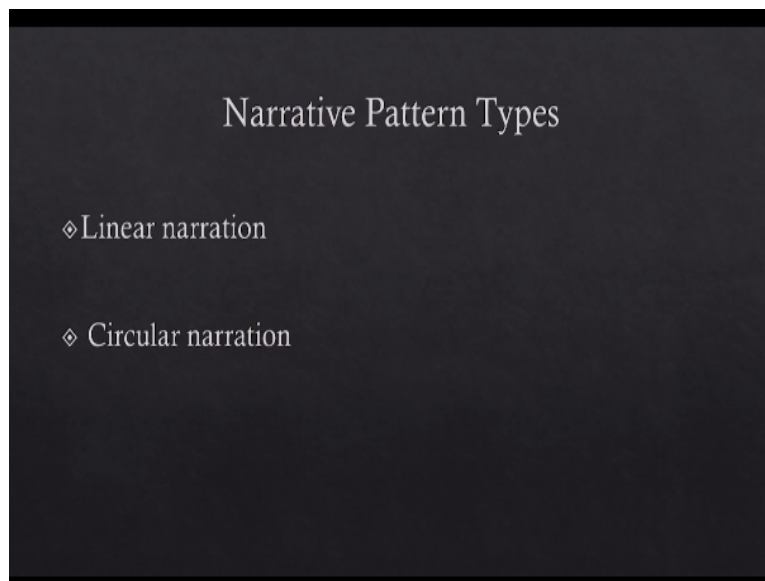


**Short Fiction in Indian Literature**  
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**Indian Institute of Technology-Madras**

**Lecture-1B**  
**Narrative Patterns in "In the Flood"**

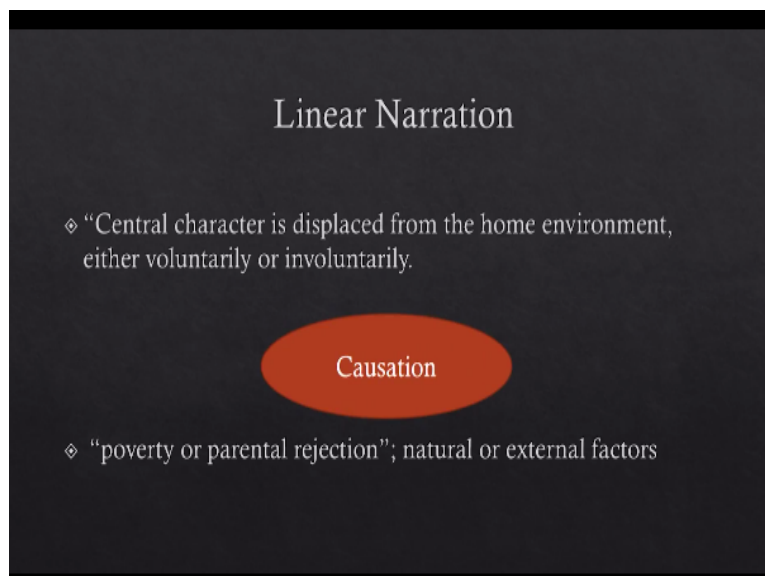
Hello and welcome to this lecture on narrative patterns in, in the flood. There are 2 very interesting narrative pattern types there are linear narration and circular narration.

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I will be looking linear narration first.

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Now what exactly is linear narration, in a linear narration the central character is displaced from the home environment either voluntarily or involuntary. So the centre character is taken

away from the home space, either it is forced to do that or he does it voluntarily for certain reasons. Now there is a particular causation or a particular set of causal factors for this displacement, with the displacement could be because of poverty or it could be because of parents rejection.

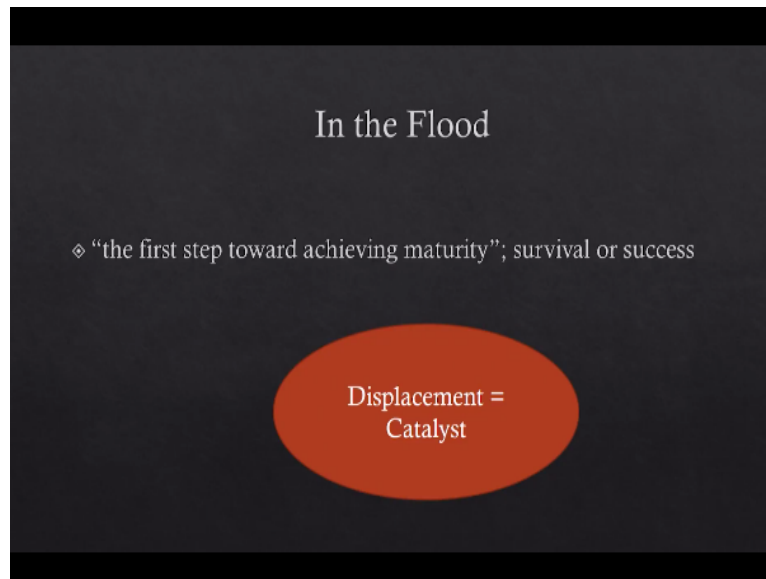
The causation could also be the cause of natural or external factors over which the central character has no control, some natural factors could include flooding, earthquakes and things like that. Now if we look at the short story in question for this week in the flood what exactly is the causation.

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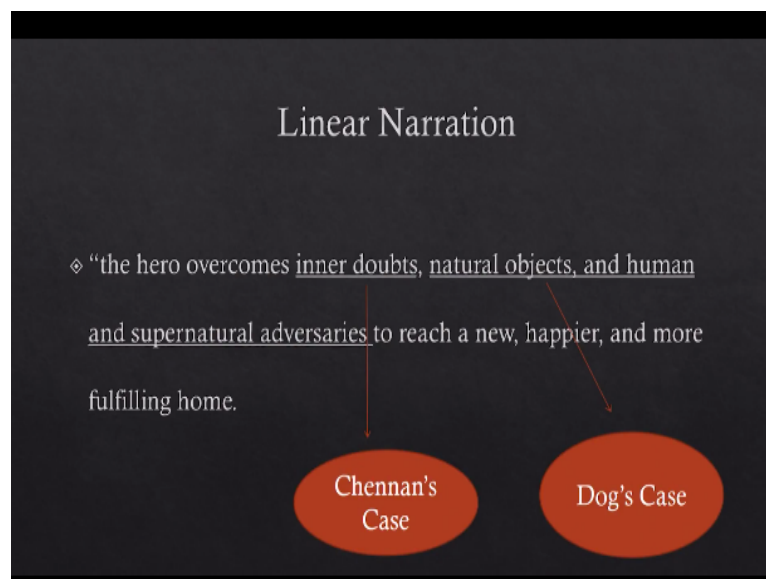
The causation is natural calamities, so Chennan is displaced from his hut or his home space by flooding monsoons and hut rain, heavy rain. Now the same thing applies to his dog as well, the dog is displaced from his home space from the hut because of natural calamity that is the flood caused by heavy monsoon rains.

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Now this displacement is a very interesting schematic category some critics interpret this displacement as a sort of a journey towards achieving maturity it is a process of growing up for the central character, it also be you know you could also be towards achieving success or survival for the central character. So how do we look at displacement, displacement perhaps the certain set of schematic interactions in terms of narrator the displacement is plug catalyst.

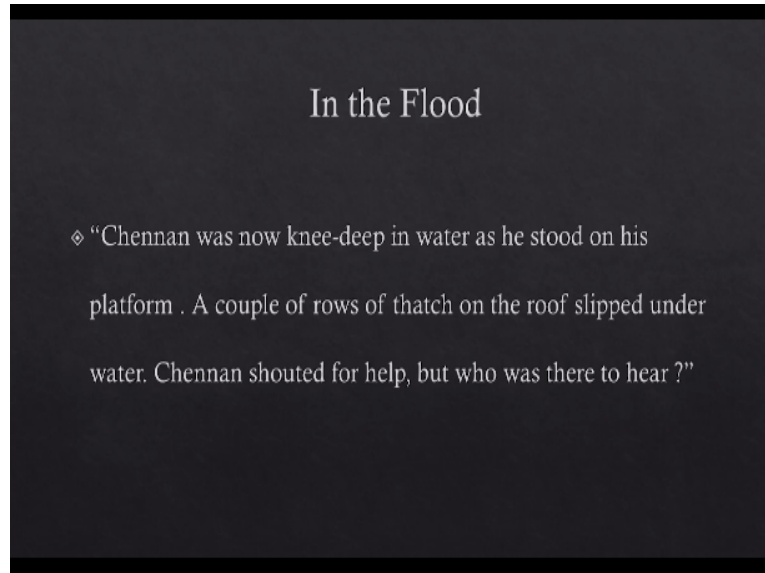
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It starts the plot a rolling a kind of pushes the narrative into functioning, now in narration once the hero is displaced the hero starts to overcome his inner doubts, certain natural object and human and supernatural adversaries to reach a new, happier and more fulfilling home. So from my home space the hero is displaced and he starts to move towards a new happier and more satisfying home environment.

Now let us apply this to the case of Chennan in the flood, what happens there, Chennan obviously overcomes inner doubts, let have an example of this as a analysis in the chapter, in the story, let us see what happens when Chennan's hot is flooded.

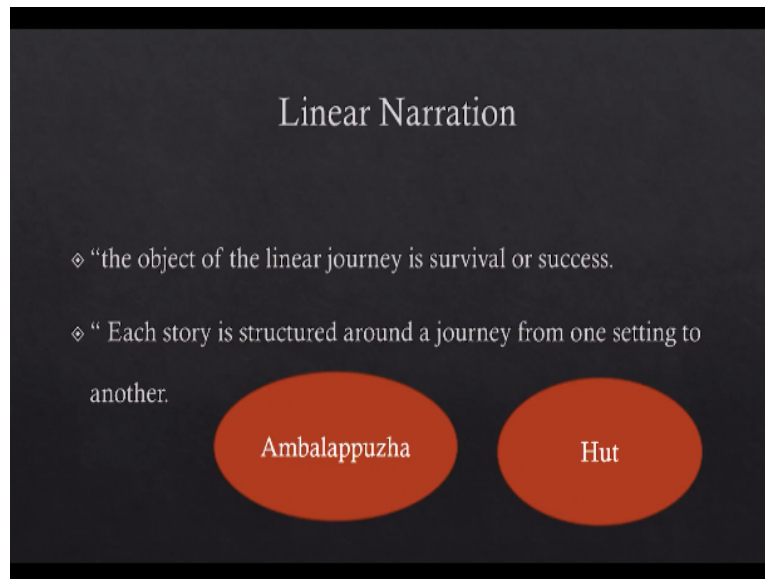
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Chennan was now the knee-deep in water as he stood on his platform, a couple of roles of thatch on the roof slipped underwater, Chennan shouted for help, but who was there to here?, this last phrase who was there to here is very interesting in relation to this concept between linear narration and the role of the central character or hero. As the concept says the hero will overcome inner doubt.

He has his own doubt as to whether he will be rescued, whether Chennan will be rescued and he asked that question who is there to here but then rescue that happened for Chennan thus he does happened as a neighbour comes with a boat and rescues him. But if we apply the same concept to his dogs case what happens, that is a different question is the dog rescued those who have registered will know that does not happen.

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Now let us look at the object of linear narrator what is the object of the linear narration, the object is to survive, the destination of a linear relation is to survive or to succeed and each journey in a linear narration structured around journey a movement from one setting to another. In a case of Chennan in the flood Chennan moves from his flooded hut to Amblipura, there is a movement there as you can see.

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And then eventually he returns from Amblipura to his own hut at the end of the story. So there is a journey that Chennan on the tag in order to achieve survival in his case. So as I said in the flood there is a movement from flooded home to dry land in other words it is a movement from a critical or a crisis situation to a situation where Chennan survive. Linear narratives generally move from the home space to the other space.

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## Linear Narratives

◇ Home → Away/Other → Home

The space that is away from home and then the return back to the home space once the hero has attained the necessary level of maturity once the hero has survived or once the hero has succeeded. Now let us look at non-linear narratives, some examples of non-linear narratives of flashbacks or stream of consciousness.

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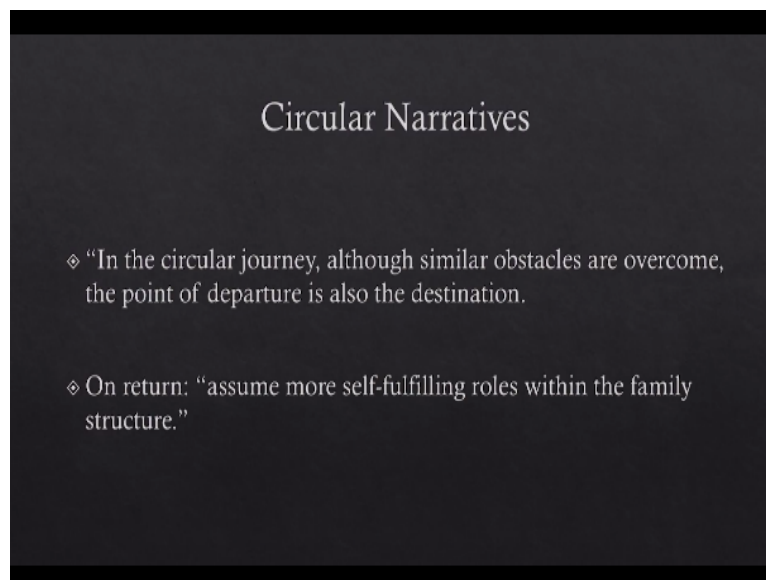
## Non-Linear Narratives: Flashbacks/Stream of Consciousness

- ◇ “stories of one’s youth, such as personal growth or innocence lost”
- ◇ author pays no heed to time, traditional conventions of narration.

Flashbacks tell the story of one’s past, the story could be about personal growth or it could be about innocence lost. So the narrator kind of revisits once past and then a thumbs up with the story about it. In the case of stream of consciousness of the place no heed to time, and traditional conventions of narration are broken there everything is narrated from the consciousness of the narrator, that is the stream of consciousness.

Let us see what exactly is circular narrative concept of displacement happens in circular not escape from central character is displaced from the home environment are the voluntary or involuntary. So the skill is removed from his home ground and the causation again could be similar, it could be because of poverty or it could be because of rejection by the parents and other factors could include natural calamities or external factors such as political turmoil.

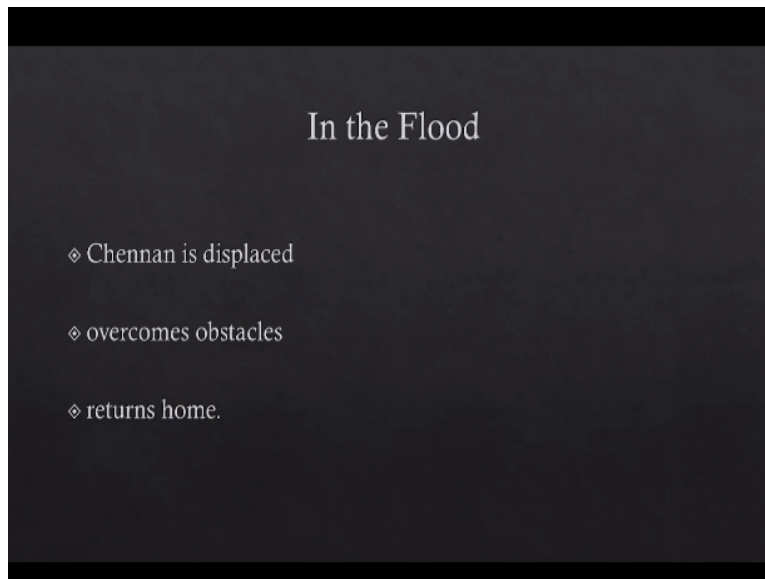
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So these are the cost of factors that remove the hero or the heroine of central character from the home space and again in the circular journey all the similar obstacles are overcome the point of departure is also the destination. So the desire to return to the home space is the driving force for the narrator here in a circular narrators, if we go back to linear narrative sometimes the central character returns home but sometimes they do not.

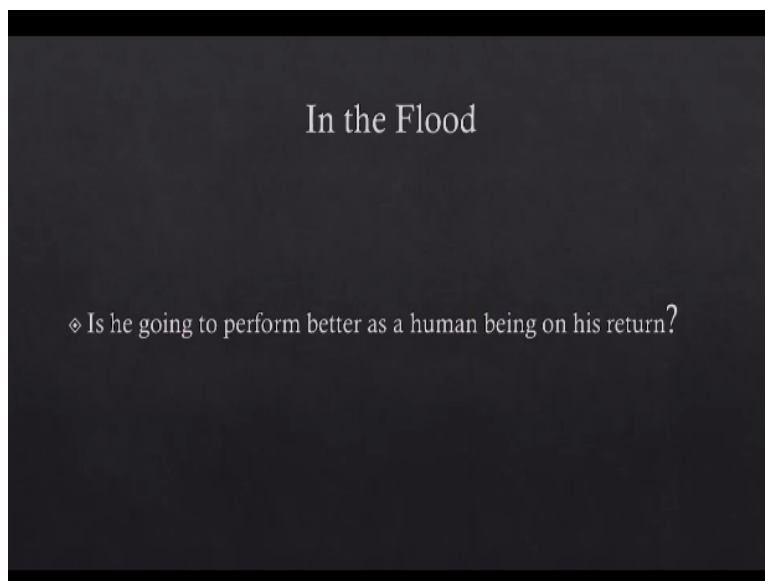
That is also very possible, the ultimate home that they reach their central character are better or sometimes most fulfilling or satisfying, but in the case of circular narratives the desire is to come home and when they return home a central character assume more self-fulfilling roles within the family structure. There is a good for the better there is at least desire to be better on the part of the central catalyst once they have come back home.

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Now we if we apply certain narratives concepts to in the flood what happens let see channel is this place he overcome obstacles that was the flooded home and then he moves away from the home to Amblipura and once the rains have receipt at he comes home. So we can see a circular narrative there in the case of Chennan very clearly map out.

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Now the big question is, is he going to perform better as a human being on his return we do not know for sure, he may or may not the short story just offers a glimpse into a particular slice of Chennan's life at one point in time. So we do not know what exactly Chennan things when he finds his dead dog at the end of the story. The Story stop there, so his growth is personal growth as a better more holistic human being is something that he can speculate on.

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## In the Flood

- ◆ The dog is displaced
- ◆ The dog doesn't overcome obstacles
- ◆ The dog dies

Let us apply the same concept to the circular narrative to the case of Chennan's dog. So again the dog is displaced from the hut, the dog we have to note does not overcome obstacles, there is nobody to rescue the dog from that situation of crisis. The dog continues to remain in a flooded home and the dog dies because it tries to eat carcasses, it falls into the water and is drown and attacked by the crocodiles as well.

So the circular narrative is cut off and that happens to be a linear narrative with the tragic end there, is no better home for the dog on this space on earth, hut will get the better home space in the heaven but we do not know that for sure. So the circular narrative fails to take off in the case of Chennan's dog and the linear narrative of Chennan's dog ends in tragedy.

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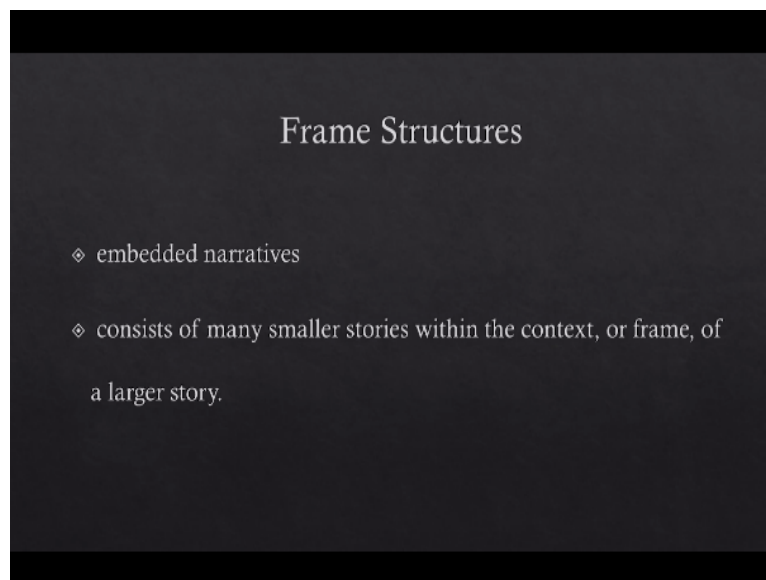
## Narrative Patterns

- ◆ Circular Narrative does not take off.
- ◆ Linear narrative ends in tragedy.

Dog

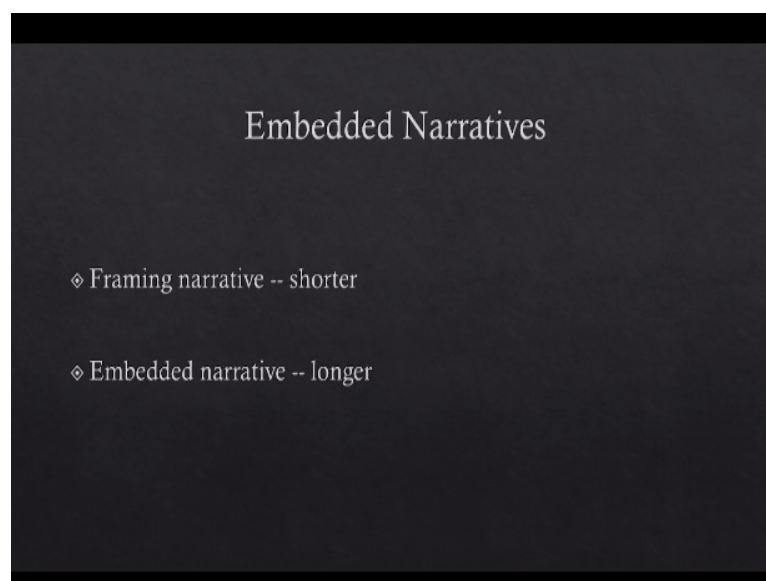
That is very interesting and very profitable to think about the stories in terms of linear narration and circulation and see if these concepts can be applied to this very interesting story and what are the implications, what are the matrix significances that we can derive once we apply these narrative patterns to the story this is a very interesting exercise to practice. Now let us look at another category of narrative pattern.

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This is called frame structures, the other time that we use for it to talk about this type of narrative pattern is embedded narrative and embedded narratives consists of small stories within the context of frame of a larger study. So there is a larger story and within the largest story there is a smallest story. So that can affect is a frame structure.

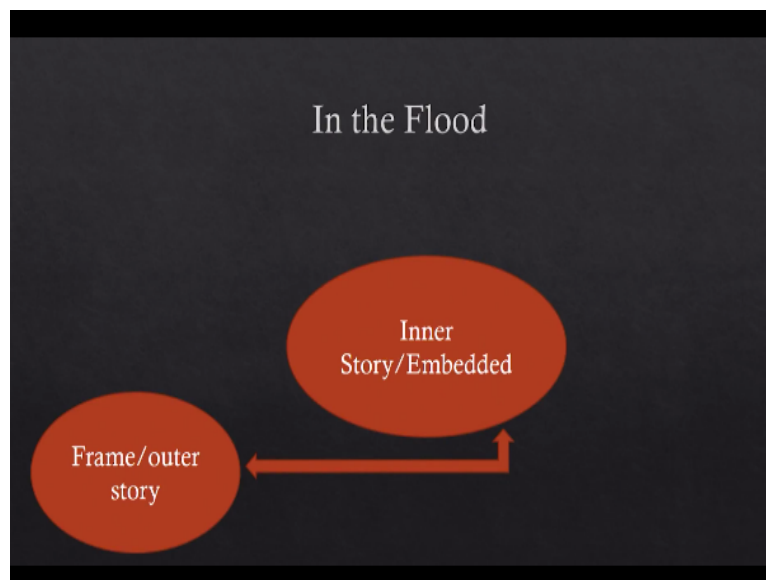
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The framing narrative is usually shorter is it brief whereas the embedded story, the story within the story the inner story is longer in duration in a narrative, so to speak. So the embedded narrative hinges contextually on the outer narrative that something you need to keep in mind the outer story gives life to the inner story, though the inner story has the capacity to stand on its own.

It can be an individual story in itself that is possible, however an interpretation of the embedded narrative in relation to the frame story is more meaning for in the context of the largest story there are several layers of meaning that can be undrawn and such a revelation has implications for the largest story as well. We can apply this concept of frame narrative to in the flood.

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There is a frame story and outer story that is telling story and there is an inner story or the embedded story of the dog, the outer story gives life to the in a story and the inner story changes how we are going to approach the outer story in terms of its team and in terms of its largest significance and so on. The other narrative pattern that I would like us to keep in mind is the parallel narratives.

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## Parallel Narratives

- ◇ two distinct, but closely associated storylines that occur simultaneously.
- ◇ “In the Flood” can be seen as an example

So in parallel narrative structure there are 2 distinct but closely related story lines that occur simultaneously. So think of the rail tracks, there are 2 rails there that run concurrently simultaneously and in the flood can be seen as an example of a parallel narrative structure to. We have Chennan's narrative that is a kind of stock at the point when he leaves his flooded home and leaves the dog behind.

And that is a mean Chennan's narrative a completely comes to a stop, his native continuous at some other and some other place say for example in but the narrator does not go there. So we have 2 parallel narratives in the story and the narrator pays attention to Chennan's storyline until kind of brings that to a halt and Chennan returns to the narratives. So we have a sort of a parallel structure going on there too.

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## Thematic Patterns: The beginning

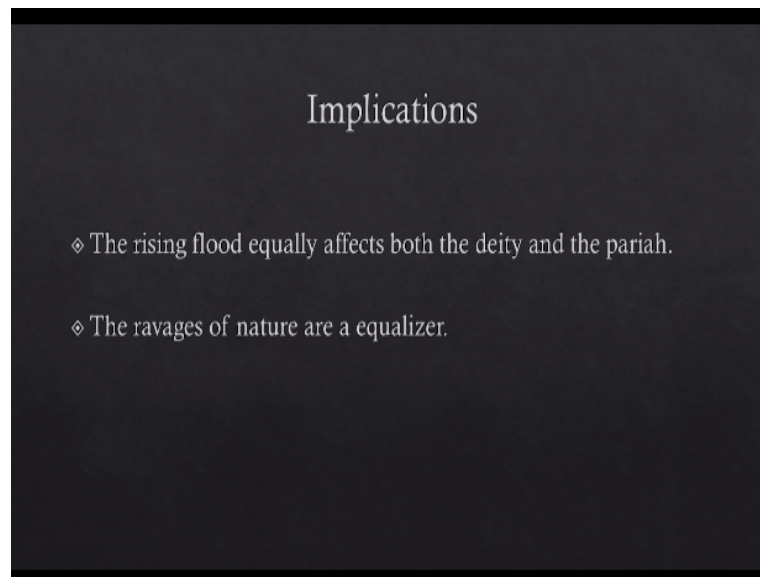
- ◇ The deity's situation and Chennan's situation resemble one another.
- ◇ “The temple stood on a rise, the highest ground for miles around. Despite this, its deity was submerged in water up to its neck. There was water everywhere you looked.”

And we might want to think about that thematic concept of significance of having 2 story line that kind of has significance for one another. Now I would like to look at the beginning of the story in the flood and see the dramatic significance of a certain parallel structures there. If we read the first line which says the temple stood on a rise, the highest ground for miles around.

Despite this, its deity was submerged in water up to its neck, there was water everywhere you looked, such a very interesting picture there and a very start link picture right at the beginning of the story the temple is on high ground he says the narrator says is the highest ground for miles around and despite this on the god the in the figure of the god is submerged in water up to its neck.

And this images very interesting because soon after we have on the images Chennan standing in flood water. So one can say that the deity situation and Chennan's situation resemble one another, the mirror one another thematically, both of them are in water the highest in the hierarchy and the lowest in the hierarchy are both in flood waters. So however we to interpret the situation we can say that the flood.

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And natural calamity equally effects both at it and the prior and that the ravages of nature or equaliser, no matter where you live you could live in a mansion, you could live in a temple, you could live in a hurt everyone is affected equally by flood waters in the case of a story. Now let us get another thematic patterns that brought out by this narrative structure.

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## Thematic Patterns

- ◇ Chennan's situation and the dog's situation "mirror" each other.
- ◇ Chennan's master leaves Chennan in the lurch just as the dog is left behind by his master.



Now we had the deity and the prior mirror each other in one case and we can we have another situation where Chennan situation and his dog situation mirror one another. Chennan's masters if you remember leaves with on his boat leaving behind Chennan and his family. Similarly we have Chennan leaving behind his own dog in the flooded hut.

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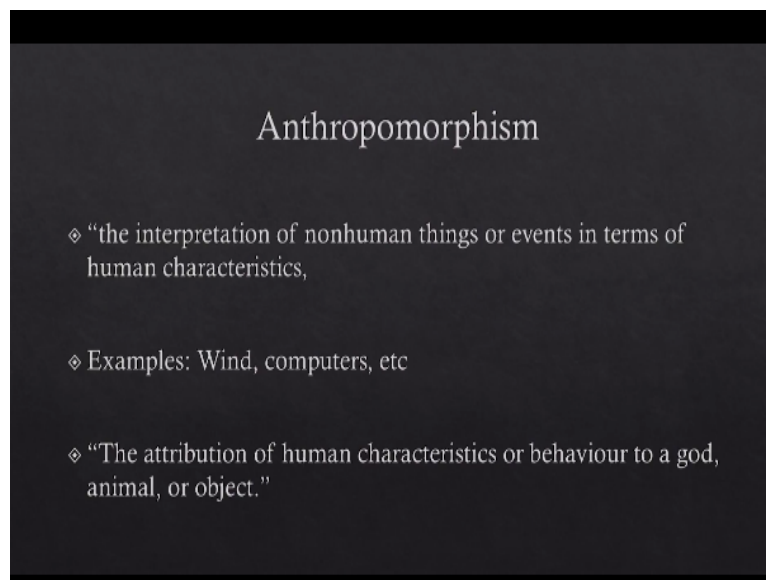
## Personification

- ◇ The attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something non-human. Eg: Sea can be seen as being angry.
- ◇ the representation of an abstract quality in human form. Eg: a villain can personify evil.

So again Chennan situation seems to parallel is a master situation in the fact that both of them leave somebody behind. Now I would like to take a minute to look at this very interesting narrative technique called personification. Now what exactly is personification. Personification is the attribution or the giving of a personal nature of human characteristic to something non human.

So give a kind of a personality to something that is non human. For example we can say that the sea is angry especially when there is rain and storm on the seas we can see the sea is being angry anger is something that is a very human characteristics. But we kind of transpose the human characteristic on to a non human thing in nature and we can also say that personification can be a representation of an abstract quality in human form.

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For example a villain can personify evil, evil is an abstract quality and somebody can embody that, that is also called personification I would also like to look at anthropomorphism today and what exactly is anthropomorphism the definition dictionary definition as the interpretation of non human things or events in terms of human characteristics . For example we can say the wind is talking.

Especially a particular kind of wind can be interpreted as a kind of communicating to the human beings, the wind having a certain sort of message and you also talk about computers being evil has as computer some delicious and some ways. So in other words the attribution of human characteristics of behaviour to a god, animal or object can be defined as anthropomorphism. That is it for today I will see you in next session, thank you.