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**SPEAKERS**

Jim Phelan

**Jim Phelan** 00:00

May anything ever happen with that? Partly I'm asking because I sort of want to think about it for the medical humanities and my

00:09

are looking good. So you guys can start anytime. Okay, that's gonna be monitoring. Okay. I'll be any other if you need. Okay, it.

00:18

So there was a discussion and because the elaborateness of what would have to happen at the time Susan was like, Guess how much? Yeah, take on and so, okay. All right.

**Jim Phelan** 00:37

So some for me to look into, but that's good.

00:40

Yeah. But I mean, she wasn't against it, but it was gonna be complicated. So and take some labor on undergraduate, you know, set it all up. So, which is okay, like, I wasn't quite sure how many people were gonna sign up for it anyway. So yeah. Which is also a concern.

**Jim Phelan** 00:58

Right? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. All right. Good. Are you ready to go? Yeah. Yeah. Okay. This is Joe Fallon, Director of Project Narrative at The Ohio State University, and I like to welcome you to the project narrative podcast. In each episode, a narrative theory selects a short narrative to read and discuss with me or another host. Today, I'll be talking with Arman Garcia, who has selected Salman Rushdie short story, the Firebirds nest, which was originally published in the New Yorker in 1997. In addition to discussing the story, and I will get into some general issues about how authors and readers handle the issue of characters choices. Hello, I'm Paul gotcha is Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Ohio State English Department. And I'm happy to say that he's recently become a member of the core faculty in project narrative. And scholarly expertise includes a 19th century British literature, the theory and history of the novel and literary theory. He's the author of From sketch to novel, the development of Victorian fiction, from Cambridge University Press in 2009, as well as numerous essays and reviews about Victorian literature and culture. Its current project is about narrative and choice. And he's been publishing some of his thinking and journal articles. In 2020, he published a fascinating essay in Texas studies in literature and language on the colleges of choice, and Trump's the fixed period. He has a wonderful essay on Jane Austen's handling of choice forthcoming in the journal novel. His title there is Emma's choices, economics and modern narratives of decision making. And is there anything you'd like our listeners to pay special attention to, as you read rush to story?

02:55

Thanks, Jim. That was great. There's a lot going on in Russia the story so and I'll hopefully talk about things I'm not so focused on as far as things I am focused on in terms of my own interests and scholarship. But one of the certainly things that we're going to be interested in is to look at or think about, as we go through the story. How Rushdi represents or in this case doesn't represent people trying to figure out what to do next, making choices making decisions, etc.

**Jim Phelan** 03:29

Okay, good. So now here's almond gotcher, reading the fiberarts nest by Salman Rushdie.

03:37

Now, I am ready to tell how bodies are changed into different bodies. Ovid metamorphosis, is a hot place flat and sear. The rains have failed so often, that now they say instead, the drought succeeded. They are Plainsmen livestock farmers, but their cattle are deserting them. The cattle staggering migrate south and east in search of water and rattle as they walk. Their skulls horn mileposts line the root of their vein Exodus, there's water to the west, but as salt. Soon even these marshes will have given up the ghost. Tumbleweed blows across the leech gray flats. There are cracks big enough to swallow a man and a half enough way for a farmer to die to be eaten by his land. Women do not die in that way. Women catch fire and burn. within living memory a thick forest stood here. Mr. Mirage tells his American bride as the limousine drives towards his palace. A rare breed of Tiger lived in the forest white assault, wiry small and songbirds. A dozen dozen varieties they're very nests rebuilt in music. Half a century ago his father riding through the forest would hum along with their areas could hear the Tigers joining in the choruses. But now his father is dead. The Tigers are extinct and the birds have all gone except one, which never sings a note and the absence of trees mixes nest in a secret place that has not been revealed. The Firebird he whispers and his bride a child of a big city, a foreigner. No virgin. laughs It's such exotic mellow dramatics, tossing her long bright hair, which is yellow like a flame. There are no princes now the government abolish them did decades ago, the very idea of princes has become an our modern country of fiction, something from the time of feudalism, a fairy tale. Their titles, their privileges had been stripped from them. They have no power over us. In this place. The prince has become plain Mr. Maharaj is a complex man. His palace in the city has become a casino. But he has a commission seeks to extirpate the public corruption that is in the country he's been in his youth he was a mighty sportsman, but since his retirement, he has had no time for games. He has an ecological Institute studying and seeking remedies for the drought. But his country's residents at the great fortress Palace to which this limousine is taking him cascades of precious water flow seamlessly for no other purpose than display. His library of ancient texts is the wonder of the province, yet he also controls the local satellite franchises and profits from every new dish. The details of his finances like those of his many rumored romances are obscure. Here's the quarry. The limousine halts. There are men with picks axes and women bearing Earth in metal bowls upon their heads. When they see Mr. Mirage, they make gestures of respect the genuflect the bow. The American bride watching intuits that she has passed into a place in which that which was abolished is the truth. And it is the government far away in the capital. That is the fiction in which nobody believes here Mr. Mirage is still the prince, and she is new princess, as though she'd entered a fable as though she were no more than words crawling along a dry page, or as though she were becoming that page itself. That surface on which your story would be written. And across which they're blue hot and merciless when turning her body to Papyrus. Her skin to parchment, her soul to paper. It is so hot. She shivers it is no quarry, and it's a reservoir. Farmers driven from their land by drought had been employed by Mr. Maharaj to dig this waterhole against the day when the rains return. In this way, he can give them some employment he tells his bride and more than employment hope. She shakes her head saying that this great holo is already full, a bitter irony. briny brackish, no use demand or cow the women in the reservoir of irony are dressed in the colors of fire. Only the foolish blinded by languages conventions. They could fire is red or gold. Fire is blue and it's melancholy room green and it's an envious heart and may burn white or even at its greatest rages black. Yesterday the men with pickaxes tell Mr. Mirage, a woman and a red and gold sorry a full ignited in the amphitheater of the dry waterhole. The men stood along the high rim of the reservoir watching her burn, shouldering arms and a kind of salute recognizing in the wisdom of their manhood, the inevitability of women's fate. The women their women screamed when the women finished burning their nut was nothing there. Not a scrap of flesh, Not a bone. She burned his paper burns flying up to the sky in bleen blown into nothing by the wind. The combustibility of women is a source of resigned wonder to the men hereabouts they just burned too easily what's to be done about it? Turn your back and there are white. Perhaps it is difference between the sexes. The men say men are Earth solid enduring. The ladies are capricious, unstable. They're not long for this world. They go off in a puff of smoke without leaving so much as a note of explanation. And in this heat, if they should spend too long in the sun, we tell them to stay indoors not to expose themselves to danger. But you know how women are is their fate, their nature. Even the demure ones have fiery hearts, perhaps the demure ones most of all, Mr. Mirage murmurs to his wife in the limousine. She is a woman of modern outlook and does not like it she tells him when he speaks this way hurting her sex into these crude corrals. These easy generalizations even adjust. He inclined said an amused apology. A firebrand he says I see a mess men my ways. See that you do she commands and Nestle's comfortably under his arm. His gray beard brushes her brown gossip burns ahead of her she is rich as rich as the old obese Nazim who was weighed in joules on his birthdays and was so able to increase taxes simply by putting on weight. His subjects would quick as they saw his banquets, his mighty harvests his towering jellies his coffee, Emily is very new that endless avalanche of delicacies sliding down the designs call it meant that the food on their own tables would be sparse and plain as he wept with exhausted repletion so their children would weep with hunger His gluttony would be their famine. Yes, filthy rich the gossip sizzles. Her American father claims descent from the deposed royal family of an Eastern European state. And each year, he flies the elite employees of his commercial Empire by private aircraft to his last kingdom, whereby the banks of the river of time itself he stages a four day golf tournament, and then laughing contemptuous godlike fires the champion destroys his life for the universe of spider glory, abandoned by the shore of times River, into who, into whose tumultuous deadly waters, the champion finally dives and is lost, like hope, like a ball. She is rich, she's a fertile land, she will bring sons and rain. No, she is poor, the God got some flashes her father hanged himself when she was born, her mother was a whore. She also is a creature of wilderness and rocky ground, the drought is in her body. Like a curse. She is barren, and has come in the hope of stealing brown babies from their homes and nursing them from bottles since her own breasts are dry. Mr. Maharaj has searched the world for its treasures and brought back a magic jewel whose light will change their lives. Mr. Maharaj has fallen into iniquity and brought despair into his palace has to come to yellow haired doom. So she's becoming a story that people tell and argue over. Traveling toward the palace. She too is aware of entering a story a group of stories about women such as herself, fair and yellow and the dark men they loved. She was worn by friends at home in her tall city. Do not go with him. They cautioned her if you sleep with them, he will not respect you. He does not think of women like you as wives. Your otherness excites him your freedom. He will break your heart that he calls her his bride she is not his wife. So far, she feels no fear. A ruin gateway stands in the wilderness an entrance to nowhere. A single tree the last of all the local trees to fall lies rotting beside it. The exposed reach grabbing an air like a dead giants hand. A wedding party passes the limousine slows. She sees that the turban groom on his way to meet his wife is not young and eager, but whispered cold and parched. She imagines a tale of undying love, long denied by circumstance overcoming adversity at last. Somewhere an elderly sweetheart awaits horizon to Mr. They've loved each other always she imagines now near their stories conclusion, they found this happy ending by accident she speaks these words aloud. Mr. Mirage smiles and shakes his head. The bridegroom's bride is young, a virgin from a distant village. Why would a pretty young girl wish to marry an old fool? Mr. Mirage shrugs. The old fellow will have settled for a small Bowery he replies and if one has many daughters, such as factors have much weight. As for the old sister, he adds in a long life there may be more than a single dowry. These things add up. fleets and horns blow raucous music in their direction. A drunk Trumps like cannon fire, transsexual dancers heckle her through the window. Away American they screech ra Howdy partner they say what? Okay, you take care now. I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy. Ooh, baby. Wawa, maximum cool, Miss America shake that thing. She feels a sudden panic, drive faster she cries and the driver accelerates. Dust explodes around the wedding party hiding it from view. Mr. Mirage is solicitude personified. But she's angry with herself. Excuse me, she matters. It's nothing the heat.

13:37

America. Once upon a time in America, they'd shared an Indian lunch 300 feet above street level, at a table with a view of the vernal elections to the park, feasting their eyes upon an opulence of vegetation that now as you remember it in this desiccated landscape, feels obscene. My country's just like yours. He'd said flirting, big, turbulent and full of gods. We speak our kinds of baguette English, and you speak yours. And before you became Romans, when you were just colonials, our masters were the same. You defeated them before we did. So now you have more money than we do. Otherwise, we're the same. Under street corners, the same bustle of differences, the same litter the same everything at oneness. She guessed immediately what he was telling her that he came from place unlike anything she'd ever experienced, whose languages she would struggle to master whose code she might never break, and whose immensity and mystery would provoke and fulfill her greatest passion and her deepest need. Because she was an American, he spoke to her money, the old protectionist legislation, the outdated socialism that a hobbled economy for so long, had been dismantled. And there were fortunes to be made if you had the ideas. Even a prince had to be on the ball one step ahead of the game. He was bursting with projects, and she had a reputation and financial circles as a person who could bring together capital and ideas Who could conjure up for our favorite projects the monetary nourishment? They required? A Rainmaker she took him to the opera was aroused as always by the power of great matters sung of in words she could not understand who's meeting had to be inferred from the performance deeds that she took them home and seduced him. It was her city, her stage and she was confident and young. As they began to make love, she guessed that she was about to leave behind everything she knew. All the roots of herself, or love Mikey became ferocious as if his body were a locked gateway to the unknown, and she must battered down. Not everything will be wonderful, you wonder. There's a terrible drought. His palace unfortunately, is abominable. it crumbles stinks. In room, the curtains are tattered, the bed, precarious the pictures on the wall pornographic representations of arabesque couplings at some Penny princelings court. No way of knowing if these are husband's ancestors or job lot purchased from a persuasive peddler. wowed music plays an ill it corridors but you cannot find it source shadows scurry from our site. He installs her vanishes without an explanation. She's left to make herself at home. That night she slips alone. a ceiling fan stirs the hot syrup a year simmers like a soup. She cannot sit thinking of home. If nocturnal sirens it's cooling machinery. It's reification of the real. Amid that surplus of structures of content is not easy for the phantasmagorical to gain the upper hand or entertainment is full of monsters of the fabulous because outside the darkened cinemas beyond the pages of the books away from the Gothic decibels of the music. The quotidian is inescapable, omnipotent, we dream of other dimensions, a paranoid subtext of underworlds because when we awake, the actual holds us it's great they need grasp, and we cannot see beyond the material, the event horizon. Whereas here, cotton the empty bubbling of dry air, afraid of riches, all your frontiers may crumble are crumbling, the possibility of the terrible is renewed. She has never found it easy to weep, but her body convulses she cries, dried tears and sleeps. When she wakes, there's the sound of a drum and dancers. In a courtyard, the women and girls are gathered young and old, the drummer beats out of rhythm and the ladies respond in unison. The knees bent outward, their splay fingered hands semaphore ring at the ends of peremptory arms. Their next making impossible lateral shifts eyes ablaze they advance across cool stone, like a syncopated army. They still early in the courtyard is in the shadow. The sun is not yet when the stone is fire. At the dancers head, tossed at them all fiercely erect, showing them how is Mr. Mr. Rogers sister over six years old, but still the greatest dancer in the state. Miss Mirage has seen the newcomer, but makes no acknowledgement. She is the Mistress of the dance movement is all when it's finished. They face each other. Mr. Ma Rogers women, the sister, the American, what are you doing? A dance against the Firebird participatory dance toward it off? The Firebird. She thinks of Stravinsky of Lincoln Center, Miss Maharaj and clients are had the bird which never sing she says whose nest a secret whose malevolent wings brush women's bodies and we burn. But surely there's no such burden. It's just an old wives tale. Here there are no old wives tales. Alas, there are no old wives. Enter Mr. Maharaj turban with an embroidered cloth lying about his broad shoulders. How handsome How manly how winsome way apologetic. She finds herself behaving petulantly. Like a woman from another age. he woos and controls he went to prepare her wedding welcome. He hopes you will approve. What isn't? Wait and see. In the semi desert beyond his stinking Palace Mr. Maharaj has prepared an extravaganza by moonlight beneath hot stars on great carpets from is fun and draws a great gathering of dignitaries and nobles Welcome sir. The finest musicians play their mournful haunting fleets, their ecstatic strings and sing the most ancient and precious love songs ever heard was succulent delicacies of the region are offered for her delight. She's already famous to the neighborhood a great celebrity invited your husband to visit us the governor of an adjacent state guffaws but I told him if you don't bring your beautiful lady don't bother to show up. And neighbouring X Prince offers to show her the art treasures locked in his palace vaults. I take them out for nobody he says except Mrs Onassis Of course. For you I will spread them in my garden as I did for jackieo While the moonlight last there are camel races and horse races, dancing and song fireworks burst over their heads. She leans against Mr. Mirage his absence long forgiven as whispers Do you have made a magic kingdom for me? Or should Jesus ism? Is this how you relax every night? She feels some stiffen smells, bitterness leaking from words. It is you who have made this happen. He replies in this room Palace, you've conquered the solution. The camels, the horses, even the food has been brought from far away. We impoverish ourselves to make you happy. How can you imagine that we are able to live like this. We protect the last fragments of what you had. And now to please you we plunge deeper into debt. We dream only of survival. This Arabian Night is an American dream. I asked for nothing. She said. This conspicuous consumption is not my fault. Your accusation your diatribe is offensive. He's had too much to drink and has made him truthful. It's already obedience. He tells us at the feet of power. Rainmaker. Bring us rain. Money you mean what else? Is there anything else? I thought there was love she says the Full Moon has never looked more beautiful. No music has ever sounded lovelier. No Knight has ever felt so cruel. She says I have something to tell you. She is pregnant. She dreams a burning bridges burning boats. She dreams of a movie she's always loved, in which a man returns to his ancestral village that somehow slips through time to the time as a father's youth. When he tries to flee the village to return to the railway station, the tracks have disappeared. There's no way home. This is where the film ends. When she wakes from a dream in a sweltering room. The sheets are soaked and there's a woman sitting at her bedside. She gathers a wet sheet around her nakedness. Miss Mirage smile shrugs. You have a strong body she says younger but in other ways. Not too unlike mine. I would have left him now I just don't know. Miss Mirage shakes her head. In the village. They say it will be a boy she explains. And then the drought will break. Just superstition. But he can't let you leave. And afterwards if you go he'll keep the child. We'll see about that she blasts. When she is agitated her turns become nasal unattractive even to herself. In her mind's eye the story is closing around her the story in which she is trapped and what she must if she can find the path of action, perfectly of right action. But if not, then I'm wrong. What cannot be tolerated is inertia. She will not fall into some team and he days swoon. Romance has led her into errors enough now she will use her head. So as the week's unfold, she begins to see he does not own the casino in his palace in the city has signed a foolish contract, but again, wedding it to a consortium of alarming men. The rent they pay him is absurd and as stipulated in the small print on that certain high days. Each year. He must hang around the gaming tables grinning ingratiating li at the guests, wending atone the satellite that dish franchises are more lucrative. But this greedy old wreck of a country residents needs to eat off far richer platters if it's to be properly fed. The rural Palace is ageless, perhaps 600 years. Most of it lasts electricity, Windows furniture, cold in the cold season hot in the heat, and if the rains should come many of its state rooms would flood. All they have here is water the inexhaustible Palace spring

23:23

at the back of the palace past the ruined zones. For the bats hold sway. She picks her way through accumulated guano and sees a wind form before dawn. The villagers rendered indigenous indigene by the drought come under cover of darkness hiding their humiliation, filling their supplicant pitchers. behind the line. The thirsty there stands like a haunting the high black shadow of a crenelated wall. A village woman with a few unaccountable words of English explains this charred fortress was in former days, the larger part of the princess residents, great treasures are lost when it burned. Also lives also lives. When did this happen? In before time, she begins to understand his bitterness. Another Princess Miss Mirage tells her a Dowager even more destitute than we recently ended her life by drinking fire. She crushed her heirloom diamonds in a cup and gulping down. So Mr. Mirage visiting America turned himself into an illusion of sophistication and innovation had won or with a desperate performance. He has learned to talk like a modern man, but in truth is helpless in the face of the present. The drought is unworldliness, the decision of history to turn away her face. These things are his undoing. In Greece, the athlete who won the Olympic race became a person of high rank in his home city. Mr. Mirage however, rots as does his house. Her own room begins to look like luxuries Acme glass in the Windows the slow turning electric fan and telephone with sometimes a dial tone, a socket for laptops, powerline, the intermittent possibility of forging a modern leg with that other planet, her earlier life. He has not taken her to his own room because he's ashamed of it. Sensing the life growing inside her, she wants to forgive its father to help them out of the past is that flowing, metamorphic present? That has been her real life. She will do what she can do. She is America and brings the rain. Again Again she wakes sweating naked with Miss Maharaj murmuring at her side. Yes, I find body it could have been a dancers. It will burn well. Don't touch me. She is alarmed. All brides in these parts are brought from far afield. And what's the men who spent their dowries than the Firebird comes? Don't threaten me, perplexed. Do you know how many brides he has had? Terrified raging bewildered confronts him. Is it true? Is that why your sister has never married? Why she gathers under her roof to protect them all. All the sponsors of the village young and old. That turtle dance class of lifetime virgins too frightened to take her husband? Is it true you burn through your bride's mad sister has been whispering to you? He laughs She came to your room at night. She crushed your body she spoke of water and fire of women's beauty and the secret lethal nature of men. She told you about the magic bird I suppose. The bird of death? No, she remembers carefully. The one who first named the Firebird was you. Mr. Mirage and fury brings her to his sister's dance class. Seeing him dancers stumble their bell bracelet and feet, lose the rhythm and come jangling to a halt. Why are you here? He has them raging. Tell my bride why you've come? Are you refugees are students. Sir students. Are you here because you're afraid? Oh please, sir, we are not afraid. His Inquisition is relentless. bellowing and all the while his eyes never leave his sisters. Miss Maharaj stands tall on time silent. The last question is for her. How many brides have I had? How many do you say? They're locked in each other's power brother and sister each other's eternal prisoner outside history beyond time. This Mirage the first drop her eyes. She's the first she says it's over. He turns to face his bride and spread his arm spreads his arms. You heard it with your own ear. What's happening? No more fables. The heat is maddening. Skeletal bollocks die on the brow on. Some days there are mustard yellow clouds filling the sky hanging over the evaporating marshes to the west. Even this hideous yellow rain would be welcomed, but it does not fall. Everyone has bad breath. All exaile serpents dead cats insects fogs everyone's perspiration is thick and stinks. In spite of all our resolutions the heat hypnotized sir, the child grows. Miss Mirage dancers become careless about closing doors and windows. They are to be eclipsed here and there. Painting one another's bodies and hot colors and wild designs making love sleeping with limbs entwined. Mr. Maharaj does not come to her. Well, not while she's caring. But each night Miss Maharaj comes since her brother's descent upon her dance class and Miss Mirage has barely spoken. At night she has only to sit at the bedside, sometimes almost personally to touch this Mr. Maharajas American bride allows. Her health fails. She begins to sweat to shiver from a fever. Her shit is like thin mud. Only the palace springs save her from dehydration and swift death. Miss Mirage nurses are brings her salt. The only physician hear about it's an old fellow out of touch useless. Both women know the baby is at risk. During these long, sick nights, quietly absently the sex engineering dancer talks. Something frightful has happened here, some irreversible transformation without our noticing its beginnings so that we did not resist until it was too late. Until the new wave of things was fixed. There's occurred terrible terminal rupture between our men and women. When men say they fear the absence of rain, when women say we fear the presence of fire, this is what we need. Something has been unleashed in us it's too late to tame it now. Once upon a time, there was a great prince here. The last Prince, one could say everything about him was gigantic, mythological, most handsome prince in the world. He married the most beautiful bride a legendary dancer in temptress They had two children, a girl and a boy. As he aged his strength Ed. His eye dimmed but she the dancer refused to fade. At the age of 50. She had the look of a young woman of 21 as the princess Forrest faded as that glamour which had been the heart of his power ceased to work its magic. So his jealousy increased. This Mirage shrugged move quickly to the stories and the fortress burned. They both died. He spected his wife had taken lovers, but there had been done. The children who had been left in care of servants lived jotter became a dancer, the son of sportsmen and so on. The villagers said that the old prince consumed by rage had been transformed into a giant bird, a bird and boats entirely flames. And that was the bird that burned the princess and returns these days to turn other women to ashes at their husbands cool command. And you asked the a woman on the bed. What do you say? Do not condescend to us in your heart, Miss Maharaja Popeyes Do not mistake the abnormal for the untrue. We are caught in metaphors they transfigure us and reveal the meaning of our lives. The illness recedes and the baby seems also to be well. Return of health is like a certain being lifted. She's thinking like herself again. She will keep the child but she will no longer be trapped in this place of fantasies with a man she finds she does not know she will go to the city fly back to America. And after the child is born, what will be will be she has no desire to prevent the father from seeing his child. Extremely free access including trips east will be granted. She wants that wants the child to know both cultures enough time to behave like an adult. She may even continue to advise Mr. Maharaj on his financial needs. Why not? It's her job. She tells mister Miss Mirage her decision and the old dancer winces as it from a blow. In the dead of night the American is awakened by hubbub in the palace. Its corridors and courtyard. She dresses goes outside a scratch Armada motor vehicles assembled a rescue bus, several motor scooters and US Japanese people carrier and open truck a jeep and camouflage. This mirages, women are piling into the vehicles. Angry singing they've taken weapons the domestic weapons that came to hand sticks, garden implements kitchen knives at their head, rubbing the drape shouting impatiently at our troops is Miss mirage. What's going on? None of your business. You don't believe in fairies, you're going home. I'm coming with you. Miss Mirage treats the Jeep roughly driving speed over broken ground without lights. The Mali convoy Georgia long behind they drive by the light but molten fullmoon ahead of them stands a ruin stone arch and entrance nothing besides a fallen tree. The Armada halts turns on its lights. The dance class pours through the archway as if it were the only possible entrance to the open waste ground beyond as if it were a portal to another world. When she the American does likewise, she has that feeling again, a passing through an invisible membrane looking glass into another kind of truth into fiction. A Tableau illuminated by the lights of motor vehicles. Remember the old bridegroom on his way to meet his young important bribe? Here he is again guilty murderous and his young wife uncomprehending at aside in the background silhouetted are the figures of male villagers. Facing the unhappy couple is Mr. Maharaj.

33:05

The women burst shrieking upon the trauma scene, then come raggedly to a halt, intimidated by Mr. Maharaj presents. The sister faces the brother, somebody has left their lights flashing. The siblings faces quote, white, yellow, red and the headlights. They speak in a language the American cannot understand is an opera out without supertitles. She must infer what they are saying from their actions from their thoughts may deeds. And so as clearly as if she comprehended every syllable, she hears Miss Maharaj command her brother. What started between our parents stops now enters response, a sponsor has no meaning in the world beyond the rune archway, which he speaks as his body turns to fire, as the wings burst out of him as his eyes Blaze. His words hang in the air as the Firebirds breath scorches. Miss Mirage, burns her to his center, and then turns upon the daughter streaking bride. I am the Firebirds nest. Something loosens within her as she sees Miss Maharaj burn some shackles broken some limited possibility past unleash she crashed upon Mr. Mirage like a wave and the angry dancers pour behind her seething irresistible. She feels the frontiers of her body burst and the waters pour out the immense crushing weight of her rain, drowning the Firebird and its nest, flowing over the drought hardened land that no longer knows how to absorb it. carrying away the old daughter and its murderous fellows cleansing the region of its horrors its archaic tragedies of life. The death toll is still rising in the former Principality after last night's unexpected drought breaking down for that caused a widespread flooding in the area is feared that the former Prince Mr. A mirage and his sister, a celebrated classical dancer are among the dead. However, an American woman Miss Maharaj fancy It is confirmed as being among the survivors. Now she's flying home and the ocean is below her. The universe has resumed its familiar shape, but her own shape has changed. Mr. mirages child will be born in America. She caresses her swelling, womb increasing, she's both fire and rain

**Jim Phelan** 35:21

exam. Well, there's, there's a lot there's so much going on. Obviously, we probably won't get to talk about all of it. But before we get into some of the details of the story, let's have that discussion about choice and character choice and so on. So I know that one of the things you're interested in is sort of critical misperception is perceptions about choice. You noted that critics of fiction tend to think about character arcs, and even Hall plots in terms of a spatialized view of choices characters make, rather than taking a more temporal view destroys that choice. So for example, critics of Jane Austen's Emma, sometimes talk about Emma choosing among Mr. Elton Frank Churchill and Mr. Knightley, when the novel never puts me in a position where such a choice is available to her. So perhaps you could start there talking about why even smart critics would talk that way? And how you'd prefer that we talk about characters choices.

36:27

Yeah, so that contemporary moment is one where we think about choices as there are millions of things we can choose from all of them are available to us, theoretically, simultaneously, right? She actually in in, in the Firebirds nest, there's this kind of moment, where, you know, contemporary America is kind of portrayed as all at once this right. And a lot of people talk about, you know, in contemporary life, that this is a problem of the modern world, that's been both enabled, it's also like a wonderful thing about the modern world, we can choose all kinds of stuff. But one way to think about it is that choices, and decision making is in some ways about value, what you value over another thing. And one issue is that, you know, in the contemporary moment, we can value all kinds of different things all at the same time. So, and we import this kind of idea of oil, you know, I can choose between, you know, having a hamburger or going to the gym, or watching TV, because all of them are available to us. And it's only up up to us to figure out our own value system on what they're based on. And we import that onto novels where it actually doesn't really work that way. You know, it's not like, there are simulia It's not like Austin represents an Emma, a world of many different value systems, where Emma can, you know, choose to break social rules, marry Mr. Elton, even though it's beneath her, you know, go against her own sense of, you know, what love is, and, and married Churchill values are not so many and disparate. And more importantly, they're not just up to the individual to figure out in these gross ways, and therefore, choice doesn't have this kind of expansive everything all at once kind of mode. It actually happens kind of serially, you know, one after another, where people kind of consult their that some value system, decide one thing, and then another. But we are so used to thinking about decisions as open, that we think even novels that don't show people deciding about many different value systems. We think that that's what's happening.

**Jim Phelan** 39:05

Yeah, so just to tease out that a little bit more here sort of saying two things. When the big one, right, I was so so we import our sense of choice onto narratives. But also those narratives. There's two things going on. One is that the choices are more cereal. And the other is that the choices aren't so much up to the individual. There's, there's all these other kinds of constraints, right. So I guess another thing that would be connected, right, so to take your example of, you know, going to the gym having a hamburger watching TV, I think another dimension of that would be okay, on Tuesday, I'm going to I'm gonna have the hamburger but on Wednesday, I'll watch the TV on Thursday I'll go to the gym and that somehow the you know, there's not a sort of a fixed a hierarchy of our values, right? And that we can, we can shift our values from day to day if we want, right? But you would suggest that in lots of novels, that's really not an option for characters. Does that make sense?

40:14

That's right. You know, it becomes more of an option as we get further into the 19th century, and, you know, into the contemporary age. So when we get to Henry, James's Portrait of a Lady, you know, there's a kind of famous moment of like, do you want to know everything, even things you're not supposed to do? And she says, Well, and she says, I do want to know about them. And then someone asks, like, so that you can do them? She says, Well, like so as to choose, you know, like, there's this kind of sense of like, Alright, I want to kind of make up my own values and follow them. That is not exactly what Emma is doing. And it's certainly not what Elizabeth Bennett is doing. And they will not recognize some kind of idea of just like, well, I just like the idea of choosing, you know, kind of filing as at least, you know, even if the changing, evolving, flexible sense, sense sense of value systems. Nonetheless, I think, you know, Jane Austen takes some kind of structured value systems very seriously. And so the name of my future monograph is called preference, it's this kind of move from, towards a very individualized sense of value that then allows choice to be represented in just this kind of very expansive, kind of endless way.

**Jim Phelan** 41:38

Right, right. So in that sense, you're, it sounds like you're interested in kind of writing a history and the novel focused on preference in that way, so that we, and also then to sort of differentiate right periods of when preferences are strongly constrained, and then of gradual movement into the contemporary period where it's much less strongly constrained, is that, is that fair? Is that too simple?

42:05

Well, I would, I would just object to the idea the preference is constrained. And like, I just think it it's not envisioned in that way. Preference. Another way to put this is, is one of the major issues and self help right now, is actually what's called The Paradox of Choice, right? Which is that the more choices you have, the less you're able to kind of figure out what to do. And one of the things

**Jim Phelan** 42:32

that paralysis of choice paradoxes that leads to paralysis,

42:36

yes, paralysis? Well, the paradox is that you want more choice. But the more choice you have, the less able you are to actually act. So you're actually or what this one psychologists called the tyranny or freedom, that's the kind of paradox, right. And part of what, you know, the reason why I say like, it's not the preference is constrained, because like, really what we get with preference is is, you know, this kind of way that we mix all kinds of different value systems that don't actually, they're not commensurate Abul. So if you're like, should I, you know, enjoy a novel, or should I, you know, go to the gym, in a way, they're not really can't really measure them on the same yardstick. So, the, the, if we thought the preference was constrained, we would think like, well, there are many yardsticks in Jane Austen and Jane Austen has kind of acknowledged them and say, it's like, okay, that's not, you know, but I don't care. I think we go from a world where there's not really imagination of a million different yardsticks a male in different systems value to a world which there are many systems of evaluation, it's up to the individual to kind of figure it out. And it becomes both, you know, liberating and kind of terrifying. So like, Henry James, again, you see a lot of people not doing much any of anything. Yeah.

**Jim Phelan** 44:06

They're singing.

44:07

They're thinking, right.

**Jim Phelan** 44:08

So I mean, that's another I think, maybe, you know, potential future and sort of one of the things that's striking about the rusty is that compared to Henry James, right, something Henry James would get so much, you know, representation of consciousness, internal thoughts, reflections, etc. Right? And, you know, and that that's not just James Right. Or you could say, James, and then James is influenced, right? This becomes a feature of his early 20th century fiction and sort of continues, you know, but, in a way, the Viper's nest sort of is striking because we don't get much of that, right. It's seems like a different kind of thing. So you know, that that raises a couple of questions. I think one is about you know, the sort of the arc and may push back, you know, we get to a certain point and we've exhausted this kind of exploration of individual consciousness. That'd be one dimension of it. But the other dimension, of course, would be genre, right? That's certain kinds of genres lend themselves to the exploration of individual consciousness and reflection and choice and others don't. Right. So, you know, maybe just some thoughts about, about those two things, the historical development and then the genre dimension.

45:31

Yeah, so I think they're related, I would add one more, which is the kind of post colonial and, and, and one way I can kind of get to Firebirds nest is sometimes the language that we talked about the postcolonial condition is one of confusion of many different yardsticks of, of an integration or an opposition or confusion of different systems of value. Where, you know, again, in the film, every, there's everything everywhere all at once. Or, you know, in TV shows, there's, there's a kind of sense of like, the confused, immigrant child being able not knowing which yardstick to you know which thing to choose, because there's so many different ideas. So so one thing about that's interesting about Rusty is, he's clearly very interested in the mixing of cultures and mixing values. But he also resists having what would be a very paradigmatic kind of, you know, culturally confused moments of like, Well, should I do this, I'm confronted by this kind of idea. And what does this mean? I mean, the American bride is confronted with this, but but there's very little moments where she is like, you know, should I go with this idea? Should I go with that? Should I, you know, whatever, subsume myself to Indian culture, you know, and, and so, one of the things that I think is fascinating about Rushdie generally, is he takes on the topic of kind of cultural mixing the mixing of values of individualism, Western individualism, its relationship to the past, of fables of of myths, you know, and he, in a way refuses that, what could be a temptation, there was often a temptation for other postcolonial writers, to think about multiple, you know, this kind of grand multiplicity of possibilities and ideas. And instead he writes something that he's self conscious about, he mentions fables, he mentions myths, he mentions this kind of like sense of this is an age old place and age old pattern. And he also takes on just if I can go on a little bit of a riff, also the kind of historical dimension, you know, he's, he's clearly thinking about one of the one great controversy in kind of the historiography of the of kappa colonies, the practice of Sati, the wives of what's their, what's their husbands died, widows are supposed to throw themselves on the fire itself, Emily, and this, for those of the audience are into literary criticism and literary theory, Gayatri speedback, one of the great postcolonial critics in one of the classic texts can the Subaltern Speak, the entire last section of it is about different ways of thinking about Saudi that she actually says, you know, there's a bunch of different ways to think about it. One is and this is what she says. One is that the colonists often thought of themselves the white colonists of saving white women, brown women from brown men. And and and so it was this kind of like, white savior kind of idea. And but then the Hindu men would often say, Well, the women wanted the women wanted to die. This is the way she put it puts it. So he's, you know, commenting on this, you know, in some ways, going through the same idea that it is the American female who comes saves everyone, you know, for the practice of Sati reverses the gender kind of keeps the white savior kind of thing. But does it all with a kind of flatness, you know, like a, like a kind of refusal of internal deliberation. You know, it takes on the kind of flavor of fable and myth, even though he seems to want to defend my militarize ourselves with it. And I think that's, I can say more about that

**Jim Phelan** 49:56

or should I think I mean, I think you have already started to me have to make a good transition to some of the details of the story. But maybe before we go further there, there are one other sort of question about choices is the way in which we can think about choices sort of at different levels of narrative. Right. So obviously, we've been focusing primarily on character choices. But then there's also, you know, choices about how to tell the story. Right. And, and we, depending on how an author uses a scenario, we could say, well, sometimes it will get a narrator making choices, either implicitly or explicitly. And, and then we could also think about, you know, authors making choices. Right. So you're, you're saying, in a way, you know, Roche rusty, you know, refuses to do certain kinds of things. Right? Well, I, you know, I might say, well, that's a choice. Right. So, so we don't, at that, say at the authorial level, we're still to some degree, at least interested in authorial choice is that, how does that play into your whole way of thinking about?

51:07

Yeah, you know, it's and it's, it's really interesting, because, I mean, you can tell he has all kinds of, I think he may have even read speed X, you know, like, like, Well, I mean, he's got all kinds of things that he knows that he can take all these different, you know, ways into it. I think it's, you know, I don't know about Russia, but there is this kind of, I do know about Dickens and Dickens would often Dickens has to be a same kind of mode of, he reluctantly describes consciousness, you know, a lot of his characters are flat. And he often talks about his writing processes, steam powered as if he's like, some kind of machine. And he just like, does it you know, you know, I, I think Rusty is more thoughtful, but there is this kind of sense of Rush T of like, you know, people are trying to kill him, you know, and he's just like, um, I don't care, I'm just gonna keep on going, you know, like, like, it, it that that energy, the kind of like, energy of the sentences Yeah. It doesn't foreground that sense of, I'm making choices, you know, like, like, the feel of it is a kind of irresistible force very much like the Firebird and the, the water, you know, the water. And it's very distinctive, you know, and if you pick up Midnight's Children, which is your favorite thing. So actually, the, the novel begins with the first person narrator, right. He's been born at the moment of, of Indians independence. And he actually says, this is a quote, because thanks to the occult ironies of the family saluting clocks, I've been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubility chained to those of my country. For the next three decades, there was to be no escape. So at least on the narrator's kind of sense. There's really like, like, a sense of like, history is destiny. And, and I can't resist this kind of thing. And I really feel like that's part of the vibe one gets rusty.

**Jim Phelan** 53:09

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. All right, great. So if we go back to the story, right, maybe just pushback slightly right on the idea of the American bride and her choice thing, you know, or choosing to do X or Y or not, right. I mean, I think in general terms, what you say, you know, rings true, right? But but we do get these things like, you know, when she says, Now that she's pregnant and right, well, I'm not sure whether I should go or stay, you know, that guy. I was ready to go, but now that I know, I'm pregnant, maybe I'm gonna stay. So is that what do you How does that figure into your, your analysis?

53:58

I mean, yes, there are those moments, right. I mean, one thing that that one kind of has to focus on is that she's not named, I mean, like she's the American bride. Right? Absolutely. Right. Even Mr. Mahara? You're Mr. Maharaj. Right. It's just like supreme, you know, like, like, I

**Jim Phelan** 54:15

know, it's really it's the Matic name. Yeah, these kind of thematic names.

54:19

And so one feels like she represents a kind of individualism and American individualism. Yeah. But she's so over determined by history, like, like, you know, both the history of where she's at, but then we also find out that she is supposedly the, the daughter, you know, the daughter of these, you know, ancient, you know, maybe European monarch monarchs and it's subject of gossip. That that the that feeling like an Midnight's Children are being kind of, you know, linked to these historical trends, you know, of the American and the Indian feels more vital to whatever is happening in the story than any sense of what's at stake is an individual set of preferences. Right? You know, like, in a way, it's even, like the eating and stuff like that, where it's just like these mountains of food that come out you like, there's no sense of like, well, do I want this? Or do I want that, you know, like, the kind of consumption happens on this, like, way of, of there's, there's, there's very little sense of, I've got a yardstick I can we can see the different yardsticks, you know, by which she's evaluating things. So it is there, but it's but but it's kind of teasingly there, you know, and again, I don't want to make a, like these, these different verses of choice do kind of appear, even in very different genres where one's not once dominant, but there's a subordinate kind of part of it. I don't think that's subordinated. But I think the subordination it's kind of striking to me.

**Jim Phelan** 56:02

Yeah. Okay, good. Good. Yeah. Maybe we could talk just a little bit more about genre, because, I mean, think, you know, we could say, mixing genres. And there are these elements of, you know, the fable. Myth. I mean, Firebird obviously, there's a whole carries a whole tradition of, of math. But then there are these other kinds of details that we might think of, as, you know, sort of quasi realistic anyway, I mean, you know, the either go to the opera, there's, you know, this, that, and the other, I mean, what, how do you how do you sort of sort the genre mixing that that seems to be, you know, roasties? You know, mode here?

56:50

Yeah. Now, it's, I mean, it's confusing in that, in that way, that kind of post modernism is a little confusing, right, because even the the moments of realism are people being transfixed by different kinds of narratives of like, going to the opera, she's like an RTS or the insects, and you know, she's often actually says, like, I'm entranced by these fables and, and brushy, often, like, has this like sense of like, this is the problem. If you think fire, if you believe the way of language that's read, you don't quite understand, you've been entranced by language too. And, you know, the realism and also, there's the issue of magical realism, which has a whole kind of, you know, history of the, the, you know, whatever the, you know, whatever, what they used to call the developing world, you know, like, like, but, but I do think that arm's length, like that kind of realism, where, where there's a kind of self consciousness by which people are seduced by tails, by stories, by stories they don't quite understand, right, because that sort of thing about the opera, she's like, she needs to supertitles. And she's actually like, she likes the fact that she doesn't actually understand the language. And, you know, if you think about the bat thing, you know, and which is also the seductiveness of the other, right, you know, of not understanding, it is a, both a longing for and a fact of not being able to choose, you know, like, like, because you don't actually understand what's happening, and you don't understand the story that you're in. And therefore, you're not so much constrained, like the narrator of children in this kind of national story that you're kind of part of, but actually, in someone else's story, right, you know, and or stories that are out there. And that's certainly the case, like, like she comes in, and there's this long story of the Firebird and the brides and we don't quite know, whether it's true or false or a story, and what if, what, what's the kind of truth value of the story, you know, and then she becomes a character in this legend, you know, like

**Jim Phelan** 58:59

that, and she becomes conscious of that, right? So, I mean, that happens at least twice. Right? Where, where, you know, she's aware of, sort of this, or she has this feeling that she's moving into a fiction, and he says at one time, right, so that's really interesting at the character level, but it's also interesting at the reader level, right? Because it's like, okay, well, you know, or are we are we shifting, you know, generic frames as she feels this, this shift or comment on that?

59:34

I mean, I think we are shifting generic frames in the sense that, that, that is being what is being called attention to, is the fact that when you shift generic frames, you're shifting from one genre to another, as opposed to some kind of idea of individual like, like, like, like, options and making, you know, like, like, like, I think, isn't it shifting of genres? You know, he's very, he constantly tells us about these things. mentions of different genres. And, you know, I think part of what he's saying is like, there's no world outside of convention. And in some ways, that's, that's a, now an obvious thing that that we all learn, you know, in a first year graduate school, like there's no out, you know, out there outside of language. But it is a very different idea than saying, you know, you got a choice, you can, you can do this you can do that you can break out of the genre, but she can't, you know, she, she actually becomes the main character in the, in the legend, and she does it kind of against her will, she feels herself, you know, bursting in the water just comes out of her, and we're not quite clear that she knows what's happening.

**Jim Phelan** 1:00:42

Right. Right. Yeah, I think it too, then, you know, we should we should pay some attention to sort of the cross cultural thing and sort of the politics of that, right, and how, how, you know, he's doing this genre mix in relationship to something that's obviously, you know, sort of politically relevant outside of, you know, the fiber to nest outside of the fiction. So, I mean, there's some obvious things like so the, you know, there's this very strong, you know, gender binaries here. Right. And, you know, women when women nine other way, we have the drought as the, you know, the dominant instability, right, how what's going to happen with the drought? And, you know, that's driving so much of what happens? You know, so we run them, of course, we have, we have water, and fire and rain, and so on. So how do you see these things mapping onto some kind of a, you know, a political dimension of the story?

1:01:49

Yeah. So I'll say a couple of things. For one thing, I think one of the things that Rushdie is interested in is precisely the way the post colonial condition isn't up and to individuals, it is this kind of gigantic set of forces. That, you know, I feel like, in a way, what he's saying, and he's kind of saying it the same way with a narrator of Midnight's Children is like, if you think whatever is happening between cultures and economies, and wars, is up to you, you know, like, like, you fundamentally mistaken something like, and, and this is, again, you know, a long standing kind of Marxist critique of, of, of certain kinds of literature, especially kind of modernist literature, where everything becomes a matter of consciousness of individual consciousness. And that's both very tempting, but what, again, generations of critics have said, it's like, it really mistakes, something really important about politics. Yeah, the very idea of politics is that it's not about an individual being like, I'm going to, you know, like, appropriate this piece of cultural whatever or not, or, I'm, you know, gonna buy this rather than that, like, like, our I am not going to say this kind of word and say that kind of word. Instead, these forces are, are way bigger. And I think this is, I think this is both the power and I think, also what gets rusty often in trouble, which is, there seems to be a fine line between saying, what I think, you know, a lot of people might say, is something important to say, which is, like, it's not up to us, these forces are really big, while also then also kind of rien scribing, the same, you know, like, like, general pattern, I mean, there is this kind of conservatism to the whole, you know, gender binary, the fact that the white person kind of saves the Indian thing, whether it's making fun of it, whether he's, you know, like, you know, who knows? I think. So I think that is important,

**Jim Phelan** 1:03:56

right? And I think I mean, just maybe says, you know, say what's obvious is that, that all fits with what he's doing formally. Right? I mean, that we're not in spending less time in the consciousness of the American Brier or Mr. Maharaj, or miss Maharaj, where we're seeing them sort of, you know, that just the representation of the action and so on, is, is pointing to these larger forces, they're, they're being controlled, you know, or directed by someone that goes beyond their individual will or choice or whatever, right. So so anyway, just, I interrupted you, but it's just because I'd seem to me like oh, yeah, that's so you know, that connection seemed really strong in our conversation. So

1:04:41

yeah, and you know, other people like that, again, those of you and the audience you might have read like Eric our backs, Miami says he talks about the style of the Old Testament. And he's like, you know, when you know the whole drama of Isaac and Abraham and you're just like, what are what are any of these be thinking like, like, like, like, how's it all working in, and no one tells you that. And part of what our back says it's like, that's right, because they're presenting it as the force of God a force of truth. This is the truth, and he calls it a tyrannical truth. That's what our back says. And I think there's something like that happening with Rushdie, which of these is actually like, it is a tyranny, you know, like, like, this historical force is a kind of tyrannical force that that doesn't allow, you know, us to see individual consciousness because it kind of doesn't matter. And that's not part of the drama that is not part of that's

**Jim Phelan** 1:05:37

the larger was really gonna be consequential. Yeah,

1:05:41

I think one other thing, you know, again, we can debate this, but one of the things I think is, is really interesting is that, in a weird way, it becomes a more collective vision of what fiction can do, and what what it means to read what it means to be, you know, in a way, this world of everyone can make up their own values, make up their own choices, you know, eat a hamburger, you know, watch TV, you know, like, it it, it dissociates us from some kind of idea that, that it's not all up to us that we should have some kind of standards and some kind of like value systems that are not just our own to make up. And, and this is, again, one of the things that, that whatever the psychologists who talk about the tyranny of choice A, is that actually kind of makes us retreat from the world of consequential ethical action. You know, I, it's hard for us to think about Rushdie maybe as an ethical person, because of his politics or our, you know, out there, and I'm not exactly sure with all the genre and mixing. It's not quite like he's putting forth a absolute ethical system. But I do think that vision of like, it's not all up to us. They're these gigantic political forces and like, let's be aware of our, you know, determination by them, is, can be a kind of call towards a more kind of collective sense of being, in some ways.

**Jim Phelan** 1:07:15

Yeah, yeah. And then just to pick up on one other point you made, there was about, you know, the potentials of fiction, right? So, what do you make of the fact that, okay, he's choosing this way of, you know, let's say he's issuing this call, right? Well, why why not write an essay? Right? Why Why write the fiber to this? What's that? What's, what is it? What does it gain? Or what might we gain by engaging with the fibers thus, rather than an essay about this stuff,

1:07:47

it's really interesting, because, like, you know, the other version, he kind of talks about, it's like, the fairy tale, you know, like, like, and I often, when I teach the 19th century novel, you know, it really does, like the fibers nest, there is this kind of whole other system, the feudal system of princes and princesses, and that is the, the world of the fairy tale. And kids like fairy tales, and that we grow out of fairy tales, you know, but part of what I think kids like about them is that it suggests a world where it's not all up to us, right, you know, you become a prince or a king, not because you've chosen it, but you're born into it, you know, like, or something, yeah, it's both, like really tempting to think about that, there's a sense of like, relieves you of a certain kind of responsibility, but it also like puts you in a system of obligations that are legible, you know, like, and I do actually think by writing it and kind of reminding us of that kind of fascination with a world in which freedom and maturity actually doesn't, actually does has kind of fairytale sense. Maybe have a happy ending this false and all this all the other problems with fairy tales, but also have a legible world of actual values of actual places that we can kind of locate ourselves in, in a society, which is not an easy thing to do. I mean, he knows that our post colonial world, this is what's dissolving. But I think there is a kind of nostalgia that is again, both problem, you know, whatever, as the kids say, problematic, but also in a way a, a kind of reckoning with trying to make us you know, see the validity and the attraction to a more structured world. And I do think that fairy tale kind of fiction back to it reminds us of VPLS of that. Yeah,

**Jim Phelan** 1:09:47

okay. Well, that may be a good place to end but let me just ask their learning final thoughts, things you wanted to get to that we haven't gotten.

1:09:56

Now? I think that's a good standard. We went somewhere that I did not choose So.

**Jim Phelan** 1:10:02

Okay, that's a great place to end. So thanks very much. This was really enjoyable. And I want to thank our listeners. And also to remind you that we'd appreciate your feedback, you can send it to us at Project narrative@osu.edu. That's our email address. Also on our focus Facebook page, or on our Twitter account, which is at PN Ohio State. I also want to remind you, you can find 13 additional episodes of the podcast at the project narrative website. That's Project narrative.osu.edu. Or on Apple podcasts. Thank you all