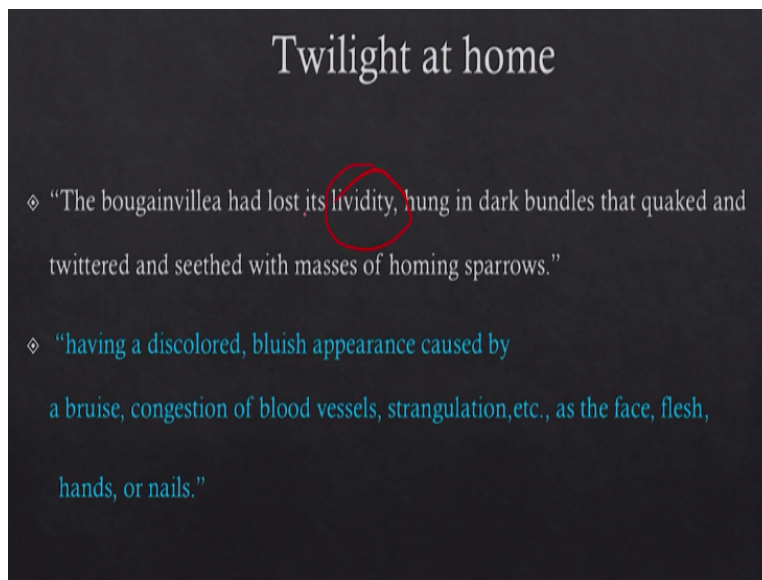


**Short Fiction in Indian Literature**  
**Prof. Divya A**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology – Madras**

**Lecture – 12B**  
**Childhood Anxiety at play in Anita Desai's Games at Twilight**

Hello and welcome back. We are looking at Anita Desai's Games at Twilight and the lecture title is childhood anxiety at play in this short work and through an analysis of childhood anxiety, we will also delve a little bit deeper into the structural issues that are complicating the lives of young adults, young children in this fiction.

**(Refer Slide Time: 00:47)**



If you recall the earlier session, we stopped at the point when Ravi is looking forward to joining his family and he looks at the world through the small you know vision that he is able to get from inside the shed and he can see that the bougainvillea had lost its lividity hung in dark bundles that quaked and twittered and seethed with masses of homing sparrows. So through the small slit of vision from inside that dilapidated shed Ravi is able to look at this scene and he realizes.

Or the third person narrator tells us that this tree this flowering tree had lost its lividity. It is bright, shine and it hands in dark bundles and that is a very, very interesting description. First let us look at the meaning of the word lividity. According to the dictionary, lividity means having a

discolored, bluish appearance caused by a bruise, congestion of blood vessels, strangulation, etc, as the face, flesh, hands, or nails.

So it is a really, really disturbing image that is associated with this word lividity and that is the word that Anita Desai offers to give us a picture of a flowering tree and that is a massive contrast in terms of the idea that she wants to communicate. Bougainvillea have really colourful flowers. It really has a spirited cheerful image in front of homes and here this word lividity kind of gives us a disturbing subversive quality to it.

And it is very interesting that this bluish appearance that this word lividity gives us or tells us is usually associated with strangulation as well so association with hurt, injury or violence are some of the ideas that this word lividity communicates to the readers. So let us look at the other words that are there in that particular description quaked.

**(Refer Slide Time: 03:23)**



Quaked to tremble, people quaked in fear, twittered, chatter, seethed, the meaning of the word seethed is to be, one of the meanings is to be in a state of agitation or excitement and these words especially the word seethed used in the context of these homing sparrows again gives us a very bizarre, eerie atmosphere to that bougainvillea tree so the bougainvillea tree is usually associated with something that is beautiful, colourful, cheerful, and when these homing sparrows.

You know enter the tree it seems to kind of make the tree seethed with some kind of agitation. So again the idea of nesting or being at home is not a peaceful atmosphere for the inmates. There is agitation or excitement indoors especially within a home at least in the context of this particular short fiction of Anita Desai and again the dark bundles could refer to the beautiful flowers of the bougainvillea which seems to hang together in clumps.

So if we look at all these associations that are there in terms of the natural description of Anita Desai we get a sense that nature itself takes on a really dark hue, dark colour and that is suggestive of the complications in the psyche of the people who inhabit the landscape of this short story. Now before we move on to the state of affairs that is there in terms of the other children.

I would also like you to remember the other elements of nature in terms of this particular setting such as the dog which is in a mournful state which asks the sympathy, the squirrels which are lying on the ground as if they are dead in a limp manner and we have the parrots which you know fly about in battle formation and we have the dry arid grass on the garden floor. So, all these elements need to be recalled.

And you know kept in mind when you look at the other aspects of nature that keep propping up at as the story progresses because they are all part of a piece. It is all part of the mood that Desai wants to communicate in this particular fiction and that mood is a melancholic mood, a pessimistic mood, oblique mood. So this aspect, the dreariness of life is communicated through the choice of language used to describe aspects of nature.

**(Refer Slide Time: 06:42)**

## Twilight

- ◆ “Chanting, singing and laughing”
- ◆ Horror has apparently been replaced.
- ◆ realisation of a child (incompleteness on his part)

Now Ravi is inside the shed and he is able to hear a chanting singing and laughing and he is really struck by that change in mood and he is sort of horrified as well to realize that you know the game is apparently over and how could it be over because he is still there in the shed not found by Raghu and he is wondering what to do and then he realizes and that is a very interesting thing.

He realizes that this game is incomplete even with respect to himself because if he has to win the game he has to come out of the shed and go and touch a particular spot in the veranda say a pillar in the veranda and say den and that will finish off the game and that would make Raghu realize that he has lost it. So that particular small effort on his part is still incomplete and he thinks that a very innocently he thinks that, that is why you know he still has not gotten his victory. So that is one thing. The other interesting thing is when he hears all these chanting and singing.

And laughing the various noises which somehow suggest happiness on the part of the children these suggests that the horror or the brutalities that is associated with the hide and seek game is apparently over. So, the horrors associated with hide and seek and the seeker especially Raghu is replaced by as a kind of communal singing and laughing. So what Ravi does is he gets out of the shed and he runs really quickly you know hurriedly and he touches the den.

**(Refer Slide Time: 08:33)**

## Twilight

◇ Touch the den

◇ Veranda as the den (animal imagery)

◇ “his voice broke with rage and pity at the disgrace of it all, and he felt himself flooded with tears and misery.”

And his voice breaks with rage and pity at the disgrace of it all and he felt himself flooded with tears and misery. So all these emotions are rushing through his body as he is dashing towards the veranda and that is very interesting because as he moves he realizes that he is lost, that he has lost this game somehow or the other and that realization makes them very, very emotional. So, even before he communicates the fact with the rest of the group that he has won.

And that Raghu has lost his mind has made that realization and he is immensely hurt and miserable and the other thing I want to point out here is that the veranda is called as the den in the parlance of this game and that is very significant as were in terms of the choice of words that the children used to play their game or name different parts of their game so if you remember when Raghu spots Manu when Raghu finds him out he says that you are dead and that is the word that he uses. That is the language that he uses.

The idea of death is used as to indicate that this boy has lost the game and now veranda is called as the den and den again is part of this animal world certain predators, carnivores animals, have their homes called as den. So we need to remember this too. So the animal imagery is really is the subtext for some of the names which are part of the games that the children play in this particular short story.

So Ravi is heartbroken because he is immensely embarrassed. What causes such a pain such stress and such anxiety on the part of Ravi is this fact that he has to wait for a long time inside the shed so which is why he has been put under immense stress and he really longs for success which he thinks is his due.

**(Refer Slide Time: 10:55)**



He has worked for it, he has you know employed a lot of will power to stay within that really scary, spooking dark shed which has all these defunct household goods and other creepy crawlies you know moving about and he thinks that he deserves success because he has been through a lot of struggle to achieve it and he makes a final dash towards victory, the final dash towards victory ultimately ends in disappointment for this young boy Ravi and what does that tell us.

How do we interpret this particular episode which is at the heart of this story because if you look at the story very closely you will realize that much of the narrative is spent on describing the various elements within the shed and how Ravi feels about it and how Ravi imagines other spaces and how Ravi you know thinks about his victory in the context of all these older children and these older children are represented by Raghu.

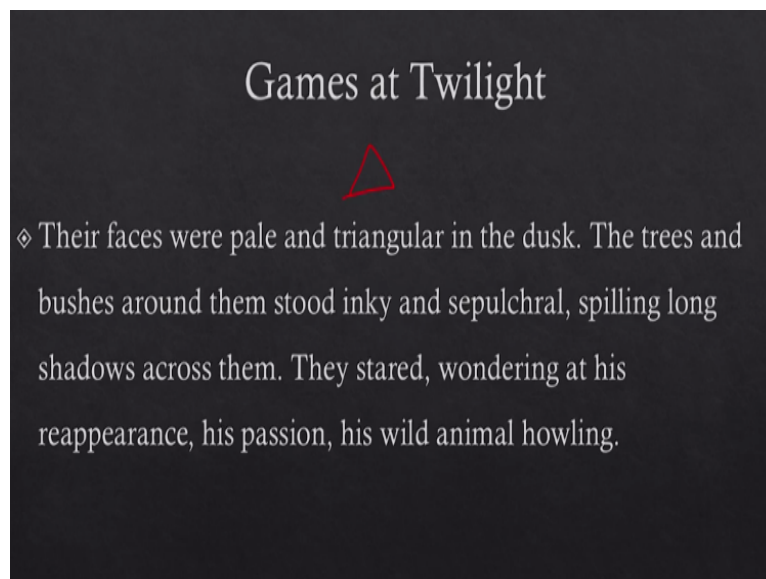
So the narrative is invested quite a bit in Ravi's emotions within that claustrophobic space. So that is his adventure that is Ravi's adventure and that is Ravi's penance to speak and after this penance he really wants his victory which he thinks is his due, but he does not get that and what

as I said how do we look at this you know episode on the life of Ravi. So we can realize we can think that this is inexperience that is coming through Ravi and which is why he is unable to bare that disappointment.

So he is a young boy who has not experienced the way so the world. He does not know that disappointments are part in parcel of the everyday so that inexperience is highlighted in the case of Ravi and that can be extended to just pointing out to the experience of life itself and life to put it in a cliché way is not a bed of roses and just because Ravi has struggled really hard to win the competition of the game of hide and seek.

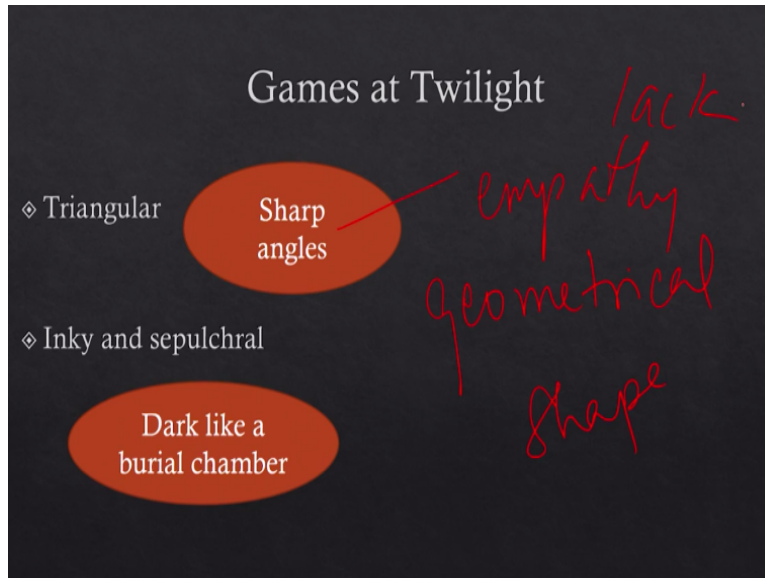
Does not mean that he would get the victory that he deserves. So that experience has been a painful one for the little boy. So he is out in the open and he sees all these children engaged in another game and this is a less brutal game, it is a less harsher game than the game of hide and seek and this is how these faces appear to Ravi.

**(Refer Slide Time: 14:02)**



Their faces were pale and triangular in the dusk. The trees and bushes around them stood inky and sepulchral, spilling long shadows across them. They stared, wondering at his reappearance, his passion, his wild animal howling. So this is the image that Ravi gets when he sees this group of children playing.

**(Refer Slide Time: 14:37)**



And the description is fantastic in the sense that the faces are described by a geometrical shape that is very, very interesting. The application of geometrical shape as a metaphor to describe the faces of young children suggest that there is a lack of empathy on the part of these young adults, these children in the home that we are interested in this particular story, sharp angles, suggests lack of empathy and sympathy and Desai is really clever in using this particular image to describe the faces of these pale children.

They do not have that freshness that you know full blooded face which indicates health and happiness and life itself. So they have pale faces as well and if you look at the atmosphere it is very inky and sepulchral, the trees and bushes again and we have the colour of dark, black colour, dark colour, dark blue colour and that suggests death and decay and sepulchral something to do with sepulchral, a burial place so again we have a description of this household this space of home compared to a burial chamber.

Again a very, very eerie metaphor is employed by Desai to talk about this particular home. So even though this is a apparently a children's short fiction you know the dominant image or the dominant feeling that we get when we do a close reading of this narrator is one of death or you know moving towards death, the progression towards death. So that is communicated through a choice of words employed in this particular fiction.

**(Refer Slide Time: 16:59)**





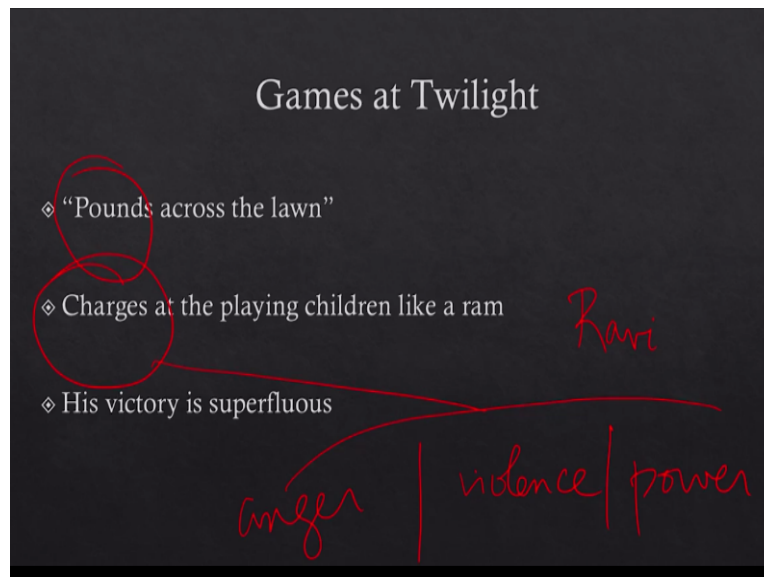
Now this passage is also interesting for another reason the passage that I read out just now. For the first time, we get a passage which directly describes Ravi as very passionate, passionate in the sense of his being wild almost like an animal. So again we get connection to or reminder of the baser instincts of human beings of small children. So the small children can also have wild aspects. They can howl like an animal that is one interpretation.

The other interpretation is that when one is pushed into a corner when a vulnerable young person such as Ravi is pushed into a corner we will realize or get at the reaction from that vulnerable person and that reaction will be wild and one that can be compared to animals howling either in pain or in anger. So this is another interpretation. Further interpretations are also possible and one such interpretation would be Ravi is beginning to resemble Raghu himself because wildness and animal imagery are usually applied in the context of Raghu so far in this narrative.

And for the first time we get Ravi reacting in a fashion that is proceed as Raghu. So is he mimicking Raghu that is one question that we can ask and the other as I mentioned before is that wildness is there, submerged in everybody and when provoked are and when angered and when pushed into a corner that wildness will surface. So the primitive brutal instinct is just beneath the civilized veneer and will erupt when the time is right.

So, again as I mentioned early on this particular narrative of Desai is highly imagistic and that imagery communicates a lot of symbolism and thematic in ideological significance in this particular work.

**(Refer Slide Time: 19:30)**



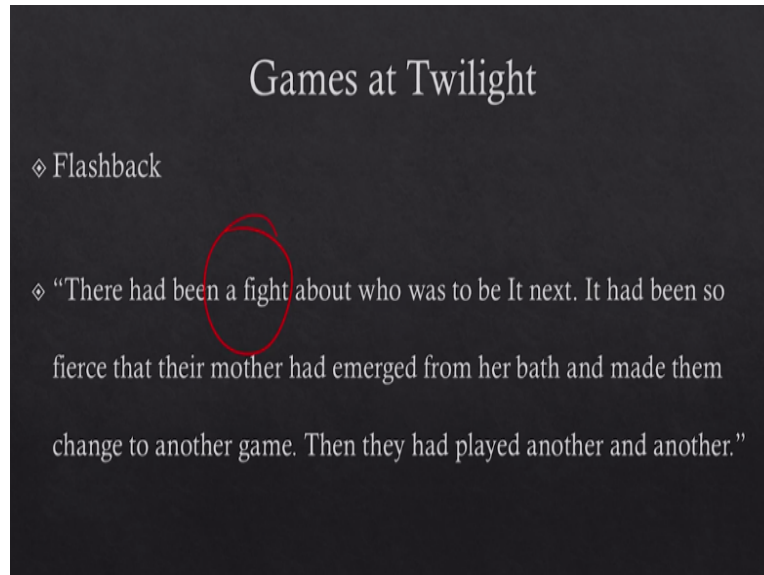
So if you look closely at the way Ravi runs from the shed to the veranda the action itself is very interesting. He pounds across the lawn. He does not run. So the pounding is a very, very energetic and fears activity one that also communicates the sense of purpose, drive, and perhaps anger to on the part of the person who is running across the lawn in this fashion. So Ravi is pounding across the lawn and then he charges and he charges at the playing children and these children are playing as a group and they are singing a rhyme.

They are making a particular kind of formation and they are you know chanting a rhyme. So what Ravi does is he charges at them as a military battalion would charge or angry ram would charge at something it has been anger but the word charging is again also very, very interesting in this particular regard. So it suggests violence. It suggests power to, it suggests anger as well. So, all these aspects are associated with this young boy Ravi for the first time towards the end of the story.

So we no longer have this vulnerable weak, puny little kid we have a kid which is you know out for revenge to speak. At this point his victory is forgotten. That has become superfluous so all he

wants to achieve at this minute in the story is some kind of recognition on the part of these other children.

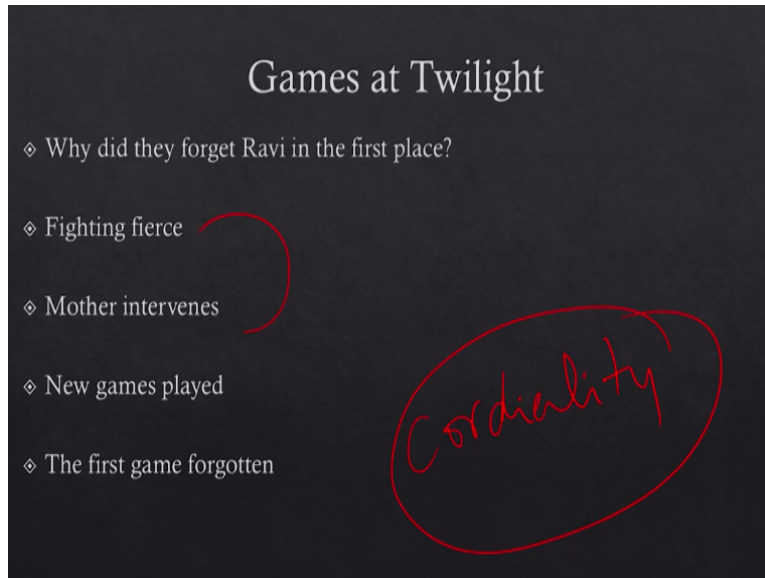
**(Refer Slide Time: 21:17)**



Now there is a bit of a flashback towards the close of the story which has been employed by the narrator to tell the readers as to why this game of hide and seek had been given up by these children so this is the narrative which describes that. So the narrator says there had been a fight about who was to be it next. It had been so fierce that their mother had emerged from her bath and made them change to another game. Then they had played another and another.

So this is the reason behind why that particular game has been abruptly stopped. So the narrator says that there has been a big fight about who is going to be the next seeker and again the interesting question is why have not they found out about Ravi. So he has been forgotten and the mother intervenes because the battle between the children has gone so out of hand that somebody has to put an end to it so the mother intervenes and forces them to change to another game.

**(Refer Slide Time: 22: 45)**



So they keep on playing game after another game which is why Ravi has been left behind by them literally and symbolically so the points that we need to note here are the fierce fighting on the part of the children again suggesting that play is not play, play is about violence and forcing of authority and superiority and seniority so there is no concerns. There is no cordiality among the children there that is something to be noticed.

And this impression that we get that children are not always engaged in a communal game is something that we need to remember because we have this really cliché understanding that children are immensely pure and good and always have a great time while they are playing and that they provide a massive contrast to the world of the adult. So that does not seem to be the case here and intervention of the mother is also very important because just as the mother intervening here if you recall the earlier game the first instance in which this game of hide.

And seek begins it is the motherly Mira who intervenes. So the mother figures make some kind of intervention in the fighting that happens in the either in the playground or in society that could be an extrapolation that we can make. So new games are played and the first game is obviously forgotten. So with the entry of new activities that old ones are left behind.

**(Refer Slide Time: 24:24)**

## Flashback

- ◇ “broken mulberries”
- ◇ Wash the car (no issue there)
- ◇ Helped the gardener : “roared at them and swore he would complain to their parents”

Father the highest authority

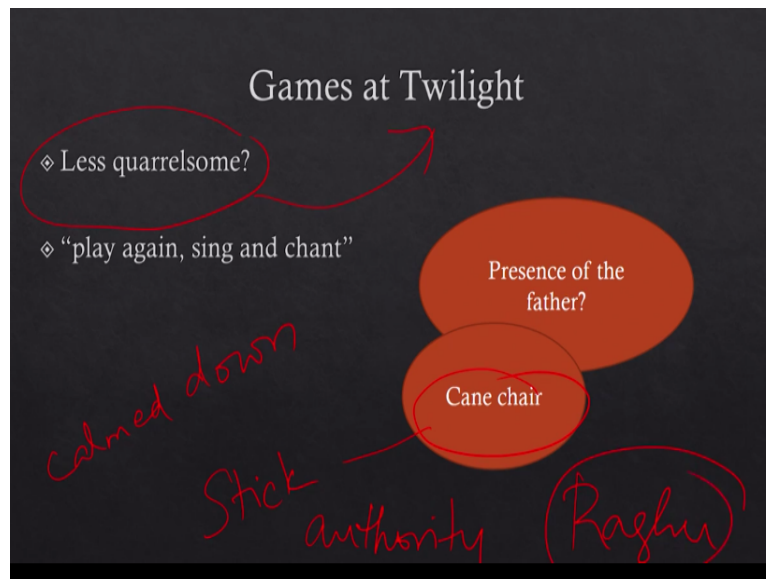
Now happens after the new set of games is that the children also break mulberries from the trees and eat them, and then they help wash the car and then they helped the gardener. So these are some of the activities that continue after the abrupt stopping of the hide and seek game and if you notice this second point in the slide wash the car and I have not put no issue there. The father returns with the car and the children help wash that clear the car.

So it is very significant that seems to be the only activity in which the children did not make any problems in it so and the narrative does not suggest anything to tell us that the children were reprimanded, the children were naughty or mischievous while they were engaged in that particular activities. So this is the only activity which is without any problem. So my speculation is that is that there is no problem because it is the car of the father.

The father is the highest authority in the household and his object is not messed about by the children so that could be one reasonable speculation to make and the other the last point in the slide, the children help the gardener to water the garden and it is very interesting and funny and significant to notice that the gardener roars at them shouts at them because the implication is that the children have been behaving badly. The children have been having a lot of fun, not following the orders or that you know guidelines of the gardener.

And he swore that he would complain to their parents about the misdemeanor or the behaviour of the children. So again the first point is also very interesting in the sense that mulberries were broken. They were in plucked. They were broken by the children and again there is an element of violence and harshness and brutality on the part of the children when they are you know when they are moving about in the home space. So these are some of the things that we need to keep in mind in terms of our assessment of the behaviour of the children in society.

**(Refer Slide Time: 26:57)**



Now when Ravi hears all these noises of singing and chanting I mentioned early on that it is a less horrible noise in the sense of there is no pushing or shoving or kicking you know no bearing down on a you know helpless girl or a boy on the part of Raghu so we get a sense that the children have become less quarrelsome at Twilight that is one interpretation. They have calmed down that is one thing. The other thing that we can reasonably suggest is that Bittu parents are there especially the father is there sitting in a cane chair.

And is that is what making the children behave with some kind of decorum and normalities so that is the question that we can ask and again the cane chair is very interesting because it reminded me of the stick of Raghu, the stick that he uses to beat the words with you now beat the bushes and shrubs. So cane stick again suggesting the authority figure who is the father and in his absence it is Raghu.

**(Refer Slide Time: 28:29)**

## Games at Twilight

◇ 'Don't be a fool,' Raghu said roughly, pushing him aside, and even Mira said, "Stop howling, Ravi. If you want to play, you can stand at the end of the line,' and she put him there very firmly.'

So we have Ravi confronting the set of children and he as I said as it is mentioned in the narrative he has charged towards them as a bull would as a ram would or as a military battalion would and then Raghu pushes him back or pushes him aside and say do not be a fool. Raghu said roughly pushing him aside and even Mira said, Stop howling Ravi. If you want to play, you can stand at the end of the line and she put him there very firmly. So this is the reaction of the eldest boy Raghu and the motherly Mira.

**(Refer Slide Time: 29:18)**

## Games at Twilight

◇ Rough Raghu

◇ Even Mira is unsympathetic

Disciplines Ravi

◇ 'Stop it, stop it, Ravi. Don't be a baby. Have you hurt yourself?'

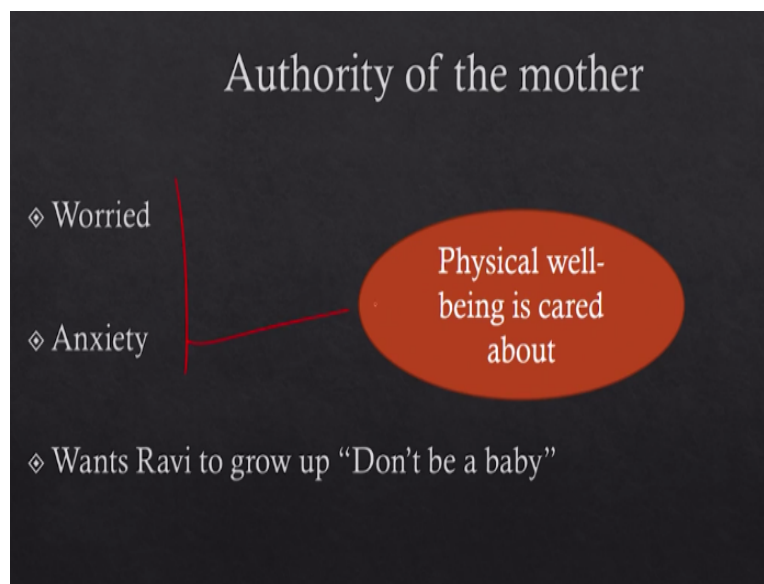
So as I said roughness is a part of Raghu's character so that is something we can anticipate and expect and what is interesting is that even Mira that word even is interesting because Mira is unsympathetic and she also disciplines Ravi just as Raghu did and that reminds us of the



behaviour of the mother early on when he comes out of the shed crying as he dashes towards the den or the veranda and this is what the mother says to him stop it, stop it Ravi don't be a baby. Have you hurt yourself?

So there is a mixture of concern as well as annoyance. The concern is for the physical harm that Ravi could have had somehow so her concern is for that. Her sympathy is not towards his emotional turmoil and she says stopped being a baby. Do not be an emotional wreck you know and that is where interesting in the context of the mother figure.

**(Refer Slide Time: 30:23)**



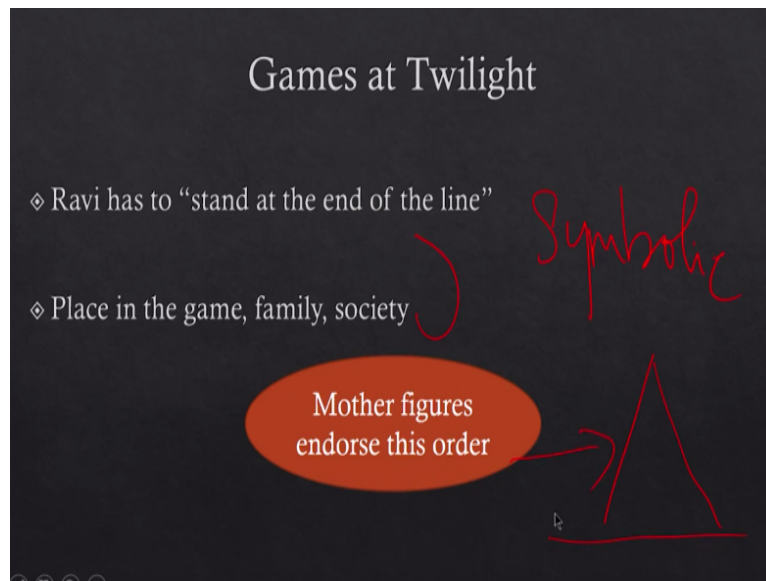
And that is why I suggested there are some parallel between the motherly Mira and the mother figure in this particular household and as I said the worry and the anxiety is for his physical well being. So the physical well being is really cared about by the mother and she wants Ravi to grow up do not be a baby. So being a child is a state which has a lot of you know incompleteness which has something that is to be you know removed or eradicated by that particular being.

So she does not want Ravi to be a child. Do not be a baby just stop being a baby and grow up in the normal be discipline we have control your emotions that is very interesting. Adults do not express emotions at the drop of a hat whereas a child does and that instant reaction to the world around a child is a very interesting human phenomenon which as the baby or as the child grows is suppressed by that growing child.



So growing up is associated with the suppressive of the instinctive reactions and the big question to ask is that good or is that bad and in what context is that good or bad so again the ability or the desire to question that is there on the part of Ravi is also suppressed and our question should be is that dried is that good and these are the questions that come to our mind if we do a closed analysis of the reactions of the mother figure in this particular story.

**(Refer Slide Time: 32:11)**



So Ravi has to stand at the end of the line in this particular game so that is the direction given by Mira and she endorses the order, the existing order or the system which is at play in this particular game and it has a very symbolic significance as well and what is the symbolic significance. Ravi's place in the game in the family, in the society is at the end of the line.

So there is a hierarchy and in that hierarchy Ravi is at the bottom and there are other figures about him at the top of the pyramid, at the top of the pecking order and these figures, mother figures endorse this particular set up and which is very, very important for us to note.

**(Refer Slide Time: 33:10)**

## Games at Twilight

◇ Two pairs of arms reached up and met in an arc. The children trooped under it again and again in a lugubrious circle, ducking their heads and intoning

The grass is green

The rose is red

Remember me

When I am dead, dead, dead, dead

This is the game that they play when Ravi comes out of the shed. It is an interesting game and the very, very significant rhythms sung by the children as they play this arrangement game and sing a song. 2 pairs of arms reached up and met in an arc so we have an arc formation made by the children.

The children trooped under it again and again in a lugubrious circle, ducking their heads and intoning, singing. The grass is green. The rose is red remember me when I am dead, dead, dead. So this is a nursery rhyme that is sung by the children in India and they do this intoning while they are going through this arc made by the arms of the children who stand in a particular neat arrangement.

**(Refer Slide Time: 34:09)**

## Games at Twilight

- ◆ Mournful, sombre, tragic ditty
- ◆ Asks to be remembered
- ◆ Ravi was forgotten

Simple yet  
profound rhyme

Importance of  
remembrance

And the choice of words employed in this description is very interesting because it suggests mourning, somberness, and the song the word ditty means song and the song is also very, very tragic. It says the rose is red remember me when I am dead, dead, dead. So the rhyme asks for remembrance. It asks society. It asks the family to remember the dead and if we put this in the context of the hide and seek game Ravi when he was within that shed.

He is completely forgotten by the rest of the community of the children so it is a simple rhyme. This ditty is very, very simpler, but it is also profound in the sense of ideology of the meaning it wants to communicate and it suggests the importance of remembrance and the biggest embarrassment for Ravi, the biggest pain for Ravi, the biggest miserable for Ravi is the fact that he was forgotten.

He has not been remembered not only by the children, but also by the parents too. So that is something we need to make note of. You got to remember that when the parents are sitting in that cane chair in the garden they do not realize that Ravi is missing and that is very disturbing in some sense.

**(Refer Slide Time: 35:32)**

## Games at Twilight

- ◆ Trooped
- ◆ Lugubrious circle
- ◆ “Looking or sounding sad and dismal.”

Sad troops?  
Metaphor

Oppression

So other choice of words that are particularly significant in this context is trooping. If you go back to the narrator the children trooped under it again the image of soldiers trooping going in a particular orderly discipline fashion is you know suggested there. So they are a body of soldiers or group of people who I really subservient. They follow the orders and they do it in a lugubrious circle which means they do it in a very, very sad way.

So it is not a happy set of faces that we see. We have these pale faces which are looking sad and dismal, dejected. So the metaphor is that of a people or a group of people or a body of soldiers who have been overruled or oppressed by a higher authority. The sense of oppression is very, very clear in this particular set of nursery rhymes

**(Refer Slide Time: 36:37)**

## Games at Twilight

◇ “And the arc of thin arms trembled in the twilight, and the heads were bowed so sadly, and their feet tramped to that melancholy refrain so mournfully, so helplessly, that Ravi could not bear it.”

Children as weak and  
helpless

And the arc of the thin arms trembles. So this is the narrative which tells us how the children behaved physically and the arc of thin arms trembled in the twilight and the heads were bowed so sadly and their feet tramped to that melancholy refrain so mournfully, so helplessly, that Ravi could not bear it. So in this formation when they are chanting this nursery rhyme, the arms are trembling, shaking and that tremble could be because of the physical effort that they have to employ to maintain that arc or it could be because of fear why are they afraid.

So that is a good question to ask? And the heads were bowed so sadly. So bowing suggesting subservience again so and they do not do it willingly; they do it sadly and happily. And the melancholic refrain their dead, dead, dead is repeated and it suggests mourning for someone who has passed away and remembered and there is helplessness, vulnerability, and all these emotions make Ravi not want to be a part of it, not want to hear this rhyme.

And this is the first time the entire community of children, the entire category of children are portrayed as weak and helpless before the might of the adult world.

**(Refer Slide Time: 38:08)**



So as I said all these words tremble, bowed, sad, mournful, melancholic, tramped, walk in a heavy manner suggest again dejection, depression, desolation and inferior positions more importantly. So these children represent a community that has been oppressed and suppressed by the powerful, the rich, the wealthy. So we need to ask all these questions in terms of the context of the children so why are they bothering really very sadly.

Why are they trembling it is after all their parents who are sitting there in cane chairs and watching them? So what is the reason for the mourning we do not know, but if we extrapolate this particular nursery rhyme and this particular set of children to make some general comments about the society we can suggest, we can speculate, and we can argue that these children represent symbolically the inferior positions occupied by the weak and the vulnerable and the poor in society.

And if we do that this story becomes really rich in that sense for the implications it has for the various ideological positions in the society.

**(Refer Slide Time: 39:25)**

## Ravi's determination

◇ “He would not follow them, he would not be included in this funeral game. He had wanted victory and triumph—not a funeral. But he had been forgotten, left out, and he would not join them now.”

So Ravi is determined to do this. He says he would not follow them; he would not be included in this funeral game. He wanted victory and triumph, not a funeral, but he had been forgotten, left out, and he would not join them now. So Ravi sees this game and he does not want to have anything to do with that. He decides that he would not be included in this funeral game. So he considers it to be a really melancholic tragic game a game that you know talks about death.

And dying and remembrance all he wanted was victory and triumph and he did not get that and now he does not want a funeral song as a laurel for his part that he played in the game. Now how do we interpret this particular narrative, in this particular nursery rhyme that these children chant and play.

**(Refer Slide Time: 40:27)**

## Ravi's Realisation

- ◆ Games, philosophically, are suggestive of death.
- ◆ Instead of laurels for his victory
- ◆ Children offer him a funeral song

More selfish  
reasons too

So games could be seen especially the games in this story could be seen as suggestive of death itself. The games could be a metaphor of death itself again reminded of Raghu comment that you are dead when he spots Manu when he seeks Manu and this particular nursery rhyme also talks about death and remember so philosophically it could be you know comparable to death that is confronting each and everyone in society and Raghu in the case of Raghu instead of laurels all.

He gets is this nursery rhyme, bleak nursery rhyme, funeral nursery rhyme as a laurel for his participation in the game of hide and seek. So it is a very, very anticlimactic and sad you know end destination for Ravi in this particular story and Ravi also has more selfish reasons for not joining in. He thinks that he has been forgotten so why should he kind of return the favour by joining in this particular game with the rest of the children so he does not want to be a part of it too.

**(Refer Slide Time: 41:44)**



## Ravi's realization

- ◇ Ignominy
- ◇ "Public shame or disgrace."
- ◇ Embarrassment and pain at being forgotten

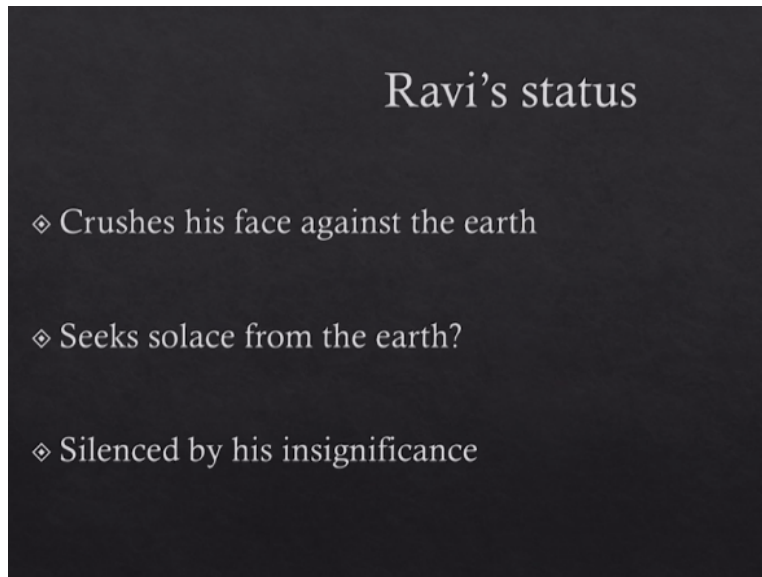
And the ignominy of forgotten how could he face it. He felt his heart go heavy and ache inside him unbearably. He lay down full length on the damp grass, crushing his face into it, no longer crying, silenced by a terrible sense of his insignificance. So up to a second point in the story he wanted victory. He wanted recognition for his effort, but later he realizes that he all he wants is that people miss him then when he is not around.

So that ignominy that embarrassment of being forgotten is the biggest blow that he gets from the rest of the children so he feels as heart go heavy and it aches it is unbearable it is a very, very adult emotion perhaps you know unbearable ache inside once heart and he will what he does sees lays down full length on the grass and he crushes his face against the earth and he does not cry anymore, but has become silent and that silent is very, very important because that silence tells him that his crying is not going to matter.

His crying is not going to make any intervention in the way the society functions so he becomes silence. So the shame the word ignominy means publics shame or disgrace and that is what he has met with on the part of these other children he has been he feels as if he has been publicly shamed because he has been forgotten, not only by the children as well as by the parents and the adults and that was the greatest pain.

The pain is not about losing to Raghu. The pain is about being forgotten by the entire community. So nobody remembers him when he is dead. So, to speak when he is hidden inside that shed it is symbolic death for Ravi.

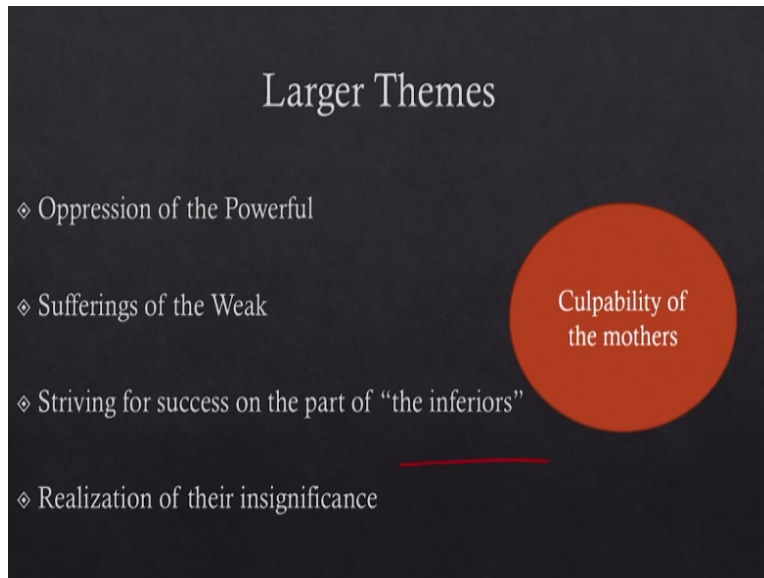
**(Refer Slide Time: 43:43)**



So he crushes his face against the earth and it seems as if he is seeking comfort from the mother earth itself. The solace is from this massive mother of all. This landscape, this earth, this globe, this planet, and because he does not get any from his own biological mother who is really annoyed and irritated by the fact that he is crying like a baby when he should behave like an adult.

He should have shed of his childhood nature and he should have attained adulthood you now perhaps way before his time. So he seeks comfort from this particular mother earth and as I said his silence is an indication that he is really helpless, powerless in this particular society which cherishes and endorses and gives space only for the mighty and the powerful.

**(Refer Slide Time: 44:37)**



Some of the larger themes at play that we can you know easily pick out through a close reading of games in Twilight are the oppression of the powerful the suppression of the weak and then we have the sufferings of the weak, communicated or represented by Manu and Ravi and the striving for success that the young children desires such as Manu and Ravi and that success is against these really powerful you know people represented by Raghu and other parental figures and ultimately the inferiors, the weak.

And the vulnerable realize the insignificance in this particular society and the other important theme that we need to keep note of this is the culpability of mother. Mothers are culpable in this structural arrangement because the intervention that they make are really nominal and the ultimately they endorse the status co and that is communicated through the motherly Mira as well as through the mother of Ravi and I want to close this lecture by making a few comment about the style of writing of Anita Desai.

**(Refer Slide Time: 45:50)**

## Anita Desai on her writing

◇ *My style of writing is to allow the story to unfold on its own. I try not to structure my work too rigidly.*

◇ *I try to trace the connection between the characters and that way a story or plot emerges.*

And she says that my style of writing is to allow the story to unfold on its own. I try not to structure my work too rigidly. So this is what she says. I do not have a specific structure to work with the beginning and middle, and then end. She lets the story to unfold to kind of expand on its own and that is a very interesting way to describe her writing style because in this particular fiction too if you notice the most important figure Ravi comes pretty late into the story.

We have a big description of the house all the children and then we have Manu who is spotted and finally comes Ravi. So he is not introduced a way ahead as this you know they will not of much of the writer. So we get their most important figures described at the beginning. So Anita Desai does not do that. So Ravi comes late into the picture and he seems to be at the end of a line as if he is also narratively apparently insignificant just as he is literally insignificant in the status code. So she communicates ideological significance through the narrative that she writes.

So that is something that was curious to note and she says that I try to trace the connection between the characters and that way a story or plot emerges and this is also a justified in the context of games at twilight. She says that the connection between the characters makes the story develop and as the story develops we see Raghu's connection with the other children makes or pushes the story to develop to its logical conclusion.

So Raghu spots this young boy Manu and then he goes after Ravi and the connection between Ravi and Raghu and how Ravi wants to kind of you know make up intervention in the circle of larger bigger children makes the story develop in a particular manner. So it is almost as if it has been you know unstructured. It has been not very chisel to the last detail in the sense of the plot, the connections, the familiar connections or the bonds between the characters makes the story organically develop and flourish.

But the most important thing in this particular work of fiction is the language. the imagistic language that Desai employs each and every word is rich in the multiple layers of significance it suggests and through that image building through that rich diction Anita Desai develops a story that kind of indicates that all is not well with the lower orders. Thank you for watching. I will continue in the next session.