the other hand targeting the American readers there is this rather pleasant picture of a Mughal monument.

And there are also these Rajasthani kinds of artwork in the background and it has also title, write a love story and these different titles for Indian and American readers, they were

employed to locate it to these separate visualizations of the novel and the rule himself has acknowledged that most of his Indian readers they seem to like the graphic descriptions of the Riot, has seen on the other hand his American readers they also like the pleasant images of the Mughal monument against the Indian; lead against the Indian art forms.

Indian edition was published by a Viking penguin and the American edition was from Arcade and this has been considered as a fairly successful novel by Tharoor and also did enjoy a rather wide ranging kind of readership from across the world, it becomes very interesting when an author himself say certain things about the work that he had written and Tharoor is one of those writers who have engaged relentlessly in writing fiction as well as nonfictional works.

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In fact much of his writings as part of nonfiction, it responds to his own writings, it responds to the many things which are happening in and around the country and society and in one such writings, bookless in Baghdad where he talks about his famous encounters with books, he has the chapter title a novel of collisions and here he entirely talks about this novel the Riot and this is what he writes about his own novel.

The themes that concern me in this novel; love and of hate; cultural collision, in particular in this case the Hindu Muslim collision and within India, the collision between the English educated elites of India and people in the rural heartland and as well issues of the knowability of history and the way in which identities are constructed through an imagining of history and finally perhaps the unknowability of the truth.

So, though this is written in a rather straightforward, simple form of narrator, we find that a number of postmodern elements have crept into this narrative, Tharoor has does not employ the techniques of magic realism much in his writings but nevertheless he engages with history in a very interesting way and one of the ways in which he presents the unknowability of the fact or the truth is by presenting the narrative, the series of events from multiple perspectives and from multiple points of view.

And he also tries to reimagine history in a rather different way than perhaps Rushdie or Koch did, this is not to make a comparison between these writers of the post 1980's but to state that to highlight the fact that the roots reimagining of history is not to evaluate one kind of truth over the other but to present multiple perspectives, to present multiple viewpoints and also to leave the reader as a final judge as to what the case could be.

And this becomes all the more interesting given the fact that in his non fictional writings and in his other articulations and currently, even as a public person with a very definite political affiliations, we do get to know what the roots personal points of view are but in some form of the other we do not find the personal viewpoints interfering much in at least some of his narrative such as Riot.

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Novel or history?

- o "Riot is a novel about the ownership of history, about love, hate, cultural collision, religious fanaticism and impossibility of knowing the truth"
- o Transforms the narrative into historiographical meta-fiction

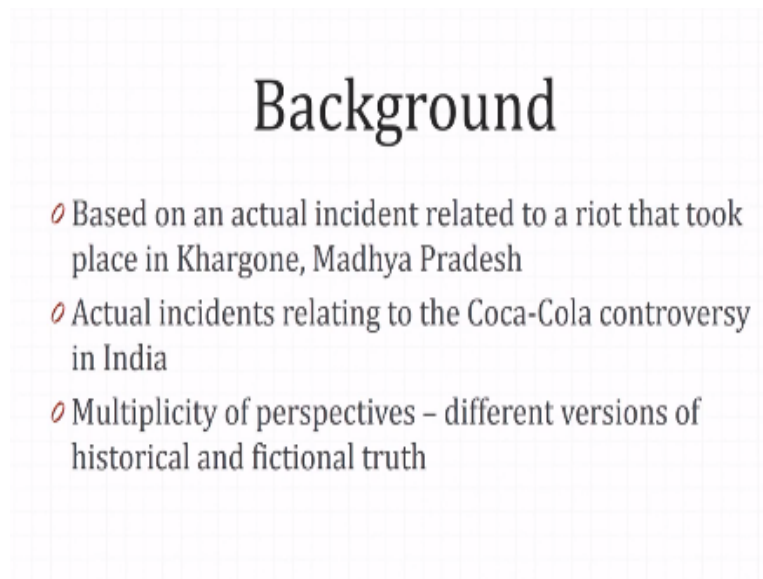
kinda history

This is one of those novels, which will again leave us wondering whether this is actually a fictional work or is this part of history and one of the reviewers has this thing to say about Riot; Riot is a novel about the ownership of history about love, hate, cultural collision, religious

fanaticism and impossibility of knowing the truth and this is also a kind of work which transforms a narrative into historiographical meta fiction.

Historiographical meta fiction is a term coined by a Linda Hutcheon, she is one of the postmodern theorists and she uses the term historiographical meta fiction to talk about the kind of a postmodern a text which imply the technique of history not to talk about the historical facts but to entirely splinter, the consensus which has always been part of historical narratives.

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The background which inspired the writing of Riot is very interesting, this is based on an actual incident related to a Riot which took place in a Khargone, which is in Madhya Pradesh and there are also certain actual incidents relating to the coca cola controversy in India which happened in the late 1970's, this was also an inspiration to bring both these events together in the unfolding of this narrative.

And we find that the rude drinks in multiplicity of perspectives in order to provide different versions of historical and fictional truth, this is not to say that this is entirely a reconstruction of history but there are certain fictional elements which are being brought in to aid the historical construction and also to provide an element of neutrality and also to privilege different perspectives along the same lines.

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## India and the novel

- o Tharoor's 6<sup>th</sup> book
- o Pursued a career in the United Nations
- o International career - but all books set in India
- o "India shaped my mind, anchored my identity, influenced my beliefs and made me who I am. India matters immensely to me, and in all my writing, I would like to matter to India. Or, at least, to Indian readers"

Tharoor as a novelist has also written much about India, this book being Tharoor's 6th book, this was again written in the context of the International career that he pursued in the United Nations but in spite of the kind of exposure and experience that he had in the pursuance of this international career, we find that all books; all his books are set in India and they also have very Indian characters.

Tharoor himself provides a kind of a clarification for this, he says India shaped my mind, anchored my identity, influenced my beliefs and made me who I am, India matters immensely to me, and in all my writing, I would like to matter to India or at least to Indian readers, so this statement from the part of an Indian English novelist becomes extremely important, when we evaluate this narrative.

It is kind of a canvas of the general discussions that we have been having in with respect to Indian fiction English. India becomes extremely important for the writers not only in 1930's who are writing in the backdrop of the nationalist movement but even in the post 1980's and 90's, even when the novelists are pursuing international careers and not essentially pursuing things which are predominantly superficially India.

So, there is a certain compulsion from the part of the novelist, we continue to see to assert that India matters to them and they would like to matter to India and this is a kind of an assertion which incidentally the regional writer is not forced to indulge in and this is not an assertion that the regional writer thinks he or she is expected to make.

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## As Tharoor clarifies

- o A story which could not be told from just one point of view
- o Not just to imagine a dozen different characters but to try and enter their imaginations
- o Sought to depict four or five different people's views of the Ram Janmabhoomi / Babri Masjid controversy

And this is what Tharoor further clarifies about Riot, especially he says that Riot as a story which could not be told from just one point of view, which is why he makes use of an experimental way of narrating the novel and he also clarifies that his intention is not just to imagine a dozen different characters but to try and enter their imaginations. So, he does not manipulate the characters by using the advantage of the omniscient point of view.

But on the other hand, he makes all those characters, speak for themselves and imagine for themselves what exactly happened during that period of time especially in the context of the Riot and there is something very peculiar about this narrative especially the way in which it responds to the historical events which happen in the context of the nation. The novel sought to depict at least 4 or 5 different people's views about the Rama Janmabhoomi and Babri Masjid controversy.

It tries deliberately not to take a particular stand but to showcase how the events unfolded in a different part of the country which was not geographically in any way near to Rama Janmabhoomi or a Babri Masjid and we also find how not just Hindus and Muslims but different kinds of people are also getting caught in this moment of frenzy, in this moment of Riot.

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## The novel has

- Journals, diary entries, scrapbooks of the protagonists
- Interviews of characters by media persons
- News clippings, transcripts
- Letters, cable messages
- Poems
- Different voices, stylistic forms

And they also left rather helpless in the wake of this kind of violence which erupts on a national scale and as mentioned earlier, the novel is also framed in a very interesting way, it has got not just conventional elements but as Tharoor himself had sought to, it makes use of newer kinds of elements and try to experiment in ways that Tharoor had not attempted before, so novel has journalist and diary entries and scrapbooks of the protagonists which are also part of the narrative.

There are interviews of characters by media persons, there are news clippings and transcripts and interestingly, they are all given to the reader in an unmediated form, we do not find a summary or an evaluation of these various kinds of media, which are presented to us. On the other hand, we are given to us in an unmediated form leaving the reader to interpret the given narrative for whatever worth they are.

There are news clippings and transcripts, letters and cable messages, there are even poems composed in private by protagonists, there are different voices in stylistic forms as well thus enabling the telling of the novel in a way which makes the novel rather different from many of the rules other kinds of writings and one thing which particularly distinguishes this as postmodern.

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Can be read in any order

Is that this can be read in any order and this is something Tharoor also has clarified to his readers that though he advises the readers to read it from beginning till the end like one would read any book, he also says that even if you read randomly through certain entries, there is no linearity which has been injected into the novel, which would get disturbed because a novel begins by informing us of one of the important events which shaped the novel which is the death of the protagonist, the death of the American girl Priscilla Hart, who was spending field work based time in India.

And there is no particular plot which begins to unfold, there are a series of experiences, there are series of ways in which characters are exposed to events and situations, things that they did not foresee before and this is given to us through these multiple kinds of media like news clippings or journal entries or poems or amusing, so even transcripts and this can be brought together in whichever way the reader wishes to.

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# A unique product from Tharoor

- ◊ Unlike *Show Business* or *The Great Indian Novel*
- ◊ Not an epic sweep, not a satirical work – attempted to bring something 'new'
- ◊ Riot – vital issues on a smaller, more intimate canvas.
- ◊ Increasingly concerned with communal issues in the 1990s
- ◊ Based on the account of Harsh Mander, an IAS officer – who had dealt with a riot in MP as a district magistrate
- ◊ Four years of writing - December 1996 to the end of 2000

And that is perhaps the beauty of this rather simple kind of a narrative which makes use of an experimental form to convey to the reader and this is also a very unique product from Tharoor world for various reasons that we have already noticed as well, this is unlike his other successful novel such as *Show Business* or *Great Indian novel* and like *Great India novel*, this does not propose to employ an epic sweep of narratives nor is this a satirical work like *Show Business*.

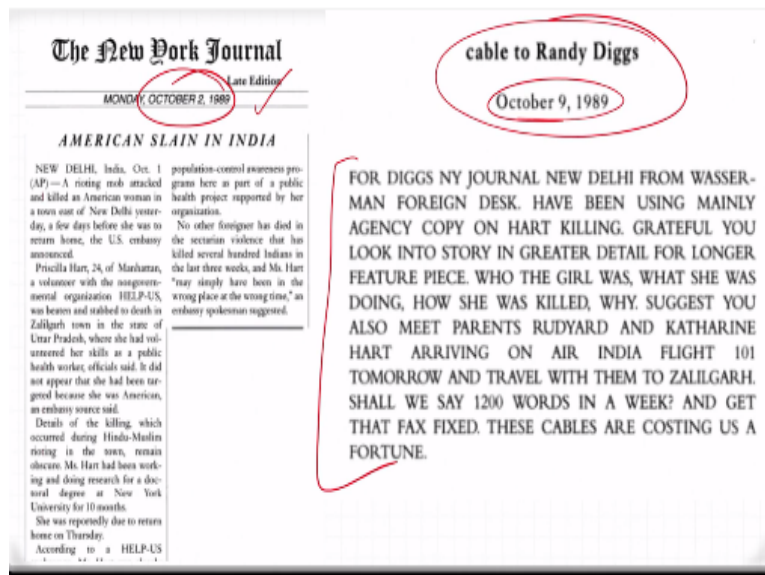
And as he himself is clarified, he is attempted to bring something new to his novelistic expeditions and write has a very small canvas and this tries to explore vital issues on a smaller and a more intimate canvas, we also find well rounded characters emerging and we also find 2 kinds of passions being explored; one, the sexual intimate passion between the protagonists and secondly, the communal passion which emerges in the form of a violent Riot.

The novel assumes further relevance when we get to know that Tharoor was getting increasingly concerned with the communal issues which were happening in the 1990's and he decides to write a fictional account which would also be his own response to this peculiar situation which had begun to erupt in the nation and this novel he says is based on the account of Harsh Mander, an IAS officer who also happens to be Tharoor's friend.

And Mander had dealt with the Riot in Madhya Pradesh when he was a district magistrate in one of the small provinces and since the Tharoor was thinking about writing a novel in the context, in the backdrop of a Riot, he also thought of getting the account from Harsh Mander,

who had published his account; his personal account or how he dealt with the Riot. This work took about 4 years for completion.

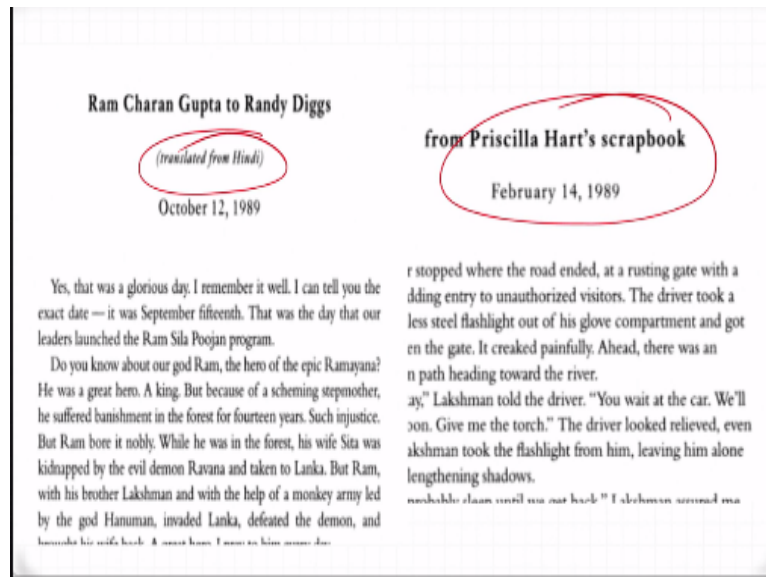
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He started this in December 1996 and this was completed by the end of 2000 and published in 2001 and these are the different kinds of material that we would perhaps encounter in the space of this novel. There are newspaper clippings from across the world and this is particularly about an event which happened in this small town called as Zalilgarh in Uttar Pradesh and he talks about how an American was slain in India.

And we are able to gather many of the details from these sporadic descriptions which lay across these different kinds of narratives, there are these cable messages sent and the transcript of which was also part of the narrative and we are expected to collect the important details and also to fix the puzzles in the right place and to make sense of the entire narrative and something which is interesting is that dates become extremely important throughout this narrative.

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And there is a form and a format to the way in which the narrative unfolds and this is not a kind of any kind of a random description of events but there is a structure to it though this is; this needs to be culled out from different places and we also find certain transcripts which are translated from Hindi giving us the impression that there is a certain kind of a mediation which has already taken place.

And there are also these excerpts from Priscilla's scrapbook, we have journal entries from Lakshmi, the protagonist, so altogether it is quite an interesting journey, this is also a rather adventurous trip into one of the rural hinterlands of India to figure out what exactly happened in 1989 from a certain date till a certain date, so then certain book ending in that since there is no omniscient narrator who is trying to interpret and give us an overall sense of the story.

But we are expected to try and understand what exactly happened across a span of time in this year 1989 having said this, I also invite one of our students Deva Nandan to share some of his readings and some of his interpretations and some of the insights that he gathered from the reading of Riot, I also strongly encourage you to read the novel on your own, so that these discussions will begin to make sense to you.

And also, this is a different kind of an experience of reading in Indian English novel, so I would continue to expect you to be familiar with the narrative, the different media which I used to bring together the narrative, so that the discussion and the readings about the novel would begin to fit and perfectly well in the context of the larger discussions that we have been having as part of Indian fiction in English.

Over to Deva Nandan, who would be introducing the major characters and also some of the major themes which are part of Riot or novel, good morning all, today I am going to present on Riot and all by Shashi Tharoor.

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### ...*Tharoor*...

- Author, columnist and politician.
- Three novels: *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), *Show Business* (1992), and *Riot* (2001); story collections also.
- Non-fiction - foreign policy and India analyses.
- Stephanian school of Indian English fiction.

Yeah, I will first talk about Tharoor; Tharoor is you know as you all know, he is a famous author, columnist and politician, he has written 3 novels; *The Great Indian Novel*, this is the first one and the most famous, the *Show Business* in 1992 and *Riot* in 2001, has published other story collections and other what, nonfiction mainly foreign policy Indian I mean, analysis on you know issues related to India as also literary nonfiction as in things like book lesson Baghdad.

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"a novel about the ownership of history, about love, hate, cultural collision, religious fanaticism and the impossibility of knowing the truth."

So, he is supposed to be part of the Stephanian school of Indian English fiction, this novel as I read in some article, it is all about the ownership of history about love, hate, cultural collision, religious fanaticism and the impossibility of knowing the truth, so it basically talks about it is a postmodern novel as we will see later, it basically talks about the appropriation and ownership of history who owns history, who gets to decide, what is the official narrator.

And Tharoor also make sure that we get multiple perspectives and also he makes us understand that there is impossibility in knowing the truth because there is a possibility of multiple narratives again.

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### **...Structure...**

- Divided into seventy-eight sections of varying length.
- The main events of the novel beginning on 2 February 1989 and ending on 16 October 1989.
- Begins at the end - newspaper article.
- Heteroglossia - polyphonic, discursive.
- Episodic narration.
- Documentary style.
- Mouthpiece.

So, as the structure of the novel basically, it is divided into 78 sections of varying lengths, it consists of newspaper articles, journal entries, cable transcripts, interview transcripts, conversation transcripts, I mean all of these it is basically does not follow the conventional chapter vice mode, main events of this novel begin on 2 February 1989, its ends on 16 October 1989.

It starts with what happens at the end of newspaper article depicting what happens at the end and that newspaper articles is cut short in the beginning and the rest of the newspaper article is you see it again in the end yeah, heteroglossia; there is a lot of voices; lot of narrative voices speaking inside this novel, it is very polyphonic and discuss it as in different voices speak to each other.

And different people often offer contradictory opinions and views about the same stuff that has happened, so yeah that is the polyphonic nature of this novel and (()) (24:10) the episodic sort of narration as in you know, different people have their own episodes as I already mention and again certain parts it is almost like a documentary style, they are documenting the events that has happened in the aftermath of the Riot is that Shashi Tharoor uses this novel has sort of a mouthpiece for you know voicing his views on things like secularism, religion, the nation you know communalism and all that.

So, the characters especially the; you know the male protagonist part, lord Lakshman, the IAS officer, he sort of sounds very much like you know what Tharoor, what we hear Tharoor speaking, so basically this novel is about an American woman Priscilla Hart, she came to India to help in a population; not population control as more of her what population control awareness program and what, sexual health awareness program called help US and help us.

So, this is basically running in India but you know there is a NGO which receives foreign funds from the US, so this NGO is; I mean she is working in this NGO and also she is doing her doctoral fieldwork research, she is a student in US, so she comes to this town, Zalilgarh to do the research, in Zalilgarh, Lakshman is the collector of the; he is the district magistrate and he is the district collector of the district Zalilgarh.

And she meets Lakshman, she and like to fast forward it, she dies in the Riots, I mean she is killed in the riots that happened just before the Babri Masjid demolition that Ram Janmabhoomi conflict during the Ram Shila Pujan that happens. So, yeah in between she falls in love with Lakshman and there is a lot of conflict between him, he already has a wife and a girl child.

So, it is a lot of conflict between his traditional family which is a loveless life for him and against the life that he dreams of with Priscilla, which is very, you know romantic and which suits him a lot, so he is unhappy with this marriage you know, it is loveless but he has learned to live with it but when Priscilla comes, the whole you know, his lifestyle itself changes, he; you know looks forward to their meeting and all that.

And then there is you know the Riot part, there is a lot of you know, stuff brewing in Zalilgarh town, you know as the rest of India in like everywhere, the Ram Shila Pujan thing has happening here, you know the bricks for constructing the Ayodhya Rama temple is being

consecrated in different parts of the town and sent to Ayodhya, so that is brewing and there is a lot of you know fear of communal clashes.

There is Gurinder Singh SP, the superintendent police of the district, he is Lakshman's college-mate also, so they try to bring the situation under control, they are a sort of sensible people in a; you know surrounded by a lot of religious fanatics on either side. There is Ram Sharan Gupta and the character, he is a Hindu communalist leader, then there is Muhammad Zafar, he is an Islamic history professor, he again talks of how the Hindu fanatics are trying to appropriate history by denying Islam's role in Indian history as also by denying that Islam you know, Muslim people are a true what, citizens of the nation.

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### *...Loves...*

- Sexual love and duty-bound love.
- Clash of civilisations.
- Narrow line between love and lust for Lakshman.
- Conflict between east and west; or west and west (Victorian ideals vs modern western ideals).

So, I will talk about love in the novel because in outside India, this novel; here, it is published as write a novel, well outside India it has been published as write a love story and love is very important a part of this novel, there is a conflict between sexual love between Lakshman and Priscilla and sort of a duty bound law that Lakshman has towards his wife Gita and he; also to his daughter.

He thinks that he would be betraying his own wife and children and then, I mean by extension Indian culture that has been brought up with by you know going to Priscilla, I mean going with Priscilla to US, it is they briefly plan and all, so there is a sort of a clash of civilizations in this in this love, there is a you know the conflict between east and west or like you could even say it is the West to west conflict in the sense that the Victorian ideals of how you know



appropriateness should be versus the modern Western ideals which where appropriateness is you know nothing more than a construct.

So that conflict is like a bound throughout the novel, the American culture that Priscilla represents verses the Indian culture that other people represent in the novel and the secularist strand of Indian culture versus the extremists and strand of Indian culture, the Islam part versus the Hindu part, different conflicts are you know make up the narrative of the novel that is very evident.

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## *India as an 'Additive Culture'*

- "Additive cultures are those in which opposites, like male/female, good/bad, birth/death, are accepted as imperfectly perceived parts of a greater unity."  
• (Illustrated Dictionary of History - Kate Morris)
- The Hindu/Muslim binary.
- The novel itself an additive whole.

Yeah and this is a concept I found in a very small book that illustrated dictionary of history, it is a; so this book says its, I mean additive culture, you will get the idea that additive cultures are those in which opposites like male female, good bad, birth death, now this contradictions here binary accepted as imperfectly perceived part of a greater unity, so basically you know it gives examples of additive cultures as in India or Egypt, where you know there is not a proper binary.

So, here also you could see the concept; the Hindu Muslim binary is there, Hindus and Muslims are you know seen as 2 different communities but in the novel and you know, you could say, Tharoor is talking about India in general as a society, where there is this sort of you know wholeness playing out, Hindus and Muslims a part of a composite culture where they coexist, where they interact with each other, where Muslim Gods are, I mean Muslim Saints are worshipped by Hindu people also.

And Hindu Gods are likewise worshipped by Muslims especially, the Sufi tradition, so that wholeness that unity and eclecticism is what Tharoor focuses on this novel yeah, so you could say that the novel itself is sort of an addictive whole like things add up to you know each other and sort of creates a bigger whole bigger, you know more beautiful whole in which different voices and structures are in constant conversation with each other.

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## ***Riot as Historiographic Metafiction.***

- Term coined by the literary critic Linda Hutcheon who defines it as "popular fiction which being intensely self-reflexive also, paradoxically, lay claim to historical events and personages".
- These fiction works "within conventions in order to subvert them". They make 'history and fiction the grounds for reworking the forms and contents of the past'.
- Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1994), Githa Hariharan's *In Times of Siege* (2003), Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006).

This is a; this Roman article that I read that Riot as a postmodern historiographical meta fiction, I discuss each term, postmodern historiographical meta fiction in the coming slides, so this term coined by the literary critic; Canadian literary critic Linda Hutcheon, she defines it as popular fiction which being intensely self-reflexive also paradoxically lay claim to historical events and personages, mostly talked about postmodern fiction in which it is you know there is intense self- referentiality and self-reflexivity you know the novel talks about itself.

I mean the novel refers to itself it also lays claim to like real historical events and personages, so these fictions you know work within conventions in order to subvert them and they again, as this as I already talked about this novel, it make history and fiction you know a ground for reworking like the what the past was, so these fiction says or like declares that there is no the pass that can be considered authentic and genuine.

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- **Fragmentation.**

- Episodic narrative - transcripts, conversations, cables, letters, journal entries, poems.

- **Multiple narrative voices.**

- Characters' conversations, transcripts, etc speaking for themselves.

- **Intertextuality.**

- Mahabharata, Ramayana, Koran, Bible, Natya Shastra, Kama Sutra, Wilde, Freud, Lawrence of Arabia.

Riot also can be called historiographic meta fiction because there are like a lot of historical references, has also self referentiality as also postmodern elements, so I will talk about postmodern now, so there are like different strategies of postmodern writing, so one is fragmentation. There is episodic narrative you know as I already mentioned there are transcripts, conversations, cables, letters, journal entries, poems and all that which constantly comes into the novel.

And which make up the structure of the novel like as you are seeing the novel, you would see that it is not like regular chapter vice, there are different episodes of varying length already, 78 sections or varying length and the others in a thorough fragmentation that way, there is multiple narrator voices you know different characters speak the transcripts etc. are speaking for themselves.

And I as I already said there is a sort of what is a; conversation that is happening between the opinions and views of different characters as in many times they are contradictory say for instance, what Ram Sharan Singh, the Hindu Ram Sharan Gupta, the Hindu phonetic leader claims would be diametrically opposite to what Muhammad Zafar, the Islamic history processes they say he would be more sane.

And you know, while that Tharoor made sure that you know we do not radically opposed the views of Ram Sharan Gupta at least in some parts, like not everywhere but in even his views somewhere or the other are given their own importance, there was no one valid, see there are;

there is the privileging of Lakshman's narrative mostly but still as I said early earlier this is a sort of a validity given to other characters also, other characters voices and opinions also.

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↓ *My own father taught me the Vedic sloka "Aa no bhadrah kratvo yantu vishwatah" - "Let noble thoughts come to us from all directions of the universe." Every schoolchild knows the motto "Ekam sad vipraj bahuda vadanti" - "Truth is one, the sages give it various names." Isn't this all-embracing doctrine worth being proud of? ↓*

And then there is lot of intellectuality, it is you know quotes from Mahabharata, Ramayana, Koran, Bible, Natya Shastra, Kama Sutra, Oscar Wilde, Freud, Lawrence of Arabia and also the Vedas, so to make its point like a different places, it is an excerpt from the novel in that it talks about a Vedic sloka, you can read for yourself, yeah I will read. My own father taught me the Vedic sloka.

"Aa no bhadrah kratvo yantu vishwatah, let noble thoughts come to us from all the directions of the universe, every schoolchild knows the motto; "Ekam sad vipraj bahuda vadanti"; "Truth is one, the sages very give it various names, is not this all embracing doctrine worth being proud of, so this is lecture on speaking to Priscilla about Indian culture about the ensuing you know communal fume that is you know brewing in Zalilgarh.

He; you know, he talks about how he is also a believe in practice Hindu but he does not you know abide or I agree with what the phonetic types say, he says that he is on; his father taught him a Vedic slokas which you know say that there is no one truth, there are multiple truths and I mean there is one truth which people perceive differently as I already said that additive culture; the additive whole.

So, he also says that India has been a boiling pot of you know, civilizations everything, every culture was welcomed to India and what we now have is a composite culture and you know one

cannot you know get out Hinduism as such from I mean, pluck out Hinduism as such from this composite whole, so he basically yeah, he says that it, I mean he is very being very proud of this you know all embracing nature of this culture.

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↓ .... So to stop the tongues wagging, he subjected her to an agni-pariksha, a public ordeal by fire, to prove her innocence. She walked through the flames unscathed. A certified pure woman.

That stopped the gossips for a while, but before long the old rumours surfaced again. It was beginning to affect Ram's credibility as a king. So he spoke to her about it. What could Sita do? She willed the earth to open up, literally, and swallow her. That was the end of the gossip. Ram lost the woman he had warred to win back, but he ruled on a wise and beloved king.

What the hell does this say about India? Appearances are more important than truths. Gossip is more potent than facts. **Loyalty is all one way, from the woman to the man. And when society stacks up all the odds against a woman, she'd better not count on the man's support. She has no other way out other than to end her own life.**

**And I'm in love with an Indian. I must be crazy. ↓**

Yeah, this sort of long but the thing is this is from Priscilla scrapbook, what she writes about you know when she gets to know about the story of Ram in Ramayana, she basically came to know this because she was you know hearing news about the riots that is; not the riots the communal sentiments that are being flared up in the town, so she knows wants to know about the real story behind you know around Ram and all this ordeals.

So, she is talking about that so, she basically narrates the story of Sita going you know being swallowed by the earth and then she you know sort of reflects on her own situation, she says what the I mean on Ram's modesty I mean on the female modesty and all that she thinks of what the hell does this say about India, appearances are more important than truths, gossip was more potent than facts, loyalty is all one way from the woman to the man.

And when society stacks up all the odds against a woman, she would better not count on the man's support, she has no other way out other than to end her own life and I am in love with an Indian, I must be crazy, so this is very self-reflective, self-referential novel, which sort of foretells what happens in the end. Priscilla loves Lakshman but he you know does not want to you know face the heat of a scandal.

He sort of plays a safe way and he does not support her, when it matters the most, so she has to go it all alone and the most important part how Priscilla died comes towards the end, she comes to spoil alert, so she comes to courtly the place where they usually meet to; I mean for one last time to tell Lakshman that she; Lakshman something she has not told them already at a final attempt probably to make him stay, make him not abandon her.

And you know the Hindu fanatic types, they have already send a person; they already know about this you know Lakshman's meetings with Priscilla, so they send a person to you know make to avenge what Lakshman did to them in the sense that Lakshman controlled them a lot too when in their processions you know, against Muslims and all that so, they send a person there.

He, I mean Lakshman does not go there, Lakshman forget said you know in the midst of the Riot and she is alone there and she is murdered by this guy who you know goes there, so she went there to tell him that she is pregnant but you know he could not, he does not know that until the post mortem report comes and you know his friend, the SP hides that from like public eye, he tells that only to Lakshman.

So, basically this whole you know fear of scandal thing which knows has been a continuing tradition from the Adi Kavya, the Ramayana that for the man, it is like also easy that is what the idea is about and yeah it is also the intertextuality but it talks about Ramayana and it also talks about its own this novel itself, its intertextuality plus the self referentiality, yeah then the historiographical part.

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- The narrative of the nation.
- Indian history playing a definitive part - 'history as a human construct'.
- Historical references - Sikh riots, Babri Masjid, 1990s riots.

There is a lot of like reference to Indian history, Indian historical events player you know large part, the nation; the narrative of the nation, Indian history playing a definitive part, history again is a human construct here, so like major historical references are Sikh Riots, Babri Masjid you know riots and the 1990's riots which you know happen before the Babri Masjid demolition and after the Babri Masjid demolition.

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┆ "Yes, man, our pride. It wasn't just the masonry of the temple that was shattered that day by the assault they called Operation BlueStar. It was unbearable even for those Sikhs who had despised Bhindranwale and all his works. I mean, if some Mafia gang had taken shelter in the Vatican, would anyone have aimed howitzers at Saint Peter's bloody Cathedral? We felt personally, intimately violated." ┆

Yeah, so this is what Gurinder Singh, the SP, he is a Punjabi, he talks to (( )) (41:20) the journalist who comes to report on Priscilla's death, he also I mean basically knows the background of the Riots and how Gurinder and Lakshman together controls it, so he talks to Randy Dix, he is saying about the operation BlueStar talks about the Sikh, you know the not the Sikh Riots, it is exactly the what the causes for the Sikh riots.

And you know the murder of Indira Gandhi, how it was caused by operation BlueStar and how operation Bluestar you know even while being necessary to you know exterminate the; extremist elements from the Sikh community who demanded khalistan, it was note down, you know a proper clean way to do that because it had the sentiments of the Sikh in a very deep manner.

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- **Self-referentiality.**
- **Tharoor referring to his own work (*The Great Indian Novel*).**
- **Conscious narration.**
- **Anticipates '*Why I Am A Hindu*'.**

This is about the metafiction part, so here the metafiction part is like lot of self referentiality is there as I said earlier, Tharoor was referring to his own work; *The Great Indian Novel*, I will talk about that also in the next slide, there is a conscious sort of narration that you know different people since they are being you know it is transcribed or interview transcripts or like very conscious conversations that we see in it.

So, the narration is very conscious you know, very conscious and self-reflexive and also it could be said that it is anticipating Tharoor's non fictional work, *why i am a Hindu* which basically lays out the same arguments that Lakshman the civil servant or first about his belief in Hinduism in this novel.

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↓ *“The beginning foretells the end. Down with the omniscient narrator! It’s time for the omniscient reader. Let the reader construct her own novel each time she reads it.”* ↓

Yeah, this is he talking about his desire to write a novel to Priscilla, he says he wants to write a novel, which reads like an encyclopaedia, he says that the beginning foretells the end, down with the omniscient narrator, it is time for the omniscient reader, let the reader construct her own novel each time she reads it, so this is basically what this novel does it begins with the end you know the first thing that we see in this novel is a newspaper article that you know talks about Priscilla's death and communal rights in India.

And how it is affecting communities, so it beginning foretells the end and the novel reads like an encyclopaedia in the sense that you know, there are different sections you could read each one of it and make your own sense of how the novel should be, I mean what the novel is and all that so, the reader is constructing you know her own novel each time she is reading it, so that is about the novel that is about how you know self referentiality is intense and this leads it to be a metafiction.

You could say that there is self referentiality and Tharoor is consciously narrating the authorised person here, the authorised, not talked about, albeit in a covert manner, as also metafictional characteristics, so it makes up all the metafictional characteristics thus it becomes postmodern historiography metafiction yeah, please do read it, thank you.

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