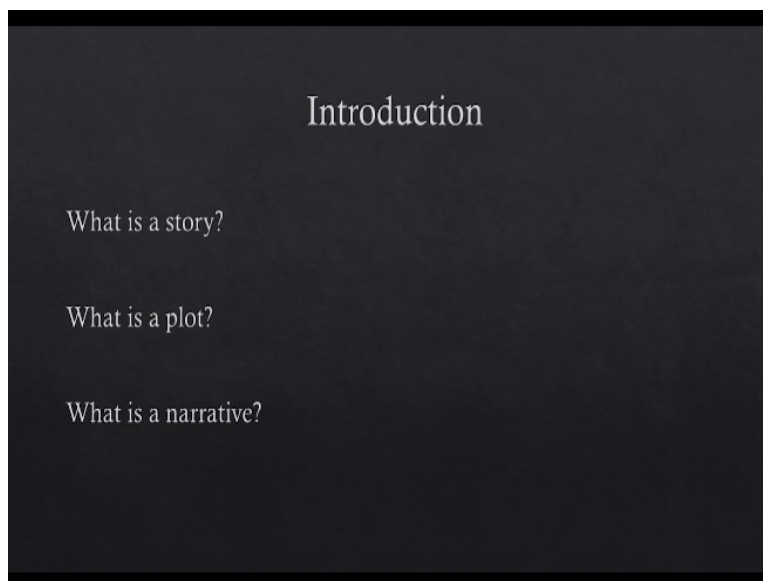


**Short Fiction in Indian Literature**  
**Prof. A. Divya**  
**Department of Humanities & Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology-Madras**

**Lecture-1D**  
**View and Setting in "In the Flood"**

Hello and welcome to this lecture on narrative point of view in in the flood. Now I would like to recall a couple of aspects of the narrator before we move on to this narrator point of view which are what is the story what is the plot and more importantly what is a narrative.

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If we recall the previous session we know that story is a set of events and if we recall the previous session about the plot we know that it is a sequence of connected events, there is causations and their sequencing in the events. How we have not gets looked at what exactly is a narrative. Now if we apply this concept story in plot 2 in the flood we will know that in terms of the story a dog dies in the flood.

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## Story and Plot of “In the Flood”

- ◇ A dog dies in a flood.
- ◇ A dog dies in a flood because human beings refuse to rescue it.

And in terms of a plot a dog dies in a flood because human beings refuse to save him. So this is the story and this is the plot of in the flood. Now what exactly is a narrative, a narrative includes not just the sequence of events and the cause and effect relationship.

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## Narrative

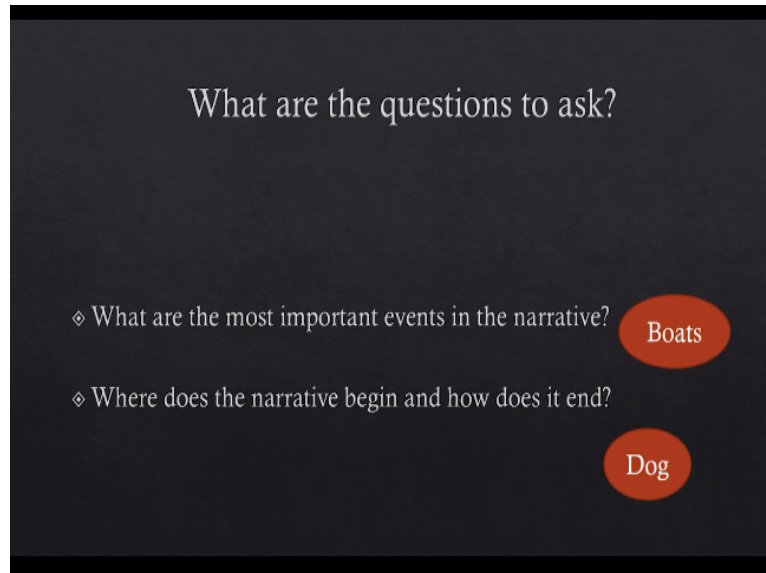


- ◇ “A narrative... includes not just the sequence of events and their cause and effect relationships, but also *all* of the decisions and techniques that impact how a story is told.
- ◇ A narrative is *how* a given sequence of events is recounted.”

But all of the decisions and technique that impact how a story is thought it is not only about a set of events, it is not only about a set of connected events with causations employed it is about all the techniques, all the strategies are the strategic effects that write a invoice to weave a narrative and impact that narrative has on the reader and narrative is have a given sequence of events is recounted is vetoed is described to the reader.

It is almost like a (( )) (02:04) that is oven by the weaver right. Now we need to ask the set of questions about a particular narrative, so these are some of the most important questions that everyday can ask.

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Such as what are the most important events in the narrative, if we are this question to the story that we read for this week in the flood one answer could be the both the boats, the appearance of the boats are some of the important events in the narrative, it is kind of drinks in anticipation and it brings an disappointment for the central character of the dog. You can also ask this question how exactly does this narrative begin.

And how does it end , if we remember the story we know that the story begins with Chennan the prior but it ends with Chennan as well but within that span of time of narrative we have the dog's story as the central story 2. So we need to keep in mind who are all the characters that figure and what are the kind of stories that oven with these characters as the centre piece.

So the narrative begins with Chennan then it move want to the story of his dog and then it brings Chennan back into the picture. So we need to keep all these narrative strands in mind yeah the questions that you can ask or the events in the narrative in the order they occur.

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What are the questions to ask?

◆ Are the events in the narrative in the order they occurred, or are flashbacks or other techniques used to present the events in another order?

So it is a linear sequence of events or are the flashback of the taking employed by the writer to present the event in the story. So is it logical or other flashbacks involved other parallel narrative in the stories. So these are things that we need to keep in mind. So if we apply these set of ideas in just a position to the story the period for this week and answers are pretty interesting.

So we have the narrative of Chennan beginning and almost ending with his escape and then other narrative picks up the dogs life and it runs with that and ones that is over Chennan's narrative again picked up and life seems to go on with the floods receding and the people coming back onto as I say it is like a tapestry that is been over and need had done. Now I would like to give you an example in terms of the order of events that I talked about just now.

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In the Flood

◆ "Its master was probably eating his dinner. He was probably rolling a ball of rice for the dog between his fingers, as was his practice at the end of a meal."

Past

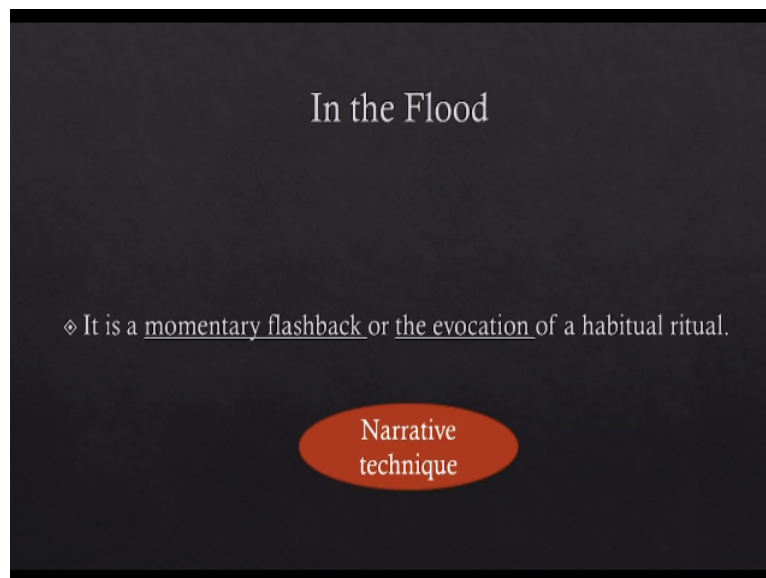
Possible  
Present

So I asked is the sequencing logical linear or the flashbacks, so let us look at a particular example in in the flood. So this is the quotation on that I am interested in it goes like this, it is master was probably eating his dinner, he was probably rolling a bowl of rice for the dog between his fingers as was his practice at the end of a meal. So these lines are from the narrator and he kind of describes what Chennan would probably be doing right now when his dog is caught in the flood waters.

So Chennan would probably would have kept upbeat of his share of the food for the dogs at this point of the day. So it is very interesting to see the habitual activity of Chennan being brought in at this particular moment when the dog is all alone isolated trapped on a roof and surrounded by flood waters. So this is not exactly a flashback but it is kind of revocation of a ritual habit to practice of Chennan.

And it kind of as to the intensity of the desperation in which the dog is caught in so the past and the possible present our kind of conflated in this particular moment and it kind of a is a nice narrative technique that the writer weaves in I said this seen could be seen as a momentary flashback to the practices of the family at a particular moment in the day especially during nightfall.

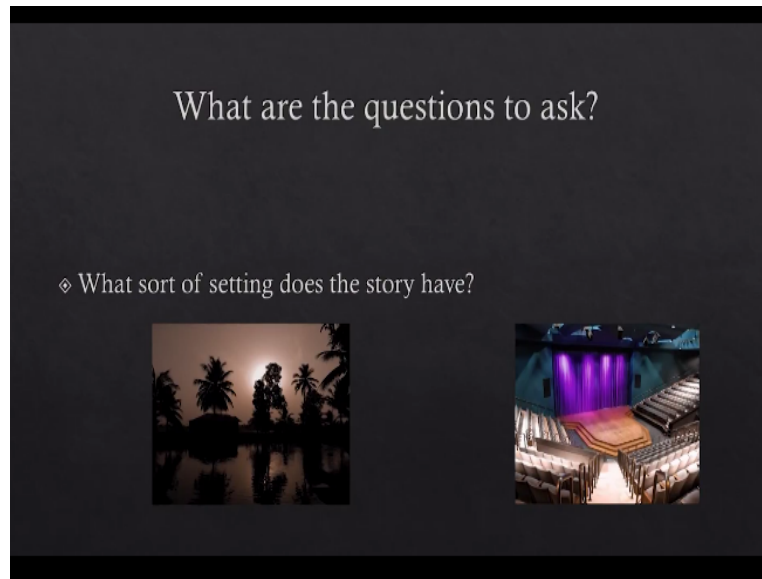
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When the dog is given his share or it share of the meal from the master of the house which is Chennan it is a very interesting narrative technique because it is neither a proper flashback nor kind of a scene from Chennan's actual present because Chennan is no longer on the same

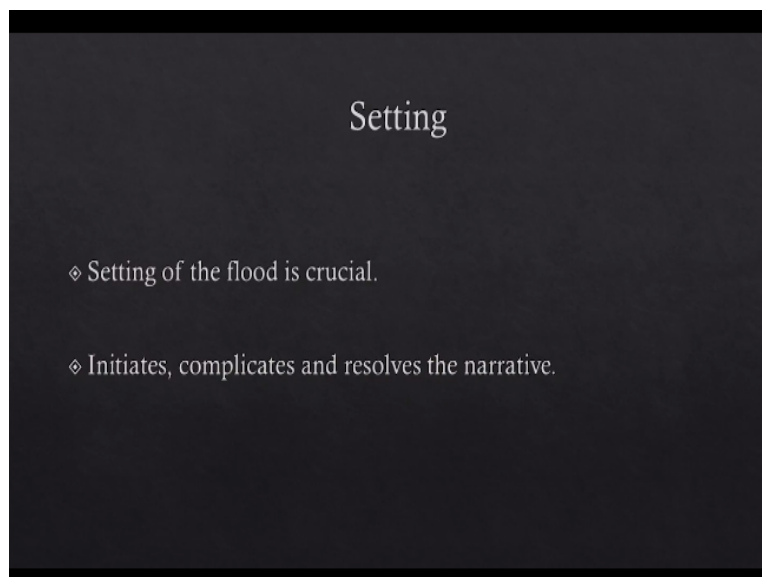
once he disappeared with the family on a boat and escapes to dry land. The other questions that we can ask is for a narrative are what exactly is this setting.

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And how does this setting affect the way that the narrative is structured and in this you can also compare the setting to a stage in theatre in a performance space its very very important aspect in any story and in in the flood the flood itself is a canvas **or** a backdrop it more than a backdrop in fact because it plays a very very major role in how the narrative is kind of structured as I said the setting of the flood in in the flood is crucial.

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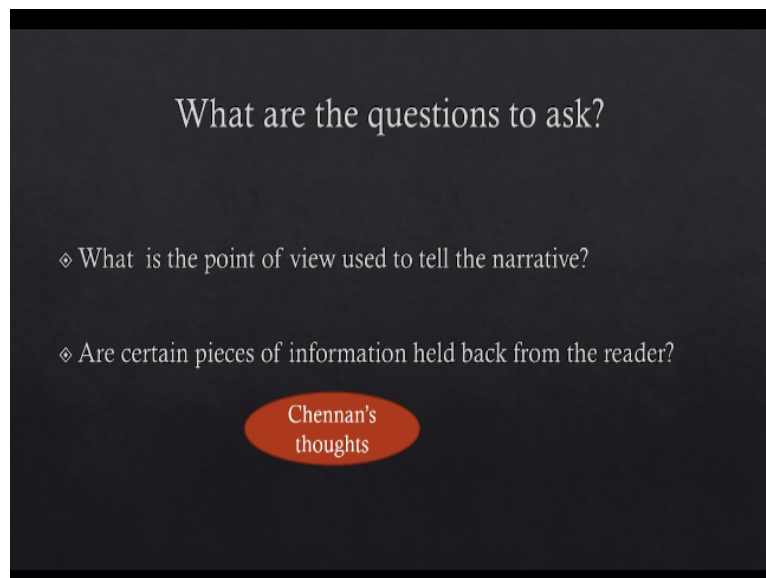
And it is access the flood is one significant character a dominant character in this particular story because it initiate the action, if you remember the beginning of the flood makes the story happened because everybody is and they want to escape that situations is the narrative

ball set rolling with this scene of a floating and it also complicates the flood as I said because it creates a crisis from which the character have to escape to continue sustaining the life.

And to continue sustaining the narrative itself. So there is a close connection between narrative life and the life of the characters who are trapped in a critical situation which is the flood here and again very interesting the setting itself sort of reserves the narrative in a very tragic manner but it does resolve it . If you remember the story to go back to the stories we can recall that the dog in order to sustain its like life just foolish thing or grabbing on a carcass it is foolish but just like perhaps it has no the choice.

So it grabs on to this carcass but there is instability in that moment and it goes into the water along with the carcass and its life and tragically and that in itself is a certified solution in narrative resolution to the dog that has been dropped off with nobody to rescue it from that particular point in the narrative. So the flood as the setting is very very important something that we need to bear in mind.

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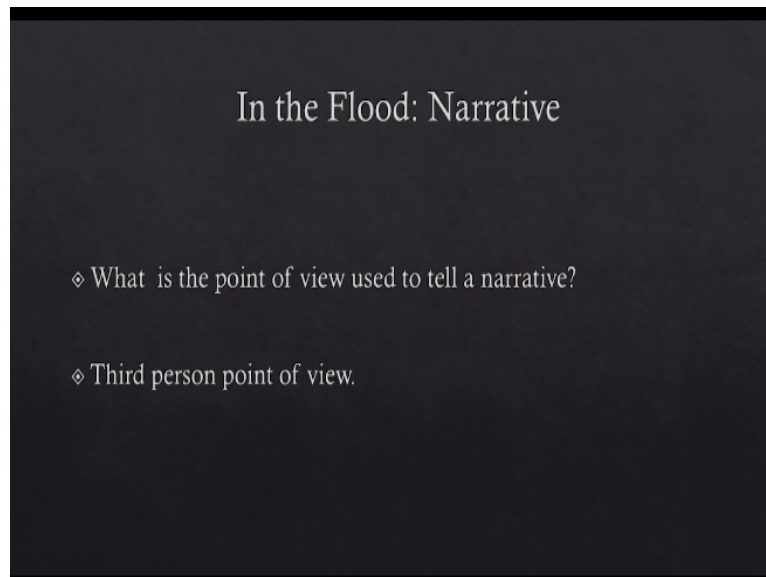


The other questions that we can ask of this narrative are what is the point of view used to tell the narrative and are some pieces information held back from the reader. I will give the second questions and then I will go back to the first point. The answer to the second question is yes 7 pieces of information are held back from the reader in the case of in the flood for instance we do not know Chennan's starts once he comes back into the story at the final stages.



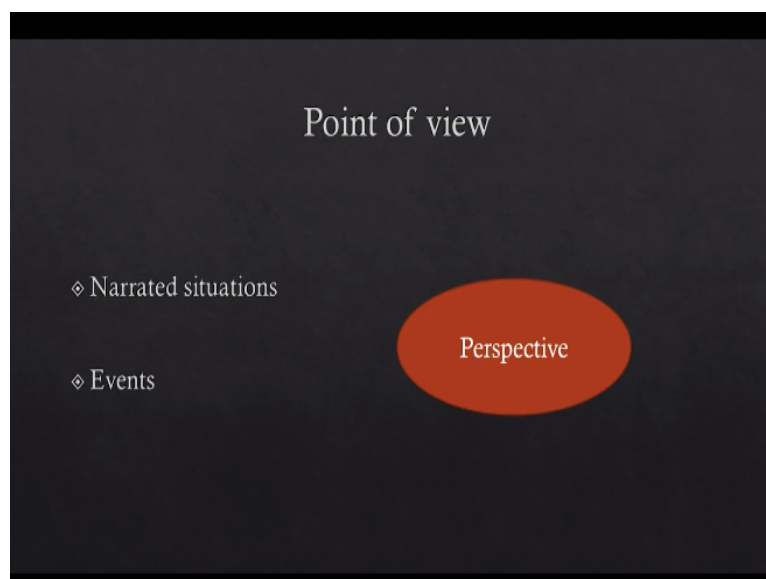
One he comes back we do not know what exactly he thinks about the loss of his dog's life, we can contrast this suppression of information to the earlier moment in the story when we know what Chennan has been thinking in terms of his entrapment, in terms of his family entrapment in the flood. So the narrator chooses not to reveal certain pieces of Chennan's emotional projector at the end of the story for reasons of his or her own.

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Now let us go back to the earlier question of what exactly is the point of view used to tell a narrative in the case of Pillai is in the flood, in the case history it is the third person point of view and it is very interesting choice and the right place around with this particular mode of narrating the story which has interesting and significant implications as to how we understand and respond to the story.

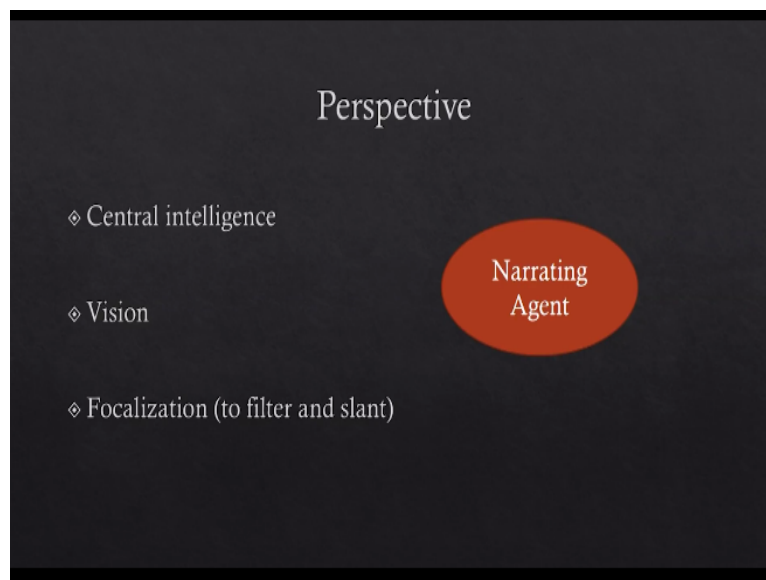
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Now a point of view is more or less the prospective through which we kind of get the story from the narrator. So it is a particular perspective through which situations and events are narrated described given to the reader and we can call this narrator as a generating agent as well as somebody who has the central intelligence central information about the things that happened in the story well.

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So this narrating agents which is what we have or what we get as we read this story on the page and we can call this as the focalization the focal point through which information is filtered and offered to the reader through which information or offered assessment as a particular point of us a particular perspective which the reader will buy or not buy and evaluate and respond emotionally and intelligibly.

This respective is a crucial narrative feature that we need to understand in order to find out understand or emotional and competitive reactions to the story. So will understand more about the characteristics of a narrator in terms of generation. So he is a person who sees the story and we see what he or she is saying.

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## Narrator

- ◊ Who sees?
- ◊ Kind and quantity of information.
- ◊ What is seen?
- ◊ How much is seen?

We also understand the information through that narrative visions. So the kind of information that he only offers is what we get and the quantity that he/she offer is what we get a receive from the story as well. So what is scene is important but we also need to understand is that we are seeing the third person point of view in the story and how much is seen is also controlled by the narrator as well.

So certain suppression of events can be deliberate and this can have some consequences for the stories narrative structure and ideological structure as well. So what is seen has implications for the meaning that we take away from this particular narrative point of view. So the narrator decides whether we should have more information or less information of a kind of information as I said and the narrator has the authority to emphasize some information over others.

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## Narrator

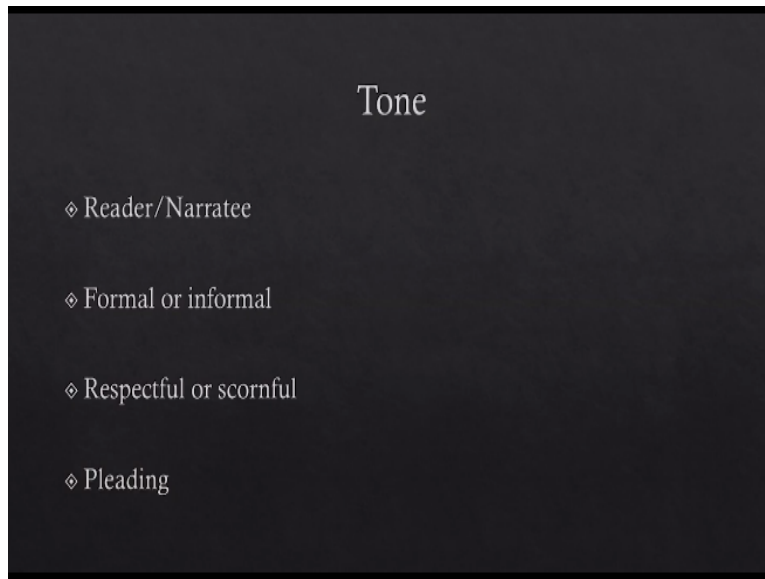
- ◇ More or less information
- ◇ Some information emphasized
- ◇ Explicitly, Objectively, or approvingly

And if you recall in the flood we can see that certain details are repeated offer to create some effects for instance on the plane of the jumping off the fox and the flood is a recurrent and the floating of carcasses is a recurrent and the parents of both a recurrence. So these recurrence is might have some symbolic deeper meaning for the philosophy of the story for the larger understanding of the story and these are emphasized as I said.

And the information can be communicated in various ways if they can be communicated explicitly very overtly very directly they can be communicated objectively without the narrator's personal spin on it or it can be communicated in a proving manner in which on the above the generator legitimacy is the information of prove the information endorses the information.

So there are multiple ways in which information is presented to the reader and the reader has to be careful enough to understand what exactly is going on in terms of the information that the reader receive. So that he can a process it in a rational manner and respond adequately correctly inappropriately and you also think about the tone in which the information is offered.

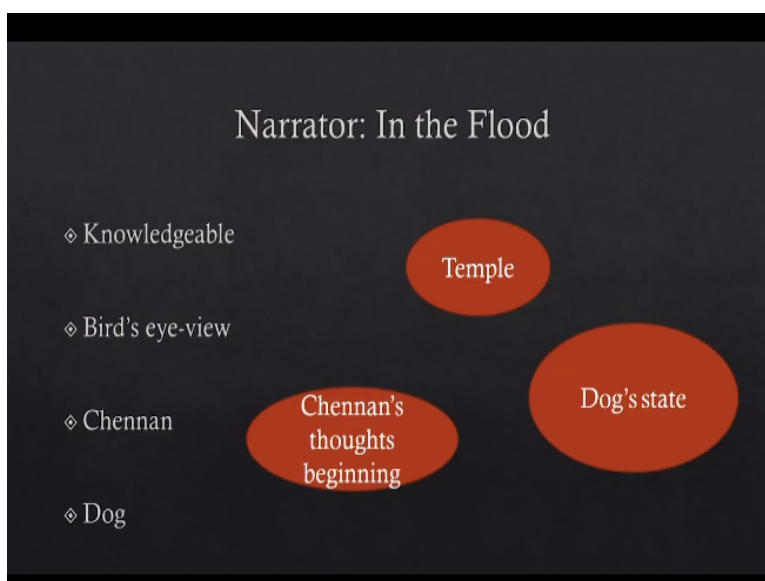
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The narrative is offered for the readers benefit the reader can be also referred to as a narrative that the narratee the person who kind of is the listener to whom the story tone. The tone can be either formal or informal and depending on the context of the story and the context of the narrative view point. The tone can be respectful, respectful of the reader or it can be scornful of the reader as well.

So these tones can be detected on true very close reading of the language in which the story is woven. The tone can be pleading as well it can ask for the entity of the reader the sympathy of the reader and it might ask for your kind understanding of the events back and forth in the narrative. So these are some of the things that are employed in the narrative view point.

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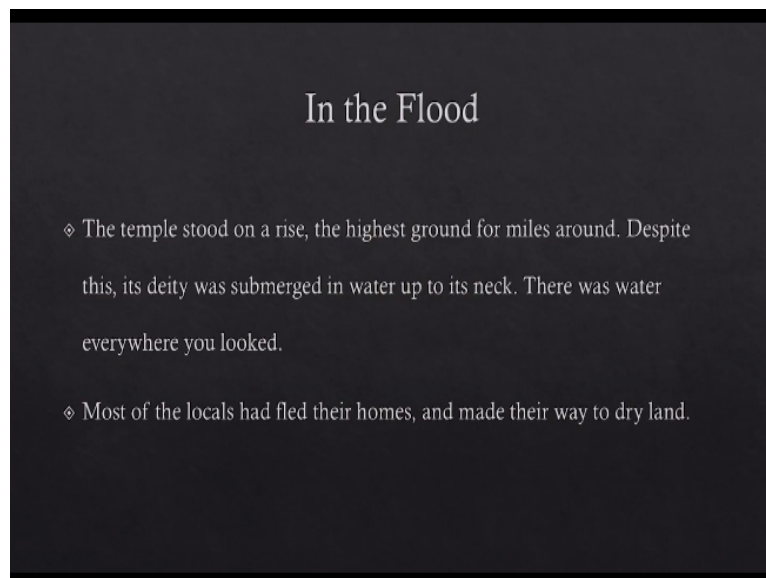


Let us come to the narrator of in the flood this figure is quite knowledgeable he or she has a bird's eye view of the story if we remember the starting point of the story the starting point talks about the temple on a high ground. So if from if kind of understand this perspective we can also understand that the narrator has a bird's eye view a complete understanding of the landscape of the story well .

And this narrator also has a good understanding of the circumstances of Chennan his neighbours as well as Chennan's dogs. So he or she is we can always call that narrator as a omniscient narrator one who knows everything one who sees everything but does it mean that he or she gives you almost every detail that that is a mood questions the way to work. So as I said this narrative has a bird eye view he has an idea of the height point the high ground on the landscape.

And this narrator also has a in the understanding of Chennan's thought especially at the beginning because he know that he communicate she communicate the thoughts of Chennan and the dog state is also very well understood by the narrator because the narrator explains interpret the thought of the dog for us. Let me give some examples in that context the temple this is a quotation from the beginning of the story.

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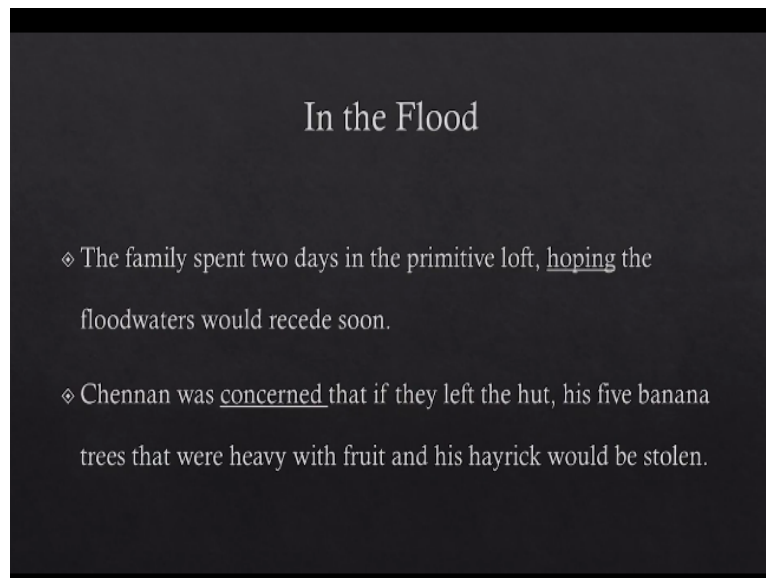
The Temple stood on arise the highest ground for miles around that statement tells you that the narrator knows the landscape of the region, she has the authority to mention that this is the highest ground for Mayas in that particular region and the narrator states that despite the shift it was a submerged in water up to eat snacks or not only does am the night I have a

bird's eye view he also knows the intricate details in details and comprehension of the interiors of not only the built environment.

But also an interior spaces of the being mine that he or she described, so despite this that it was submersion what up to its next the best water everywhere you look and look at the way he kind of him what the reader into the narrator but this reference to you even if you look at this world you will know that it is flooded everywhere and look at the next statement on the street most of the local track club their homes and made a way to dry land.

So not only is aware of the temple situations but the narrator is also aware of the local who had fled their homes and they are all safe on right round these lines of text establish the authority of the narrator who has a good understanding of the world at is being described. Now he also understands the emotional life of the family of Chennan which is clear from the first line on the slide for you.

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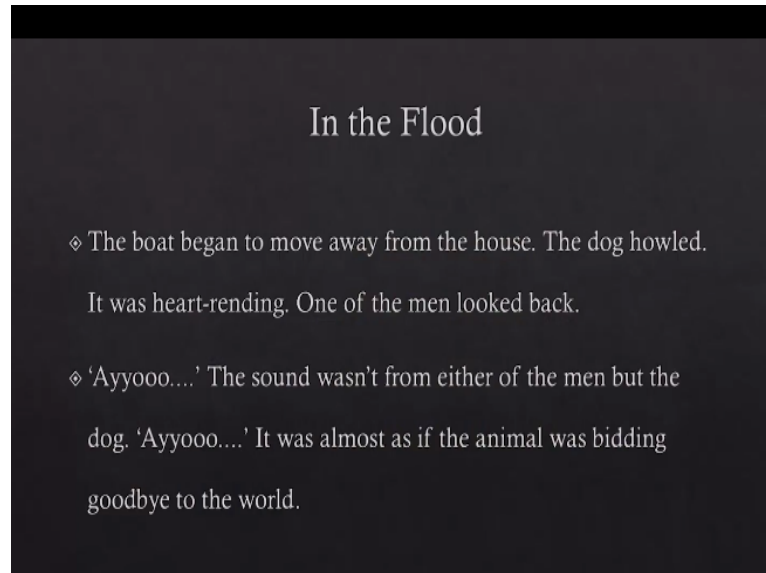


The family send 2 days in the primitive loft, hoping the flood waters would recede soon, so the hopes of the family is also understood by the narrator and communicated for the readers benefit the word hope give you that indication on the concerns of the head of the family Chennan is also understood by the narrator he is aware of the hopes and desires and anticipations of Chennan as well.

So this lines gives you that information for us. Chennan was concerned that if there was the heart his for banana trees that were heavy with fruits and hayrick would be stolen. So the

motivations for Chennan to stay on in the flooded home is also made clear through the narrators information. Now we also have indication from the text that narrator has a very good understanding of the emotional converse of this dog.

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And he interpret that he interpret that very very interesting for the reader and this is an incident with the boat if you remember the story we have 3 boats on the scene in relation to the dog situations one of them does not even notice the dog the second one notices the dogs but the occupants in the boat fail to give heed to the plight of the dog and they move away and this is the scene that the text describes.

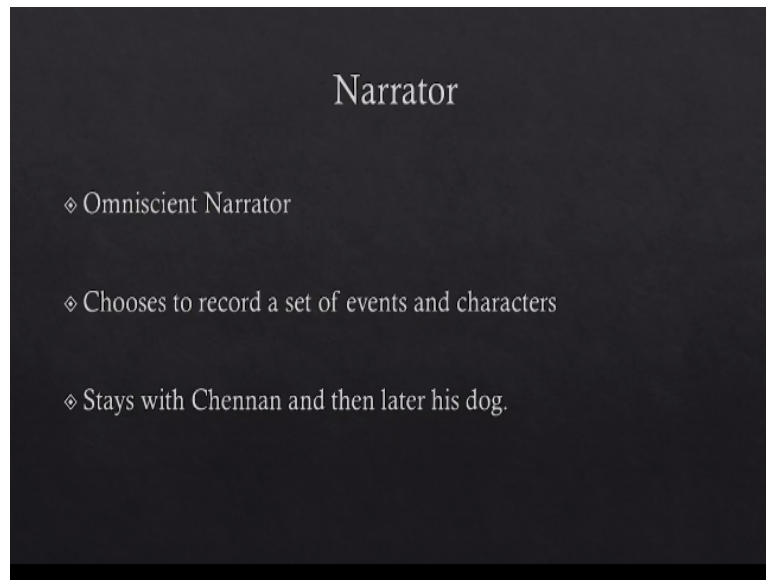
The boat began to move away from the house the dog how it was heartrending one of them and look back and this ayyooo the sound is very human like the sound was not from either of the men but the dog its repeated again that sound almost human like cry, it was almost as if the animal was bidding goodbye to the world. So if you look at the statement it was hard training it was almost as if.

These are interpretations of the emotional landscape of the dogs, so this narrative as I said is extremely aware of not only the external environment but also the internal environment of the psychology of the characters that the narrator is interested in a from Chennan to his dog. So we can say right say with that and this narrative omniscient narrator but he chooses to record a set of events a particular set of events and a particular characters.



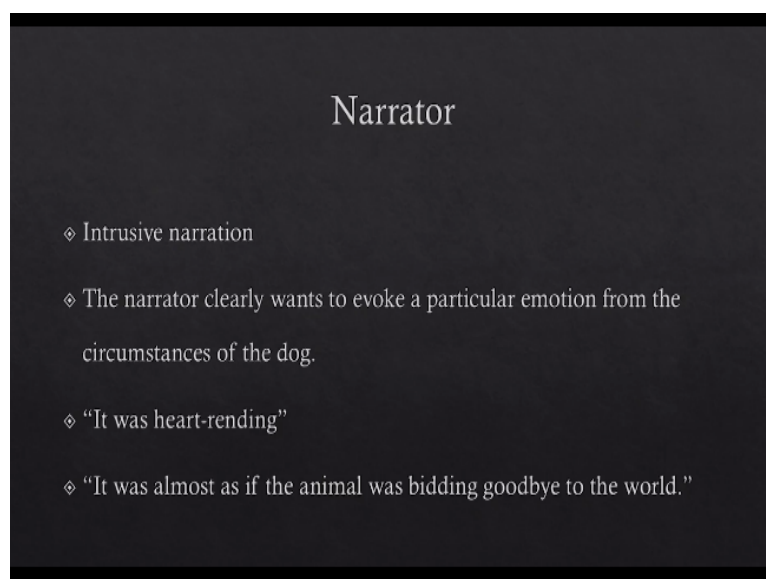
He does not capture the emotional landscape of all the characters that is referred to in the story we do not have information as to what this person who is reciting the Ramayana is thinking about, but we have a selective record of the ideas or events that goes around a particular number of characters who played a major role.

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So this narrator stays with Chennan in the beginning and then he moves on to his dog and finally he comes back then and when Chennan is returned to the rate of to check or check about his dog that he had left behind. I can also called this narrator intrude of narrator in some respects because we can clearly see from some of the examples that have shown you that he wants to evoke a particular in motion from the reader truth or dries circumstances of the dog especially from the previous scene.

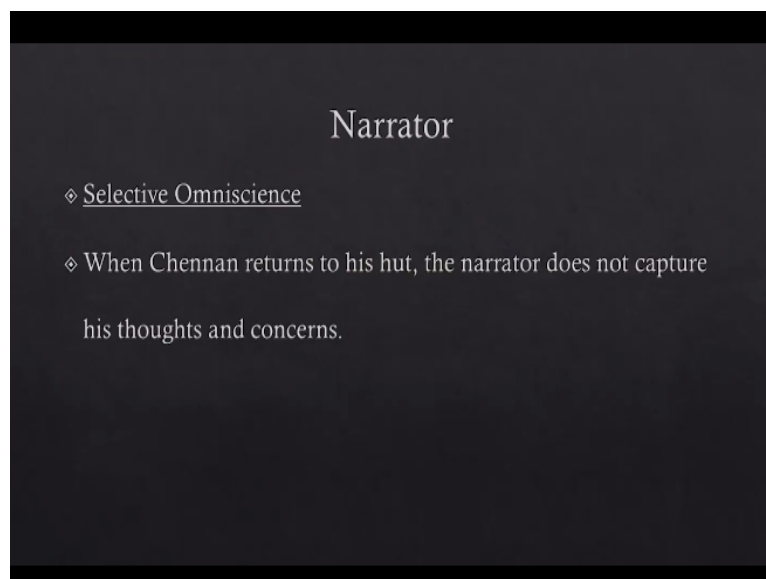
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I pick those lines again for you so that we understand that we have been moved kind of hinted away we are kind of moved to sympathize with the dog in the world hot trending in the very very emotionally loaded word and the narrator users that are too kind of bring out the sympathy from the reader and again this line was almost results and animal horse breeding good but the world every human like the way the dog retrieves the other the world around him.

It is as if a human being is bidding goodbye not there anymore that is bidding goodbye said these words are very fully in a kind of put into practice in the story on the part of the narrator to manipulate not negative leave but positively because empathy and sympathy on boys we need to see this is a positive manipulation that it is a manipulation alright in order to make us to see the world in a particular way slanted way.

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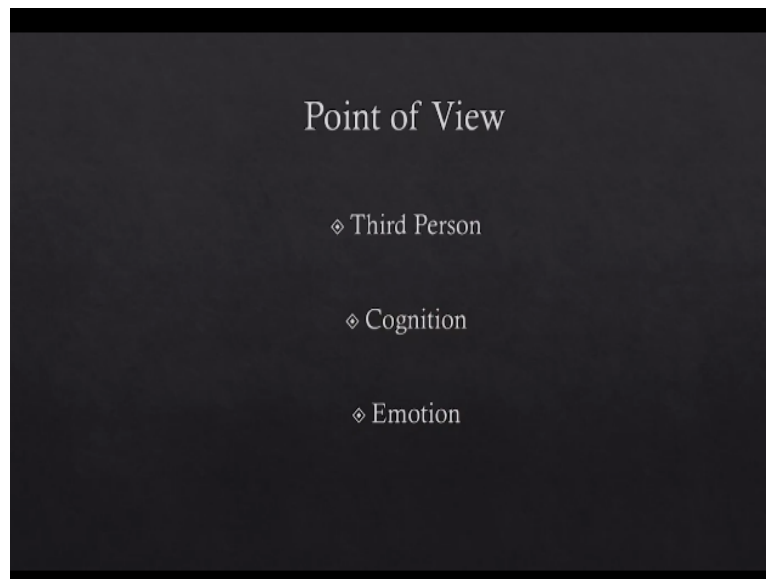


So we also if we can also if considering this set of circumstances we can also say that this is selective omniscience that we have in terms of the narrative view point and saying selective primarily because there is no consistent pattern in terms of revealing the inner thoughts of Chennan at the beginning we know what he thinks even think that within 12 hours the whole family is going to get drowned.

Unless somebody comes to rescue him also always thought patterns which are available in terms of Chennan is suppressed towards the end of the story and we should ask this question why is the suppression of information emotional information happening in the case of Chennan at the finale of the story because there is something going on there with implications

for hh manipulation as I said manipulation of the reader in terms of understanding the events that happened within the story world ok.

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So generally how are we to look at this notion of point of view what is the function of. If you are so I am going to talk about it in terms of third person but I am not going to say that the interpretation that I have are not applicable to other point of view say they may be applicable but I am going to focus now on the third person point of view. So they this particular point of view offers you an understanding of things as they happen .

And the processes that involve in understanding the unfolding of event, so you apply your mind you apply your logical reasoning and you know the process that is behind the scenes in a story and such a understanding will obviously have an impact on the emotional processes that are never far behind so this cognitive understanding of the story also has an effect in terms of the emotional landscape.

And that is taken from the story well and this part of view kind of towards is very suckle interpret the world in a particular way as I said on the intrusive omniscience narration guides us to respond to the story in specific less than other ways.

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## Point of View

◇ Interpret

◇ Respond

But in ways that the writer want us to respond, he does want to install an inventions of empathy for this dog that infesters in isolation most done and he does manage to do that. Let us come to the final statement in in the flood and the final statement is very interesting in terms of point of view.

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## Final Statement, In the Flood

◇ “You couldn’t even tell what colour the dog was, for its skin had rotted and sloughed away.”

◇ Invites the reader into the story world

He could not even tell what colour the dog was you could not even tell, he does not say Chennan could not even tell, he brings in the reader at this point in the storage to the readers pulled into the in a story he says that the colour was totally gone for skin had brought it is locked away. So he said they use of the word on the second person evocations is cleverly done to again bring out the empathy to make makeup be part of the tragedy that has gone on in front of the readers eyes in a more over to way.

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## Cognition, OED

- ◇ The mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses.
- ◇ A perception, sensation, idea, or intuition resulting from the process of cognition.

So there is an invitation that participate to respond in a little man of letters word competition I want you to completely understand what exactly the word cognition means which is why I put the definition from OED on the screen for you here. So cognizant means that mental action of process of acquiring knowledge and understanding truth thought experience and the senses. So this third person point of view help you do that.

You know if you closely follow the action of the story from a larger prospective in an objective perspective you will find of understand the way you acquire knowledge, you will know what the factors are and through those understanding of the factors you perform your own thought, you will form your own experiences and your senses will automatically respond to the events that unfold within this universe.

So cognition is about perception understanding is about sensation, it is about the formation of ideas and in the visible when a rational part of your mind is working it also affects the emotional part of your brain to and intuition is also started work there. So all these result from the process of cognition is an idea that we need to wear in mind. So go back to the final statement in the flood the conclusion is very very interesting.

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## Conclusion

- ◇ Dog loses particularity becomes a common symbol, devoid of shape and colour.
- ◇ The weak, the innocent and the loyal need protection.

Because the readers made in a part of the story so justice the nurse is witnessing the Corpse of a dog we have the reader representative of the entire reading community on the same looking at the corpse of the dog and at this point the dog loses its particularity it is no longer Chennan's dog with it could be any dog it becomes a representative of this entire species of the dog.

And again the dog itself as we know is a very very powerful symbols and common symbols and if the symbol is at the word of any shape or colour or even of the species association so it becomes a symbol for all the weak in the world all the Indus in the world and all the loyal in the world who need the protection of the powerful and in this case the powerful mean the human being.

So who have the power to you know of sucker, salvation and rescue to the needing, that is for today I will see you in the next session thank you for listening.