

Short Fiction in Indian Literature
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Lecture – 06C
Short Story Genre and Premchand's The Chess Players Overview

Hello and welcome to the session. I have here with me Ms. Gayathri, who is an MA student at IIT madras and Ms. Arya my intern on the course short fiction in Indian literature and today we are going to have a group discussion about Premchand's story, The Chess Players and let me begin with Arya, what do you make of the story the chess players? Chess Players is one of the, even it is described as one of the most fascinating and interesting stories by Premchand.

And I think that it follows this usual formula of building up the background then coming to introducing the central issue and we have the climax, a literal climax with the end of 2 heros. Okay, okay very good. Now let us begin by talking about historical background of this particular story world and let us have an idea about how Premchand perceives this historical backdrop.

I will read the excerpt first, "It was in the times of Wajid Ali Shah, Lucknow was downed in sensuality. The big and small, rich and the poor always sunken at somewhere engrossed in dance and music. Some just revelled in the drowsiness induced by the opiate. Love of pleasure dominated every aspect of life, in administration, in literature, in social life, in arts and crafts, in business and industry, in cuisine and custom sensuality ruled everywhere.

The state officials were absorbed in fun and pleasure. Poets in descriptions of love and separation, artisans in zari and chikan work businessmen in dealings in Surma, perfumes and cosmetics all were drowned in central pleasures. No one knew what was happening around the world". So this serves as a perfect description for the time in which the annexation of hours takes place.

It was I think it is situated somewhere around 1856 and it is remarkably one year before sepoy mutiny which marked almost the beginning of proper British rule in India. So I think that Premchand somehow or the other he is trying to portray the background or the situations

that paved the way for Britishers to annex India, because people were so, the administration was so what, so loose and there was not any order and this actually paved the way for them to come and conquer us very easily.

So I think by portraying the Lucknow of Wajid Ali Shah, he is trying to say and through the characters of Musa and Musahib, he is trying to portray the attitude of people and the rulers of India during 1856 and the times around and to show that it was our own fault that led to an exaction of the British. Okay, yeah that seems to be his observation in terms of the description of Lucknow and in fact Lucknow was called as the Paris of the East in those times right.

And lots of books have been written about the pleasures as well as the fine arts that the people of Lucknow were indulging in those times, but the picture that we get here is somewhat extreme and some critics even call it an exaggerated depiction of the pursuits that people indulge in those times. Gayathri you have anything to comment on that.

Yes, as for the question you had asked earlier about what do you think of the story I think the story as she rightly pointed out it has a time tested formula that is why even Satyajit Ray had adapted this story into a film and again I think Premchand is more critical of the East rather than the West. He says no wonder these people came in conquered us, we were like this, if it is the Whiteman's burden it is actually the Whiteman's burden.

So I think Premchand brought this out very beautifully in the story. Yeah, particularly the final statement in that extract that you read out, nobody had any idea what was happening in the world. So people seemed to be in a drugged state, you know kind of preoccupied in pursuing all these pleasures that they have no idea about the invaders who are coming into the country. So let us pick up on this idea of pressure and work.

You know the contrast between pleasure and work, can we think about the spaces in relation toward what are the spaces of work here do we have any spaces of work in this particular story any thoughts about that? I think their idea of work and our idea of work do not match at all. Yeah absolutely. For them they were jagirdars, they said that they wanted to earn money without doing anything, but still they earn money, so for them they had done their work.

They were earning money as far as they know. Okay, the system of jagirdari works like this. They are sort of the officers of the state, the king appoints certain members of the community as officers of the state they are the jagirdaries and you know their privileges are these. They get to govern the particular place. They get to collect the revenues from the place and in return they offer support to the king in the form of troops when the king is in need.

So at times of crisis they are supposed to send troops to the king for the battles that he will fight against these enemies. So that is the kind of contract that they have with the king and if you remember at one point in this story there is a reference to this idea of jagirdari and one of the messengers within quotes makes this comment. Can we come back to that extracts of very interesting comment and that tell you in essence what exactly is this particular system that the Muslim rules adopted and practised in our country.

Is this when the messengers come and ask him? Yes, yes, can you read that please. “One day the two friends were submerged in the quick sand of chess when an officer of the king’s army came riding on a horse asking for Mir Sahib. Mir Sahib was stunned what was this. Why these summons, this was no good. He shut the doors and said to the servant, tell him I am not home. Where is he if not at home asked the rider?

I do not know what is the matter asked the servant. I cannot tell you he has been summoned. Maybe he has to provide some soldiers for the king’s army. Jagirdari is no fun, if he has to go to the battle field he will know what it is”. Exactly, that tells you that this is the very crucial aspect of that particular system you know the idea of being there in the battle field along with the king sending your troops, maintaining your troops.

So all these are the responsibilities of all these noble men, which they do not do, which they do not kind of take it upon themselves to do. So they blissfully send their time playing chess while the kingdom is becoming you know invaded by the foreigners. So can we also think about this game of chess, what are the symbolic valances of this particular game, why this particular game has been chosen by Premchand to represent the extremity of pleasure and obsession, any speculations about that Arya?

Mam, I consider chess as a game of power, where one faction is trying metaphorically there is a power game in which one faction is trying to overpower the next. So in this context I

think the chess board metaphorically it stands for the battle field itself, where one group was trying to win over the other and there is I think the central conflict of the story is between pleasure and work.

Where the obsession with pleasure is overriding the obligations of these 2 characters and it is that which leads to the downfall of their country and themselves. So in this context the pawns in the chessboard they represent these 2 people and the battle actually for me it metaphorically stands for the conflict between pleasure and work which is exaggerated in the story. So chess plays a very important role because one is that it has a lot of historical associations.

It stands for power; it stands for war. Yeah, it is a political game right. The metaphor is quite clear it is a very easy association that we usually make, you know with chess and power play and things like that and the conflict between pleasure and work is a very interesting conflict because there is not work at all. Nobody is working, not only these 2 noble men, none of the people in the city of Lucknow seemed to work.

We do not see any activities of labor going on, all the activities are in pursued of pleasure is not it. So that is there, so there is a known entity at the opposite side, is not it, I mean it is a no brainer. There is no other side, both the sides are about pleasure sometimes in the story and what are the other associations that we have and the other contrast that we have is with this countryside. How do we see the countryside?

We have the countryside as well which is contrasted with the city of Lucknow and at one point in the story the narrative says all the wealth has been sucked out of the country and the wealth is pumped into the city is not it. So the country side is impoverished, pauperized that is the word that is used to describe the country right and very interesting when the city falls, when the city falls to the invader, people start to run to the country side. So we see that kind of spatiality and the contrasting spatiality in this particular story as well.

It is the city folks who seemed to be deadened, but pleasure whereas the country folk seem to be vulnerable, helpless, passive victims right. So we have all these contrast. Let us see other areas that we need to think about. Can we think about the game of chess as foreshadowing the war or the clash between Mir Sahib and Mirza at the end of the story? There is an irony as

she pointed out that the ponds can be associated with these two Miza and Mia. When you see this as being juxtapose to the real life.

Real life has a chess game and the chess game literally as a chess game instead of them actually protecting their king. They end up giving up their lives for the king on the chessboard, right. You are quite right. So that is the irony which Premchand brings out in the story. So we have a political battle being fought. A political battle being fought at least theoretically between the Indian rulers and the British, that is happening.

And while the actual battle that is happening is the chess battle. The literal battle that is happening in the narrative of this particular story world is a chess battle between Mirza and Mir Roshan Ali. So here it becomes a personal battle. It is a battle as to who will win it comes down to a very personal level, it becomes apolitical. So the fight is it in a virtual space somehow in an alternative space and that space is cut off from reality.

And the funny thing is when you actually see the city fall when the British forces are there in Lucknow and these 2 noble man they are kind of sneak out of their homes like thieves and they do not want to come across or bump into any of the king's soldiers because they are worried that they will be taken away and be forced to kind of fight or they will be questioned somehow.

So it is a very, very interesting thing again the idea of the contrast between work and pleasure, it is pleasure, pleasure, pleasure and obsession with pleasure it is kind of an escapism into pleasure at the cost of the reality. In the reality it is the political struggle going on between the Indians and the British and we have a British resident who is kind of threatening the folks that in the local people saying that if you do not pay the taxes you know you will have to pay the consequences.

You will have to see the consequences and nobody is listening to all those threats. So the British presence is there, the resident, there is reference in the story to the resident as well, but these noble men are not you know taking any kind of hint. So it is a very, very interesting story in that context where they are kind of cutting off themselves from reality, is not it, okay. So let us look at the women in the story, Mirza's Begum.

She is a very interesting character and you say that she is the queen of the kitchen, that is a nice speculation, but it is mentioned that she is helpless in front of the husband. She becomes really helpless she does not react really terribly in front of the husband, yet at some point of the story she rules over him and throws away the chessboard and how dominating is she. I found her and Mir Sahib's Begum to be one of the 2 intriguing characters in the story.

Because at one point we have she is, it is true that she is very much annoyed by him playing all the time, but at first it is mentioned that she did not have the courage to open up and to shoo them away from the house, but again it is very complicating that at another point she plays a trick over him. She calls him by saying that she is having a headache and interestingly he too knows about her game and he comes in and when he comes in again there is a sudden change of colour in her.

And she asks him to let throw him out and we have again Mirza he lies to her that it is Mir Sahib who persuades him to play the game throughout. So at some point of the other I think Mirza, he is afraid of his wife that is why he lies to her and when she plans of going through Devangana to throw the chessboard out he literally begs to her and alike her we have Mir Sahib's wife.

Mir Sahib's wife it is really mentioned that for some reason or the other she did not want her husband to be there at home and even she plays there both women are portrayed as tricky or cunning. She plays a trick; she sends a messenger because she wants him out. Yeah, yeah, we will come to that. So I found that his portrayal of women as tricky over here. He portrays them as very cunning and they know how to moults things and how to wind them around, get what they want basically.

Okay, so we will first deal with Mirza's Begum first because she embodies a particular characteristic that we need to arrive at before we come back to Mir Roshan Ali's wife. So what are the characteristics that we see in her, you are quite right to say that she is very manipulative to a certain extent. What do you think Gayathri? There is this very interesting statement by Mir Sahib who says that women are delicate if I quote it, why do not you go, women are delicate things.

So I think we should talk about the attitude of the men towards the women of their home. They know that they are going to be, they are answerable to them, but outside they portray as if they control them and again there is one more after all the fiasco, which she does. He goes and again explains to Mir Sahib and there is one more very interesting thing that he says, let her shout, she will get used to it in a few days, but from now onwards be a little tough with her.

Yes, yes. So this attitude is very, it is a facade is what I think. There are several things here. One was this stereotype that you mention that women are delicate things and Mirza knows that women are not delicate things because his Begum literally throws the chessboard out of the guest house and flings the pieces and you know really creates a scene and Mir kind of slings away like a thief again when she hears the sound of the bangles.

That is what she says when I heard sound of the bangles I thought something was wrong and I left. So that is one interesting incident where there is a lot of irony and that subversiveness in women are made manifest, so that is one thing, the other thing is she is very, very some critics call her as if very selfish, self- interested, self-centered women because she wants to dominate the attention of the husband that is the criticism pointed at her.

But we also need to see that this guy has been playing this game of chess all day long and she does not even get the chance to scold him you know. I mean he starts playing before she gets up and goes to bed you know and he continues to play so that sort of thing is something that makes it very dysfunctional, domesticity in their household.

So we need to make note of that too and in terms of Mir Roshan Ali, he has a wife who seems to be very, very cautious, very pliable, very concerned about Mir Roshan Ali right. So through her he thinks that he has got a really sober, sedate, moderate wife which is probably why he says that women are delicate things maybe you know there could be a source for that and that could also be a source for him being confident while giving advice while meting out advice to Mirza.

Yes, yes, absolutely, absolutely, he might think that he has a wife and she is good so he has done a good job of taming her. Yes, yes, he has strained her perfectly and he says that you know you do not have to worry too much about it, you know she will get used to it. That is

what he says correct. Mam, I would also like to point out the stereotype, like you mention that women are stereotype as delicate things, but Premchand I think he wants to show that it is they are appearing to be delicate but on the other hand both these women are manipulative.

So there may be a stereotypical representation in that manner too. This one, Mir Roshan Ali's wife is extremely tricky right. She is like a trickster character that we see in all those folklores and fables right and she employs a fake messenger and this messenger kind of pushes the husband out of the house along with his friend and the chessboard and that is a lot of dysfunctionality that we see in that particular domesticity too, none of the homes are perfect here.

There is a dearth of affection, genuine bond across the landscape of Lucknow which we see represented through these homes. So any other things you would like to add about Mir Roshan Ali's wife. I would also like to point about his domestic space as such we have the servants over there. Again I would like to point out the conflict between pleasure and conflict. Here the irony is that we have this home which is transformed into Mir Sahib's place of pleasure whereas for his servants they were persuaded to do work.

It is clearly mentioned that till that point of time they enjoy the time there. They need not want to do anything seriously, but with these two men playing there, their place of pleasure became a place of work for the servants because they need to cater to the needs of these two men. So both of them they did not complain to Mir Sahib, instead they are complaining to his wife.

Because I think in some way or the other the servants are too aware of his wife's intension and again there is a hint about a secret affair going on in the life of Mir Sahib's wife because it is always mentioned that she wants him out of the house and it is quite intriguing. Yeah it is a interesting episode that she plays out is not it. She wants the husband out because the narrative is clearly suggesting that she is carrying on an illicit affair with this messenger most probably.

That is one of the reason that she wants the husband out, so again the house is kind of turned topsy turvy, the social order is a subverted and it is subverted through the agency of the whoever who is supposed to uphold the social order. So there is a lot of subversion going on

there and in the context of the servants there is a very interesting point that you make about how the space alternatively becomes a space of pleasure and a space of work.

The servants are supposed to work right, that is the job, that is the job in that particular point of time. Let us stick to the historical time. The servants are supposed to run errands, supposed to fetch things, supposed to give them pans to the masters, supposed to bring the hookahs that is their job, that is the responsibility and just like the masters the servants are also just a rejecting work.

They also reject to responsibility and that is probably because they are kind of imitating the masters. They are mimicking them. So they are kind of mirror images. So the servants are kind of mirror images and again the wife rejecting the responsibility of a devoted, you know loyal wife. She is rejecting her place, her position, her role probably because the husband is doing the same.

He is rejecting his responsibility towards the state, towards the home, towards the society. So we can see a rejection of responsibility all around which is why the city of Lucknow is somehow kind of caving in on it is side right, on itself. It is kind of self-deconstructing, self-disrupting and that is happening very passively, very quietly. Right, it is a very, very interesting thing.

So what about the conflicts the chess players a lot of conflicts and how do the conflicts contribute to the revelation of central message in this story. What are the conflicts do you think? While they play we think that both of them are friends, they are very amicable to each other, but there was this one statement in this story when Mirza was talking to his wife and justifying that Mir is the one who is actually.

And he says that he is (()) (23:23) so again there is this social order that comes into picture and even though both of them are playing for pleasure and both of them are doing no work whatsoever. There is still that idea of he is above me, he is below me. This superiority and inferiority, the power complex again plays into this. Yeah. I think that is one of the conflicts which go on. The social conflicts, social conflicts, the concept of hierarchy and to maintain the hierarchy what are the things that we need to do.

That is something that is there and wife says is he feeding us, he is not feeding us, throw him out, you know, so she has a different way of approaching the problem you know she comes down to the basics, you are a noble man, he is noble man. He is not feeding us, so we do not have to oblige him. What about the narrative conflicts in the story Arya? First of all, I would like to say that as I mentioned earlier.

There is a conflict between pleasure and work and that is the reference to sensuality in the beginning. It actually points at a place which is drowned in pleasure with people having no reverence to the order or the system and there are some literal conflicts in the story the one between the intentions of Mirza and his wife, Mir Sahib and his wife and I think that the game of chess it is actually mirroring or it is a metaphor to the conflict that is happening in real world.

And when the game intensifies on the other hand we have the invasion which is intensified and when the king or Nawab ends up in the hands of the company we have these 2 men their game also almost came to an end and with a verbal conflict between these 2 mens regarding the traditional occupations done by their ancestors we have a literal end and that too ends in a conflict.

So I think that it proceeds through a set of conflicts both literally and metaphorical. Quite right, so let us pick up on the, so you mention the social conflicts, the conflicts brought about the social order and you mention again the idea of conflict between work and pleasure, so the people of Lucknow are immersed in pleasure while the work seems to be done by the English East India company which is gradually kind of taking over one region after another on the Indian subcontinent.

So they seem to be the ones who are doing the real work, you know literally kind of invading with their force. So that is one work and we have the conflicts between Mirza and the Begum. We have the conflicts between Mir and his wife which is a not apparent to him and we have a conflict between these 2 noble men and the kind because they are not doing their part of the job right. They are not agreeing to honour the contract by supplying the troop.

So that conflict is there as well and we have the conflict between the 2 men themselves as you pointed out that it is a metaphorical reflection. So these 2 men often have conflicts they

quarrel and then they stop the game, they go home abruptly and once after you know they get up in the next morning, they kind of make it up and then they start again. So this set of conflicts seem to kind of gather in force and at the end of the story it is a full blown fight, a physical fight right.

But if you want to just reduce it into a simple narrative projectory sort of conflict we have Mir and Mirza being thrown out of their home, out of Mirza's home that is the first conflict. So they lose that space Mirza's space is lost and then we have them playing in Mir's home and that space is lost again because they are thrown out through the (()) (27:05) of the wife again indirectly.

So the wife throws the husband and the friend again and then they come to the banks of the river Gomti right and then it is a conflict again between the two of them and they witness the real struggle happening the cloud of the dust that is kind of raised by the horses coming into the city and then there is a verbal conflict between the two at the end of the day, when they lose.

When one person is on the losing side he is interested in the politics when the other person is on the losing side he is interested in politics. So it is like a mood swing is not it, and then they finally lose their lives and the place again. So it is a very, very interesting narrative progression towards that psychological climax that you wanted to bring up right. So anything else you want to add to Arya.

I think that as she mentions the psychological, we have a clear mentioning, the narrative actually through the conflicts they build up the psyche of the two characters with one who again at one-point Mirza seems to be loyal to the Nawab. He says that when the company is trying to conquer the Nawab and their place, he is interested in that King, like the game of real politics.

Whereas Mir Sahib is preoccupied with his game this can be connected with the first reference where Mirza he tells his wife that he is the one who persuades me. So whether he tries there to console his wife or not, but at the end it proves to be somewhat true. The thing is we need to remember that these two men are hypocrites, absolute hypocrites, that is what the narrative kind of suggests I mean you know.

And especially the last conversation about when one person is winning the game he does not want to be distracted by information about the political downfall of the Nawab. So he says you know you worry about your King, you know, forget about the other king. We can think about it when the time is right, because this person does not want to be distracted from winning and towards the end of the story Mirza is constantly losing.

Apparently he lost 3 times consecutively and he is really upset and he is really angry and he tries to distract by talking about the imprisonment of the Nawab and how he has been taken prisoner by the company and things like that whereas Mir is not interested there, he wants to focus on the game and then from there it kind of you know spirals into conflict about chess etiquette.

He says you cannot just you know take such a long time to make a move and from the chess etiquette issue it becomes a quarrel about the each other's nobility ancestry and things like that. So the conflict arises literary from the chessboard for these 2 individuals who are apolitical, who are completely indifferent, totally indifferent to the political turmoil, the shift that is happening, the transfer of power that is happening.

And they kind of and this is what, can you read the last closing passages in the story because Premchand's narrative is extremely sarcastic and bitter, the last this extract, "Both the friends drew their swords from the hips, it was the age of chivalry, everyone was equipped with a sword or a dagger. Both friends were pressure loving, but no cowards. They had become devoid of political will, why should they die for kings or kingdoms, but they were not deficient in personal careers.

Both of them fought on and fatally wounded, died writhing in pain. They who could not spare a single drop of tear for their king died defending their (()) (30:55) on the chessboard. It was getting dark; the pieces still lay on the chessboard. It was as if both the kings sitting on their thrones were shedding tears at the death of these warriors. Silence reamed all around. The broken arches, the ruined walls and dust laden pillars of the mosque were watching these cops and cursing their fate".

Okay, very, very interesting closing statements especially the big extract where he talks about the age of chivalry is highly sarcastic, you know, and the idea of their bravery I mean if they were real I mean you know brave people, if they were really brave they would have gone on to the battlefield and they would have fought bravely, they would have organised some kind of army and kind of led the army and they do not do that interestingly they fight for the egos.

They fight for their personal ego, and the personal ancestry and that is what Premchand mocks and both of them fought on fatally wounded and they died writhing in pain and he says that they could not fight for the king by they defended their (()) (32:03) on the chessboard that is a very, very interesting thing to do is not it. So the political struggle has come down to a personal struggle.

And therein lies the tragedy because in your personal struggle, you forget your social struggle, you forget your cultural struggle, you forget your historical struggle, it becomes narrowed to a particular space, to a particular kind of lineage, personal lineage, right. Arya you were interested in the final statements right and the symbolic valance of that, you know silent rained all around the broken arches.

The empty spaces seemed to be kind of you know watching these corses and they are cursing their fate because there are no people alive to take care of all these monuments, all these treasures and all these you know institutions and buildings and society and families. So it is a massive tragedy and that tragedy according to Premchand in this particular story seems to be due to the personal lack of courage, the personal lack of will and faith to fight politically and socially.

So he seems to be kind of mocking that you know rejection of responsibility. It seems that Premchand gives a, it is very odd. It seems that he gives dignity to these protagonists in death which she had denied from the beginning. He had built their characters as pleasure loving, as not doing any work, just shirking off their responsibilities, not being aware of their surroundings, being apolitical all this.

But there is a sense of dignity, there is something about them which changes in the mind of the reader, is what I felt. At the end the reader from actually feel sorry for them that is what I feel. Yeah, it is a tragic fate, you know the obsession with the game that kind of life in a

fantasy world of chess this everyday chess playing has somehow restructured the psyche in such a way that they have become cutoff from all the social political narrative trajectories.

And they perhaps are really no courageous men on their own but they kind of shift or change their direction in such an extent that it becomes almost like a (()) (34:36) kind of thing, you do not know what you are fighting against and your fight seems to be in vain. It is an empty battle that you fight. It is an empty death that you die. It could have been a courageous fight but ultimately for what? What is the you know, productive aspect of that kind of death.

It seems to be useless death, that is what the archers in the mosques and everything seems to feel sorry about. So it is a valor but it seems to be a pointless valor somehow and which is what kind of annoys this third person narrator who is very, very bitter and sarcastic about these 2 figures and I really also agree with the critic that you mentioned about this being exaggeration.

It is an exaggerated society that we have on this particular short fiction. Another speculation, I might be way off the track but till now whatever they have done it's only on the chessboard and in real life it never had any consequence, their actions did not have any consequence. So when they took their swords off in a very impressive sort of way, I think that they still where in the which you said in a virtual world where they cut off from reality.

I think that they still did not think of the consequence it might have. I do not think they would have been ready to fight if they knew at the end of that battle they would lose their lives. This one, I am not very sure if it is Mirza or Mir, but he says who would want to go to the battlefield and die an untimely death, yes, yes, that would have been a death with dignity, but this one was a very impulsive, as you said a very pointless sort of battle.

So this action and consequence is what. I mean they kind of represent the state of or the psyche of Lucknow at that point of time and if you remember the narrator says that even a beggar in Lucknow would prefer opium to bread that is the state of Lucknow, that is the psyche of Lucknow at that point of time, it is an exaggerated representation alright, but that is what Lucknow is in the perspective of Premchand at this point of time which is why this action seems to kind of match.

And interesting sometimes we cannot make out who said these lines because they are all mirror images of one another, Mir Roshan Ali and Mirza they are interchangeable because the attitudes are all the same and they do not have individual identity to speak, very very basic differences are there you know, the difference of names, the difference of their wife's that they have and the different ways that they are manipulative.

But almost all the characters in the story are weak, passive, manipulative, tricky. We do not have a healthy picture here at all, from the messenger to the servants, to the wives, the social order is crumbling and that is the stage according to Premchand in this particular story at 1856 when The King of Awadh was taken away as prisoner by the English East India company.

Mam, from the end can we also make out that like these people were totally isolated from the real world and everybody was so, because people were drowned having opium and all so we have only inanimate things like sword, dagger and monuments to mourn their death, very good, yes, no real person is there to mourn their death. So this also can be a critic on that, yes, yes, absolutely because the city was sleeping and it is not a healthy rest.

It is not a kind of commendable, admirable rest, they all kind of sluggish that is the interpretation that we need to take away, so there were kind of unconscious or kind of drowned in their opium induced sleep when the king has been taken away. So what is left only these broken arches and decrepit mosques to kind of mourn over the loss of a particular way of life itself.

And if you notice these characters are increasingly becoming literally isolated from Mirza's home, from Mir's home where he is surrounded by all the servants and the wives and everybody, they have gone to these margins to an isolated bank, so they are kind of literally lost the connection with the society and final stage is the death that they bring upon themselves.

So you very quickly mentioned that the death of the soldiers with the death of that way of life and I think it is very true because as the East India Company was coming in and the king has been dethroned, so again there will be people who start, who will be starting to work actual

work after this. So the death of these soldiers do depict the death of the way of life of Lucknow till then.

And there is also a kind of a migration from the city according to this particular story from the city to the countryside so there is an evacuation sort of atmosphere is created in this particular short narrative, but Premchand that is again very interesting kind of literary leave the space behind the space which you have kind of occupied for generations and you quit it and the responsibility seems to be you know within you, you know, your passivity, your inaction seems to have brought it on yourself.

It is a very simplistic kind of formula that Premchand is playing here and you are the ones who are responsible without considering the kind of interventions of the East India Company, the complications of this political game. This game is highly complicated, the game that the British East India Company plays with the local rulers in order to rest power it is way too complicated.

But in this story it is kind of reduced to a very simple formula where just because you have been irresponsible, just because you have been addicted to pleasure your life has been taken away, you have lost your lives and there was nobody to blame, but yourself. So let us kind of wrap up this conversation here and thank you Arya, thank you Gayathri for a very stimulating conversation. Thank you for watching we will continue in the next session.