

**Modern Indian Writing in Translation**  
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**Stench of Kerosene Part - 1**  
**Length: 45:01**

Student 1: Hello, all. Today we will be doing a short story, titled the Stench of Kerosene by Amrita Pritam. Before we move on to the story, we will first talk about the author herself.

Amrita Pritam was a prominent Punjabi poet, writer and novelist. She was born in August 31st, 1919 and she passed away in 2005. She was a very young writer. She started writing around the age of 16. She published first collection of stories around the age of 16, and she has a very long literary career spanning over six decades and she wrote poetry, fiction, biographies, essays which were translated into several Indian and foreign languages.

Thematically speaking, her works deal a lot with partition, and also we see a lot of feminist concerns being reflected in her works. So, speaking a bit about her works we are looking at her poetry, so one of her well-known works is “Ajj Aakhan Waris Shah Nu”, in English it means “Ode to Waris Shah”. It is an elegy to the 18<sup>th</sup> century Punjabi poet and it basically, the work deals with massacres during the partition of India.

Her other works are “Amrit Lehar” which was in 1936, “Jiunda Jiwan” 1939, “Trel Dhote Phul” 1942. Her autobiographical works include “Rasidi Ticket” and “Black Rose”. Coming to her novels, one of the most famous works of Amrita Pritam is “Pinjar.” It was published in 1950 and it also deals with the theme of partition. Later, this novel has been made into a film. Her other novels which were again produced as films include “Dhart Sagar Te Sipian unna di kahaani.”

Coming to the way in which she was perceived, she was very well recognized in India and across the world. She was the first recipient of Punjab Ratan Award. In 1956, she became the first woman to receive Sahitya Akademi Award for her magnum opus “Sunehade”. It can be translated as ‘The Messages’.

Later, she received Bhartiya Jnanpith Award in the year 1982 for “Kagaz Te Kanvas” which can be translated as ‘The Paper and the Canvas’. She was the first Punjabi woman to be given Padma Shri Award in 1969. She received the Padma Vibhushan and Sahitya Akademi Fellowship in 2004.

Internationally also she was well recognized. In 1979, she received Vaptsarov Award from the Republic of Bulgaria. In 1987, she was conferred order of letters and- order of Arts and Letters by French government.

So now we will be looking at her short story, the Stench of Kerosene.

Student 2: I will be reading the short story now, The Stench of Kerosene.

Outside, a mare neighed. Guleri recognized the neighing and ran out of the house. The mare was from her parent’s village. She put her head against its neck as if it were the door of her father's house.

Guleri's parents lived in Chamba, a few miles from her husband's village, which was on high ground. The road curved and descended steeply down-hill. From this point, one could see Chamba lying a long way away at one's feet. Whenever Guleri was homesick, she would take her husband Manak and go up to this point. She would see the homes of Chamba twinkling in the sunlight and would come back with her heart glowing with pride.

Once every year, after the harvest had been gathered in, Guleri was allowed to spend a few days with her parents. They sent a man to Lakarmandi to bring her back to Chamba. Two of her friends, who were also married to boys outside Chamba, came home at the same time of the year. The girls looked forward to this annual meeting, when they spent many hours every day talking about their experiences, their joys and sorrows. They went about the streets together.

Then there was the harvest festival. The girls would have new dresses made for the occasion. They would have their dupattas dyed, starched and sprinkled with mica. They would buy glass bangles and silver earrings. Guleri always counted the days to the harvest. When the autumn breezes cleared the skies of the monsoon clouds, she thought of little

besides her home in Chamba. She went about her daily chores, fed the cattle, cooked food for her husband's parents and then sat back to work out how long it would be before someone would come from her parent's village. And now, once again, it was time for her annual visit. She caressed the mare joyfully, greeted her father's servant Natu, and made ready to leave the next day."

Looking at the story, you can understand that very rustic in nature. The view you get when you read the story, you get a sense of, the setting is extremely pastoral in nature, where she talks about her village and how she looks forward to go to her parent's house. And we can understand the kind of life women used to lead in the early times where they were not allowed to go to their parent's house whenever they wanted, but it depended totally upon her parents, her in-laws' wishes or when somebody, she cannot go whenever she wants. She wants somebody else to come and fetch her and it is very interesting. She talks about the harvest festival where they get dressed up and where she talks about how she wears all these kind of jewellerys. And she is so happy and excited about this harvest festival because it is not just a time for her to go and visit her parents but it is also, probably it is because she gets to see her friends, she gets to be herself apart from being somebody else's wife. That is all that I have got from this section.

Student 3: "Guleri did not have to put her excitement into words. The expression on her face was enough. Her husband, Manak, pulled at his chillum and closed his eyes. It seemed either as if he did not like the tobacco, or that he could not bear to face his wife. "You will come to the fair at Chamba, won't you? Come even if it is only for the day," she pleaded.

Manak put aside his chillum but did not reply. "Why don't you answer me?" asked Guleri in a temper. "Shall I tell you something? I know what you are going to say, I only go to my parents once in the year."

"Well, you have never been stopped before."

"Then why do you want to stop me this time?" she demanded. "Just this time," pleaded Manak. "Your mother has not said anything. Why do you stand in my way?" Guleri was childishly stubborn. "My mother..." Manak did not finish his sentence.

On the long-awaited morning, Guleri was ready long before dawn. She had no children and therefore no problem of either having to leave them with her husband's parents or taking them with her. Natu saddled the mare as she took leave of Manak's parents. They patted her head and blessed her. "I will come with you a part of the way," said Manak. Guleri was happy as they set out. Under her dupatta, she hid Manak's flute.

After the village of Khajjiar, the road descended steeply to Chamba. There, Guleri took out the flute from beneath her dupatta and gave it to Manak. She took Manak's hand in hers and said "Come now, play your flute" but Manak, lost in his thoughts, paid no heed. "Why don't you play your flute?" asked Guleri coaxingly.

Manak looked at her sadly then putting the flute to his lips he blew a strange anguished wail of a sound. "Guleri, do not go away" he begged her, "I ask you again, do not go this time." He handed her back the flute unable to continue. "But why?" she asked. "You come over on the day of the fair and we will return together. I promise you, I will not stay behind.""

In this section, carrying on from where Mridula left off, you can see how young Guleri is. The excitement is visible on her face. She's got 'child-like stubbornness' and she has all the excitement, enthusiasm of a child that is being promised a fair but in addition to this you cannot tell if she is excited about the fair at Chamba or she is excited about her going to her parents' house or whether it is both in combination.

Her husband on the other hand seems to be a very taciturn man who appears to be quite incapable of expressing his emotions verbally, for all he seems to do is pull at the chillum and close his eyes. And there is a little bit of foretelling here with the line, 'it seemed as if he did not like the tobacco or that he could not bear to face his wife', and later on you realize that it's the latter bit.

Guleri on the other hand is, she does not suspect anything. There is no foreboding here, she is ready before dawn and there is a very innocuous sentence that says 'she had no children and therefore no problem of either having to leave them with her husband's parents or taking them with her.' So the children, usually considered a problem, she doesn't have

them. And nothing stands in the way of her going to her parent's house, of meeting her friends, of having a good time basically.

And she is quite playful. You see her taking her husband's flute, you see her trying to get him into a better mood, into a better temper but she thinks that he is being very reticent about her going that he does not like her going away to her parent's house, and she asks him to play his flute but well, again there is more foreboding here where he plays a 'strange anguished wail of a sound' instead of a nice melody as you would expect.

And here you see him I mean, here you see him begging her not to go away. He says, 'do not go this time,' and he seems to be quite overcome with emotion and she is very innocent. She says, 'what's wrong?' I mean this happens every year. I go, I come back in a few days and it is only for a few days and she says, you can see where she is coming from, she says you shouldn't keep me here all the time. It is only a few days that I get this break that I am going to my parents' house. You shouldn't resent this. And she says 'I promise you, I will be back' and she thinks and quite rightly that he loves her and he will miss her. That's about it.

Student 4: "Manak did not ask again. They stopped by the roadside. Natu took the mare a few paces ahead to leave the couple alone. It crossed Manak's mind that it was this time of year, seven years ago that he and his friends had come on this very road to go to the harvest festival in Chamba and it was at this fair that Manak had first seen Guleri and they had bartered their hearts to each other.

Later, managing to meet alone, Manak remembered taking her hand and telling her "You are like unripe corn, full of milk." "Cattle go for unripe corn," Guleri had replied, freeing her hand with a jerk. "Human beings like it better roasted. If you want me, go and ask for my hand from my father." Amongst Manak's kinsmen, it was customary to settle the bride price before the wedding.

Manak was nervous because he did not know the price Guleri's father would demand from him. But Guleri's father was prosperous and had lived in the cities. He had sworn that he would not take money for his daughter but would give her a worthy young man of a good

family. Manak, he had decided, answered these requirements and very soon after Guleri and Manak were married.

Deep in his memories Manak was roused by Guleri's hand on his shoulder "What are you dreaming of?" she teased him. Manak did not answer. The mare neighed impatiently and Guleri thinking of the journey ahead of her rose to leave. "Do you know the bluebell wood, a couple of miles from here?" she asked. "It is said that anyone who goes through it becomes deaf. Yes, it seems to me that you have passed through the Bluebell wood. You do not hear anything that I say."

"You are right Guleri, I cannot hear anything that you are saying to me" replied Manak with a deep sigh. Both of them looked at each other. Neither understood the other's thoughts."

So in this particular area, we are finding like how both these characters Manak and Guleri, they came in contact with each other. It is also showing that in this context, in course of the story, they are retrospecting their relationship before marriage. They have, this part of the story is also portraying about certain social customs that are undergone before the matrimony and what are the standpoints of the male suitor and the female before marriage and what are the kinship expectations from both the sides, specifically from the side of the female here as it is written here about Guleri.

And this particular part has certain, I mean the portion where it is showing how they started their courtship. There are certain sexual innuendos here and including this one the story is also showing that how after marriage seemingly there is a little bit of distance which is apparently setting between them, that's why both of them are having a little communication gap right now.

There is a little bit of comic strips also where they are saying that have you come across the bluebell wood, which is supposedly a wood which if anyone passes through that somebody can become deaf. So, there is a little bit of comic element here. And there is a certain gap or distance in communication which is actually apparent here in this part. So it

anticipates like there is something of, maybe some unspoken feelings, which are yet to be discussed between them and it sets the next part of the story in motion.

Student 5: “I will go now. You had better return home, you have come a long way,” said Guleri gently. “You have walked all this distance, better get on the mare,” replied Manak. “Here, take your flute.” “You take it with you.” “Will you come and play it on the day of the fair?” asked Guleri with a smile. The sun shone in her eyes. Manak turned his face away, Guleri perplexed, shrugged her shoulders and took the road to Chamba.

Manak returned to go to his home. Entering the house, he slumped listless on his charpai. “You have been away a long time” exclaimed his mother. “Did you go all the way to Chamba?” “Not all the way, only to the top of the hill,” Manak’s voice was heavy. “Why do you croak like an old woman?” asked his mother severely, “Be a man”. Manak wanted to retort “You are a woman, why do you not cry like one for a change?” but he remained silent.

Manak and Guleri had been married seven years but she had never borne a child and Manak’s mother had made a secret resolve. “I will not let it go beyond the eighth year.” This year, true to her decision she had paid five hundred rupees to get him a second wife and now she had waited, as Manak knew, for the time and Guleri went to her parents, to bring in the new bride. Obedient to his mother and to custom, Manak’s body responded to the new woman but his heart was dead within him.”

In this section, if you are to critically read this section, there are quite a few obvious things which gives you a clue of what are the ideologies that this story is trying to highlight and also to critique. For example, after Manak goes back home and speaking to his mum, so she asks, ‘why do you croak like an old woman? Be a man.’ So this command given by his mother is one of those very obvious clues which tells us the ideology that is working behind the scene is of patriarchy and Manak’s mum is complicit with this crime.

So the command of being a man is how patriarchy manifests itself in the relation between sons and parents, like the child and parent. So it’s quite well known that patriarchy usually

manifests itself mostly within social institutions, of which one is family. And we have a perfect example here, very clear and on the face.

So Manak wants to retort that you are a woman, why do you not cry like one for a change? This is again in complicit with the patriarchal thought but he remains silent. But we are not sure if it is a silence. This silence is very clearly, is complicit with patriarchy but we do not know why he is silent. And again, we know that Guleri is unable to bear a child and this is one of the reasons why, this is the reason why Manak's mom wants to get rid of Guleri so that her son can get a child. So this is again a clue.

So 'obedient to his mother and to custom Manak's body responded to the new woman.' So here we see that it is under obedience to his mother and also to custom that Manak's body is responding. So the question of body autonomy and also of, he does not have access to his own will so, this is another problematic area which we find in this. So also there is one more point where the story I quote 'she had paid five hundred rupees to get him a second wife'.

So paying 500 rupees to get a new wife as if a person is something to be bought is also problematic because you also see that, just in the section just before this, we see that Guleri and Manak was bartering their hearts. So I think that's what I understand from this section. Thank you.

Student 6: So, I will be reading the next section of the story.

"Early one morning, he was smoking his chillum when an old friend happened to pass by. "Oh Bhavani, where are you going so early in the morning?" Bhavani stopped, he had a small bundle on his shoulder. "Nowhere in particular," he replied evasively. "You must be on your way to some place or the other," exclaimed Manak. "What about a smoke?" Bhavani sat down on his haunches and took a chillum from Manak's hand.

"I am going to Chamba for the fair," he replied at last. Bhavani's words pierced through Manak's heart like a needle "Is the fair today?" "It is the same day every year" replied Bhavani dryly. "Do you not remember we were in the same party seven years ago?"



Bhavani didn't say anymore but Manak was conscious of the other man's rebuke and he felt uneasy.

Bhavani put down the chillum and picked up his bundle. His flute was sticking out of the bundle. Bidding Manak farewell, he walked away. Manak's eyes remained on the flute till Bhavani disappeared from view. Next afternoon, when Manak was in his fields he saw Bhavani coming back but deliberately he looked the other way.

He didn't want to talk to Bhavani or hear anything about the fair but Bhavani came around the other side and sat down in front of Manak. His face was sad, lightless as a cinder. "Guleri is dead," said Bhavani in a flat voice. "What?" "When she heard of your second marriage she soaked her clothes in kerosene and set fire to them." Manak, mute with pain, could only stare and feel his own life burning out."

So if you conduct a peripheral surface level analysis of this text, you can see that, so the setting of this part takes place after Manak's second marriage. And it starts on, this section starts on a pleasant note, Manak meets his friend Bhavani and they starting a casual conversation, but as soon as Manak realizes that Bhavani is going for the fair the tone of the conversation turns into a sad one.

So he, Manak does not want to be reminded of his wife Guleri because there is something that he regrets that he did not inform her and he married. He cheated her basically and married another woman. So he does not want to, the sentence here reads 'Bhavani's words pierced through Manak's heart like a needle.' He does not want that memories to come back. But Bhavani again is trying to, trying to remind him those things by saying that, we were in the same party for the same years.

So throughout this session we can see that the men, and Ananthu said that the setting is patriarchal in this story. So throughout this we can see the men of the story trying to preserve or conserve their masculinity by suppressing their emotions, so-called women emotions like sorrow and all. From the beginning itself Manak doesn't express his emotions when he sees off Guleri and here in this session also he is very sad but he is mute with pain.

He has a flat voice, both Bhavani also has a flat voice. They are not expressing their emotions. They are trying to restrict them and I think that is it from this section.

Student 7: “The days went by. Manak resumed his work in the fields and ate his meals when they were given to him, but he was like a man dead. His face quite blank, his eyes empty. “I am not his spouse” complained his second wife, “I am just someone he happened to marry,” but quite soon she was pregnant and Manak’s mother was well pleased with her new daughter-in-law.

She told Manak about his wife's condition, but he looked as if he did not understand and his eyes were still empty. His mother encouraged her daughter-in-law to bear with her husband’s moods for a few days. As soon as the child was born and placed in his father’s lap, she said Manak would change. A son was duly born to Manak’s wife and his mother, rejoicing, bathed the boy, dressed him in fine clothes and put him in Manak’s lap.

Manak stared at the newborn baby in his lap. He stared a long time uncomprehending. His face as usual, expressionless. Then suddenly the blank eyes filled with horror and Manak began to scream, “Take him away”, he shrieked hysterically. “Take him away. He stinks of kerosene.” ”

So in this final and really short part, we get to see what happens after Guleri’s death. And Manak is described as someone who, he is not the same person anymore. He is completely destroyed by her death and even though he is married, it’s an unhappy marriage and there is this part about his wife. She is also, she does the chores of being a wife, but there is no love between them.

And you can also see how Manak’s mother, she shows no remorse of indirectly causing Guleri's death and also, her eyes are set on her goal to get her a grandchild. And when that finally happens, she believes Manak will become his old self again. But instead, the child somehow terrifies him, and we get to see that he kind of, in a way thinks that Guleri’s death was the price that had to be paid so that he could get a child. So that is what I think, it means by, ‘he stinks of kerosene.’

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## Gender Matters

AMRITA PRITAM (1919-2005)



Professor: Very unconventional. She's had a, you know, big, full life. And she was very controversial as well. There were a couple of books, works of hers which were banned and it is very interesting that even though her works were banned, she was hugely popular as well. So she had a massive popular appeal. In fact, she herself said that many of her novels are potboilers, you know. But despite that flippant remark, some of her fiction are very, very valuable as psychological studies, right, and she is also very well-known for that partition poem. I will give you a reference for that one.

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## 'Safarnama'

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It was pain—

That, like a cigarette, I smoked away in silence

Just a handful of poems—

That, I have flicked like ashes from the cigarette...



So okay, we will start with this one. This is how she describes her writing, her work, her commentary on her work, 'Safarnama.' 'It was pain. That like a cigarette, I smoked away in silence.' 'It was pain. That like a cigarette, I smoked away in silence. 'Just a handful of poems. That, I have flicked like ashes from the cigarette.'

This poem because of the imagery, look at the way she writes about her poems, they are like ashes from the cigarette. And somehow for me, ashes, cinder, flames and fire all these images seem to have a nice echo with the Stench of Kerosene as well, right. So there is a kind of literal connection between all these expressions, right, elemental expressions which are also connected to the pain, you know. We kind of channel our pain through these elemental aspects of nature so I thought it had a nice echo so, I brought this couple of lines for you to look at.

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## Amrita Pritam's "Aj aakhan Waris Shah nu" ("Today I invoke Waris Shah")



"It brings the past and the present together; it is a cultural cementing right at the time of being riven apart, a cry from the heart, the poem expresses the agony of dislocation."

--Jasbir Jain, Remembering Amrita, 2005



Okay. This is the poem that I was talking about, and earlier Suma also mentioned it when she was doing her biographical sketch. And this is this very famous poem on the partition, and I have a few thoughts about that poem by Jasbir Jain. If there is time we will read the poem as well, at least a couple of lines from the poem we will read if there is time.

So the translated title is "Today I invoke Waris Shah" and Jasbir Jain in his article 'Remembering Amrita' in 2005, when she dies he says that 'It brings the past and the present together.' The poem, the partition poem, brings the past and the present together. 'It is a cultural cementing', it is a kind of a cementing bringing two very different things together and kind of molding it, cementing it.

'Right at the time of being riven apart.' Just at the point when they were being kind of shattered, divided forever, 'a cry from the heart, the poem expresses the agony of dislocation'. So it's a wonderful poem that expresses the need for cultural amity and unity exactly at the point when it was being broken, so that poem is still very resonant and I would highly recommend it to you for reading.

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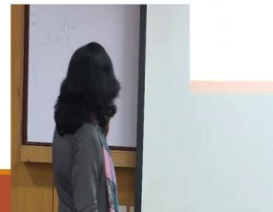
## Padma Sachdev, "Amrita: The Flame on the Smoke Ball" (trans. by Amar Mudi)



'Faiz Ahmad Faiz read a poem by Amrita on Warish Shah....and said that no better poem than this has been written on Partition. Amrita, the nightingale of Punjab, was described by him as

"The woman came out drenched after bath in the pond

Like the flame of a smoke-ball."



Okay, so this is a comment by Faiz Ahmad Faiz, a very famous Urdu Poet, and this is what he had to say about Amrita Pritam when he had read that partition poem. He says, 'The woman came out drenched after bath in the pond like the flame of a smoke-ball.' 'The woman came out drenched after bath in the pond like the flame of a smoke-ball,' So this is his comment on Amrita Pritam after having read that poem, today I invoke Waris Shah.

And once again this imagery is pretty stark and paradoxical. A woman coming out of a bath would be drenched with water, right? But with Amrita it is totally the reverse because she is very passionate, highly excited about the subject. Very, very passionate in her rendering of the ideas in her work, so he calls her 'like the flame of a smoke ball.'

So again this image of being drenched, a woman being drenched not with water but with kerosene and fire had a nice echo with the story that we are dealing with, which is why I thought this comment is pretty interesting because it reminds us of the personality of Amrita Pritam as well as her passionate approach to the subject matter.

So this is sort of a, kind of a cultural materialist reading that I am doing, right? Picking out ideas about her work and the way Amrita herself reacts to her own work. And I'm trying to put them alongside the Stench of Kerosene, so that we see a kind of a thematic parallel

running through all these cultural documents, be it Amrita's own work or be it critics on Amrita Pritam.

First to respond to what Mridula had to say about the first section. She is quite right in suggesting that this first section sets up the rustic world, the rural world, the pastoral world, the village life. We get to kind of see its images, feel its rhythms when we read the first section.

In that context I want to bring your attention to a particular element of that which is the mare. The mare, the female horse which has arrived, I am kind of particularly struck by that. Let me read that passage. 'Outside a mare neighed. Guleri recognized the neighing and ran out of the house. The mare was from her parents' village. She put her head against its neck as if it were the door of her father's house.'

I thought this was pretty interesting. We read in the story that a man is sent for her but the first thing to come to her, to beckon her home is this mare, this female horse, right. And then she puts her head against its neck as if she were putting it against the door of her father's house so, there is an immediate transportation in her mind to that familial place, the father's house, the mother's house.

One other thing that struck me here is that we don't get a very good picture of the interiors of the father's house, the parental household. It's almost as if we are at the door just as Guleri herself is in some ways. She is just outside the parental house. I don't know how to read it, there are two ways you can read it, you know. One is the parental household, the parental home is itself an ideal, is itself a kind of romantic ideal for the girl who is married off into a different village, going home to the parents becomes a kind of tradition, a cultural tradition which perhaps is empty we do not know. This is one way to respond to the door outside of which she kind of stands.

We would never see her inside the parents' house. We see her with her friends, going about in the village fair, dressed up in finery and that's about it. The interior, the internality is kind of not described, which is pretty interesting. So that's one thing that we can think about and again, someone was pointing out to the fact that, Mridula was pointing out to the

fact that we get a picture of a carefree Guleri. Guleri who is free of responsibilities, right. When she is spending time with her friends, the female friends and what I see there is the sisterhood. The sisterhood there, the almost egalitarian domain in which they participate, where they get to share all the joys and the sorrows without the male intervention so, it is a pure female domain in which she participates.

‘The girls would have new dresses made for the occasion. They would have their dupattas dyed, starched and sprinkled with mica. They would buy glass bangles and silver earrings.’ Look at the detail there, right. So this is what I mean when we don’t get the details of the parent’s house, no detail about the father or the mother indulging the daughter, do you see? So that stark absence is slightly jarring. Something that we need to keep in mind.

Let me come to this section. ‘The girls would have new dresses made for the occasion.’ So when we read these details we inevitably compare these details with the final section, right, where we are told by Bhavani that she drenched her clothes in kerosene and set fire to them. So it is a very you know poignant comparison.

The dress is chosen with a lot of joy. The amount of work that has gone into it, in preparing that dress, the dupatta which needs to be dyed and kind of adorned with mica and that outfit is what is being set on fire, right? So it’s a very poignant moment when we realize that, that she sacrifices all the joys of girlhood as well as life itself.

We also see, as Mridula pointed out, the list of daily chores that she has to participate in, partake of feeding the cattle, cooking food, you know these are really laborious work, very intense hard work that she does on a daily basis. And again I am reminded of the point that she sounds as if she is a very young girl, she sounds as if she is a very young wife.

So, if you kind of think about the amount of work that this young girl does then it’s quite reasonable to see her point of view in the sense that she is, it’s alright for her. She is only due to go home and enjoy her carefree life, isn’t it? So again the contrast between hard work and the carefree enjoyment in the village fair kind of shows the kind of the rude extremes of life.



Okay, let's go to the second section. Here, in this section, the chillum, the pipe is intriguing to me. Manak smokes this pipe constantly, I mean there are a couple of references to chillum, right? He smokes at this point and later on he offers the smoke to Bhavani, his friend who is going off to Chamba. So it suggests the luxury that men enjoy. The privileges of being a male compared to the list of chores that she does. So this smoke is an indication, his smoking is an indication of that and further, if you look at the next section, 'early one morning he was smoking chillum when an old friend happened to pass by.' So the first reference is to when he is not happy with the fact that Guleri is going off to her father's place and in the second one it's right after his second marriage.

So there is not a drastic change of circumstances for Manak there. Even though he is not happy with this marriage, he is not entirely thrown off-balance that he has stopped smoking, right? He continues to stick to his old habit so that continuity is there. The continuity for the male in partaking of his pleasures is still continuous, still there. And it is also a kind of a chance to build bonds. For the girls it is like preparing dresses, for the men share a smoke, engage in male bonding so that idea is also there.

Let's talk about the problem of having no children quote unquote 'On the long awaited morning, Guleri was ready long before dawn. She had no children and therefore no problem of either having to leave them with her husband's parents or taking them with her.'

So this scene is shown through Guleri's eyes. The consciousness is Guleri's consciousness, so if she had children at that point of time they would be a problem, but in the grand scheme of things not having children is the problem for Guleri which takes her life. So it's a very innocent viewpoint, 'thank God I do not have children, I do not have to think about leaving them or bringing them with me to my parent's home.' So it is a very innocent, somebody used the word 'innocuous.' It's the right word to use in the sense that it captures the innocence, the youth, the carefree nature again. Guleri doesn't think below the surface, she does not think below the surface here.

Earlier someone was talking about, I think it was Ananthajith who said that why is he silent? He does not seem to talk much, Manak does not seem to talk. Instead of talking, at this section, he seems to use music to express his anguish. So music becomes a kind of a

channel for him to express his agony, that is one way. Or you can state that he is incapable of expressing very clearly in words. Thirdly, there is a suppression of the natural human instinct in the male due to the patriarchal framework. So there are multiple ways you can describe this particular idea.

The child-like stubbornness is a very interesting point that Shweta was pointing out. The child-like stubbornness is something that you can compare to, kind of a feminist or a kind of an assertion of one's rights here. I get to go every year and I will go this year too. I don't care. So she is resisting the husband's wish and goes ahead with that and she also resists other factors as well. So there is no leeway there. She does not give in to the husband's romantic requests so that is interesting. So, childlike stubbornness and assertion of the feminine personality here.

In the third section, we get the embedded narrative, a flashback. We get a flashback where we get a romantic interlude and, 'cattle go for unripe corn' Guleri had replied. 'If you want me go and ask for my hand from my father.' So there is an overt reference to sexuality which she undercuts. She stops that trajectory of sexuality and says that go ask for permission and what she does is she channels that sc- crude sexuality into the domain of custom and tradition and the institution of marriage.

So if you think about this moment and compare the other moment where he kind of responds to the second wife, it is an interesting comparison. So it is a kind of a biological reaction as well as a reaction to custom. The second wife is also part of the institution of marriage, just as the first wife is. So there are paradoxical discordant elements within the institution of marriage, which kind of undercuts the trajectory of romance.

So you can't have romance as well as the institution of marriage dictated by patriarchy on the same level. Something has to give and romance gives here. So the institution of marriage and patriarchy demands an heir and she can't give that. So what happens is that, the narrative of romance gets deconstructed and the silence of the male allows for that. The silence of the male here, Manak, allows for the continuation of the patriarchal nature of the institution of marriage.

So I'll stop here, we will continue later.