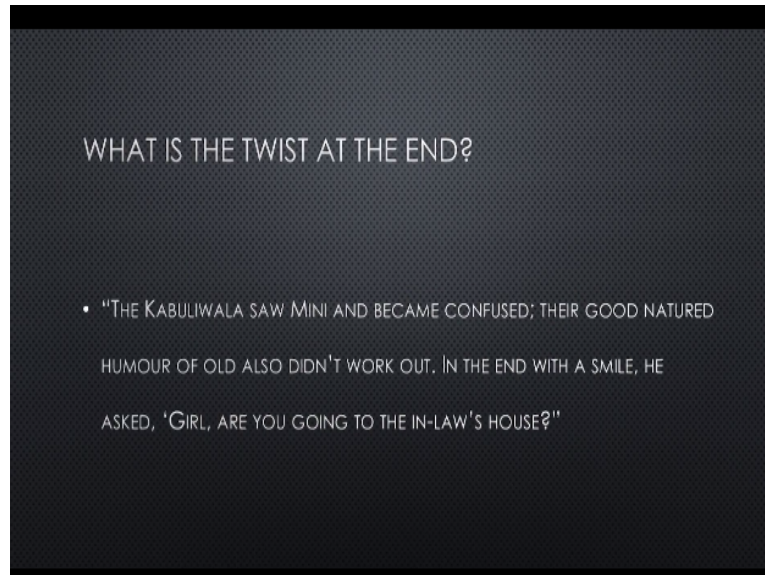


Short Fiction in Indian Literature
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Lecture-3A
Plotting Tagore's Story "Kabuliwala" (1892)

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Hello and welcome back, now let us look what exactly that text is for this one. So when the Kabuliwala and Mini meet there is hardly any exchange of words there. So the Kabuliwala saw Mini and became confused, their good natured humour of old also did not work out. In the end with a smile he ask girl are you going to the in law's house. So in that absence of warmth and cordiality and friendship.

The Kabuliwala ends up asking that question that ideal question, question that used to provoke mark in that little girl are you going to the in laws house. Earlier she does not understand what exactly the in laws house meant now the grown up girl on her wedding day is absolute care as to where exactly she is going to go after her wedding.

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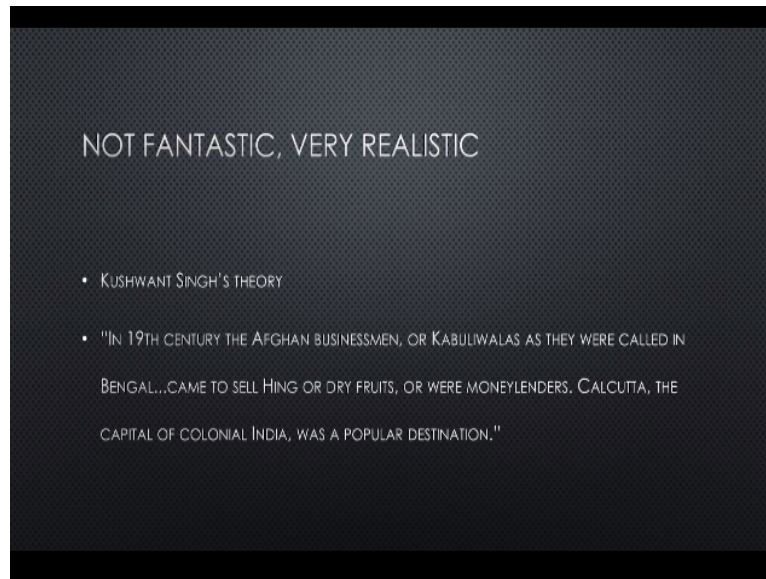
WHAT IS THE TWIST AT THE END?

- "MINI NOW UNDERSTOOD WHAT 'IN-LAW' MEANT. SO SHE COULDN'T ANSWER THE WAY SHE DID IN THE PAST. RATHER, HEARING THE QUESTION FROM RAHAMAT, HER FACE BECAME PURPLE IN SHAME AND SHE ABRUPTLY TURNED AROUND AND LEFT. THIS BROUGHT BACK MEMORIES OF THEIR FIRST MEETING AND I FELT AN ACHE IN MY HEART"

So Mini now understood what the in law meant so she could not answer the way she did in the past. So in the past she use to laugh at the reference to the in laws because some the Kabuliwala also used to suggest that he is going to worth his in laws. So now there is no left then only shame. Rather on hearing the question from Rahamat her face became purple in shame as there is embracement here and left.

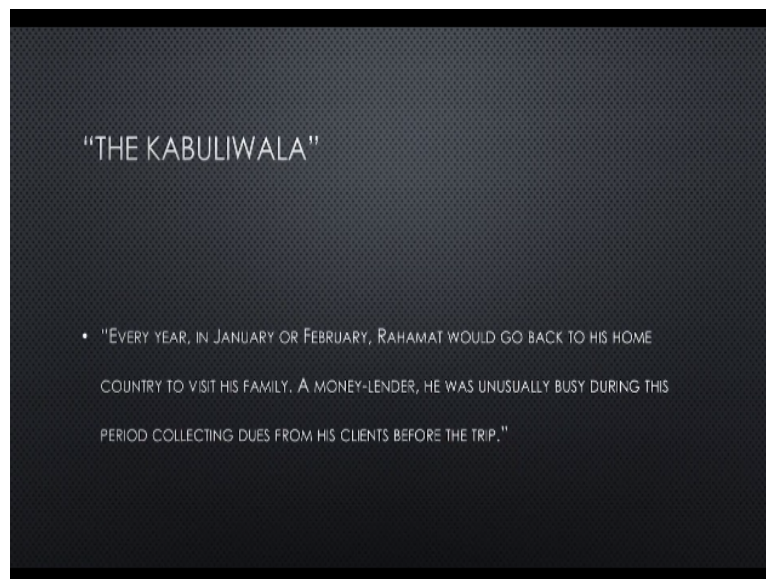
And she abruptly turn around and left, so there is a abrupt break not only in the conversation there is also an abrupt break in the relationship between 2 between Rahamat and Mini. This brought back memories of the first meeting and I felt an ache in my heart. So the eye here refers to the father. So he is terribly unhappy, there is a pain in him to see that these childhood friends have not been able to recapture the warmth of the past, the past relationship, questions in his theory of the short story said that a story can be as fantastic as possible provided that there is some message to convey.

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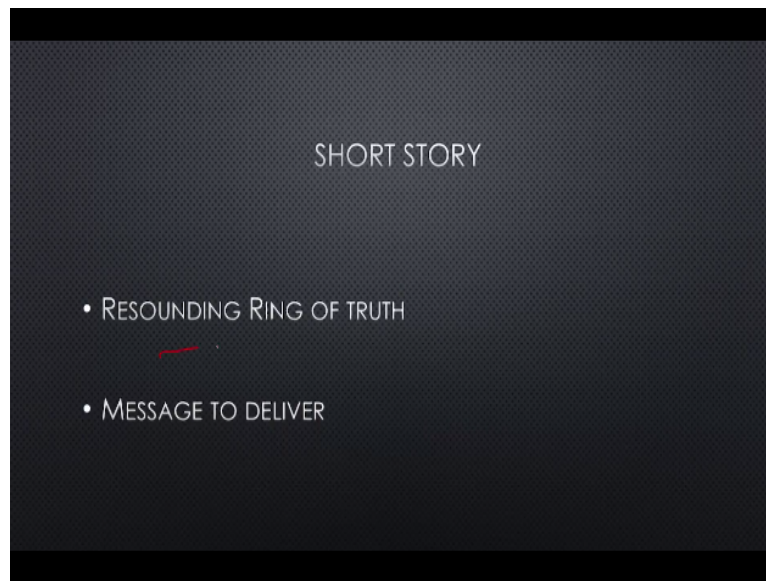
Now this story is not very fantastic in fact his realistic, so where does this realism come from credit suggest that in the 19th Century Afghan Businessman of the Kabuliwala as they were called in Bengal came to sell hing or dry fruit over money lenders, Calcutta the capital of colonial India was a popular destination. So take over uses this cultural connection the cultural connection from Kabul which was present in Calcutta.

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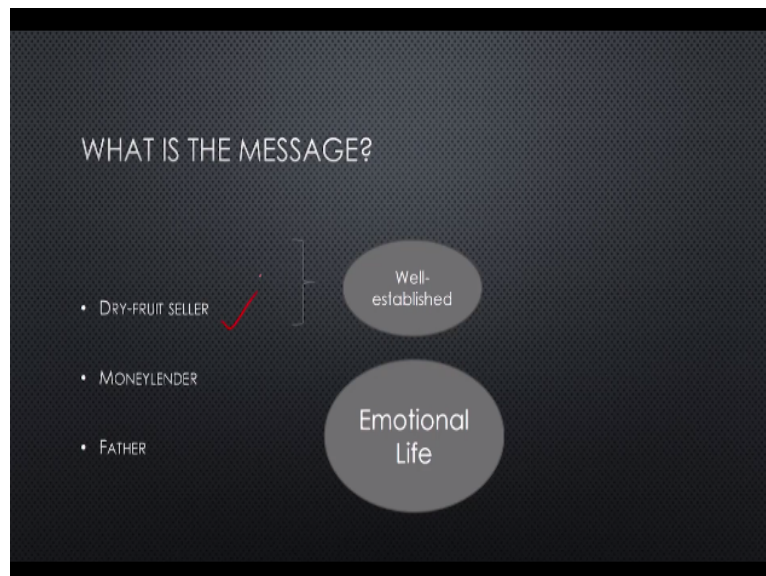
So he uses this landscape and fix a certain character from that cultural facet to weave a story here. So every year in January or February he writes Tagore write that Rahamat would go back to his home country to visit his family or money land he was unusually busy during this period collecting dues from its clients before the trip. So he was not only the Kabuliwala was not only a dry fruit seller, he was also a money lender sometimes he also sold his goods on credit.

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And he used to collect the money later and before you went on his trip. So this is very very realistic backdrop that we have in the short story. So as I said there is a resounding ring of truth in the socio-cultural fabric that we see a study in Kabuliwala now. We have seen the realistic part of it, now let us look at the message that is to be that is there in the story and delivered to the readers.

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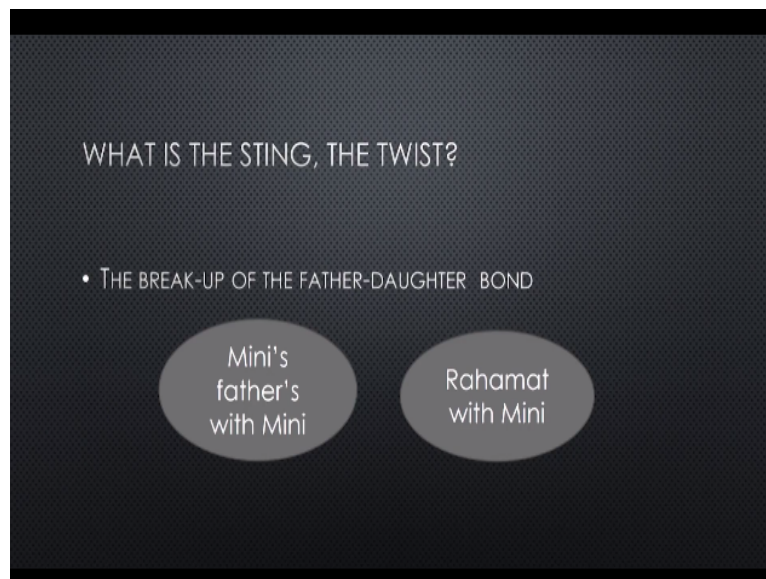


Now we know that the Kabuliwala is a dry fruit seller and we also know that he is a money lenders. So these 2 factor well very well established by Tagor in the story, but what exactly is revealed at the finale of the story is this information that Rahamat is money lenders, this dry fruit seller is also a father who is terribly missing his young child a girl child and this

emotional life to Rahamat is what is very interesting and significant and shocking to know at the end of the story.

Because only long we have seen only Mini's father and his relationship as a domestic setup that the story tries to uphold and suddenly at the end of it we have a window into other fathers were missing their daughters back home. So what is the staying, what is the trust in the story.

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The string and the twist in the story in my interpretation is the breakup of the father, daughter bond or relationship. So Mini's relationship with her father is broken as well as Rahamat's relation with is Saragat daughter Mini is also broken and the implication is that Rahamat's real daughter might have also forgotten her father who is far away in Calcutta who had been in prison for several years in Calcutta.

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KABULIWALA

- "SHE WAS HARDLY TO BE SEEN IN HER FATHER'S STUDIO. IN A WAY, I HAD ALMOST ENDED ALL FRIENDSHIP WITH HER."

And she might have also forgotten her father. So this breakup of human relationship particularly the breakup of the father daughter bond is the key concern of the story in my interpretation. This statement that stay on the slide she was hardly to be seen in a father studio in a while I had almost ended all friendship with her is a very very interesting statement in the entire story.

The physical absence of Mini from her father's study of studio or writing space is an indication of the emotional distance thing that she has created between herself and her father. So this father very clearly states that I had almost ended all friendship with her and this break is something that comes after the Kabuliwala departure from Minis work, that is something you need to keep in mind too.

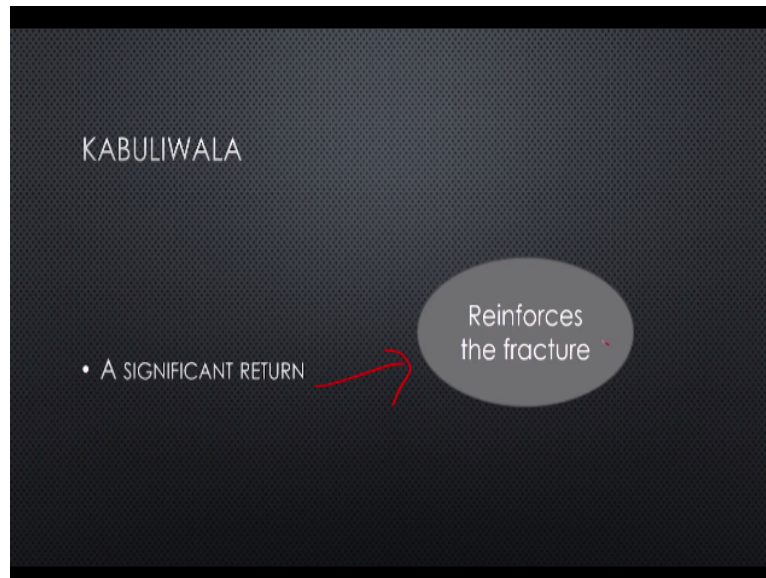
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BREAK-UP OF THE BONDS

- KABULIWALA'S DEPARTURE,
- MINI'S GROWING UP
- REPLACING MALE WITH FEMALE FRIENDS

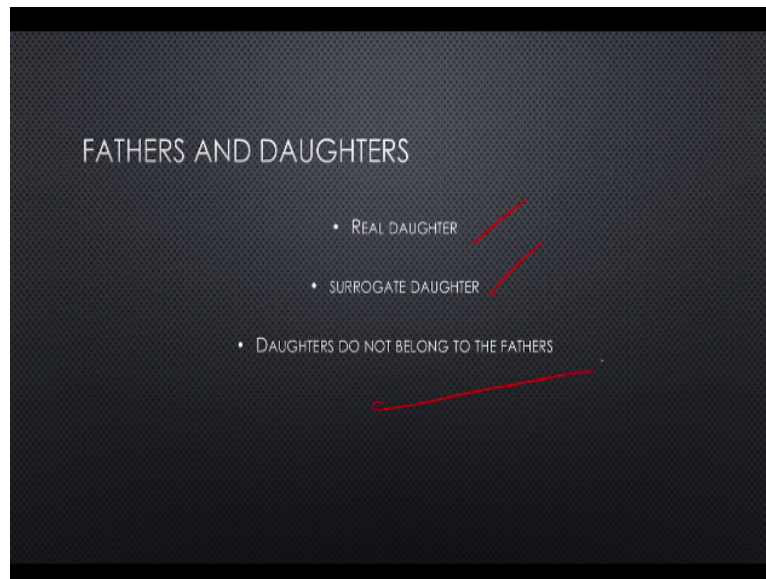
So as I said Kabuliwala's departure kind of coincides with Mini's growing up and others growing up means her be placing all the male friends with female friends of her age., So she has replaced the father, has replaced before that the Kabuliwala and she has replaced Nabi the groom who takes care of the horses in the family. So she gradually replaces all the male presences from her life, from her world and starts to migrate towards the female associations, the female figures in her life.

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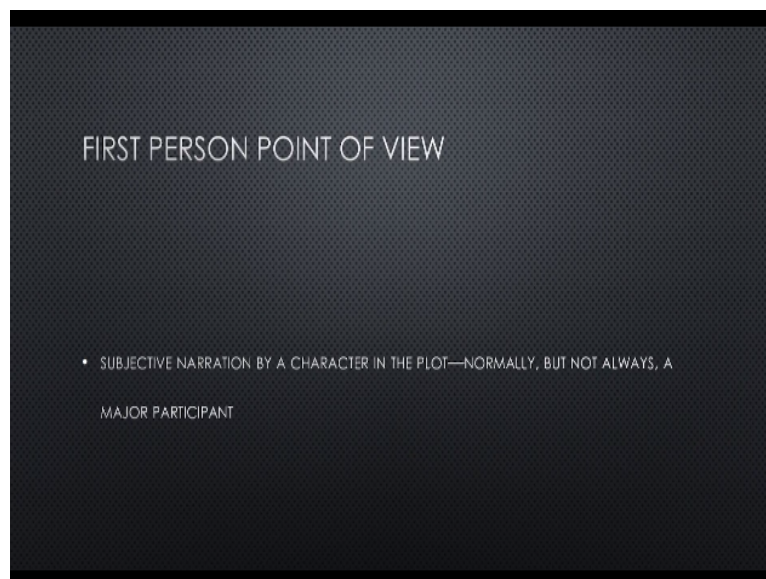
Now when the Kabuliwala returns I would call that a significant return because he reminds or we in forced the fractures, the fractures in the emotional trajectories of the father especially towards his daughter Mini. So his presence reinforces the notion that both real daughters and surrogate daughters do not belong to the Father's Day have to leave their fathers home at some point on the other ones they have grown up.

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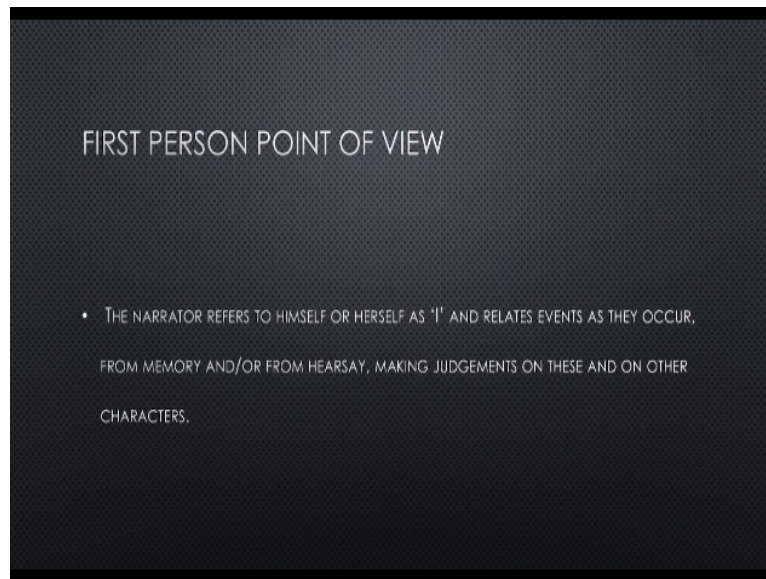
And this is reinforced by the arrival of Kabuliwala and his attempt to find the rekindle the relationship that he had with Mini. So and it also kind of mirrors back and the fathers own break with his own daughter and that way is the lot of emotional intensity to the story towards the finale of it.

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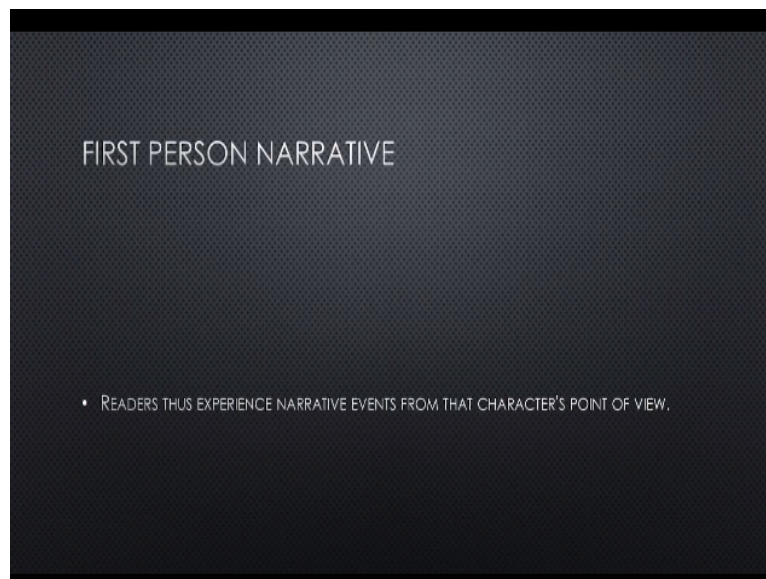
Now I would like to talk about the first person point of view which is employed by Tagor in the story. So what exactly is a first person point of view. So it is a subjective narration, it is a narration on the part of somebody a participant in the plot or not necessarily a major participant, it is a subject in narration by a character in the story, normally but not always a major participant as I said just mention.

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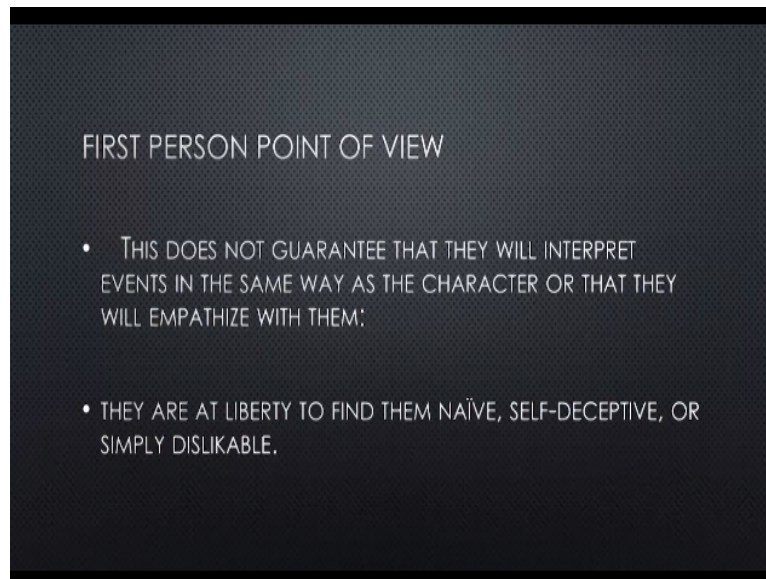
The narrative refers to himself or herself as I and release event as they occur from memory of from here set making judgements on these and other characters of the narrative gives information based on his or her experiences of the world or his or her knowledge of something that has happened. So all the assessment that we get from a first person point of view is subjective.

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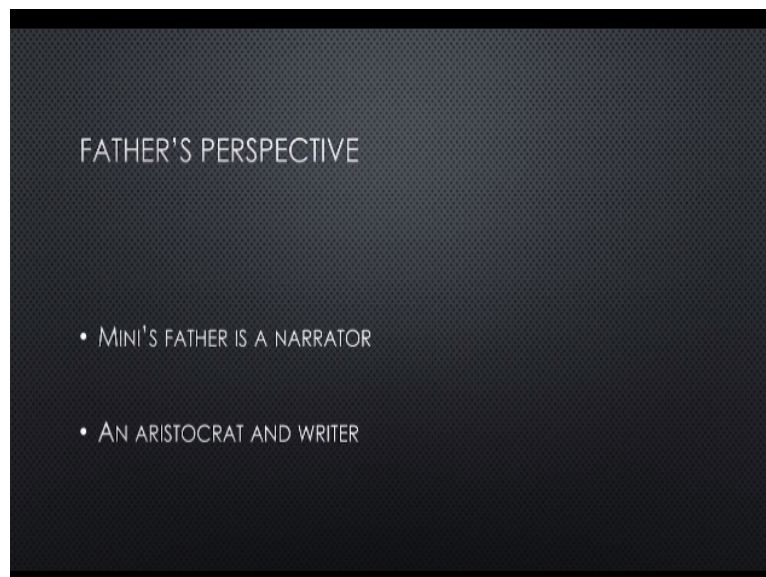
So readers experience narrative events from tat practice point of view. So this is something we need to remember and interpret the story accordingly, so we do not have a very objective perspective but very subjective perspective of the story and things that happen in the store and even character analysis made by the first person point of view is also very subjective and something that we need to keep in mind.

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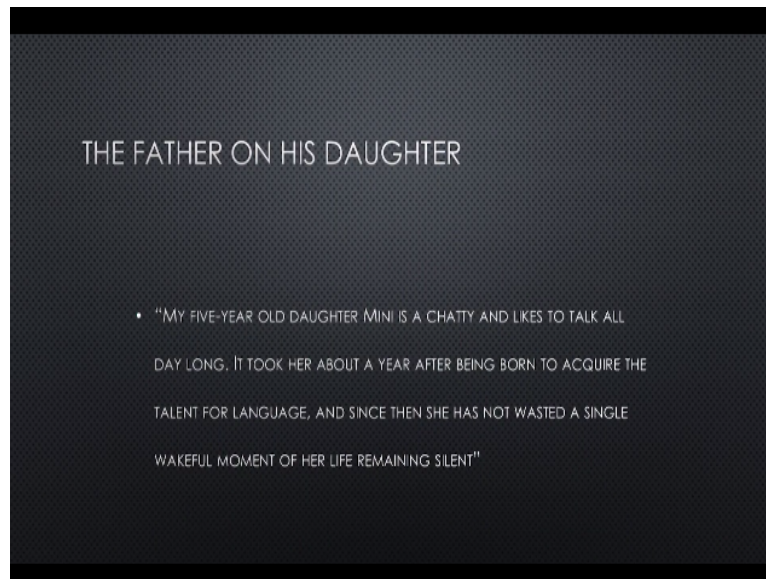
So that first person point of view does not guarantee the reader interpret events in the same way as the character or that they will empathize with them. They are at liberty to find the naive, self-deceptive or simply dislikable, even reader is also at liberty to find the first person point of view Naive self -deceptive or simply dislikable. So this is something we need to keep in mind.

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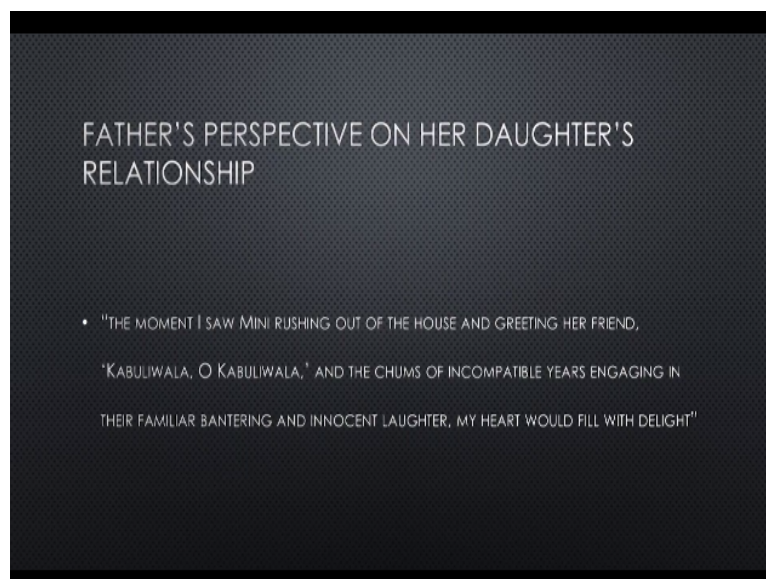
So we do not need to buy the prospectus of the first person narrative, we can we can agree or disagree with the first person point of view. So in this story Mini's father is narrator, he tells the story from his personal point of you and we need to remember that he is an Aristocrat and a writer who does not have a lot of experience of this world. But he does have a very good understanding of his daughter Mini.

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He says my 5 year old daughter Mini is Chatty is very lucky and likes to talk all day long, it took her about a year after being born to acquire the talent for language and since then she has not wasted single wakeful moment of a life remaining silent. So he has a very good understanding about his very small daughter, she is very lucky, she is very feisty and he likes her that way, that that is apparent from his description.

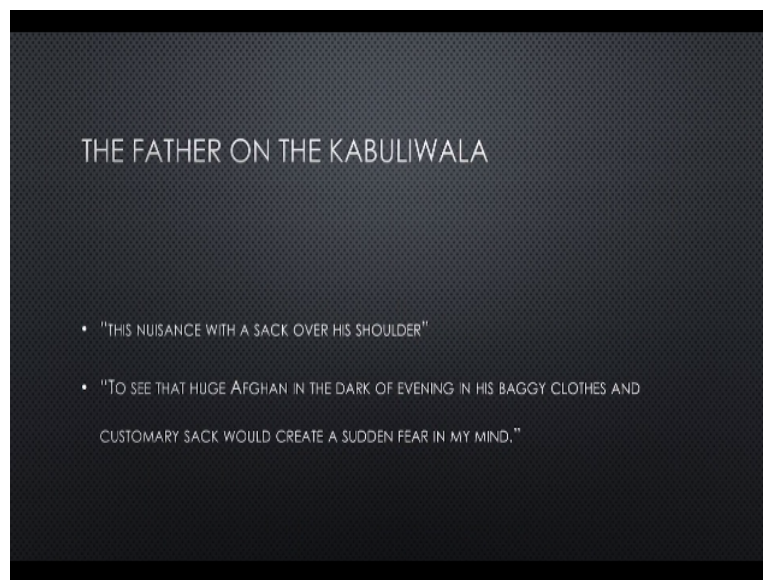
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And he has some perspective about Mini's relationship with Kabuliwala, he says that the moment I saw Mini rushing out the house and greeting her friend Kabuliwala O Kabuliwala and the chums of incompatible years engaging in their familiar bantering and innocent laughter, my heart would fill with delight. So once he comes to learn of the bond between Mini and the Kabuliwala he expects that and he is also delighted by that.

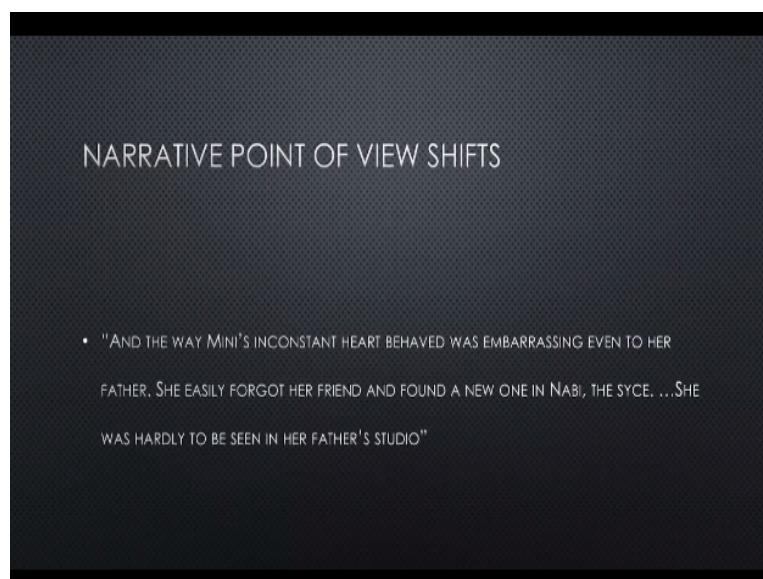
And this point of view also makes the reader sympathise or kind of accept the relationship between Kabuliwala and the little girl. So he has that effect on the readers, see kind of hints are not just the reader in such a way that they can to accept that relationship or look at the relationship with lot of sympathy. He also has his initial understanding about the Kabuliwala which he changes later on.

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So at the beginning he calls in a nuisance with a sack over his shoulder and sometimes when he comes in to the house or he says the afghan the huge figure sitting beside his daughter and sometimes he is slightly frighten by the image, by that size and darkness, but then he realises that they are just friends having a chat in the house. So that again as I mention gives him a lot of delight.

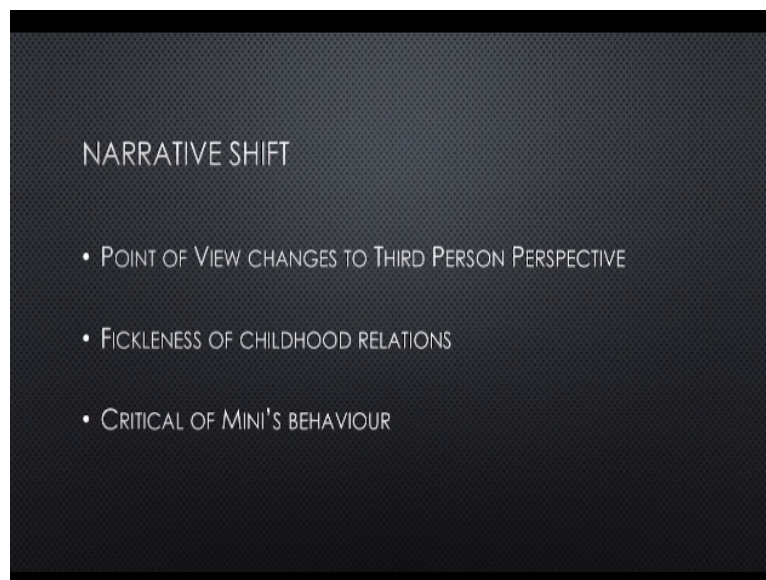
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And later once the Kabuliwala has left the story world the narrator view point sinks to suddenly shifts and this is the paragraph that suggest the shift in order to view point and let me read this and the way Mini's inconstant heart behaves was embarrassing even to her father, she easily forgot her friend and found a new one in Nabi, the Syce, she was hardly to be seen in her father's studio.

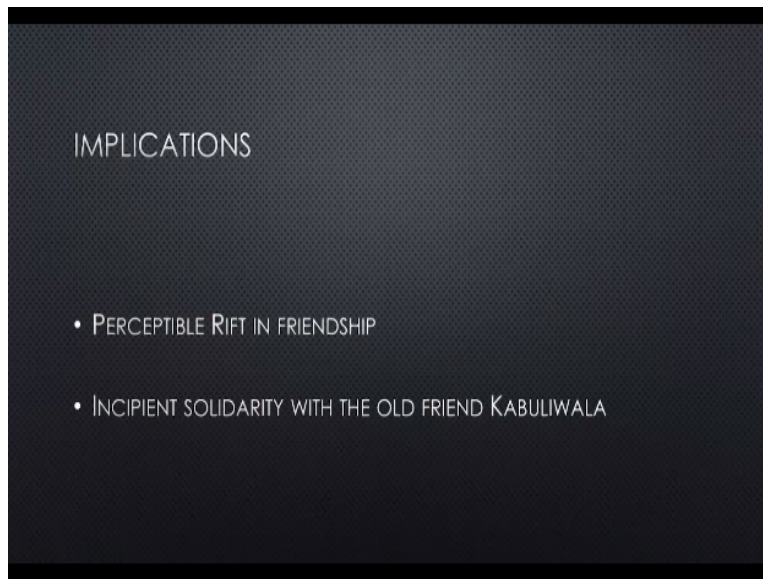
So these 2 statements in the story is daring in the sense the narrator view point is not the first person, narrator view point in fact we have the third person point of view here and that view point is very very critical of Mini because she seems to have laughed all her loyalty towards the Kabuliwala the man who had been a friend for a long time and that replacement is very very hurtful.

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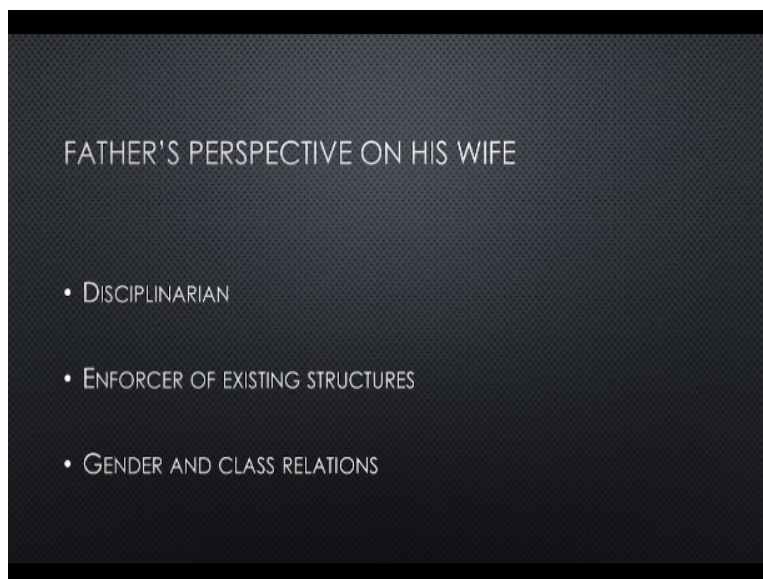
Because she tends to do the same things to her father too later, so the point of view changes to the third person perspective as I mentioned and it kind of indicates fickleness of the childhood relations, she will tend to forget pretty quickly and as I mention earlier this view point is also highly critical of Mini's behaviour because it is not only criticizing her attitude towards the Kabuliwala, it is also criticizing her attitude towards her own father Mini's father.

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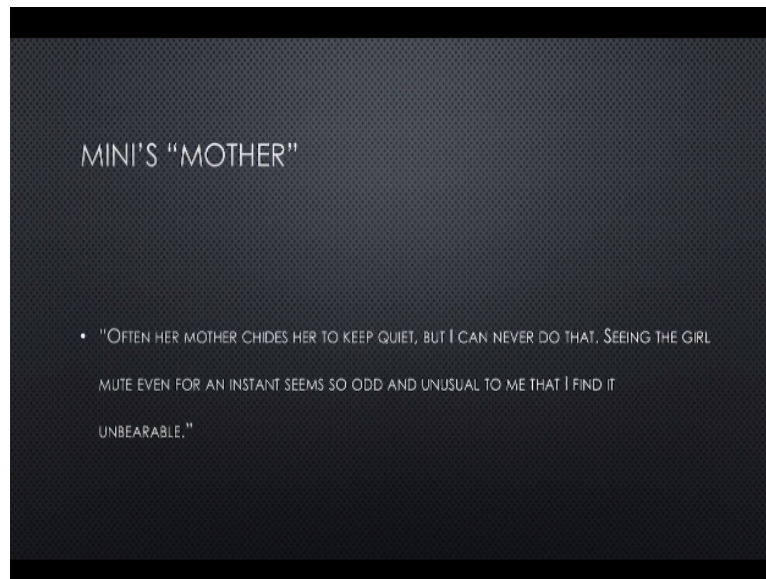
Therefore this is slightly harsher understanding of Mini's change in relations, the implication of the narrator is kind of hints at the reveals the perceptible rift in relationship there and we can also see the father trying to force the incipient solidarity with the old friend Kabuliwala. So this seems to occupy similar position in relation to Mini's emotional tragedy both are forgotten, both are replace in some sense by other figures especially the girls of her own age.

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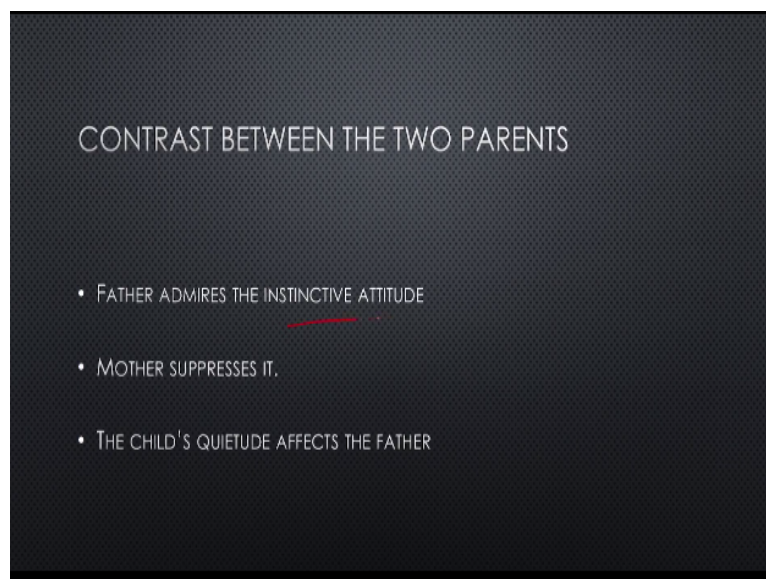
We have seen the father's perspective on Mini we have seen the father's perspective on Kabuliwala whom he initially kind of looks at with annoyance and later comes to accept him as a friend for himself and now let us look at the farthest perspective on his wife his wife seems to be a disciplinarian, she enforces existing structures of society in her attitude towards Mini and in her attitude towards her husband.

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And how she looks at the world in fact she reinforces the gender and class relationships within her household space. So we have an example here to prove that, so this is the quote that I am interested in here, often her mother chides her to keep quiet and the father says that I can never do that thing saying the girl mute, silent even an instance seems so odd and unusual to me that I find it unbearable.

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So the father does not like to see the girl child quiet while the mother wants her to stop talking incessantly. So this nice contrast here brought about by the father's assessment of the mother the father admires the instinctive attitude of his little kid while the mother suppresses at the child's quietude scenes to bother the father where it does not seem to do anything for the mother.

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FATHER'S NARRATIVE OF THE MOTHER

- THE MOTHER'S CHIDES MINI OVER THE COIN GIVEN BY KABULIWALA
- THE FATHER SAVES His DAUGHTER BY TAKING HER FOR A WALK.

So we have 2 very contrasting personalities and their attitude towards how a child should be raised, the mother as I said chides meaning of the coin given by the Kabuliwala where as the father saves his daughter by taking her for a walk. So it is very interesting how both the parents react to the incident when the Kabuliwala gives the coin back to Mini, the mother is offended by that and embarrass the father just glasses over it.

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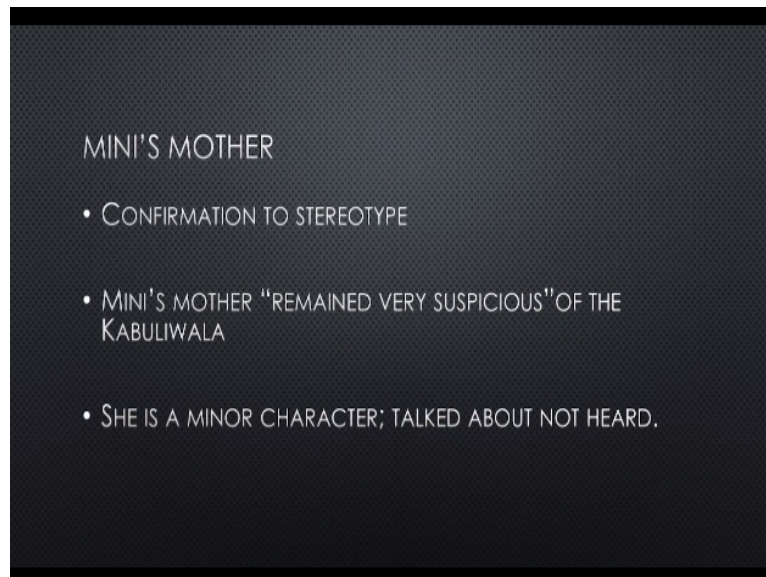
MINI'S MOTHER'S FEARS

- "MINI'S MOTHER IS A NATURALLY A TIMID PERSON. WHENEVER SHE HEARS A SLIGHT NOISE FROM THE STREET, SHE THINKS ALL THE TIPPLERS OF THE WORLD ARE RUSHING TOWARDS OUR HOUSE. AFTER LIVING FOR SO MANY YEARS IN THIS WORLD (THOUGH NOT SO MANY), SHE HAS STILL NOT BEEN ABLE TO TEMPER HER FEAR THE WORLD IS FULL OF ALL KINDS OF HORRORS: THIEVES, ROBBERS, DRUNKARDS, SNAKES, TIGERS, MALARIA, COCKROACHES AND EUROPEAN SOLDIERS."

Now here we have a heavy heavy have a cat to put rate of Minis mother here given by her husband. So he said that Mini's mother is naturally a timid person a person who is very deserve, who is very apprehensive whenever she hears a slight noise from the street she think all the people of the world are rushing towards house tipplers drinkers after living for so many years in this world though not so many.

She has still not been able to temper her fear the world is full of all kinds of horrors, thieves, robbers, drunken, snakes, tigers, malaria, cockroaches and European soldiers. So the mother constantly seems to see friends everywhere all around her and these are some of the threats that he notices the European soldiers is very interesting because we need to remember the socio-cultural historical context that the British Empire is ruling the Indian subcontinent.

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And these are some of the other horror thieves and robbers and drunkards and she is again very apprehensive about the Kabuliwala too. So this have the description confirms too the stenotype discard I'm over a woman of that particular period ajj Mini's mother remained as I said very suspicious of the Kabuliwala and she never warms up to this strange from Kabuliwala.

However we also remember that she is a minor character Mini's mother is a minor character, talked about and not here, we always get reports about her from the father's prospective but we do not actually get to hear her talk about her desire, her ambitions, and half years and how worried for her child. Now we also have an interesting sub text to Mini's mother here, there is also a suggestion that perhaps Mini's mother is not her biological mother.

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MINI'S MOTHER

- PERHAPS NOT THE BIOLOGICAL MOTHER?
- "DAD, WHO IS MUM TO YOU?"

SISTER-IN-LAW, I THOUGHT TO MYSELF..."

And this indication is given right at the beginning of the story when this little girl ask her father that who is mum to you and he reflex about he does not spell it out, he replies he thinks that she is Mini sister in law but he thinks that to himself and he does not convey it in words to the daughter and he changes the topic and the girl leave the leads the room. So this is very very indicative the about the character that Mini's mother has.

And possibly her attitude towards the little girl could be because of these factors as well are they say something and that we need to keep in mind and speculative about, that is it for today I will see you in the next session.