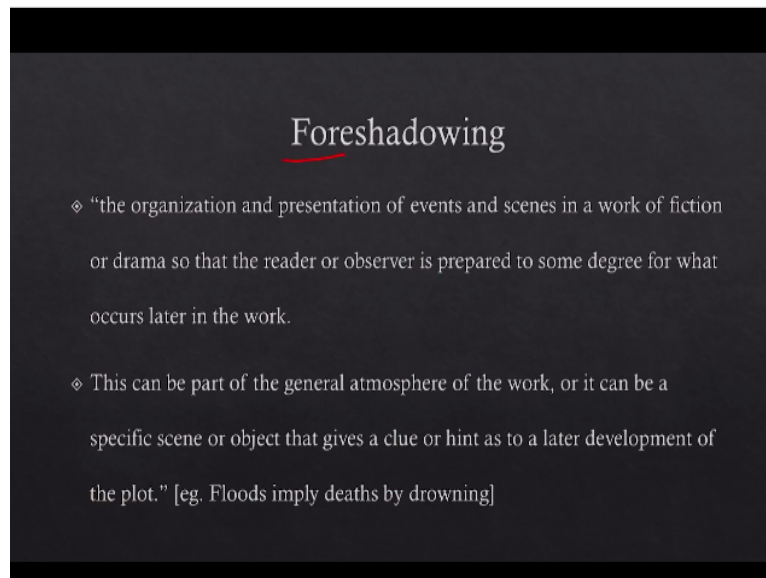


**Short Fiction in Indian Literature**  
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**Lecture-1C**  
**Narrative Patterns in "In the Flood"**

Hello and welcome back today we can talk more about narrative techniques in Sivasankara Pillai is in the flood.

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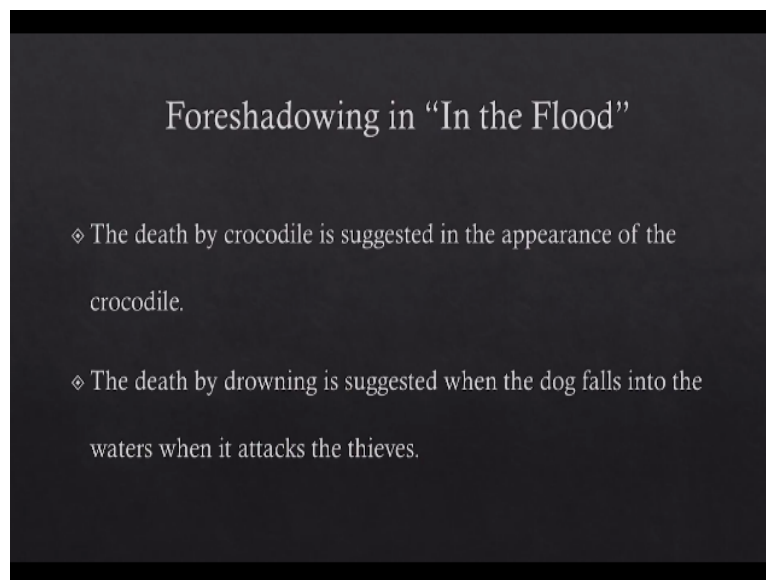


So in the previous session we talked about personification and anthropomorphism and today we are going to talk about foreshadowing. The word itself contains a clue as to what it means, fore mean something that will happen at some point in the future and shadowing means reflections of foreshadow sort of means that things are going to happen later is hinted at the previous point in time.

So the dictionary definition of foreshadowing is this, the organisation and presentation of events in scenes in the work of fiction or drama so that the reader observer is prepared to some degree for what occurs later in the work. So the narrative itself prepares the reader or the observer as to what they can expect later in the story. So foreshadowing can be part of the general atmosphere of the work, it can provide the ambience or it can be a specific scene or object that gives a clue or hind actual later development in the plot.

So it could be as I said a general tone in the narrative that would suggest as to what is going to happen later or it could be a specific seen an object in the narrative which will hint about the things that are going to happen later for the central characters of the flood, for example flood implies that is by drawing and George Eliot Million is a classic example in the case of foreshadowing.

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Now in the context of our story for this week in the floods what are all the examples of foreshadowing in the story. Firstly and the most obvious one is death by crocodile and it is suggested in the appearance of this creature at the very initial stages of the flood and that by drawn is also suggested when the dog falls into the waters when did attacks the thieves. So if you remember the incident there is a big battle between the dog and the thieves.

And when the dog attacks or bite one of the thief it falls into the water and that suggest or there foreshadowing in the narrative there as to what is going to happen later for the dog and we know since the better story we know that the dog falls into the water and tries to eat from the carcass and its round and is eaten by crocodile. This another example of foreshadowing in the story.

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## Foreshadowing

- ◊ The snake's entry into the hut foreshadows the appearance of the thieves who rob Chennan's dog.
- ◊ The floating of the carcass again foreshadows a grim ending for the dog.

And it happens when a snake enters the hut of Chennan, so the snake's entry into the hut foreshadows the appearance of the thieves who rob Chennan's dog. So the snake sort of hints at these intruders who were going to rob the property of Chennan and again the floating of the carcass is also foreshadowing of the grim ending for the dog. The dog itself will become one of the carcasses that will float on the flood waters nearby Chennan's hut.

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## Motif

- ◊ A motif is a symbolic image or idea that appears frequently in a story.
- ◊ Motifs can be symbols, sounds, actions, ideas, or words.

Now let us look at other aspects of narrative techniques that are employed in Sivasankara Pillai's story and I want to talk about Motif, motif is nothing but a symbolic major idea that appears frequently in the story. So it is a set of recurrent patterns if it could be a recurrent image or a recurrent idea or recurrent symbol and motif can be symbols, sounds, actions, ideas or even words themselves.

The cry of the dog the repetitive cry of the dog which resemble the human cry can also be a motif and the idea of being rescued or not rescued which is also repeat in the story is also a very interesting motif, now let us get some functions of a motif, motif according to critics strengthen a story by adding images and ideas to the same crescent throughout the narrative.

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**Motif**


- ◊ Motifs strengthen a story by adding images and ideas to the theme present throughout the narrative.
- ◊ “An idea that recurs in or pervades a work of art or literature”.

So the centre concerns of the story are strengthened by the motif or patterns these narrative patterns. So we can ultimately define a motive is an idea that requires an awkward or the kind of institutes of you the entire work of art of literature.

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**Motif: The Boat**

- ◊ Appears four times.
- ◊ First to rescue Chennan and his family.
- ◊ Three times after that to deny retrieval to his dog.



Now a very classic example of motif is the boat, the boat appears sever times in fact 3 times in the context of Chennan and his dog all together. So it occurs the first time to rescue Chennan and his family and 3 times after that to deny rescued to his dog. So this recurrent

appearance of the boat is very very interesting and significance in terms of the large automatic on ideology of the story. Now what is the boat stand for, it easily stands for wealth.

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Motif: The Boat

- ◆ The Boat stands for wealth, safety and life.
- ◆ The Boat in the case of Chennan's dog's case stands for denial of security and consequently death.



Because only the wealthy process a boat in the story in an industry in the flat and it also symbolises safety purpose only if there is a boat during flooding, you will be saved and the implications that the boat stands for survival ultimately. So the boat in the case of Chennan's dog case and not for survival but denial of security and consequently the boat comes to symbolise death itself.

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Symbol

- ◆ "An object or element incorporated into a narrative to represent another concept or concern.
- ◆ Symbols typically recur throughout a narrative and offer critical... information about events, characters, and the author's primary concerns in telling the story."

Because it refuses life, the boat is there on the same but it refuses you know stuck to the dog now symbol, symbol is nothing very different from a motif but we let take symbols distinctly and talk about it and understand by the different symbols in the story very specifically. So a


symbol is an object or element incorporated into a narrative included in the narrative to represent another concept or concern.

So one thing stands for another thing that in short essay definition of a symbol. Symbol typically recur or happen throughout a narrative in of critical information about events characters and the authors primary concerns and telling the story. So the symbols kind of give you a hint about why certain things are included in the story and what could be the larger consequences for the inclusion of certain elements of an object or certain scenes in the story.

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Symbol

- ◆ Frog
- ◆ Insults the existence of the dog.
- ◆ Parallels the behaviour of the thief who attacks the dog.



The very first example that occurs to me as the frog we can see the frog itself as a key symbol in the story and what is the frog do, if you remember the story the frog frightened by the movements of the dog that's left alone on the rooftop jumps into the water into the flood water that is before that can you donate on the face of the dog. So it is so kind of an insult that it offers to the existence of the dog.

And it parallels the behaviour of the thief who attack who it at the dog. So if you remember the story the thieves come to rob Chennan's property and when the dog protect the home by attacking the thief and the thieves intern retaliate by violently beating the dog. So it is insult, that insult aspect to the violence that the thieves offer Chennan's dog and now again the crocodile is also very crucial symbol in the story.

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## Symbols

### ◊ Crocodile

- ◊ The insidious nature of the crocodile that gently brushes past the dog at the beginning of the story is hidden in its apparent stealth, silence, and its unobtrusive manner of moving about in the waters.



It stands for something very very interesting in the in the larger canvas of this story world the insidious nature of the crocodile the gently brushes past the dog at the beginning of the story is hidden in an apparel stealth, silence and its and extrusive manner of moving about in the water. So the crocodile on a very obvious level is a very very gently pass the dog in the beginning and it is very stealth, is very silent and it is very unobtrusive.

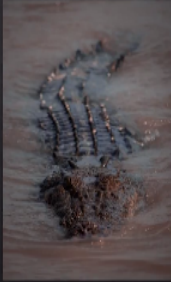
It is not very interfering in a very obvious manner. So up but this is not the real story in terms of the crocodile, the crocodile is a terribly dangerous creature and the dog knows that which is why it starts to wine and back when it notices the crocodile floating past, but the crocodile could also stand for they known benign nature of human being. Human beings can appear in a very very benign manner.

But hidden underneath that apparent benign of benevolent appearance could be something that is very brutal or violent. So the crocodile stands for that apparently in exterior of people that I said the man who arrived in boat within view of the dog but do nothing are akin to the crocodile .

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## Symbol

- ◊ The men who arrive in boats within view of the dog but do nothing are akin to the crocodile.
- ◊ Resembles the threat that human beings pose while appearing benign to the vulnerable and weak.




So there is a parallel there between the behaviour of the man who arrived on the same but they do not actually do something and they also resemble the crocodile also resembles death threat that human beings pose while appearing benign to the vulnerable and weak. So appearances are deceptive. So that is the larger meaning hidden in the symbolic value of the crocodile.

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## Symbol

- ◊ Dog
- ◊ Love, Loyalty, steadfastness
- ◊ Stand-in for the figure of Chennan




Now let us look at the dog Chennan's dog is also a really significant symbol in the story many of us know that dog stand for loyalty, steadfastness, love, and courage, but the orbit in the mountains of the story the dog is also a standard for the figure of Chennan. So that dog can also symbolise this person the prior from the lowest of the love the dog here fights to protect the home for Chennan would have fought to protect his home.

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Symbol

- ◊ It fights to protect the home for Chennan.
- ◊ Chennan would have fought to protect his home.




So there is a parallel again between the master and the master's dog. So the dog fate represents the fate of possibility for Chennan and if he had not been rescued by his neighbours.

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Symbol

- ◊ The dog's fate represents the fatal possibility for Chennan if he had not been rescued by his neighbours.



So Chennan has been lucky but what if he had not been rescued is the story that the dog suffers in the rest of the narrative. Now let us give a little bit of close reading to draw a certain significant implications for the purpose and the function of the dog in the story.

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## Close reading

◇ Many of the locals had fled their homes, and made their way to dry land. If the family owned a boat, one of them would remain behind to guard their house and their possessions.

So this is the passage that I am really interested in, in terms of doing a close reading for you, it may read the small passage there many of the locals had fled their homes and made their way to dry land. If the family owned boat one of them would remain behind to guard the house and their profession. So even if a family had own the boat not own of them would have left the home behind and fleet the safety.

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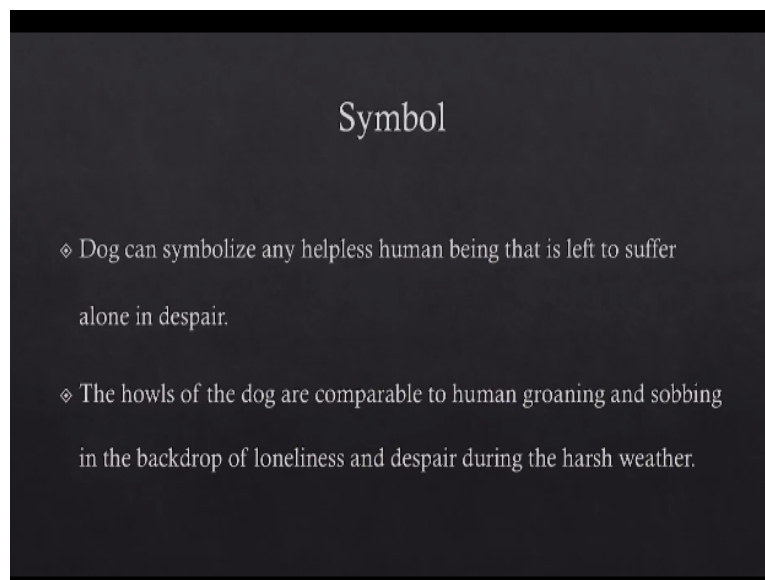
## Close reading

◇ Many of the locals had fled their homes, and made their way to dry land. If the family owned a boat, one of them would remain behind to guard their house and their possessions.

Here it says that one of them would stay behind to guard the house and their possessions from robbers. So let us ask certain questions to this very interesting set of ideas hear. So the questions that arise to me are did Chennan master leave his servant in this family to cut his processions. So that or possessions that were talking about in terms of Chennan suggested by banana trees and its eric are those Chennan or are those the property of his master that Chennan is guarding.

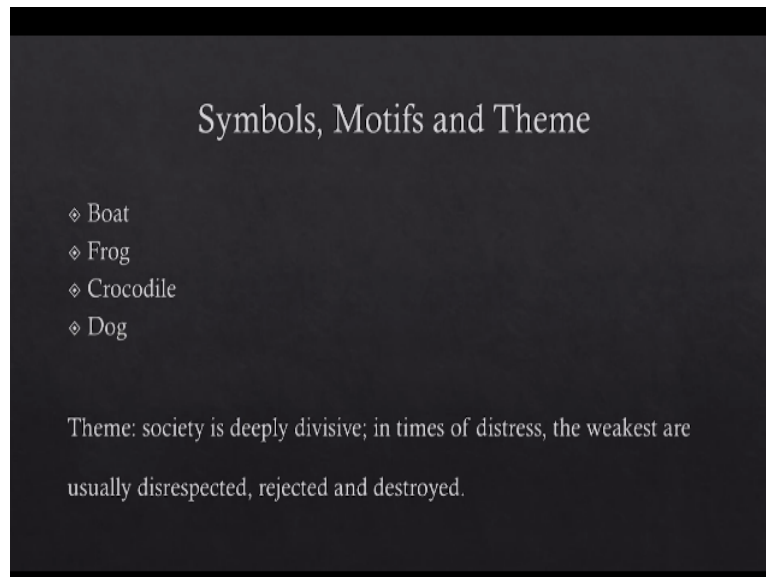
So that is one question that comes to my mind, the other question is did Chennan leave his dog deliberately to protect the possessions that he is leaving behind. So these are the questions that come up but we do not know the answers to these questions because the narrator is not very very transparent about all these ideas that are in the choice of Chennan or his master's mind.

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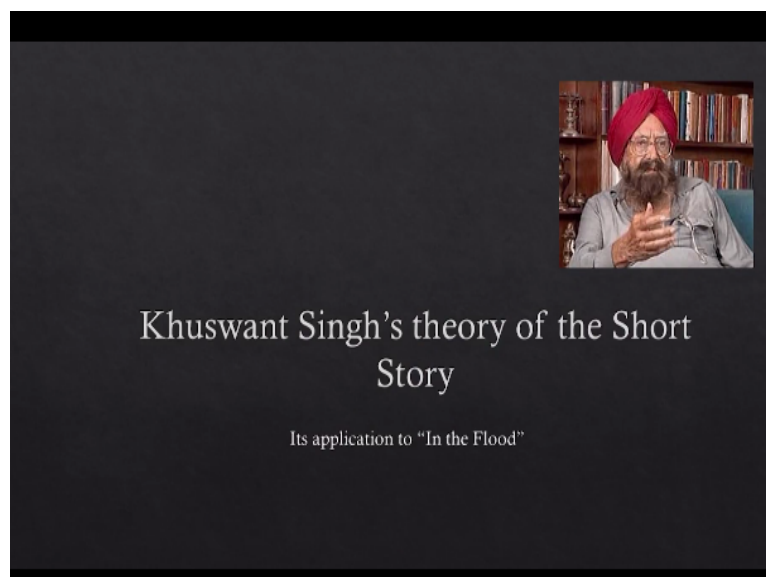
Now dog can symbolize any human being and in the case of this particular story the dog represents anybody who is helpless and who is left to suffer alone in despair. The howls of the dog are comparable to human groaning and sobbing in the backdrop of loneliness and despair during the harsh weather. So the dog Chennan's dog is a representative for the entire section of people who are left behind by the powerful to you know enough despair in isolation and without any kind of help that would rescue them from their critical situation.

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Now let us collect all the symbols, motifs and see what the thematic implications are. So we had a look at what they boat stands for the frog and the crocodile and the dog. So ultimately my interpretation will be that our society is deeply division and in terms of distress the weakest are usually disrespected rejected and destroyed and those same to be the messages that are oven or through all this narrative techniques that Sivasankara Pillai employees in the flood.

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Now in this thought of my I would like to employ Khuswant Singh ideas about the short story the plot of the story of in the flood and see the implications there.

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## Khuswant Singh on the Short Story

A short story must be built around one incident or a series of incidents illustrating one theme or portraying one character or the equation between that one character and others.

Now what is Khuswant Singh say about the short story for him great short story must be built around one incident or a series of incidence illustrating one theme that is the session Khuswant Singh or is a portraying one character or the equation between that one character and other characters around him or her. So unity is the general theme of this particular point made by Khuswant Singh on what a great short story should look like in the flood.

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## Single Theme

- ◆ "In the Flood" sticks to this logic.
- ◆ Captures the circumstances of Chennan, initially, and his dog's dire situation during a massive flood.

So this logic in my understanding it captures the circumstances of Chennan initially and his dogs dire situation during a massive flood. So there is a specific number of characters and they are united by this larger incident of flooding.

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## “In the Flood”

- ◇ The “equation” between Chennan’s dog and the others reveals the nature of society in the story.
- ◇ Non-benign nature of life is made evident.

The equation between Chennai and stock and the others reveals the nature of society in the story. So that is the implication of weaving a story around 1 or 2 characters who are affected by a particular set of events and through such a weaving of a narrative the non benign nature of the malevolent nature of light is made evident or apparent in the context of this particular story.

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## Khuswant Singh

A short story can be as fantastic and its characters and situations as fanciful as the writer cares to make them—provided they have the ring of truth and a “message” to convey.

The second point the Khuswant Singh makes it is this a short story can be as fantastic and its characters and situations as fanciful as the writer case to make them provided they have the ring of truth and a message to convey. So the characters and situations can be fanciful they can be always known realistic they can be fantastic over but they should have the ring of truth and a message for the readers to take away from that particular story.

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## “In the Flood”

- ◇ Ring of truth
- ◇ “In the background of the great flood, Thakazi portrayed not only the tragic elements of a dog, but also the tragedy made by the flood of 1924 ...in Kuttanad.”

So let us see what happens in the case of in the flood, in the flood definitely has a ring of truth, the backdrops the story is the monsoon and the heavy rains in the flooding that is quite recurrent in the context of the region of Kerala and some product say that in the background of the great flood Thakazi Sivasankara Pillai portrayed not only that project elements of a dog but also the tragedy made by the flood of 1924 in Kuttanad.

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## “In the Flood”

- ◇ The tragedy of the dog during such floods is very possible.
- ◇ The message: the tragedy strikes the weak, the outcast, the different.
- ◇ For some it is difficult to sympathize with the dog because it is so very different to them.


So according to these exam the Siva shankara Pillai kind of captured the tone, the mood and ambience created by the great flood of 1924 and the state of Kerala especially in Kuttanad. So we know that tragedy of a dog is quite possible during such slot so there is definitely a realistic perspective to the story. So what is the message then, the message clearly seems to be that tragedy strikes the weak, the outcast and the different.

We need to remember that the dog is the other someone who is known human in a very very little manner of course we should realise that the writer is using the dog more as a symbol for the outcast the weak and the different rather than more specifically as a different species perfect, so this decides this idea of the dog being the other is something that many could not sympathize with it. So it is difficult for people to sympathize with the dog because it is very very different to them.

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Khuswant Singh

A short story must have, like a scorpion's sting in its tail, a curlicue which sums up the story.



So we need to keep that in mind, the last point that Khuswant Singh suggest is that a grade short story should have a must have like a Scorpion sting in its tail a curlicue which sums of the story curlicue is nothing but a curl or twist which bite some of the story in a automatic fashion or in an ideological way. Now let us look at the twist in the flood.

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Ending: "In the Flood"

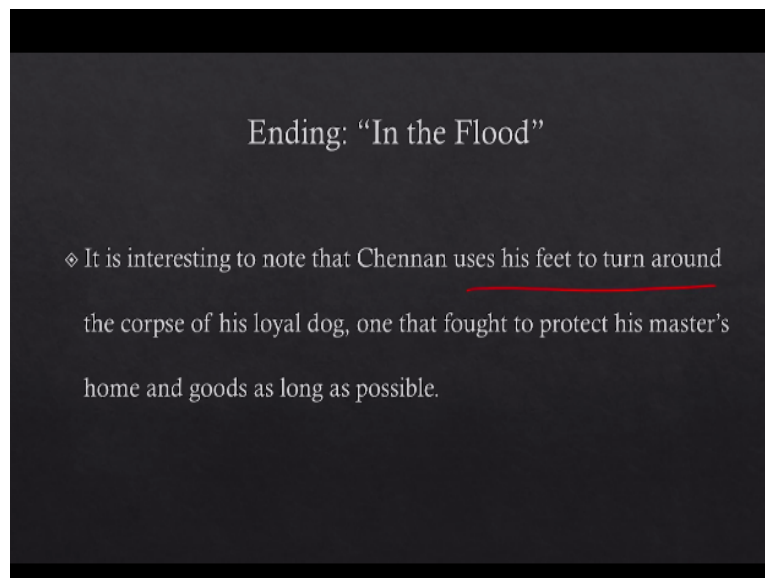
◆ One day, Chennan swam across to the spot where his hut had once stood, looking for his dog. Under one of the coconut trees, he saw the corpse of a dog, gently rocking in the eddies of the shallow water. Chennan turned it over with his foot to check if it was his dog, he thought it might be. One of the animal's ears was missing. You couldn't even tell what colour the dog was, for its skin had rotted and sloughed away.



So let us see what is that ending like in in the flood this is the last section of the story. One day Chennan swam across to the spit where his hut had once stood, looking for his dog. Under one of the coconut trees, he saw the corpse of a dog gently rocking in the eddies of the shallow water. Chennan turned it over with his foot to check if it was his dog, he thought it might be one of the animal's ears was missing.

You could not even tell what colour the dog was, for its skin had rotted and sloughed away. So this is the closing section of the story and if there is a twist we might look for other twist here, my interpretation of this passage is that or my the thing that struck me when I read this passage is that Chennan uses his feet to turn around the corpse of his royal dog.

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One that for to protect his master's home can its home and good as long as it was possible for the dog to deserve. So for me the charging aspect is the usage of his food to turn over the corpse of his dead dog. Of course he might say that you know getting anywhere and you would not rather and you would not use your hands to touch something. So apparently gross but then we need think about the largest story that we have read and the nearest thought process of the emotions of the dries circumstances that the dog has suffered.

So we have all those narratives in front of eyes, so having those ideas in mind if we compare out of station to Chennan action there is a slight element of contradiction the in terms of the way Chennan relates to the dog. So for me perhaps this is why this thing rafting in Mangalore is in the fact that the royal dog died tragically.

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## Ending: "In the Flood"

◆ Perhaps this is where the sting is.

◆ Or, is the sting in the fact that the loyal dog died tragically?

So these are some of the questions that we can laminate upon and seek answers to speculate on these questions and find answers in keeping in mind the larger context of the story that Sivasankara Pillai has given to us, the other way is to think to keep in mind is the nature of omissions.

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## Omissions

◆ "tactical omissions...suggest and imply meaning rather than stating it directly"

--Henry James

there are omissions in the short story short story is does not give you a elaborate thing, it does give you glimpse into human beings life. So it is just being we do not have entire you know entire range of emotions that got process in a short story unlike the case of the no other. So what Henry James have to say tactical omissions he says that tactical omissions suggest and imply meaning rather than stating it directly.

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## Omissions

- ◊ We do not know the thoughts of Chennan on having left his dog in a marooned hut.
- ◊ We do not know the thoughts of Chennan on having lost his dog to the floods.

So there are only implications rather than direct statement in short stories, so we do not know the thoughts of Chennan on having left his dog in a marooned hut. The narrator does not give us a view of Chennan. So the kind of heat the blank wall when we want to find out what Chennan thinks about having lost his dog behind and you also do not know the thoughts of Chennan on having lost his dog to the floods.

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## Ending: "In the Flood"

- ◊ One day, Chennan swam across to the spot where his hut had once stood, looking for his dog. Under one of the coconut trees, he saw the corpse of a dog, gently rocking in the eddies of the shallow water. Chennan turned it over with his foot to check if it was his dog, he thought it might be. One of the animal's ears was missing. You couldn't even tell what colour the dog was, for its skin had rotted and sloughed away.

So we look at the passage there, there is nowhere mention what Chennan actually think in terms of the lost the only refers to thought is here. Chennan turn it over with his foot to check if it was his dog, and he thought it might be it could be his own dog, apart from this there is no suggestions in in the suggestion to tell us that Chennan is feeling the pain of having lost his dog.

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## The Sting at the End

- ◆ Yet, the usage of his foot to turn over the corpse is a jarring gesture in the context of the gentle movements of its body in the shallow waters.
- ◆ It continues to be an insignificant creature till its end.

So as I said the usage of his foot to turn over the corpse is a jarring gesture in the context to the gentle movements of his body in the shallow waters, in this is a very interesting conference brought out by the right here. Here we have to dog that is been gently dropped by the shallow waters and here he we have a human being turning over the corps using his foot. So there is a contrast there between nature mother nature and a human being who has a set of hierarchical ideas in his mind.

And who uses his foot to look at his dad royal dog, so the implication is that the dog continues to be an insignificant creature till the end, so this is something that we need to keep in mind, thank you for watching I will catch up with you in the next session.