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INTRODUCTION TO MODERN INDIAN DRAMA

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Hello, good morning. Let us now discuss the plays of Mahesh Elkunchwar, but before we move to the first play on the discussion which will be called, which has called Garbo. Let me give you an introduction to the playwright's life and some of his major engagements with theatre.

Mahesh Elkunchwar born in 1939, belong to a generation of playwrights who satirize the estrangement of urban life, but what distinguish Elkunchwar from the others was the fact that his critic of urban life was from the perspective of a small town emigrant. He was born in the Telugu-Brahmin family that had migrated to with Vidarbha district in Maharashtra, he completed his matriculation undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Nagpur university, and it was in Nagpur that he first exposed Marathi theatre which led him to end pen several place.

He taught English literature in a college in Nagpur, but he wrote his plays in Marathi, and Vijay Tendulkar is set to had an impact on his work, he experimental with the variety of forms, my expressionist terms here at this theatre, he also wrote several essays that in elaborated as opinions on theatre.

In an essay called Notes on Theatre which has been translated and which is a part of his, the translation of his collected plays published by Oxford University press, Elkunchwar lays out his perspective of theatre and what you believe is a form and function of theatre, he emphasize the importance of experience, indeed the very experience of life in theatre, the experience of theatre is impeded, he says wherein playwrights place exclusive importance on meaning Elkunchwar criticizes playwrights who predetermined the meaning of the play through the excessive use of words that make meaning explicit and unidimensional.

Free space within the text becomes important in this regard, right, so in his own words Mahesh Elkunchwar says that this space, this free space within the text is filled by multiple possibilities of experience that an actor has to embody and realize through his acting.

Elkunchwar then recounts his very bethel experience with his friends and peers who did not understand his theatre that they taught was to buzwah and middle class in the way it was about the private aim of the individual, he wonders if the individual has this Elkunchwar, has to

wonders if the individual has to be picked against or subordinated to the social political concerns of the society at large, does they have to be hierarchy of theatres, one which is more invested in the social and economic concerns of society at large and the other which is about the privations of the individual, does they have to be hierarchy of theatres he wonders of art and ideology have to be in compatible, and he doesn't consider himself as someone who was used theatre for ideological purposes, he probably identifies himself more of someone who is more invested in the artistic form of the play without explicitly engaging in any kind of ideological propaganda, but he sees Kanhailal, very important significant Manipuri theatre practitioner, Kanhaiya launched theatre as a perfect blend of ideology and art.

He wonders if art and ideology have to be seen as polar opposites in theatre, is there a way in which you know ideology does not completely supersede or suppress art, the artistic form of the play right, so it's important to not ignore the artistic form of the play when it comes to using or theatre as a form of, as a codified form of political language, right, so for example he says that emotion has become taboo, to express emotion become, has become taboo unless it gets sanctity and legitimacy of the cause that this particular form of political theatre is championing, right, so is does everything have to be legitimized, everything have to be instrumentalized to cater to a political purpose, so he tries to dismiss and challenge these charges of elitism that come with the rather kind of familiar debate now between art for art sake and art for society sake, right, so you know is art for art sake completely divorced from any kind of ideology, any kind of political purpose, even if it is not explicit, is that socially irresponsible, morally irresponsible form of theatre or is it possible to actually completely blur or do away with this hierarchy between art for other sake and art for society sake and art for art sake, and think of you know marrying the two in some sense that you know and trying to think about you know a new artistic form of theatre which is not compromised by or separable from the political message if any that it is trying to communicate and convey.

So he is very clear in the intentions with which he writes the address, so he says in the same as a notes on Indian on theatre, he says that when I write I expect a person responds my read or viewer and not a condition reflex which is always result of the pre-conceived codification of life.

Although I have felt close to certain ideologies that various stages in my life, I have always been convinced at no ideology is greater than life itself, if I'm not using theatre as a weapon, if it is a main of self-expression for me, but I think will concern itself with life as I experience it and not with doctrine, as I says any work of art which is ideological and nothing less would be pointless, taught a logical inferior to the doctrine and claims to demonstrate, and honesty to write a prides from a very private core of his being which is beyond the control of intellectance so and so major part of his perception is often subjective.

It is to this that the reader or viewer has to respond in the same spirit, so the Infosys here is on these subject to experience of writing and performing theatre which is really about the experience of life itself and not about any particular doctrine, because to them substitute one doctrine for another, to think of also art, the art of theatre as a doctrine is also to them engage in a very self-defeating exercise where you just try and substitute if not politics some kind of

political propaganda or ideology with art, right, as though art were in itself or doctrine or an ideology.

He says later on in the same essay no ideology can liberate as from the pain of living and fear of death or our thirst for the absolute, art tries to transcend tangible reality and as first to joined into unnamable indefinable reality that is constantly pulsating between the, beneath the topical, it cannot limit itself only to concrete ideological thinking, when a writer writes he writes about the subjective man, who is the epicenter of his experience, that is why an individual private pain is as important as the pain of a mass of humanity and can also be easily shared as the universal experience, right, so he is trying to also blow the way distinguish between individual pain and the collective pain, because individual pain can also be easily shared as a universal experience.

And later on he also goes on to talk about the importance of the poetic of how the, how important the poetic is in theatre and of course again thinking of the poetry as an experience, as a sublime experience of literary language and not necessarily explicitly poetry of such, but yes, you know use of literary language which does not involve too many words, but is also you know amenable to the experience of acting of embodying the, of embodying language you know with is minimal words, with minimal verbosity in terms of trying to execute space through the actors body, so this is his thoughts on Indian theatre.

So coming to the first play that we will discuss by Mahesh Elkunchwar which belongs to the early phase of his career as a playwright is called Garbo, Garbo is not only a play by Mahesh Elkunchwar that instantiates his engagement with the significance of life itself, it portrays three young men from Nagpur, who are isolated in board with urban life in Mumbai.

Shrimant is a wealthy businessman, Pansy a young self-indulgent adolescent who has left his parents and Intuk a professor who pontificates of the meaning of art and life, Garbo is a petty film actress in B grade movies, who is also constructed as an aesthetic ideal for the men trapped in their sitting room. For the men in Garbo is a challenge, for Pansy I mean for the men Garbo is a challenge, for Pansy a mother figure and for Intuk an exhaustible aesthetic ideal, they all used her for their own desired transcend themselves but their private images of Garbo and often undermined by Garbo's bitter comebacks and self-contempt, when they suddenly discovered she is pregnant, it fills each men the new sense of purpose and salvation, that free them from their petty in to the worlds, although they do not wish to embrace a responsibilities that would come with it, and each hopes that they are the father, he is the father of the child who will inherit their names, so let's look at the play itself, this is just a brief overview of the play, you have a fairly simple setting which is you know a sitting room furnished in a casually luxurious style, there is an intellectual Intuk the professional who is relaxing, puffing on a cigarette while Pansy they are the adolescent is twiddling the knobs of a radio.

And you can make out that there is a sense of tedium, there is a mood that's created of tedium and boredom of, and these men do not know how to spend time, what to do with themselves in Bombay, so Pansy tells Intuk do you know what I used to do back home? There is no radio there, so I'd go and stand in front of the pan shop or the café, or barred state into the barbers, listen to the songs for a while and then beat it, pretending there is too much of a rush, of course those days it was only Hindi songs for me, but English songs are the greatest I had never heard

them before I came here and now is nothing but Intuk , I don't seem to enjoy even classical music these days, do you know Pansy in the old days, just a singleton flustering somewhere, on a distinct breeze of enough to give me gooseflesh, and of course listening to the real thing would bring me to tears and all, strange bloody experience.

Then later on Intuk says now Intuk is a professor who is constantly commenting on the artifacts the fakeness of people in the city of how he notices for example, people who thrown elite folks, who thrown the performance spaces of the city and pretend to understand and appreciate Hindustani music, right, so when he goes to the stuff into what Pansy calls the stuff he concerts, Intuk says that you just see the crowds that had come there, God knows where the bastards buy all their enthusiasm, the vocal is to male or female sits under the arch of tooth and brace like synthetic, they go crazy about their own marvelous voices, bulging of with sublime order had all those sublime idiots they are sitting out front with overdressed simpering idiot wives, that's why I clapped the longest and the loudest at the end of every song, alone of course and with this terrific swollen face, and people think this chap is a great lover for music, it's a real laugh, so obviously he himself trying to pretend to be a great connoisseur of Hindustani music, while he was actually sitting, they are observing the pretends, the pretentiousness of these other people who have come to watch the concert.

And later on Intuk says after all I'm the professor, I'm supposed to understand everything, crap, once you get yourself stamped professor you can literally run a mac, I'll tell you about people, once I was clapping in the skin of my hands when a baldy next to me says, wonderful Kaushi Kanada, wasn't it? I made my face even more dreadfully, Solomon said it wasn't Kaushi Kanada, it was Nayaki Kanada, so that chap turns to his dolled up wife and says terrific Nayaki Kanada, isn't it? That's the way it is, so obviously he realizes where they all pretending, they don't know anything at all. Those days are gone kido Intuk tells Pansy again, when you could enjoy music as a private pleasure.

Nowadays these musical conferences are an immense fraud, perpetrated by the community upon the community, everybody from the singers down to the listeners are under religious obligation to pretend to be intensely interested in art, they sing Mishra ragas salay, bachu, try to sing simple straightforward ragas first, but people are only too keen to out clap them, what mode do you want kid? You've got everything except good music, you should come with me sometime, so this is his comment on the portentousness of the people in Mumbai who come to listen to Hindu semi-concerts.

There is a deep sense of boredom and disillusionment with the pretends and artifice of urban life, we also learn later on that both these people Intuk and Pansy are living with Shrimant who is a wealthy businessman in Bombay, if Intuk is the professor who wants to constantly pontificate on the meaning of life, Pansy is a very restless and insecure adolescent who was rescued by Intuk and Shrimant from committing suicide at a railway station by jumping in front of the train, so he abundance his parents, he can't live with him anymore, he comes and search of his own fortunes but losses hope, he's on the verge of committing suicide when he is rescued by Intuk and Shrimant, so he's just 17, but Pansy is already seems to be terribly bored of his life, and Intuk says Pansy 17 years old and bold observe this youth, bold at 17, what will you be when you get to my age? So the play very intentionally has characters belong to different age

groups, one is young, one was adolescent, one was probably middle age, and one who is likely older Shrimant and Intuk, and this is to show how people of different ages are equally disillusioned and bored by life in city.

So the deep sense of existentialist and isolation in the city, and Intuk himself reveals the fact that he is an poet, he writes poems but he realizes that he is lacking originality, he perhaps is poems may have won him you know instant fame, but then he realizes he only knows that his poetry is not original, right, that he is not able to produce anything original, he feels he is creatively, he is stunted as a poet, right, he just create ability of stunted, so he says and the stock of utter of talk of fame is utter crap, people are fools, they call you great but you feel that way from within idiot, think carefully before you answer, Pat came to reply you are not great, then what is all this about, this stories and poems? They are the hooks came as second answer, why you're doing it? To become famous, well there is nothing wrong with wanting to become famous, but what exactly is fame, what is it mean? What are you doing when you are famous? Famous is sort of pleasant allegation first upon your name, and that's when you put a stop to writing and all that sort of nonsense, forget about the whole thing and happily in boredom, but is that the end? Certainly not, people are worse frauds then you think, they start singing another tune, here is a writer who knows when to stop, he's single minded devotion to art, blah, blah, blah, so you know he is trapped between probably you know having fame foisted thrust upon him because of his stories and poems.

But on the other hand he realizes that he does not feel creative, he does not feel original from within, so the world may appreciate you as a creative writer, but if you don't feel that sense of creativity it makes no difference, and so he also seems to be then trapped within the fake sense of, this apparent sense of being a creative and famous poet and writer, and on the other hand feeling utterly bored with himself in his own life, and this is just complete lack of meaning in life, and so what do you have, if it's not this fakeness, this fake popularity is fake fame, which is foisted upon you, you have a deep sense of bored manually with life itself.

Pansy is bored just like Intuk is bored and he realizes that he is not an original writer, so he feels bored and you have Shrimant who enters, who is again an equally effete and failed man, right, he is a businessman, there is also players that also performance being performed within this play where this 3 men play other characters or they play each other, but all this performance within the play are meant to against stage that's an act that and dramatize the same sense of disillusionment and failure.

Shrimant in the first performance within the play performs a policemen who is charging these two people Intuk and Pansy with mouthing obscenities, right, so he says you're guilty of using impossibly clean language shown off all also in fact just the opposite, the first charge is using absolutely pure chase language which has no obscenities in it, thus causing a cute embracement to those who are in the habit of using abusive language. Charge number 2, you're both guilty of expressing contempt and disgust towards drinking, meat eating, smoking, opium, hemp and illicitly.

Number 3, instead of having a bitter fun with good looking chicks and letting them go you softly indulge in pure and sublime love, and even you attempts to remain celebrate you either

saw your underwear nights against which have with the entire race of dhobies is soon going to launch a protest in the form of a demonstration or and you lock yourself in the toilet at odd hours of the day and night causing great inconvenience to others, right, so this is off course a dramatization of the kinds of moral and social values that society holds on to, that society always taunt between values of let's say teetotalism of celibacy of sexual morality, right, and of using a pure elite language which is shown of all obscenities, and the unconscious desires that constantly operate within society, within people's minds the kinds of desires they need, they have a pleasure of sexual pleasure or fore pleasure that comes from the consumption of drugs and drinking and mediating and so on.

And Shrimant himself is in capable of using of speaking influent English, so he makes constant English, mistakes in his English, grammatical errors for which Intuk has to step out of his role and play the professor, constantly checking, checking and correcting his English, and of course Intuk perhaps also stands in for Mahesh Elkunchwar, because in the play he is a leading literature of Maharashtra, he is an Maharashtrian literary figure who teaches English and who also knows English, and of course Shrimant pretending to be the police officer says I am a police officer says I am a police officer which is why my English has to be better, now it was again making a comment on class, differences between the Anglicized reading and speaking public as opposed to the professional classes, the working classes the police, right, so this is a performance within the play which dramatizes the hypocrisy of social norms and social differences of class and then of course Shrimant pronounces the courts judgment, the courts verdict, taking into consideration the serious nature of your crime, so court has decided that all that gold medals should be hung around the next for each of the following charges integrity, extensive scholarship, hard and selflessness, boundless philanthropy, humble service, burning patriotism and unblemished character.

Accuse will then be made to sit in a Cauchy flower detect Impala and driven all around the town to the compliment of the brass plant. All at every square by Suhaagans, a young you know marrying brides, wives, wearing traditional pearl, nose ornaments will give them a hero's reception, that is again we'll see a note to sarcasm of this, there all people who embody the really ideals of society of national resentment and they are going to be honored for that very service, so this performance like kind of falls into some kind of ridicule and fun, and of course then they again left as lifeless and bored as they were before the performance, right, so they are terribly bored, the liquor shops are opened, a shut on the Sunday, they don't know what to do with their time, they're all thinking of Garbo.

The consolations between Intuk, Shrimant and Pansy also in some sense echo Mahesh Elkunchwar's own conversations and debates on theatre with his intellectuals, his peers, so again this discussion between the three men in the play on why for example sentiment territory or emotions of being ridiculed, why he's emotion taboo, and of course there is Intuk for example is one of those intellectuals who is against any kind of facts, expression of emotion on stage, so this is 10 years ago the sentimentalist for a fashion, stuffing the handkerchiefs and their sarees end, saree ends in their mouth, and sobbing their bloody hearts out, on the stage 1 female ask another female for pickles, a sums that is nonsense and out there in the auditorium, the entire lot of fancily dressed females would collapse in spasms of grief, what a laugh, right, so there is a comment on the changing taste of among theatre audiences and directors of what

they actually want to see on stage, it's no longer one of emotion of half heightened emotion on stage but it's more an attempt to try and purge the theatre of emotion of sentimentality of excessive display of emotions.

And there is a talk of Garbo of how Pansy feels Garbo is a very rational moment, as someone who never seems to lose an emotion balance and if you remember now Garbo is a B grade actress, she is somebody who performs someone else, she lives in a world of make believe, right, and so again you see actors who are playing something else in the play, right, so they're constantly trying to play themselves, well they're also playing someone else, right, so you've actors, playing actors, playing characters in this case in the play, right, so you're twice or thrice removed from any sense of reality of what these actors maybe as real human beings, the whole question of the self of who, what is, who is the authentic self, what is the truth of the self remains the question in the play which is unanswered to the very end, so Shrimant constantly describes Pansy as someone who is a sex machine, right, he says he tells Pansy that in what way is Garbo great, even though Pansy thinks of Garbo as a mother, as a exalted figure, as someone who is noble and great, Shrimant questions a greatness, he says her only business in life has been jumping from bed to bed, she is nothing but the sex machine, a sex machine, yes, a sex machine and that's what he calls that she is someone who is, who is poly promiscuous having multiple affairs with many men, and also you know acting someone else, playing chased women, so the hypocrisy in Garbo's life is between let's say her, the role she plays of chased Hindu wives and women on stage, or in films sorry, but at the same time having illicit affairs with many men.

Intuk says hold on Shrimant you've made two statements in the last few seconds which are dramatically opposed to each other, completely contradictory, first you said Garbo is great in bed, then you said she is a sex machine, now if she is a machine she is devoid of emotions and if she is devoid of emotions she can't be great in bed, right, so you see Garbo is in some sense also embodies, a very idea of theatre of what the function of theatre is, is theatre supposed to actually exude a display emotions on stage or he's supposed to be devoid of emotions, right.

Similarly Garbo, is Garbo someone who is, if she is a sex machine then she is by definition not someone who can display emotions on stage, she is a purely mechanical interactions, right, or if she is someone who, and therefore she cannot be great in bed, if according to Intuk somebody who is incapable of feeling cannot be good in bed, but if she is devoid of emotions she can't be great in bed, so Shrimant is someone who is conceives me completely against any kind of emotion, she doesn't associate love making or the sexual act with any kind of intimacy, but for Intuk Garbo is this inexhaustible aesthetic ideal, it's not like as the Garbo is in love with, it's not as though Intuk is in love with the real Garbo, we don't know what the real Garbo is, but she is projected as an aesthetic ideal for Intuk, so Intuk wants to intellectualize the Garbo as an aesthetic ideal who is inexhaustible no matter how much, how far you get to know how you sleep with her, you make love to her, you will never actually be able to exhaust the real Garbo, the Garbo that we know.

Shrimant asks Intuk do you think that Garbo is someone sacred and sublime, because they're all sexually involved in Garbo, right, they're physically involved with her, so he doesn't understand words like sacred and sublime, what is that mean to be sacred, what is that mean to

be sublime? Intuk says well does it really make any difference with whatever you call Garbo this or that, names don't change things, Garbo will remain Garbo, while we will continue to search for the kind of Garbo we want, if we find them well and good, if we don't we will suffer a bit, or not even that after a while, so its all about names, how do we make meaning out of life by naming things, till the act of naming, till the act of nomination of nomenclature, so does, if the name is a signifier to signifiers signifies something, to take a note something and does that make a difference to the way we perceive reality, how this language mediate or condition our perception of reality, Garbo remain Garbo, we're actually not even talking about the real Garbo, but what is Garbo represent, what is Garbo stand in for us? Is she just an outlet for sexual desire form of trying to vent one zone frustration with the alienation of urban life through the sexual act or is she an aesthetic ideal that remains an exhaustible and ever residing right, she cannot actually be you know, so maybe perhaps she is also as Elkunchwar himself says perhaps a medium for Intuk's own art, the art of writing, the art of producing poetry and stories, I mean do we need Garbo something like an ideal to actually enable us to transcend our own limit itself in order to reach the unlimited, the absolute, the transcendent little life.

Intuk says then why do we try to define her, or any women, or anything in the world for that matter, I think we should just lay back, let Garbo be what she is, the important thing is to know what we are, if we do that becomes a sound enough basis for our relationships with her, later on Shrimant's asks you know Intuk, does women like Garbo ever becomes steal, no matter how many times you sleep with Garbo does she ever goes spail, and Intuk says don't they sleep with the women twice and you know her inside out, Intuk says don't make foolish Briticisms please, all this business are about women being an enigma and all that is myth, a bit of literary is to tell you the truth, once you've understood a women he don't want to look at her again, once you've explored her the thrill is gone, women should be able to satisfy fully and yet withhold apart of herself from you, right, so even though Intuk seems to dismiss many literary representations of women as an exhaustible ideal, he seems to in some sense also echo and duplicate that same what you call the same literary nonsense about representing a women as someone who always with holds apart for self, even as she is able to satisfy a man completely, so Intuk says you put it in nutshell Garbo never becomes common, even after fulfilled the needs of all three of us apart of her still remains untouched.

So Garbo is constantly oscillating between a women who was an actual women, real women who is a B grade actress who sleeps around with many men with full film produces with actors, directors, cameraman, but at the same time is also being salvaged as an ideal symbol of the aspirations of these men to overcome their own limited lives, the limited self in the city of Bombay.

We also see the kinds of perception, the way Garbo's perceived by this 3 men, Pansy of course you know puts Garbo in the pedestal and somebody who is an you know a completely exalted figure, mother figure, sister figure, for Shrimant she is just a petty actress who sleeps around and someone who can help him overcome his own failed masculinity, we realized towards the end of play that Shrimant is actually important and emasculated and is also secretly possesses desires Pansy and wants Pansy for his own, in order to validate his own failed masculinity.

And Garbo herself is someone who is trying to you know humo these men, she cannot put up with all the acquisitions, she used to try to always she perceives, she is contentious of herself of her own life as a B grade actress or somebody who is promiscuous, but at the same time she is also trying to, she struggles to actually resist the charges against her by these men, so she is either, she is wretched between a being a lose actress a women who sleeps around a promiscuous women and someone who is an aesthetic ideal an artistic ideal who is again fixed and frozen and who is role apparently is to inspire these men to create, to write, to raise above their limited selves.

And then they also have another play performance within the performance after Garbo enters, where Garbo is pretending to be the daughter of Intuk, Pansy and Shrimant play each other, and Garbo is pretending to be daughter of a very pious man, women who losses her joycity, her virginity to another man and ends up bearing his illicit child, and by the end of the play the performance within the play, she is forced to kill the child, she is forced to commit infanticide, and kill the illegitimate child because she never had you know any joycity in the first place, right, so she is not a pure chased women, the daughter of respectable family, but has lost all the reputation because of this legitimate child that she has then, she then has to kill and murder, so they're trying to imagine the reaction that the respectable neighbor Tatiya, who Tatiya is this very pious and orthodox Maharastharian neighbor of Shrimant's, and they imagine what, how he would react if he have heard the conversations.

So again you see how the performances within the play again project women as someone who is trapped between these two binaries, these two oppositions between chased wife, mother figure and the lose whore, right, so this is constant oscillation between the two, and Garbo is unable to actually find a way out of this binary.

Then they also discover that Garbo is pregnant, right, and each man you know sees is collective, is salvation in the child, each men hopes that he is the father of the child, right, so that's why they actually need Garbo, because they are envious of the fact that she can produce a child that she can procreate and they themselves wish they could procreate but they can't, but they use the women in this case as a medium through which they can pass on their own name, right, so the function of the women as someone who transmits patrimony from father to son, so the possibility of becoming a father to Garbo's child feels the men's life with a sense of, a new sense of purpose, and in this performance of pretends when they actually begin to play each other that they, as Intuk says to be somebody else is a way of feeling alive for a little while at least, so they all want to pretend and be someone else because they don't know how to be themselves, what is that mean to be yourself? What is that mean to be true to yourself, right, so what is that mean to be authentic, right, and in fact perhaps Garbo is the one who is trying to be the most authentic of these four characters because she realizes that she is, she acknowledges the fact that she is living in authentic life as an actress, she is always pretending to be someone else, she is always trying to pretend and pass off and masquerade, right, and in fact that's exactly what she does in the play because she is also trying to masquerade as a mother, right, in fact we realize later on that she doesn't have a child, she willingly aborted the child during shoot, when she was acting in a movie she has an abortion, but initially she pretends also she is bearing the child of this 3 men, and she gives them the men of fake sense of reassurance of hope.

So it becomes clear from these conversations that the only way that women can be, can enjoy instant morality is by being absolutely incense it, right, she cannot have any desires of her own, she is purely poppet in the hands of men, and she only reflects the power of men, right, the masculinity of men, so she is her father's daughter and then she is man's wife, so she never seems to have any sense of self ownership, and she is transmitted or exchange between men, so that's the only ways that she can be secure from the charges, any charges of social stigma, but so she is no freedom of her own, and that's exactly what is being presented in these performances within the play where for example she plays the daughter of pious man and she is being charged by Tatiya the pious neighbor for being an absolutely disreputable women who has seduce man and then had his child who is legitimate child, so she has to commit infanticide in a play, but you know they also realize that the 3 men in the play that they have no escape, when there is no escape out of the filth that they live in, right, the filth of course here refers to the effete, unproductive you know death in life, existence that they lead, right, he says that when Garbo who plays the girl within, in the performance within the play is forced to commit infanticide is nothing left look for that, right, once the child is death.

You feel revolute the Intuk says, you think we are valuing that filth, fair enough, can you show me a single place that is cleaned, show me there is nothing left, if we are valuing that filth, there is no escape for us, we must continue to live in the same filth, and we will see this filth is beautiful, in order to render this filth and durable we'll have to make up new theories about beauty, a sort of aesthetics of filth and depravity, right, so they feel that they cannot help the fact that they are completely subject to their own sexual desires, uncontrollable as it is, their own desire for, their own greed for pleasure, but that greed for pleasure right is only unsuccessful attempt to escape from their own degenerates depraved lives, they don't see any way out of it, and then they're all arguing about, they're all wondering whether, wondering about who the child belongs to, who's the father of the child, and Garbo says so you have talked the whole thing over have you, the minute I've become pregnant I also become cheap, we'll allow ourselves to forget those days when you followed me around like dogs and couldn't do without me, look here I haven't commit with own myself on your mercy, I don't want any help from you, I came here simply because I was feeling restless and uneasy, but today I have seen you in your true colour, remember one thing though I could implicate all 3 of you in this if I wanted to, so don't think you can shrug off responsibility, so they don't want to take responsibility for the child, but the whole question of paternity is also a puzzle, and we don't know who the father of the child is, right, each one thinks that maybe hopes that he is the father of the child, but none of the men won't take responsibility for the child.

So let us just continue with our discussion of Garbo, so you noticed in the, that I was talking about how these three men in the play are not interested in taking responsibility for the child that Garbo is apparently carrying, and they don't know at that point into the first tact that Garbo has aborted the child, right, so they don't want to take responsibility for the children, for the child, but they still want to have enjoy the privilege of transmitting their name as the father through the child and they believe that Garbo is their only source of hope of novelty of creating something new from their life of filth and they're all desperate to actually father, be the father of the child and for Garbo to actually carry the child to term, but they don't realize that she has aborted the child, and so at the end of the first act there is the three men imploring Pansy,

implored Garbo to have the child and they Intuk says for example we will all humble ourselves before him, of course assuming that the child is a boy, he will be our creation and we will bow our heads before our own creation, right, so you see the kind of the narcissism of these men who want to create something, create a child through Garbo and he says later a single smile for him will move us, Garbo let us do this, we're done people, we have neither seen nor experienced or nor created anything beyond filth, so this is the one opportunity they have, they believe to create something which is authentic something which is original, something which will redeem their life of filth.

Let us grab this opportunity, it's our only hope, our only chance, we will create something beautiful out of this filth, they all of them know that there is a life somewhere which is beautiful, pure, fearless, innocent, and Garbo we cannot achieve this without you, do you know, do you know what a tremendous role you have to play and then Garbo says here don't go, don't you go loading me with new responsibilities, and then Garbo says of course I do, I do feel the immensity of this thing, it's very beautiful and all that to be a mother of a beautiful thing, but do we have the guts to see the whole thing through, suppose we suddenly get cold feet, and there are all the other difficulties, if we decide on this I'll lose nearly a year, and all my contrast will have to be cancel one after the other, and so on and so forth, so she is more concerned about her career as an actor, what if she loses all her contracts that she is signed with film directors, what if she loses her job over her child and at other spontaneous hasn't revealed that the fact that she has, she has aborted the child.

And so yeah, so Garbo is the one who constantly reminds them of the hypocrisy of motherhood and fatherhood, institutions like motherhood and fatherhood and the family right, and she is quite happy being a woman who flits from one man to another, and she also reminds the men that they are disillusioning, that they are only holding on to their own illusions, if they think that this child is going to redeem their life, then they obviously deluding themselves, they actually convinced, they're actually determined to lead a life of illusions, and every man seems to hang on to illusions of self-ownership of masculinity of you know security to actually enable themselves to lead a very secure life, and so towards the end of the three men actually you know performed a small little dance which basically reinstates their hope of collective salvation through the child, so Intuk tells Garbo that a new life is beginning you don't reject it, it's our only chance, Garbo this is our only refuge, our only chance to create something beautiful, your life itself, we will do anything for you, you only have to say the word, we'll do it, okay.

And then towards the end of the first act Shrimant, Intuk, and Pansy together say your life and the root of all life, the spring of fearless beauty, the source of all hope, the fulfillment of all promises are you, you are the beginning of believe, you are the everlasting, all future sons are in your womb, give us your light, give us your son, he will burn up darkness and destroy it, retribution in the face of injustice, compassion in the face of suffering, sympathy in the face of calamity, courage in the face of death, this he will be creation out of destruction, mother, mother, mother, so this is of course is the play that in some sense is also attacking, the patriarchal construction of women as by the divine mother who reproduces, who procreates, who is a source of all creation, the source of all redemption and hope, and on the other hand also someone who is woman as you know as whore, as loose whore or somebody who moves on from man to man, and makes every man feel terribly insecure because they are unable to

actually possess the women, right, so this is constant binary between the two, and the women is trapped between these two constructions of women hood. In act 2 again you see an elaboration of this male sense of desperation, the way they hold on to Garbo as there only source of hope and redemption.

And then towards the later on the second act is where Garbo reveals the fact that she aborts the child during a shoot at the setting and the men are completely disillusion again that they now have absolutely no hope to actually redeem their own lives, there is no way out of the filth, that they actually go back to living extremely meaningless and you know style life.

And then yeah, so here Garbo for example page 48 of act 2 she says oh dear, how he worries, they were many people with menaces when she describes, the scene when she is shooting a scene and how she aborted the child, this of course a suggestion that she willingly did it, she willingly aborted the child to get rid of the child that doesn't hamper her freedom, her career, but also perhaps to arrange herself against this men who have been charging her with obscenities, with abuses right, they did everything they could for me, shooting was stop for 8 days, they were only with anxiety for me poor things, the director was almost in the point of tears, poor thing, he such a kid, it was during a camel race, he said he would never have included the shot, had he known about me, poor chap felt terribly guilty, he kept insisting her that entirely his fault, but honestly even I didn't think it would happen, all that jogging up and down on the camera, so unnecessary, they could have used my double, but I was so excited, I'm playing the role of a Lamar Neagle, she is a second heroine, it's a character role, she is terribly fiery and terribly passionate this Lamar Neagle and terrible beautiful, they could have used for a double, but I just didn't think why aren't you talking, do you believe me, right, and so they just don't believe initially when she says that she was, she aborted the child during camel race.

But initially they have, then later on they realize that they have no choice but to believe that there is now no source of hope, though Intuk says later lets return to filth, the world we decide was not for us, could never have been, we were idiots, out to turn dreams into reality.

Let's go back to our old world now, the world of filth as a punishment, and as a sort of consolation too, right, so it's consoling to go back to our world of illusions, right, what is this world of filth, a world where you create illusions in order to escape from the fact, the fact of being utterly isolated in a world which has no meaning, Pansy wants to go with Garbo, right, initially Pansy has this great sense of innervation towards Garbo who may thinks of as a mother figure, and he wants to go with her, but then when he realizes that she has aborted the child he also turns against her and begins to abuse her.

And Shrimant is unwilling to actually let go of Pansy and now we realize this point in second act that Shrimant possesses Pansy with whom you also wants to have a sexual relationship and so this also reveals his failed masculinity and the fact that he wants to conceal the fact that he is probably a homosexual, so this comes out towards the end of the second act, so when Pansy says that he wants to go and stay with Garbo, Shrimant says no he cannot leave us now, once he has been with us part of our world, he just can't get up and go living us high and dry, he cannot back out now, Pansy you will just suffocate in that poverty is taken place of your parents, walls blacken by a smoke and harassed mother, un-pressed clothes meager meals that's all you will

get, we'll better stay here, our life is more beautiful, much more beautiful, and Intuk says don't you said word against Shrimant, we are at war with it, with the very concept to represents, where is beauty? Is there any? Is just a frequent of the imagination, a sort of mirage, a trap, I'm tire of struggling within it, we are free now, filth, that is the only truth, we're free now to choose it, let's choose it, make it our own and live with it, we are honest people.

So now Intuk other's point which is to actually lead in authentic life, finally by actually choosing to live with filth, choosing to live to acknowledge the fact that they lead, they feel disillusion lives in an isolating city, right, so I think the only part, the only possibility of authenticity perhaps here for these men is to actually accept the fact that they are inauthentic, that they are imperfect, that they are failed men, and that they are, that there is no redemption, there is no way out of it, right, in fact Intuk also realizes that when he acknowledges the fact that he is not an original poet or writer that he is, that a lot of his writings is all his writings are in some sense derivative and of other ideas, who are the people ideas, they're only plagiarize, they only borrowed, Intuk says later on who are these invisible powers range against us, there is only one way to face them now Garbo, either we turn and fight those who wished to fight against us or we go ourselves bloody before they get a chance to inflict the first blow, we will choose the second way, you didn't believe what I said that day, but it is true, these powers desire to crush us and force us into filth, but before they can let us throw ourselves head long into it.

Let us create our own world in filth and then the very winds blowing over us will turn our enemies black and blue with a rotten heat filth breath, we cannot avoid this antagonism now, they're our ethanol force, we need to become very powerful, that is more rotten, more powers, crowded with hatred, right, so they need to embrace their own filth in order to actually show how powers they can actually be, right, it's almost like as though you are, you know it's a powers moved actually embraced ones on at the lack of authenticity, at a lack of you know of being absolutely disillusion with life and acknowledging the fact that you are disillusioned.

And Shrimant now just wants to have you know a mechanical and rather violent and aggressive sexual relationship with Pansy and with Garbo, now that she cannot produce children anymore or she is just I mean she is incapable of appropriating that he wants to have a relationship with her, a relationship that would only reinforce the sterility of his life, in fact his own sterility the fact that he is a failed man, right, he's a model of failed masculinity, and Pansy is of course you know cannot, doesn't want to be bought by Shrimant's wealth or by his powers, so he really wants to actually leave him and then he is the one who actually reveals the fact that Shrimant is an important man.

Shrimant also finally confesses that he is a failure, he says, he tells Garbo that are you angry with me, but this is how it is, why, why? Tell them if you like, tell them, what's the point of hiding anything now, I stand naked before you, tell them everything, I'm a flop anyhow bed these days, do you know that or flop, flop, out of flop, you know it now, now let me have it, use your scorn, you're ridicule, you'll never understand in Garbo he says again, it's a terrible thing, you are the only one who is never laughed at me, Bhabhi laughed, Shirin actually spat, these are women that Shrimant has been with, there was a time when I could tier these girls out night and night, and still have more to give, he's also on drugs and injections, right, so which is actually

completely undermined his sexual powers, and so he no longer has this kind of sexual reputation that he had earlier, and the fact that now he realizes that for the longest time he you know, the only thing that actually mattered to him in life was money and the body, and he wasn't interested in anything, anything else, he says I was never fond of reading or art or studies or anything, only things of the flush, all I had was my body that was the only truth, right, and there was no other alternative but to go on believe in it, and now it's my body that has let me down, I want that child, it would have born my name, people would never have known about me then, so you know he is, I mean he realizes that until then that, the only thing that actually possessed any reality for him was the body, and the flush and so he taught that he could actually acquire you know authentic self, sense of self through sex, the sexual act, through the body and by becoming a father, but then now he realizes that even they were false constructions.

That there was no truth to them and that there is no way now that he can actually redeem himself, but to actually confess, to acknowledge even to himself that he has led a lie of a life, and so which is why Shrimant begins to beg Pansy saying that he is the only one who can actually give him back his body, women are of no use to me now, but he has nothing but contempt for me, right, so he still thinks, he still holds on to the fantasy that the sexual act is the only way that he can actually get a validation of himself but then neither is Pansy nor Garbo willing to give him that sense of validation, so Pansy says like a spoilt child I'll kill myself, Garbo if he haven't refer him to Shrimant, if he hadn't come to the station unexpectedly like that I'd really have committed suicide that day, I don't like my parents one bit, out of all my brothers and sisters I was the only, I was the one that they disliked, I was the middle one, that's why.

One not really dislike but I just don't love them, I love only you Garbo, truly, do you think my running away upset them anyway? Do you think that they bother to make any queries about my ware bouts after I had gone, not even an ad in the papers, I saw the railway lane gleaming in the sun, and I thought I'd like to kill myself, I've no one of my own, Shrimant has been making a nuisance of himself and you, you are nice to me only when it pleases you, it was you who first said you take me to your flat Garbo, and so he again is you know which I'll like hoping that Garbo will be his only source of hope and comfort, but he realizes that even Garbo has been using him for a own pleasure, so everyone seems to be corrupt or corrupted end by their own illusions, their own illusions of perfection of self-ownership, of security and that's what they seem to realize towards the end of the play when no one seems to belong to anyone, no one has any claim on anybody, everyone seems to be equally damaged and you know completely lost in their own world of isolation and alienation and corruption.

Even Garbo realizes that all he had, all that remains is the body, right, in fact because since she also uses her own body to act and to actually you know fulfill the desires and pleasures of the men that she is with, she realizes that even Pansy has been corrupted to the core, because he was an orphan, I mean he left his parents behind at least, he abandoned them and all the remain for him was the body and that's the only thing, that the only thing that these men had to look forward to was the child, and Garbo says there is no other chance of me can see him again, she can't have other child after she lost the baby, and so now Intuk embraces Garbo saying that she can now become a part of their world which is incapable of creating an ethic, right, it's a steroid

world, and this is also when Intuk confesses to Garbo that none of his poems are his, that they seem to be a derivative a poems, drawing from the ideas of others that they completely lack any sort of originality.

And now since Garbo is also been de-idealized, has been a de-thrown from the ideal, Intuk ideals that she can no longer actually inspire him to produce something new, Garbo also seems rather a disillusion, she says I will not be happy with anybody now, it's too late for all that, too late for happiness for love, that is never to be, the mind has grown too calculative, if I ever I feel a momentary tenderness for anybody, the mind raise his head and he says are you in your senses, you're playing with fire, you know what's suffering will follow, and what will you gain in return for all the suffering and the risk, anything of value and so on and on, is there anything to be gained out of such exaggerated cautiousness, making a million subtractions to get something, I can't cope with this anymore, I'm a low women of no importance, why do you burden me with impossible significance, it is not fair, right, so she realizes that she has become extremely deliberate, and calculated in the movements, doesn't there she is completely lost any kind of spontaneity, she doesn't seem to feel anything called happiness or love, she has become someone who constantly calculates and measures you know human behaviors and they just shows, so she doesn't seem to trust herself anymore in fact, Intuk says that all his poems are all phony, that there is nothing original about them, and that's when Intuk decides to never write again, he says that's the most honest and authentic decision he's made, he used to never actually write again, that in some sense is that moment of authenticity when you confess, when you confess, when you acknowledged to yourself that there is nothing original in this world, there is nothing new to be produced.

And Garbo says I'd starved to dead if I stopped acting, right, she says that the only way for me to continue if he's in the cameras again and again with phony postures and gestures, that's the only way, she can only survive if she continues to pretend before cameras, I sometimes feel I should have got married, I have no hopes left of ever doing a really challenging role, I've grown dry like bark of deadwood, waiting for a role or love to come my way, it is too late, too too late, never again will I put forth tender green leaves, do you remember the first time we met, we talk for hours, it was wonderful, but the wonder of its wound faded and we were left was our bodies, there are times I feel deep down restlessness, this is what my life is been, and now I'm growing older, I'm left with nothing, inch by inch I have lost ground not gaining anything, who will marry me now? When Intuk offers to get married to Garbo, Garbo says who will marry me now? Men will danced, who dance to run me 2 years ago and now at the most willing to have me as a keep, so I think a lot of the play has to do with what it means to become more and more familiar with the world, familiar with the ways of people, familiar with sexual desire to the point of being absolutely jaded and bored of it, nice, so there is no novelty in newness left, the more we live the longer we live, the more we get familiar and in yard and a custom to the ways of life, and then to the point that there is nothing new to be experienced, nothing new to be felt, and I think this is deadening sense of cellularity of immobility and of the at the lack of life which the play constantly seems to focus on, and so Garbo says that there is no one who was now willing to marry her because she has become steel to the men around her, right after more than two or three encounters, nobody seems to be interested in her, perhaps Pansy will marry me is what she says.

And then she even tells, she even the quotes the director, the director who said that was just a kid, but he says that Garbo is now even less desirable and ordinary starlet, your Garbo is nothing but an illusion you have built for yourselves, that's what Garbo tells the three men that she is nothing but an illusion that the three men had built in order to actually you know survive themselves, the only way in which they can live is to actually think of Garbo as an aesthetic ideal and illusion of hope, of redemption of life itself.

Intuk says if it's an illusion we wish to keep it intact, else it would be difficult to live, Shrimant why live? Intuk because we don't have the guts to kill ourselves, what will happen to us when we give up our bodies would you be able to commit suicide, right, so they're only left with their bodies, their bodies which seems to lack any kind of significance that's the only thing which they have is just a brute body, a physical matter which seems to have a no significance whatsoever, Intuk do me a favor kill me, Shrimant says Pansy you are already dead, Garbo how cruel is become, Intuk and he will grow worse as youth advances and then suddenly one day he realize that both are shock that he too has started slithering through mud, nobody escapes ultimate disillusionment, Garbo why do you need delusions, don't you wish you could throw them off all of them and breath freely? Intuk I used to think that way myself, but that's not the way, we need these chains to hold us, we don't feel free with their falling off just lonely, as illusions fade one by one, our loneliness increases, so it's a sense of loneliness which I think the play constantly hops on that, no cad directed no one, but everyone seems to have you know this possess this fiction, this fiction called identity.

They identity themselves through their ties with other people, right, but people find it absolutely impossible, almost impossible to standalone to be absolutely comfortable with their loneliness and to live you know according to their own values, is it possible for person for individual to be absolutely individuated or individuals at some very fundamental level interrelated to other individuals, right, so it seems to be this constant play between being, between individuals, between the interrelationships between individuals and the utter isolation and loneliness that every individual does feel in their life when they give up all the illusions, they give up all their tiers, they give up all their, that very sense of identity that marks their life you know so is it possible to actually beyond identity, beyond you know I mean not reduce one self and actually to be beyond once ties with other people, so we actually end up with the bodies what Garbo says, there is no illusions there.

Shrimant says kill me, kill me, is this how life is always been Intuk asks? For thousands of years people have been born and have been dying like worms, bodies bidet bodies which wiggle and swim for a while turn rigid and die, I'm sick of the whole thing, even art becomes an illusory thing, what art can worms create? Nothing genuine seems to grow out of me, if something does come up it is stunted, diseased, instead of growing its leaves drop off, what can I write? It is not just leaves dropping, it is the root that is rotten, there was a time when I transit about like a Muharram tiger proclaiming myself to be an artist, it is a sad delusion, so you know you see that utter irredeemable sense of corruption that invades their life like a disease that they are unable to actually create something new and everything seems to be an absolutely illusion, even art itself, the very artistic production itself is rife with corruption, it's an illusory thing which only, which is only a signal of the stunted growth, this diseased, Intuk again later on goes on to say that they are all fake, that they are all in some sense, they will all end their lives on a

note of self-deception, they've all deceive themselves, they're all deceive themselves into thinking that they can actually produce, they are capable of producing something great, but that seems to be an ever residing dream which is never fulfilled.

And later on Intuk says if the body is the only truth, let's stick to it, and make life beautiful, and so they think that the only thing, the only thing that's true, the only thing which is left when one gives up the chains of illusion, of greatness is the body, right, and so therefore again the play seems to end in a note of sexual fulfillment, sexual happiness, right, through the body but then that again is not something which is going to give this men what they want, right, it's not going to give them, it's not going to enable them to transit the limit itself, their illusions, and to actually acquire a deep sense of union with the other, that sense of identity that comes with the sexual act is never promised, never happens right and they only end up being as isolated as they were before, Intuk and now, Intuk, Pansy and Shrimant now think that perhaps Garbo is the part of their world because she is barren, she has grown barren like that, right, so she is part of the world, but then Garbo does not want to belong to that world, right, she is not, she doesn't, she wants to survive, right, so which is why she actually wants to continue living, continue pretending before the camera, because she has to survive, so it's not like as though Garbo is free of a illusion either, but she does acknowledge to the fact that she has to, that in the face of life and death she has to continue acting, Garbo says that I cannot be part of you, I wish you'd all kill me instead, and that's exactly what happens towards the end of the play Shrimant stabs Garbo and she ends her live and she is murdered, but then when they see the blood is real, the blood is real but Garbo was false, right, so it's interesting that the physical body, the biological body possesses the life of its own, and that has apparent when they stab her and she bleeds, but then in the present, in the place of the real body, the biological body Garbo has disappeared, right, the fiction called Garbo has disappeared.

Garbo reveals towards the end of the play that she insisted on doing the shooting, the sequence in the film on her by herself, even though the director was willing to use a dummy for the real sequence, I wanted to punish him, he didn't come to my tent the Garbo says, I went to his one night when I wanted a role in his next film, he sniggered, he laughed at me, I couldn't bear it, he is been like that from the beginning, taking every opportunity to insult me, and when I wanted to win him over, do you know what he said, he pointed to the camels and said go to them, that's what you want, I didn't even have a second heroines role, I was playing the aging elder sister, I had about 3 scenes to do, when I did the camel scene my entire body was being churned up, and I kept praying let it happen oh God, let it happen, and it did, when I felt the warm blood streaming down I screamed, now let me see, just let me see his miserable face, when I came to those nobody but a huge course women 1:09:16 I asked her where the director was, she said he's shooting, they found somebody to replace you, right, and that's when she reveals that she has willingly you know aborted the child, and so that's when these three men realize that they have, she has deceived them from the very beginning and so Intuk says Garbo go away you have cheated me, you're death to me, and Garbo says you deceived yourself, you should never have expected so much out of me, I'm an ordinary women of flesh and blood, you burden me with all sorts of imaginary virtuals, I carried on for as long as I could, but I couldn't keep up the pretends forever, that doesn't mean I've done any wrong, but anyway who are you to make demands on me, and this is Garbo last re-joying dove and she tells them, rewinds them that they are the ones who constructed her as a, they are the one who

projected the fantasies onto Garbo, and she was an ordinary women of flesh and blood, and that's when they all kill her, Pansy calls her the whore and Shrimant stabs her and realizes that the Garbo was false in her places the physical body of Garbo, so you look at the way the play constructs a certain ideology of an amenity which constantly oscillates between the real and the representational between the biological body and what the body stands for in terms of ownership, in terms of self-ownerships, self-validation for the man, and that's exactly how big shaky as an ideology works in the pay where which basically constructive women as someone who was wedged between two extremes, one two binaries of either being a promiscuous whore who can never give any single man or sense of itself validation because she, for her, for women like big Garbo men are substitutable so there is nothing unique or about any relationship that she has with a man, and on the other hand she is also being projected as an aesthetic ideal, as an infinite, as an ideal of infinity which these men all expire to acquire, achieve, attain.

And towards the end when Garbo reveals the fact that she willingly, she purposely aborted the child to punish the director, they all feel deceived and that's how they're lives end on that note of self-deception, when they stab her they realize that was just a only stabbed their own illusions of her, right, that you know all the while long, they wanted to believe that she was their only hope, they're only some sort of redemption, they're only source of, they're only objective source of validation, but that of course ends on this note of deception.

So in the next session we will be discussing another play by Mahesh Elkunchwar which is called the Old Stone Mansion. Thank you.

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