

Course Name: The Novel and Change

Professor Name: Dr. Avishek Parui

Department Name: Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Institute Name: IIT Madras

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Lecture 38

R. K. Narayan's The Guide - Part 5

So, hi and welcome to this NPTEL course titled The Novel and change. We will continue reading R.K. Narayan's novel The Guide, which you have started reading it already. Now, I may have mentioned this earlier and we may have read this passage in some details earlier, but it is worth repeating because it is interesting to see how Narayan uses a piece of journalism over here, a local news about a saint who was supposedly trying to bring rains to a place near Mysore and how he uses this particular information. to generate a story or generate a plot. And this should be on your screen, which makes also, in a very interesting way, the novel something very situated in Indian-ness, despite the fact that this was written in America. This was written when he was in a Rockefeller Fellowship in Berkeley, as you know already. But the situation, the emotion, the entire discursive design in the guide is profoundly Indian and obviously it is an India which is changing, which is why this novel is such an important text for us in a study of a course like The Novel and Change. So this should be on your screen. The guide may have been written in Berkeley, but like Narayan's two previous novels, The Financial Expert and Waiting for the Mahatma, his more immediate origins came from an actual Indian source, so a piece of journalistic source. And when asked in an interview about the possibility of elements in a novel having been transformed by his American experiences, he referred to it as totally Indian, right? So again, the totality of Indian-ness is important over here. And now there's a passage about what happened in Mysore apparently, and this is from Narayan's book My Days.

A recent situation in Mysore offered a setting for such a story. A severe drought had dried up all the rivers and tanks. Krishna Rajasagar, an enormous reservoir of feeding channels

that irrigated thousands of acres, had also become dry, and its bed, a hundred and fifty feet deep, was now exposed to the sky with fissures and cracks, revealing an ancient submerged temple. coconut stumps and dehydrated crocodiles. As a desperate measure, the Municipal Council organized a prayer for rains. A group of Brahmins stood knee-deep in water, procured at great cost on the dry bed of the cavalry, fasted, prayed and chanted certain mantras continuously for eleven days. On the twelfth day it rained and brought relief to the countryside. So this obviously was something which is reported in the media. Narayan obviously takes it but he makes it very, very ambivalent and very open-ended which is why it is a novel, it is one of the most famous novels written in Indian English which has a really profound open-ended conclusion. It is not conclusive at all in that sense because we do not know whether the rains actually come at the end of the guide or they do not. We just have Raju's affirmation that he can feel it coming up his feet. This potential for alternative interpretations afforded by this episode clearly made this ideal grist for Narayan's fictional mill. More than just this, the exposure of the ancient temple that had lain beneath the waters of the modern reservoir, an event which Narayan takes over in the guide, served as a metonym for the notion of an archaeologically layered India. So this idea of a hidden India under the surface India the archaeological complexity of India is something that Narayan also taps into, the hidden memories, the hidden sites, the hidden reserves, and all that palimpsest-like quality about India. And again, if you look at it from a cultural perspective, this is ancient India, which is just beneath the modern, moving India, and that complexity of the country, the complexity of a very polyphonic culture is very much there, palpably present in Narayan's fiction.

So, albeit one in which the different strata were coming to exist contiguously rather than in a temporal sequence since an ancient infrastructure was now present on the surface, right. So, there is this constant tension as well as collaboration between ancientness and newness which you see happening in Narayan as well because there are some structures which are both sentimental and physical and archaeological structures which are quite ancient and then you have this new mobile almost anxious India trying to enter the global market in terms of tourism and market and you know capitalism and all the rest of it, right. So that is also there in the guide. So predictably the ambiguity over whether supernatural,

supernatural or normal meteorological forces were responsible for the coming of the rain to the area around the Krishna Raja Sagar Reservoir is carried over into the novel. Where notwithstanding the views of some of Narayan's critics, who have been eager to detect a causal relationship between Raju's fasting and the presumed end of the drought, the conclusion leaves the issue of whether spiritual intervention has occurred open. It's a very open conclusion. We don't quite know. We can never really say with any conviction whether there is actually a supernatural, a spiritual *Duex Machina* where the rains actually come as an act of God intervening and how, if this is actually an effect, direct causal effect of Raju's fasting. Because rains don't come, as in we don't see the rains come. All we have is Raju's words for it, that he can feel the rains coming. In the guide, the group of Brahmins is replaced by a single Sadhu. So Raju is this reluctant spiritual seer as it were and he is obviously at the beginning of the novel, he is a bit of a tourist guide, a con man if you will. he's called the Railway Raju because again the arrival of railways as we have mentioned already really creates a change in the economy of that particular town, how the time space become episodic in quality, how that generates new professions, a new economy and Raju is very much opposed railway child and from that to become a seer, from that to become a spiritual you know prophet of some capacity is a really interesting transformation that we see in the guide And of course, in between, he becomes the agent of Rosie, Rosie being the dancer, the Bharatanatyam dancer, who becomes a celebrity, which again connects to the emerging culture of the celebrity in India with the film industry and everything else and how Raju becomes the manager. So again, the manager of a celebrity is a new profession in this newly emerging nation. So, we have all these different complexities woven in, in very, very entangled ways in the guide.

So, in the guide, the group of Brahmins is replaced by a single Sadhu, the reluctant former tourist guide Raju, who has resisted the burden of sainthood imposed on him by the villagers among whom he finds himself and remains a suspect holy man to the very last. So we never quite know whether he actually becomes a holy man or he's just pretending to be one, whether he's performing one. And in a novel where everything is quite performative in a sense that different kinds of identities are performed, different professions are performed, even spirituality becomes something of a performance in this novel as well,

which is why it is very difficult to demarcate the genuine spiritual seer with the superficial performer. Weakened by hunger, he says he can feel the rain coming from the hills. All we have, as I mentioned, is Raj's words. He can say that the rains are coming up the hills, but that's all we have. We don't really see the rains. And although this may suggest the end of the drought is imminent, the open ending leaves this unresolved. Numerous critics seem to have missed this point. And the range of misreadings of the ending perpetrated by critics is a striking example of the extent to which books read people just as people read books. The actual words of the closing sentence are as follows. So this is the final sentence of the novel. It was difficult to hold Raju on his feet as he had a tendency to flop down. They held him as if he were a baby. So, there's this infantilizing image over here. He's becoming a baby. It's almost like traveling back in time. Raji opened his eyes, looked about and said, Velan is raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs. He sagged down. So the sagging at the end is indicative and is a baby image as well. The idea of traveling back in time, becoming an infant again, but it's also an indicator of the end of Raju. Maybe he's about to die. We don't quite know. So, there's a very interesting temporal plurality over here.

A sense of going back in time like a baby as well as a sense of going forward in time leaping towards death or sagging towards death as it were. But none of this is actually resolved or depicted any degree of comprehensive clarity which is why it is quite unclear and quite inconclusive which is what makes the novel very very complexly enigmatic in quality. Various issues remain undecided. The text not only leaves the question of Raju's possible promotion to sainthood open, it also fails to offer any kind of definitive information on whether the rains are actually coming whether Raju's eventual fate, what Raju's eventual fate will be. We don't know if he is going to die, we don't know if he is going to become a famous saint and the rains actually do come or the rains don't come and he is exposed as a con man. So all these openings, all these interpreted possibilities are open and none of which are actually indicated with any heavy handedness in the novel. At least two eminent critics have said that if he dies, that he dies at the end of the novel, and others refer to his losing consciousness. But sagging down is hardly conclusive evidence of either. So sagging down could just be physical exhaustion. It may or may not mean

death. It may or may not mean losing consciousness. Similarly, although the people of the local village, Mangala, which is a name which denotes spiritual auspiciousness, you know, something which is lucky, fortunate, Mangala, convince themselves that Raja is a saint, particularly when he is seen to be fasting to break the drought, he initially deceives them by eating in secret. And again, so there is this con man quality about Raju that fact that he comes from a railway background which is you know an economy of opportunism an economy of profit making an economy of episodic space time where nothing is stable where identities are unstable identities are episodic and the entire chronotope becomes episodic so from that to become a saint is obviously a big leap so we don't know whether he actually becomes a saint and there are a lot of indications in the novel where he is secretly eating while claiming to be fasting so that undercuts any uh seamless reception of Raju's sainthood. So, it remains a moot point as to whether or not he subsequently undergoes a transformation. It is equally uncertain whether the rains he anticipates will, as in real life, inspiration for the story arrive, and if so, whether they will have been sent by Providence. So, as was mentioned by Narayan, there was this miracle story about a group of priests who brought the rains with myself.

But this novel doesn't say that. There's a very interesting open-endedness, which is what makes a novel somewhere liminally located between a secular novel and a spiritual novel. So the guide can both be a tourist guide, a railway guide, someone very secular, very profane, very market-oriented. It can also be the guide in a spiritual sense of the word, as a seer, a prophet. So both openings are possible and they can be equally accommodated. The crucial point is, of course, that Narayan chooses to end the novel here with all his issues unresolved. So, this really interesting polyphonic open-endedness of Guide is what makes it so fascinating as a novel. The fact that we return to it even today is a case in point, corroborates the greatness of the novel. Commenting on the Guide on a later occasion, he said, I did not know what happened to Raju in the end. In an essay on the life of writing, he expressed exasperation at interviewers who asked him whether Raju dies at the end of the story or whether it rained after all, in this case demonstrating a particular irritation at being asked the question by those who had only seen the film version of the novel, by which he felt betrayed the spirit of his original. So, some of you would know a very famous

film was made on the guide with Dev Anand, the great actor Dev Anand playing Raju's role. And it was a really big success as a film and it made a lot of money. The box office is cited as a very fine piece of filmmaking. But Narayan obviously didn't like it and he thought that the film betrayed the sentiment of the novel. And there are interviews when Narayan is particularly irritated on being asked whether he knows what happens to Raju.

He said, well, I just left it at that. It's open to interpretation. And there are people who just saw the film and came to ask him questions which irritated him even more. In short, the guide resists any form of closure. The ending raises the possibilities that some kind of spiritual transformation may be taking place within Raju and that this may be accompanied by divine intervention to end the drought. But the final scenes are narrated in a death-pan, documentary-like manner, leaving the possibilities that Raju remains a charlatan and that the drought will continue as reasonable alternative inferences. Right? So the very fact that the narrative doesn't become sentimental, the narrative doesn't succumb to any kind of a spiritual sentiment is an interesting point because it remains, as the writer says over here, very deadpan, very journalistic. It's just giving the information as it were, almost like a documentary. And that keeps it even more open-ended because if the narrative betrayed any spiritual tension or any spiritual proclivity at this point, that would have created some, you know, maybe people would have just gone on and you know championed the reading with more amplification. But the fact that it is a very deadpan description makes it even more open-ended. Right, now there is a comparison between that M. K. Naik, the famous Indian critic makes between the *Mystic Masseur* by V. S. Naipaul and of course the *Guide* and how both novels compare and contrast with each other in some sense. So, comparing the novel with V.S. Naipaul's *The Mystic Masseur*, published in 1957, which also deals with the supposed metamorphosis of a rogue hero into a holy man, M.K. Naik suggests that the guide is finally very different from Naipaul's very slightly earlier novel, since in this case the hero is transformed from a picaro into a pilgrim. With Naipaul, the transformation, those of you who have read the novel, it is a very fine novel, I recommend it. very, very heavily, the *Mystic Masseur*, but there in the novel it is quite clear that there is a transformation from a rogue agent to a genuine spiritual person.

Certainly, there is a difference. Naipaul's protagonist Ganesh fairly obviously remains a charlatan to the very end, although the ironic technique precludes his being said as many words, right. In Naipaul, it is less inconclusive in that sense, but Narayan's neutrality, and like I said, there's a sense that Narayan is deliberately being journalistic, and that leaves the issue open, the fact that he doesn't really betray any narrative sentiment. Where in Naipaul, there is a transformation from Picaro to a pilgrim, but with Naipaul's protagonist remains a charlatan to the very end. but the technique makes it very ironic in quality. But Narayan doesn't include any irony. Narayan doesn't make any ironic you know hints as it were. He remains very, very perfectly neutral and that sitting on the fence quality is important over here because the neutrality of Narayan makes it very different from Naipaul's story which continues to keep guide the novel Narayan, very, very open-ended. So Raju's status as a Sadhu is a product of the views of others and so it is as if Narayan is holding the phenomenon of the Hindu holy man up for inspection while declining to offer any kind of definitive assessment himself. In the closing episodes Raju's fast attracts a good deal of media attention and amid the crowd of reporters the flocks among other to cover the story is an American documentary filmmaker Malone. Now this character Malone American filmmaker is very important because it also connects novel to the cultural context where there is a lot of quote unquote Western interest in Indian spirituality, a lot of Sadhus and Gurus who are about to become very famous in the West, about to make a lot of money.

So, the media attention from the West is important, and in that sense, it becomes a very interesting reflection, a very authentic reflection of the times. Now Malone is eager to shoot the entire story. documentary, in a form of documentary about the Swami, right. So the Swami over here being, being obviously Raju. So, Narayan simply reports, but one appealing way of viewing the figure of Malone is to see him as a surrogate for potential American readers of the novel. Now, there is a meta reading that John Thieme is offering over here, which is a really nice reading I think, very clever, very intelligent, where the American documentary filmmaker Malone coming to capture Raju's fasting may also be seen as a meta way that the potential American reader was about to consume the novel, the

guide. His response to Raju, which blends ingenuousness and disingenuousness, seems to mirror Narayan's later reluctant guru commands in American interest in India and possibly also involves a metaliterary anticipation of how he feels the novel may be read in the United States. So Narayan's position over here becomes interesting because he's about to get consumed as a writer as well in a certain way to a certain kind of profiling, racial, cultural profiling. And that the fact that Raju the protagonist in the novel is about to be consumed by the American filmmaker in a similar way makes this particular passage quite meta-fictional and meta-literary in quality outside the literary. So, his comments on his identification with Raju a secular man who finds himself the object of American interpretation and appropriation as a guru, certainly lends support that to such a view, although in Raju's case enforced sainthood is first imposed on him by the local villagers, right. So there are different kinds of imposition happening over here. The first imposition is obviously from the local villagers who almost compel him to perform the role of a saint. Then, of course, there is the other person outside of it, the American documentary filmmaker, Malone, who comes and consumes it as a sort of Chinese box, like a way, there's one order of consumption outside another of consumption. Of course, the meta order of consumption is outside the novel, the American readers who are waiting to read the story.

So, what it all means is in a certain sense this is a novel where a lot of mixing is happening. There is a mixing of ancient Indian sentiments and structures and archaeological structures and again the character of Marco in the novel. Those of you who read the entire novel would know Marco is Rosie's husband who is an archaeologist in a very, very Western tradition. He wants to map everything, measure everything, wants to find out, excavate old artefacts. So, he wants to sort of dig up old India and old Indian artefacts in a very, very Western way.

So, his gaze is very Western, which is why the name is quite symbolic, Marco, reference to the first western tourist in the east Marco Polo in that sense. So the gaze is again it goes back and alludes to the original western gaze towards India, towards the east. So there is that sense of measuring and reifying and commodifying everything. So that is very much there in the novel. But at the same time, it's a novel where, as I mentioned, this palimpsest-like quality where layers after layers are built on top of each other, but also in a very

distributive way. It's not like one layer is burying another layer. For good, the ancientness also erupts sometimes, emerges sometimes, and sometimes sits very uneasily with newness. So the new nation, the sort of newly mobile nation and the ancient tradition, they all come together. So a very good case in point is how Rosie, the dancer, transforms the archetypal sort of classical art form of dance into something quickly consumable. And the fact that she goes up and down the country performing different shows in cars and buses and trains also shows a newly mobile India, a newly connected India, a newly navigable India. So, the rise of the tourism industry, the rise of the sort of cultural superstar and the rise of the performer, the rise of the entertainment industry are all connected to new notions of cartography over here, of a new nation.

So, there is this ancient India in a very interesting relationship, sometimes tense, sometimes collaborative relationship with a newly emerging, newly navigating India, right. And Raju of course in a way he goes back in time, right. So he starts off as a railway guy. He starts off and in the middle he becomes the manager of a celebrity, a very much a plugged into the newly emerging entertainment industry. And then, of course, he supposedly goes back and becomes a saint, you know, sort of recovers as it were ancient India, ancient Indian-ness. But we don't quite know. We don't have a definitive proof or empirical evidence for that, except that he seems to anticipate the rains to come, although we don't know the rains come or not. So in his engagement with the possibility that classical Hindu discourse may provide an infrastructure for contemporary South Indian experiences, the guide is typical of Narayan's practice in this period of his fiction. So this is the period of his fiction where he is experimenting with the ancient Indian forms and the newly emerging forms coming together. The American-inspired legitimization of his interest in orthodox Hindu culture based on classic Sanskrit and Tamil texts encourages him into a greater engagement with his Brahmin heritage and ancient myths and beliefs provide a possible bedrock of meaning for the novels of his middle period. So, the guide belongs to the middle period. Nevertheless, as with all his fiction, His novels are about contemporary secular Hindu society and the ways in which ordinary people react to everyday situations. So there's a very quotidian quality about the guide, a very interesting dailiness quality about the guide, which is what makes it so relatable as a novel. So, while sometimes seeming to

suggest that age-old archetypes and codes underpin modern behaviour, the novels are more concerned with demonstrating ways in which the discourse on Indian society that may seem very remote from one another coexist and intersect. And that is a very important point. The coexistence and intersections of different belief systems, different faith systems, different identity systems which Narayan offers in the guide.

So, as I keep mentioning the interplay of ancientness and newness, the interplay of an ancient civilization and a new nation, that all becomes very, very palpably present in Narayan's novels, especially in the guide. So again, Naipaul's binary opposition between social comedy and Hindu fable distorts the complexity of tone to be found in Narayan's fiction of this period. So unlike Naipaul, who seems to offer a more binaristic understanding of ancient India and New India, Narayan gives a more fluid depiction where the ancientness and newness, the comedy and the satire and the tragedy and the classical texts, they all exist together in a very asymmetric entanglement as it were. Thus, as a Hindu fable, the guide is inscrutably enigmatic. But it does allow for the possibility that paranormal forces allied with ancient beliefs could be efficacious in averting an ecological disaster. And it also works within the conventions of social realism. So there is a sense that this is very realistic, it is very quotidian, but at the same time it also makes allowance for the possibility of something outside the rational, something outside the normal. So whether the paranormal forces can intervene and create a *duomachina* through which an ecological disaster, in this case a drought may be, you know, averted remains an open question. So along with logic and rationality and classic realism and social realism, there is also the allowance for magic, allowance for something outside the rational, outside the natural, hence supernatural. So which makes the novel really complex in its tone, in its sentiment and in its narrative methods. So just to wind up, the sections leading up to and dealing with Raju's farce are narrated by an omniscient third-person narrator. They are interspersed with Raju's confession or confessional first-person account of his former life. So Raju tells a story to Velan about his former life and outside of it is a sort of, there's a nested narrative quality, outside of this is a story of the told from an omniscient unnamed narrator, the third-person story. as told to one of the villagers, Vilan. So Velan is a person that is an interlocutor of Raju and Raju tells his first person narrative to Velan. And much of the

novel's force emerges from the cross-cutting between its two actions and modes of focalization.

So again, at that formal level, it is a very, very well-written, excellent level of craft. where different focal points intersect each other. So there is this omniscient third person narration, which is sort of journalistic, sometimes deadpan, sometimes just purely informative in quality. And we have this first-person narration of Raju, which is more emotional, more effective in quality. And those two kinds of narration sometimes intersect each other. So far from being a simple account of the way in which the Picaro becomes the pilgrim which is the Mystic Masseur story of Naipaul that the Picaro becomes the pilgrim, though one can argue that this progression is inherent in a juxtaposition of the two narratives, the guide employs a complex contrapuntal structure, right. So it is not a neat, you know, reversal or a neat progression. So both possibilities are mixed in very asymmetric ways. So, the movement between the story of how Raja becomes the putative sadhu in the present and his account of his past, which centres on his activities as a tourist guide and his affair with Rosie, a married temple dancer from Madras, involves a dialectical interplay between the two merits of narration as well as the two actions. So there are these parallel narrative merits running across the novel guide. So there is Raju obviously his life has been told from an omniscient third person perspective outside the narrative frame that he inhabits as a narrator and of course there is a narrative frame that he inhabits as a narrator, the nested narrative and the sentiments are very different, the structures are very different and one of the reasons why this novel is such a triumph in novel writing is that how it manages to balance the two focal points to such perfection. So the first-person narrative clearly enlists sympathy for a character whose transgressive behavior might otherwise seem reprehensible. So Raju obviously is trying to draw a lot of sympathy for himself and there is a lot of sympathetic investment, emotional investment in the story which is absent in a third-person narration. You know obviously Raju's attempt is to justify his transgressions, to attract sympathy and to sort of make himself more endeared to his readers, to endear the reader so to speak.

Well, the third person, camera eye which is just objectively observing him, view of him in

his sadhu persona. withholds judgment on the issue whether the form of a tourist guide can now reasonably be viewed as a spiritual guide. So there's no judgment given. So there's no conclusive stance taken by the third person narration. It just leaves it at that. That makes it very, very magnificently enigmatic and open-ended. Several critics have commented on this in the discussions of the novel's graded time schemes, woven in time schemes, different kinds of time schemes put together, woven together. For the most part arguing that the contrapuntal technique serves to emphasize the difference between Raju's earlier persona and the condition of enforced sainthood thrust upon him in the later action, though the effect of the dialectical interplay between first and third person narration has not gone completely unnoticed. if though as most of his critics seem to assume the guide's primary purpose is to demonstrate how a spiritual dharma is imposed on a hitherto worldly man so again the play between spirituality and earthliness so uneasy juxtaposition is what makes the novel so complex why one wants to ask does it devote far more space to his earlier picaresque phase so you know there are these narrative spaces that can be measured and, you know, even a very superficial survey would reveal that more part of the novel is invested or directed towards the pre-Saint phase of Raju and not quite the other way around, right? So the answer may be that this is just simply careless, unplanned writing. But another possibility is that there are more extensive connections between the two narratives than have generally been noticed. If so, approaches which place most of their emphasis on Raju's possible transformation into a Sadhu distort the overall trust of the novel. So there is also reading which tells us that if we believe, if we find it credible that he actually transforms into a Sadhu or a real spiritual seer, the reading undercuts a large part of the narrative energy the novel invested earlier. Taken together, the details of his earlier life as a child as a shopkeeper and as a tourist guide Railway Raju and his account of his dealings with Rosie and her archaeologist husband Marco, his experimental affair with Rosie, his involvement with her in her career as a highly successful professional dancer and its imprisonment for forging her signature loom much larger. So we stop at this point today but it is interesting for us to observe that how if you take a look at the structural lens and where the narrative seems to spend more energy as it were, a very superficial structural study will reveal that perhaps Just perhaps there seems to be more emphasis on Raju's picaresque phase. The fact that there's more energy, more character density given to him

when he was a railway guide, when he was a tourist guide, when his life seemed to transform, when the railways came in the town.

And there's some biblical references there as well, the railways coming in, sometimes read as a serpent coming in. in his otherwise idyllic Eden and destroying or disturbing the equilibrium, the tranquility of the Edenic space, how space-time changes, life changes, experiences changes, everything just becomes different, change happens when railways come. And that world, the sort of prelapsed Syrian world before the railways is sometimes depicted, but of course only as a contrast to describe what happens through Raju's life post railways, it obviously becomes more mobile, more mercenary. and different kinds of professions begin to emerge out of which the railway guy, the tourist guy becomes a very important profession, right. And of course, as the novel progresses Raju has an affair with a married woman which is again an act of transgression and how that also undercuts some of the traditional belief systems that Raju's early generation may have held and it doesn't stop there of course it transforms the woman into some kind of a performing commodity, she performs dances across India and Raja becomes a lover slash manager. He manages her accounts, he manages her finances, he manages her bookings and again as I mentioned the very fact that they go up and down the country performing at different points in India also depict this upwardly mobile country, this navigable country and all the rest of it. So a lot of energy, narrative energy and length and structure seem to be invested in all these episodes. and not quite on those episodes where Raju seems to become a saint or seems to transform into some kind of a spiritual seer. That just comes in the end and it is just left in a very inconclusive way. So, at a very structural level, if one were to compare word count, if one were to compare the size and narrative measurements, there seems to be more emphasis on the pre-spiritual characterization of Raju rather than the post-spiritual, if you can call it post-spiritual at all.

And that is possibly the only hint that one can draw on because Narayan remains notoriously and perfectly and magnificently non-committal as it were, because he refused to give answers on his take on Raju. So, his take away is that I have created a character which is human, which is organic, and it is up to the reader to interpret it in their own way.

So, he doesn't know, he says, whether Raju actually brings the rain or doesn't, all right. authorial distancing, the authorial inconclusivity or authorial indecision becomes really part of the narrative complexity and craft in *Guide* which is what makes it such a wonderful novel to read even in a 2024. But just to sum up and we will focus on these aspects later as well in subsequent sessions but this is a novel where social changes, cultural changes, economic changes are actually at the forefront, associated with all these changes, different kinds of identity markers, identity performances, quite literally performances. Raju performs as a guide, Rosie performs as a dancer, and also Marco performs as a very westernized, anglicized archaeologist. So all these different kinds of identities are essentially performative in quality. And that again connects sort of the ancient India as well as new India, because dance obviously is a performative art, but here we see this completely collusive with the new market of the commodity, right? So the archeology, archaeological sites that Marco is trying to sort of study represent or embody ancient India but they are mapped using a vocabulary which is very modern, very western. The epistemic structure of marker is very, very anglicized, very, very westernized and that conflation of an ancient attribute and a western modern epistemic structure is what makes a novel so complex in quality, so asymmetric in quality and so palimpsestic in quality, if you will. So, we stop at this point today and we will continue with these discussions in the subsequent sessions. Thank you for your attention.