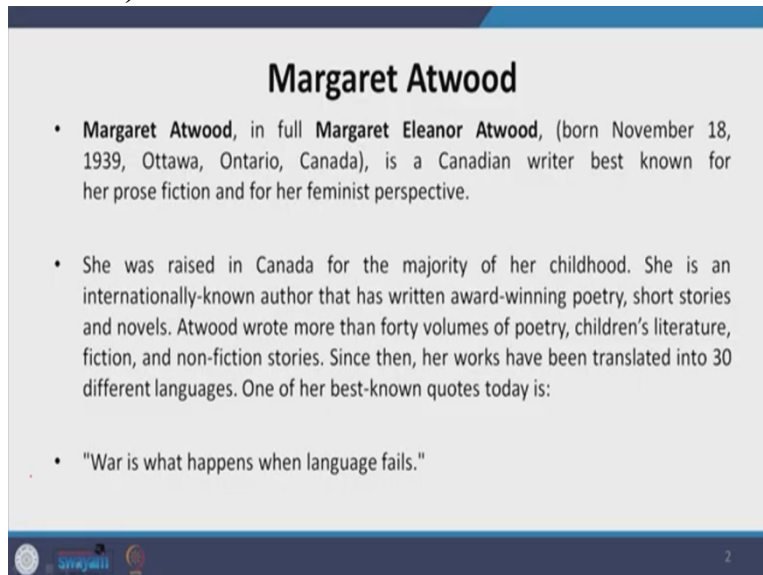


Narrative Mode and Fiction
Prof. Sarbani Banerjee
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology - Roorkee

Lecture - 43
Short Story in the Modern and Post-Modern Era - VII

Good morning and welcome to the lecture series on narrative mode and fiction we are discussing short story in modern and postmodern era. Today we are going to discuss a short story by Margaret Atwood. So Margaret Atwood whose full name is Margaret Eleanor Atwood was born in November 18, 1939 in Ontario, Canada. She is a Canadian writer best known, for her prose fiction and her feminist perspective.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:53)



Margaret Atwood

- **Margaret Atwood**, in full **Margaret Eleanor Atwood**, (born November 18, 1939, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada), is a Canadian writer best known for her prose fiction and for her feminist perspective.
- She was raised in Canada for the majority of her childhood. She is an internationally-known author that has written award-winning poetry, short stories and novels. Atwood wrote more than forty volumes of poetry, children's literature, fiction, and non-fiction stories. Since then, her works have been translated into 30 different languages. One of her best-known quotes today is:
- "War is what happens when language fails."

2

The feminist perspective that most of that is, at the heart of most of her writings Atwood was raised in Canada for the majority of her childhood. She is an internationally acclaimed author that has written award-winning poetry, short stories and novels. So one of her best known quotes today for which she is remembered is that war is what happens when language fails we are discussing a short story by Margaret Atwood titled happy endings.

So, happy endings is a short story or more accurately it could be seen as a piece of meta fiction so it was first published in Margaret Atwood's 1983 collection murder in the dark. The story has postmodern and meta fictional elements and offers 6 alternative storylines which feature a relationship between a man and a woman.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:54)

'Happy Endings' by Margaret Atwood

- 'Happy Endings' is a short story (or, more accurately, a piece of metafiction), which was first published in Margaret Atwood's 1983 collection, *Murder in the Dark*. The story has postmodern and metafictional elements, offering six alternative storylines which feature a relationship between a man and a woman.
- 'Happy Endings' is an example of **metafiction**: self-conscious fiction that is itself *about* fiction. It is a story about stories and storytelling.

Happy endings is an example of a meta fiction where the work becomes, self-conscious that and it comments about itself being an artifact, a fiction, a creation so it creates a distance between the work and the reader. The reader is also conscious about the artifices that are spawned through the process of storytelling through the process of making of a fiction it is a story about stories and a story about storytelling.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:29)

'Happy Endings' by Margaret Atwood

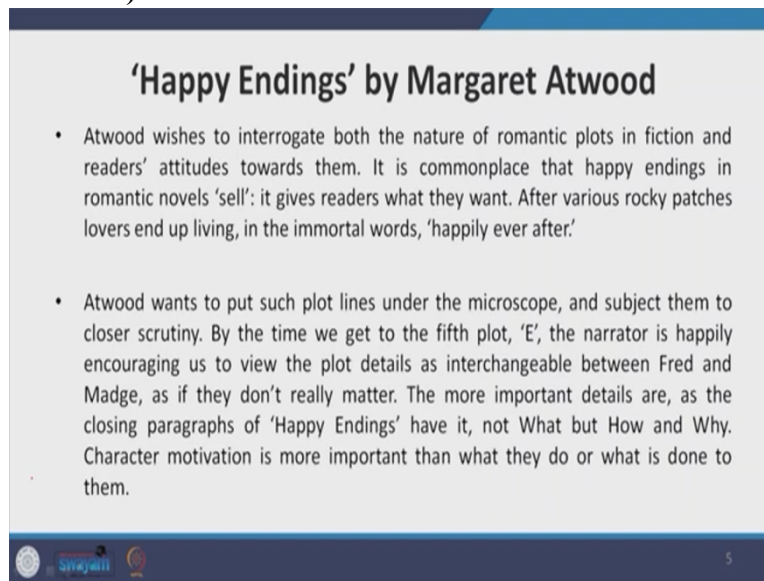
- Rather than work at creating a realist picture of John and Mary, the two protagonists of 'Happy Endings', so that the readers immerse ourselves in the story and view them as 'real' people, Atwood deliberately distances us from them, reminding us that they are nothing more than authorial constructs.
- Much of Atwood's story is about delineating the six different scenarios, each of which involves a relationship between a man and a woman. But as the story develops, the author breaks in on her characters more and more, 'breaking the fourth wall' to remind us that they are mere ciphers and that the things being described do not exist outside of the author's own head (and the reader's).

So rather than creating a realist picture of the 2 protagonists of happy endings namely John and Mary. Atwood deliberately distances the reader from the process of creation from the storytelling process reminding the reader that they are nothing more than. So the characters are nothing more than authorial constructs so this way the readers cannot immerse themselves in the story and start weaving John and Mary as real people.

There is this, distance between the work and the reading experience. Reading experience is more conscious. Much of Atwood's story is about delineating the 6 different scenarios each of which involve a relationship between a man and a woman. But as the story unfurls the author breaks in on her characters you know more and more. And in this way she breaks the fourth wall to remind us that they are mere ciphers, mere creations.

And that the things being described do not exist outside of the author's own head or for that matter the reader's own imagination.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:58)



The slide features a title 'Happy Endings' by Margaret Atwood in a bold, black font. Below the title are two bullet points. The first bullet point discusses how Atwood interrogates the nature of romantic plots and readers' attitudes, noting that happy endings in romantic novels 'sell' because they give readers what they want. The second bullet point explains that Atwood wants to put these plot lines under a microscope, subjecting them to closer scrutiny. It mentions that by the fifth plot, 'E', the narrator encourages readers to view plot details as interchangeable between Fred and Madge. The slide also includes a footer with a logo and the number 5.

'Happy Endings' by Margaret Atwood

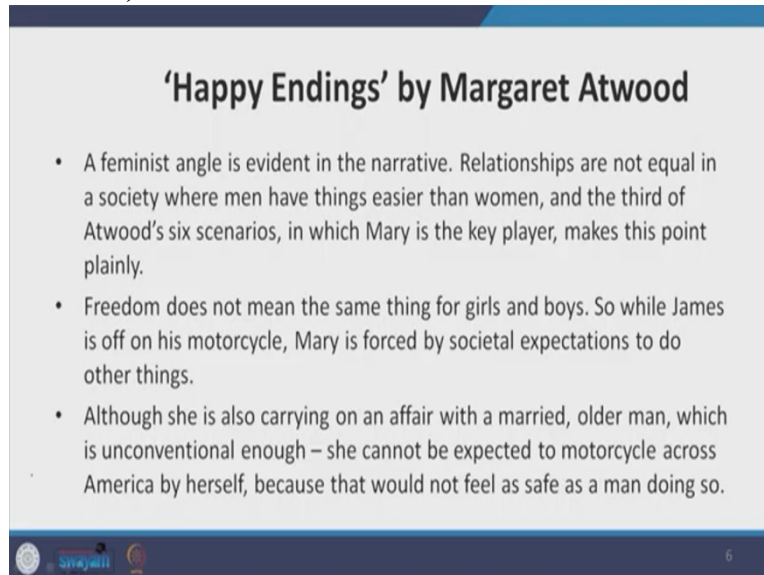
- Atwood wishes to interrogate both the nature of romantic plots in fiction and readers' attitudes towards them. It is commonplace that happy endings in romantic novels 'sell': it gives readers what they want. After various rocky patches lovers end up living, in the immortal words, 'happily ever after.'
- Atwood wants to put such plot lines under the microscope, and subject them to closer scrutiny. By the time we get to the fifth plot, 'E', the narrator is happily encouraging us to view the plot details as interchangeable between Fred and Madge, as if they don't really matter. The more important details are, as the closing paragraphs of 'Happy Endings' have it, not What but How and Why. Character motivation is more important than what they do or what is done to them.

Atwood wishes to interrogate both the nature of romantic plots in fiction and the reader's attitudes the traditionally how the readers treat them react to the romantic plots. It is commonplace that happy endings in romantic novels sell very well, people buy them people like them. It gives readers what they want it is a wishful closure to a narrative. After various rocky patches lovers usually end up living in the immortal words happily ever after.

Although there she questions she revisits such a phrase whether there can ever be; there ever was, there ever can be happily ever after anything of the sort. So Atwood wants to put such plot, lines under her microscope and subject them to closer scrutiny by the time we get to the fifth plot E. She calls the fifth plot as so A, B, C, D, E the narrator is happily encouraging the reader to view the plot details as interchangeable between Fred and Madge.

As if they do not really matter the more important details are as the closing paragraphs of happy endings have it, character motivation is more important than what they do or what is done to them.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:36)



'Happy Endings' by Margaret Atwood

- A feminist angle is evident in the narrative. Relationships are not equal in a society where men have things easier than women, and the third of Atwood's six scenarios, in which Mary is the key player, makes this point plainly.
- Freedom does not mean the same thing for girls and boys. So while James is off on his motorcycle, Mary is forced by societal expectations to do other things.
- Although she is also carrying on an affair with a married, older man, which is unconventional enough – she cannot be expected to motorcycle across America by herself, because that would not feel as safe as a man doing so.

Swapani 6

So a feminist angle is evident in the narrative where relationships are shown as not equal in a society men have their things easier than women. And the; third of Atwood's 6 scenarios show Mary as the key player where this point is made more apparent. Freedom does not mean the same thing for girls and boys. So while James is off, on his motorcycle Mary is forced by societal expectations to do other things.

So although she is also carrying on an affair with a married older man which is unconventional enough. She however cannot be expected to similarly traveling a motorcycle across America by herself because, that would not feel safe like it would in the case of a man.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:41)

'Happy Endings' by Margaret Atwood

- 'Happy Endings' is a postmodern story that freely and self-consciously announces itself as metafiction, as being more interested in *how* stories work than in telling a story itself. But within the narratives Atwood presents to us, she also addresses some of the inequalities between men and women, and exposes how relationships are rarely a level playing field for the two sexes.
- According to critic Reingard M. Nischik, Margaret Atwood is "a chronicler of our times, exposing and warning, disturbing and comforting, opening up chasms of meaning as soon as she closes them, and challenging us to question conventions and face up to hitherto unarticulated truths" (159).

So, happy endings is the postmodern story that freely and, self-consciously announces itself as a metafiction as being more interested in how stories work than in telling a story itself. So it is a story about how stories happen and what should not be expected what one should expect where to look at in a story. Or through a storytelling process within the narratives Atwood presents to us she also addresses some of the inequalities between men and women.

And exposes how relationships are rarely a level playing field between the 2 sexes. According to Reingard M. Nischik Margaret Atwood is I quote, a chronicler of our times exposing and warning disturbing and comforting opening up chasms of meaning as soon as she closes them. And she challenging us, to question conventions and face up to hit her to unarticulated truths unquote.

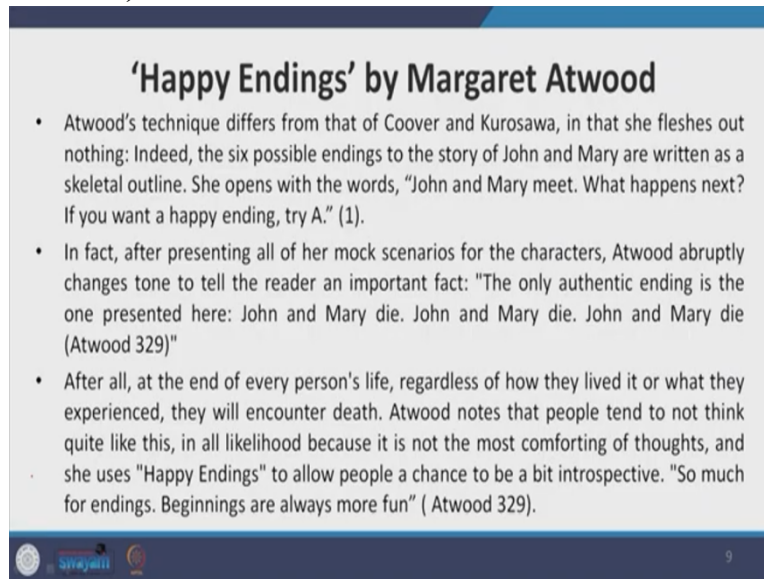
(Refer Slide Time: 07:42)

'Happy Endings' by Margaret Atwood

- "Happy Endings" can be compared to Robert Coover's "The Babysitter," in which the author offers several possibilities of what happens to the babysitter, leaving the decision to the reader's imagination; and Akira Kurosawa's 1951 film *Roshomon*, which depicts the rape of a bride and the murder of her husband through various eyewitness accounts; it demonstrates the near-impossibility of arriving at the actual "truth" of the events.

So happy endings can be, compared to Robert Coover's *The Babysitter* in which the author offers several possibilities of what happens to the babysitter leaving the decision ultimately to the reader's imagination. And it could also be compared to Akira Kurosawa's, 1951 film *Roshomon* which depicts the rape of a bride and the murder of her husband through various eyewitness accounts. It demonstrates the near impossibility of arriving at one actual final and singular truth of any given event.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:22)



The slide features a title 'Happy Endings' by Margaret Atwood in a bold, black font. Below the title is a bulleted list of three points. The first point discusses Atwood's skeletal outline technique. The second point describes the abrupt change in tone to a fatal ending. The third point reflects on the universality of death and the author's use of 'happy endings' for introspection. The slide has a blue header and footer with a small logo in the bottom left corner.

'Happy Endings' by Margaret Atwood

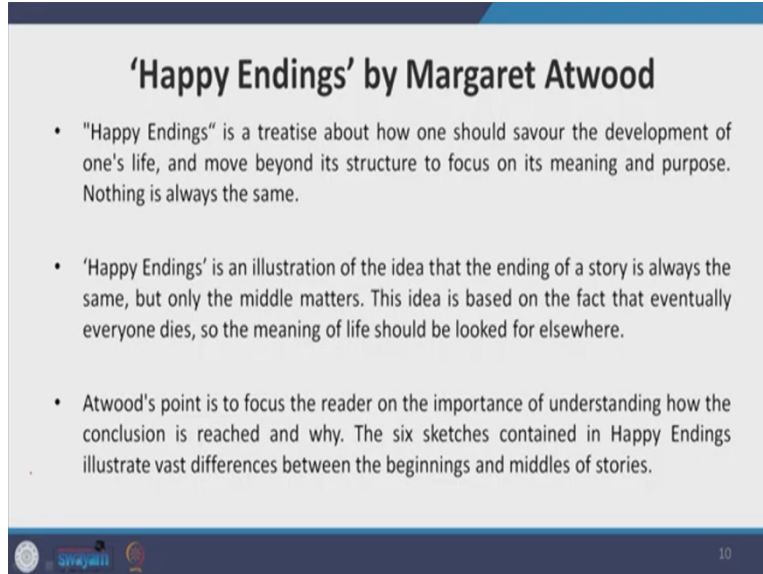
- Atwood's technique differs from that of Coover and Kurosawa, in that she fleshes out nothing: Indeed, the six possible endings to the story of John and Mary are written as a skeletal outline. She opens with the words, "John and Mary meet. What happens next? If you want a happy ending, try A." (1).
- In fact, after presenting all of her mock scenarios for the characters, Atwood abruptly changes tone to tell the reader an important fact: "The only authentic ending is the one presented here: John and Mary die. John and Mary die. John and Mary die (Atwood 329)"
- After all, at the end of every person's life, regardless of how they lived it or what they experienced, they will encounter death. Atwood notes that people tend to not think quite like this, in all likelihood because it is not the most comforting of thoughts, and she uses "Happy Endings" to allow people a chance to be a bit introspective. "So much for endings. Beginnings are always more fun" (Atwood 329).

So Atwood's technique differs from that of Coover and Kurosawa in that she fleshes out nothing indeed the 6 possible endings to the story of John and Mary are written as a skeletal outlined only to be filled up through active reading process. Through the readers traveling the other half way and using their applying their own imagination she opens with the words I quote John and Mary meet what happens next?

If you want a happy ending try A unquote in fact after presenting all of her mock scenarios for the characters Atwood abruptly change tone to tell the reader an important fact the only authentic ending is the one presented here. John and Mary die, John and Mary die, John and Mary die unquote. After all the end of every person's life regardless of how they have lived their life or what they experienced is in encountering death.

So Atwood notes that people tend to not think quite like this in all likelihood because it is not the most comforting of thoughts. And so she uses happy endings to allow people a chance to be a little introspective to think what is in the end, in the end whether, happy or sad so much for endings beginnings are always more fun she would say.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:02)



'Happy Endings' by Margaret Atwood

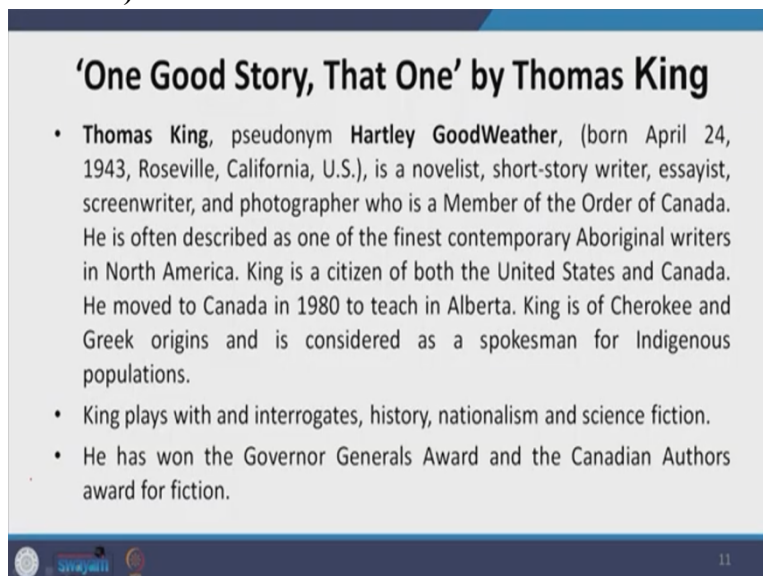
- "Happy Endings" is a treatise about how one should savour the development of one's life, and move beyond its structure to focus on its meaning and purpose. Nothing is always the same.
- 'Happy Endings' is an illustration of the idea that the ending of a story is always the same, but only the middle matters. This idea is based on the fact that eventually everyone dies, so the meaning of life should be looked for elsewhere.
- Atwood's point is to focus the reader on the importance of understanding how the conclusion is reached and why. The six sketches contained in Happy Endings illustrate vast differences between the beginnings and middles of stories.

swayam 10

Happy endings is a treatise about how one should savor the development of one's life and move beyond its structures to focus on its meaning and purpose nothing remains the same always. So happy endings a is an illustration of the idea that the ending of a story is always the same it could be the death and therefore the middle matters more what happens in the middle is should be of more interest, it should be something that the reader wants to you know unpack and decipher further.

This idea is based on the fact that eventually everyone dies so the meaning of life should be looked for elsewhere. So Atwood's point is to focus the reader on the importance of understanding how, the conclusion is reached and why? The 6 sketches contain in happy endings illustrate vast differences between the beginnings and the middle of stories.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:27)



'One Good Story, That One' by Thomas King

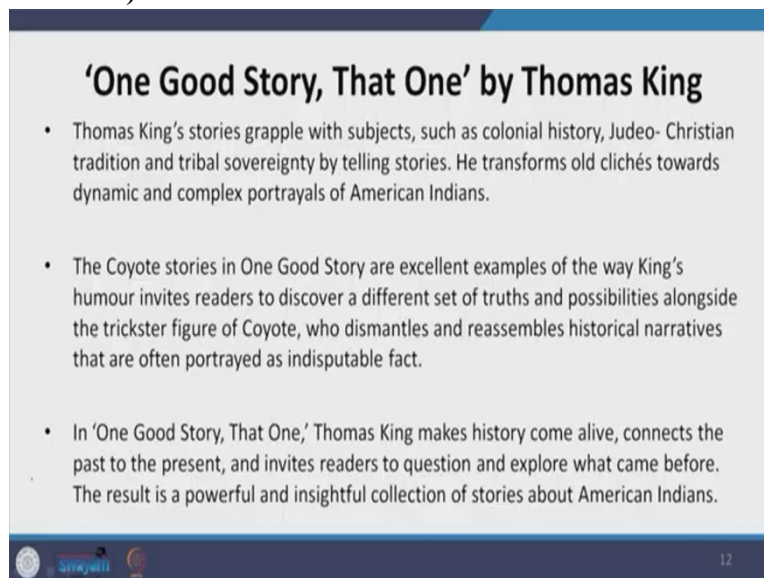
- **Thomas King**, pseudonym **Hartley GoodWeather**, (born April 24, 1943, Roseville, California, U.S.), is a novelist, short-story writer, essayist, screenwriter, and photographer who is a Member of the Order of Canada. He is often described as one of the finest contemporary Aboriginal writers in North America. King is a citizen of both the United States and Canada. He moved to Canada in 1980 to teach in Alberta. King is of Cherokee and Greek origins and is considered as a spokesman for Indigenous populations.
- King plays with and interrogates, history, nationalism and science fiction.
- He has won the Governor Generals Award and the Canadian Authors award for fiction.

swayam 11

After this I will move to our next story and discussion so the story is titled one good story that one by Thomas King. Thomas King is the pseudonym of Hartley Good Weather he was born in April 24, 1943 in Roseville, California, U.S. He is a novelist, short story writer, essayist, screenwriter and photographer also a member of the Order of Canada. He is often described as one of the finer contemporary aboriginal writers in North America.

He is a citizen both of the U.S and Canada so King is of Cherokee and Greek origins and he is considered as a spokesperson for indigenous populations. King likes to play with and interrogate the history and, thereby bring in the question of indigenous peoples rights indigenous peoples way of greatly disrupted through colonial intervention through colonization he is also interested in science fiction. King has won the governor general's award and the Canadian author's award for fiction.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:56)



'One Good Story, That One' by Thomas King

- Thomas King's stories grapple with subjects, such as colonial history, Judeo- Christian tradition and tribal sovereignty by telling stories. He transforms old clichés towards dynamic and complex portrayals of American Indians.
- The Coyote stories in One Good Story are excellent examples of the way King's humour invites readers to discover a different set of truths and possibilities alongside the trickster figure of Coyote, who dismantles and reassembles historical narratives that are often portrayed as indisputable fact.
- In 'One Good Story, That One,' Thomas King makes history come alive, connects the past to the present, and invites readers to question and explore what came before. The result is a powerful and insightful collection of stories about American Indians.

12

Thomas King's stories grapple with subjects such as colonial history like I said the Judeo-Christian tradition that, tries to replace and dominate the indigenous way of living and being. And he constantly focuses on the question of tribal sovereignty, indigenous sovereignty through telling stories he transforms old cliches towards dynamic and complex portrayals of American Indians.

The Coyote stories in One Good Story are excellent examples of the way King's humor invites readers to discover different set of truths and possibilities, alongside the trickster figure of Coyote that dismantles and reassembles historical narratives that are often portrayed as indisputable facts. So put in simpler words the colonial version the colonizers version

about the indigenous people their lives are often understood as derogatory as belittling and quite besides the reality of indigenous lives.

So the colonizers lens make the indigenous lives quite besides what they really are there are I mean it leads to dilution and vulgarization of meaning something that Thomas King wants to take up through his act of storytelling. So just like the colonizers map making act, his act of narrating about another community cannot be taken as final and indisputable there has to be a version an alternate reality coming from within these communities as well.

So in One Good Story that one Thomas King, makes a history come live connects the past to the present and invites the readers to question and explore what came before who came before did the white men really discover the indigenous people and their lands. Or where they already pre-existing; even before these discoveries because, Columbus's discovery is made to be understood in mainstream history in a way as though the indigenous people had not existed prior to Christopher Columbus finding them.

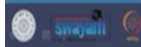
So it is made to seem as though Christopher Columbus finds him for the first time and they did not even exists their lands their you know social, cultural, geographical truths did not exist prior to Christopher Columbus locating them. So, the result of Thomas King's stories is a powerful and insightful narration about American Indians from within their communities so it is the lens that is turned around.

It is not the gaze of the colonizer on the indigenous men the native American Indians but the other way around how they choose to be looked at? How they choose to depict themselves? What they think about the Judeo-Christian myths? So, the gaze is returned.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:37)

'One Good Story, That One' by Thomas King

- Thomas King tells the readers what happens when between a narrator's cumulative memory and the listener's fluid faculty of hearing and imagination, a camera, a recorder and a microphone sit fat, determined to give a freezing closure to all curiosities and doubts about the "Red Indian" lifestyle.
- The indigenous people extend their familial propinquity to their surrounding macrocosm both animate and inanimate, and this relationship with nature defines their own existential and spiritual relevance. That is why, the colonial intention of hijacking names is synonymous with rendering a group of people with facelessness. Kristina Aurylaitė argues in her essay that "acts of (mis)naming are manifestations of power as they include or exclude, allow or deny access" (8), thereby divesting an individual body of its reality (which is one's assertive performative presence) and insistently reducing it to representation.



Thomas King tells the readers what happens when between a narrator's cumulative memory and the listeners fluid faculty of hearing and imagination there is a camera, a recorder and a microphone that are determined to freeze you know that are determined to freeze narratives about the Red Indian lifestyle. So the Red Indian is already an offensive word, an offensive term as such, used by the white men for the indigenous people.

So the desire to record everything to find the authentic version there is a violence that can be extended by these modern devices they can be seen as intrusive into the natural existence of the indigenous people and the curiosities and doubts. And the questions about the authentic Red Indian lifestyle that make the colonizers, the white men you know penetrate the indigenous communities there.

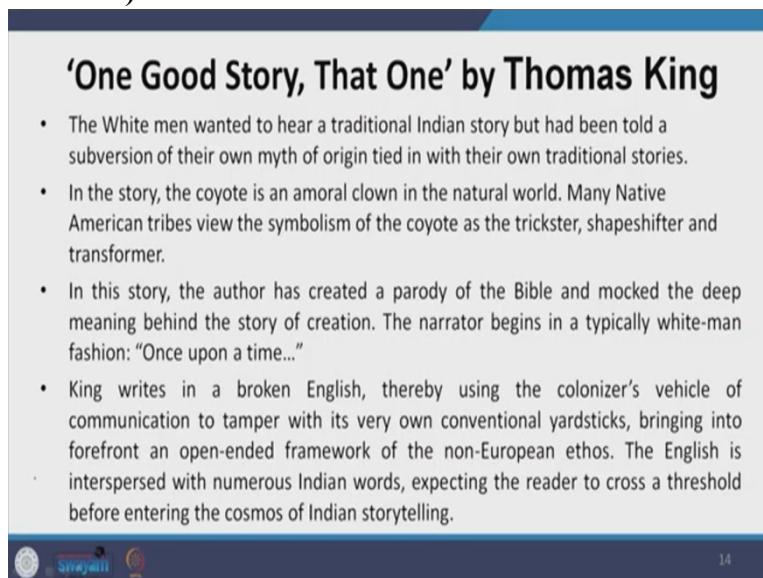
And enter into their communities unwarranted the indigenous people extend their familial propinquity to their surrounding macrocosm both animate and inanimate. So they have a very different world view from that of the Euro American lifestyle and their relationship with the nature. Therefore defines their own existential and spiritual, relevance that is why when the colonial intention is there to hijack the names of the mountains and their rivers.

It is seen as synonymous with rendering a group of people with facelessness. So all these rivers and mountains had indigenous names till the colonizers came changed the names the indigenous names to English names and their own existence was imperiled thereby. These indigenous, people were rendered with some sort of you know some kind of facelessness they suffered and identity crisis as a result.

So Kristina Aurylaite argues I quote that the act of misnaming our manifestations of power as they include or exclude allow or deny access unquote thereby divesting an individual body of its reality and insistently reducing it to representation. So that is what indigenous people have been reduced to through the mainstream history books and the anthropological exploits that they have suffered.

They have been reduced from their discursive realities to into you know very stereotypical representation, something representations that suit the colonizers gaze and understanding.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:41)



The slide features a title at the top, followed by a bulleted list of four points. At the bottom, there is a footer with a logo and the number 14.

'One Good Story, That One' by Thomas King

- The White men wanted to hear a traditional Indian story but had been told a subversion of their own myth of origin tied in with their own traditional stories.
- In the story, the coyote is an amoral clown in the natural world. Many Native American tribes view the symbolism of the coyote as the trickster, shapeshifter and transformer.
- In this story, the author has created a parody of the Bible and mocked the deep meaning behind the story of creation. The narrator begins in a typically white-man fashion: "Once upon a time..."
- King writes in a broken English, thereby using the colonizer's vehicle of communication to tamper with its very own conventional yardsticks, bringing into forefront an open-ended framework of the non-European ethos. The English is interspersed with numerous Indian words, expecting the reader to cross a threshold before entering the cosmos of Indian storytelling.

swayan 14

So in One Good Story that one by Thomas King we see that the white men are interested in a, traditional Indian story. But they are instead being given a subversion of their own myth of origin which is tied to their own traditional stories we see a subversion of the Judeo-Christian myth over here. As told from the vantage point of the indigenous person in the story the coyote is an immoral clown in the natural world.

So when we say a moral we mean that the moral yardsticks, said by the Euro American groups of people are not abided by the coyote. Coyote does not subscribe to the notions of morality and immorality that define the Eurocentric the Euro-American world many native tribes view the symbolism of this coyote as a trickster, as a shape shifter and transformer. So at this moment it could be a fox the other moment it would take the shape of a human in the story.

The author, has created the parody a comic inversion of the bible and mocked the deep meaning behind the story of creation. So the narrator begins in a typical white man fashion once upon a time we know that the western narrative has a specific beginning middle and end and he is trying to put the more discursive existence. The more discursive realities of the indigenous people within this mold of once, upon a time which ends typically with a happily ever after.

But that is not how life happens life is lived by the indigenous communities so this is most certainly a mockery of the western style of documentation which has a linear progression. And which has a very definitive closure so King here writes in a broken English and thereby he uses the colonizer's vehicle their language of communication as a way of tampering with the very their own conventional yardsticks.

So he is a mish mashing English with indigenous languages so we see that this brings to forefront an open-ended framework of the non-European ethos. So English being interspersed with the indigenous words and this creates a kind of threshold at least some difficulty that the reader ought to face as a way of crossing you know the border and entering the cosmos of the Indian storytelling.

So it is never a smooth entry into the indigenous person space they have to understand the alternate world system that the indigenous people inhabit. And that is how they can appreciate what the indigenous stories are about if we are reaching an indigenous person with our camera and our recorder we might not be able to grasp all the realities. So this is a criticism of the epistemic violence the anthropological gaze and here we see the counter gaze the indigenous person looks back at the colonizer.

(Refer Slide Time: 23:31)

'One Good Story, That One' by Thomas King

- Throughout the short story, the native man is playing a trick on the three anthropologists visiting from out of town. Through the Biblical story and retelling God's word, he is revisiting the Judeo-Christian belief.
- The story he tells is no other than his own version of the Genesis. He has God creating the world, including a television and a grocery store, and a "not so smart" Ah-damn and a clever Evening, "she be Indian woman".
- With the reversal of the original myth of Genesis, One Good Story, That One deflates this entire predatory paradigm. Playing with the singularity and plurality of God and distorting the names of Adam and Eve into Ah-damn and Evening, the desire for an 'original' Native story is frustrated with a traditional Judeo-Christian tale.

So throughout the short story the native man is playing a trick on the 3 anthropologists that have visited from out of the town and through the biblical story and retelling of god's word he is revisiting the Judeo-Christian belief. The story he does is the same as genesis so only a little bit of subversion of the original genesis. So he has god creating the world including a television and a grocery store.

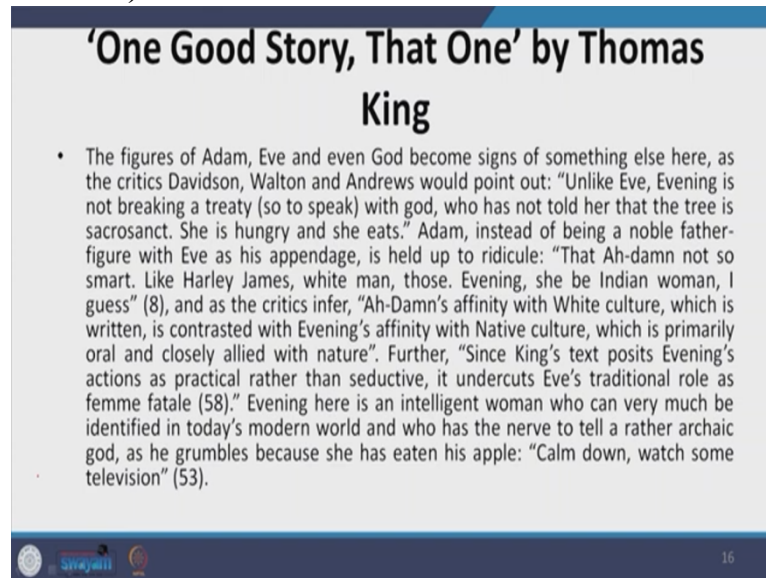
And god being not so smart referring to the Adam and Eve story of creation referring to Eva's evening and calling her she be Indian woman. So this is also a referenced to how the colonizers made inroads into, the indigenous communities through selling modern objects, modern commodities to them that the indigenous people had never seen before. So in exchange for a grocery store or a television products of modernity.

Their lands their you know heirlooms that they had bequeathed as ancestral positions were taken away from them the indigenous people find this exchange is a raw deal. Wherein exchange for various modern communities such as television, grocery store, match sticks that the indigenous people have not seen before their lands, their ancestor's lands were taken away from them you know things that they consider as heirloom.

As something that they have inherited from their ancestors so with the reversal of the original myth of genesis One Good Story that one deflates this entire predatory paradigm that the white anthropologists had you know created that they posited playing with the singularity and plurality of god. And distorting the names of Adam and Eve into Ah-damn and Evening the desire for the original native story is constantly flouted and frustrated.

And what we get in exchange is a distorted Judeo-Christian tale I am going to read a little bit from the story. So this is an excerpt it is hilarious but it is also very insightful about how the indigenous people indigenous communities feel about the anthropological gaze that colonizer's mission.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:57)



'One Good Story, That One' by Thomas King

- The figures of Adam, Eve and even God become signs of something else here, as the critics Davidson, Walton and Andrews would point out: "Unlike Eve, Evening is not breaking a treaty (so to speak) with god, who has not told her that the tree is sacrosanct. She is hungry and she eats." Adam, instead of being a noble father-figure with Eve as his appendage, is held up to ridicule: "That Ah-damn not so smart. Like Harley James, white man, those. Evening, she be Indian woman, I guess" (8), and as the critics infer, "Ah-Damn's affinity with White culture, which is written, is contrasted with Evening's affinity with Native culture, which is primarily oral and closely allied with nature". Further, "Since King's text posits Evening's actions as practical rather than seductive, it undercuts Eve's traditional role as femme fatale (58)." Evening here is an intelligent woman who can very much be identified in today's modern world and who has the nerve to tell a rather archaic god, as he grumbles because she has eaten his apple: "Calm down, watch some television" (53).

The figures of Adam Eve and even god become science of something else here as the critics you know Davidson, Walton and Andrews would point out. I quote from the critics here I quote from the story here unlike Eve, evening is not breaking a treaty. So to speak with god who has not told her that the tree is sacrosanct she is hungry and she eats unquote. Adam instead of being treated or projected as a novel for the; figure with Eve as his appendage.

So Eve being a lesser human that we find in traditional biblical narration is being held up to ridicule so Adam is being ridiculed quoting once again from this story that Adam not so, smart. Like Harley James, white man those evening she be Indian woman I guess unquote. And then the critics infer Ah-Damn's affinity with white culture which is written is contrasted with Evening's affinity with native culture which is primarily oral.

And closely allied with nature and further the critics say since King's text posits Evening's actions as practical rather than seductive it, undercuts Eve's traditional role as femme fatale quote. So Evening here is an intelligent woman who can very much be identified in today's modern world and who has the nerve to tell a rather archaic god as he grumbles because she

has eaten his apple calm down watch some television. So she has this punk she has the guts to tell god you just calm down and watch some television.

(Refer Slide Time: 27:52)

'One Good Story, That One' by Thomas King

- In his version, Ah-damn and Evening are also expelled from the garden of "Evening" – "just like Indian today" – by an angered God because they ate the "mee-so" and Ah-damn lied about the number he ate. He nearly forgets the snake in the story but remembers to add it at the end, hissing because Evening has stuck an apple in its mouth. This is a comic inversion.
- This parody of the biblical myth is hilarious and the story as a whole is absurd and clever. King denounces the way White men appropriate Indian tales and properties in a humorous manner. The first thing that strike the readers is the rhythm, which is reminiscent of the way native storytellers narrate a story.
- King identifies that the epistemic violence inflicted by the Western scriptural knowledge had commenced with the colonial intention of fixing polarities between the indigenous and the Western patterns of living, as well as through re-producing the non-Western 'Other' in terms of Western standards of ideals. King's counter-discourse necessitates the binary between right and wrong, written and oral, to fall apart.

In this version we see Adam, and Evening are also expelled from the garden of evening just as the Indians are disposed of their lands of their ancestors by an anger at god because they ate the mee-so. And Adam lied about the number he ate he nearly forgets the snake in the story and so we have the role of the snake in the original biblical myth. And but here the snake the figure of the snake is foisted as an afterthought.

So, there is playing with the myth actually the snake is suddenly remembered and added in the end and the snake is you know hissing. Because Evening or Eve that is has comically stuck an apple in his mouth out and this is precisely what comic inversion is about. So the parody of the biblical myth is hilarious and the story as a whole is absurd and very, very sharp and clever. King denounces the way white, men appropriate Indian people's tales.

And properties and he is doing that he is commenting on this appropriation in a humorous manner. The first thing that strike the readers is the rhythm which is reminiscent of the way native story tellers narrate a story. So storytelling is part and parcel of the native indigenous you know indigenous traditions and they do not have documentation as part of their culture stories about them, it is about their you know their heirloom their ancestors pass from one generation to another through you know listening and repeating, retelling.

So King identifies the epistemic violence inflicted by the western scriptural knowledge had already commenced with the colonial intention of trying to fix polarities between the indigenous and the western patterns of living. And such that the non-western other is produced in terms of the western standards of ideals they are from the western man's eyes the non-western person is already always inferior their qualities, their ways of life, their existence are considered as a non-standard inferior.

So Kings counter discourse here is trying to necessitate the binary between it is trying to debunk the binary, between right and wrong, written oral. And then we see that these binaries created through the western eye eventually falls apart in the story so here I would like to stop our discussion today and we let us meet again for another round of discussions in our ensuing lecture. Thank you.