

Contemporary Literature
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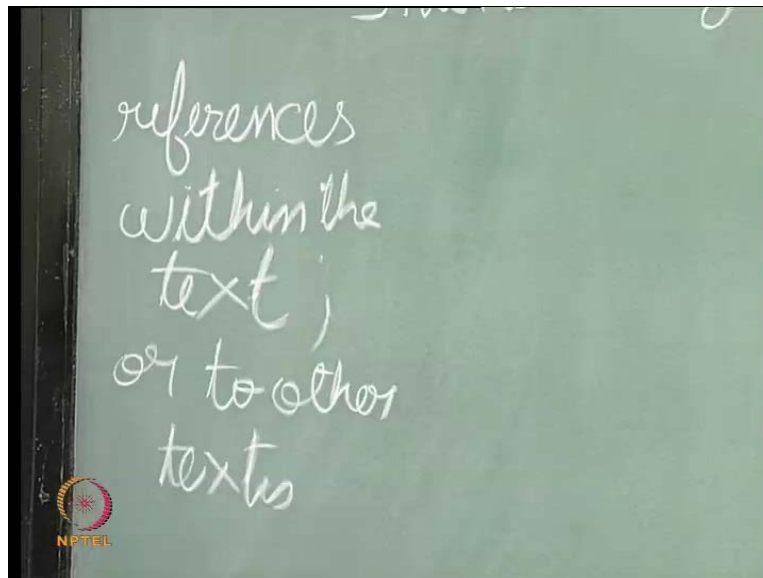
Module No. # 01

Lecture No. # 10

Intertextuality

Alright. So, inter-textuality and this is a concept related to drama theories, literary theories. I would like your responses to come first. What do you understand? What does the word appear to you like inter-textuality?

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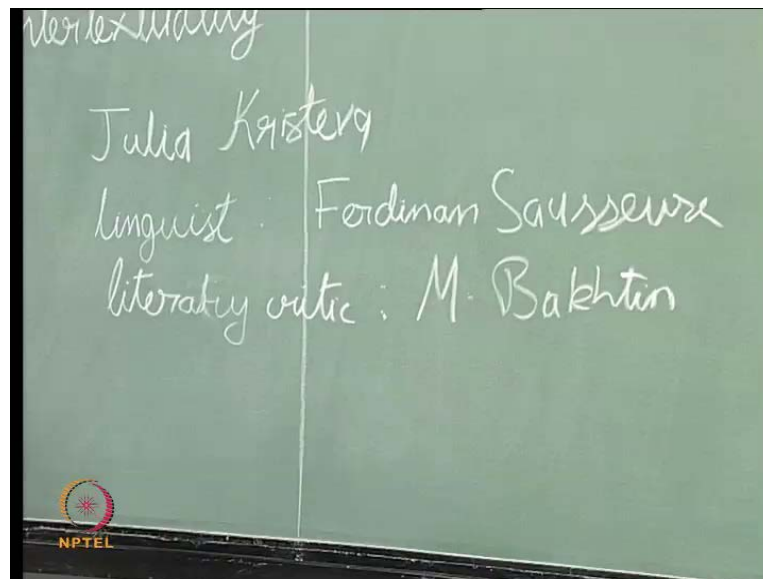


One definition could be references within the text or even to other texts that is what you said. Now, elaborate on it. Give me some examples, but not one definition, could be references from Six degrees of separation. You are correct. You are absolutely on the mark, but can you give me some examples, now not from our play. In daily use this (()). There are the rest teams telling any real life, not real life certain aspect has to see the sign boards. If mentioned sign boards on (()) that talks yeah as in the given play cards, the information there about when what happened (()) example of inter-textuality. Hasn't yeah that was taken from the actual (()) yeah fine. So what? In other words, as I understand you brushed coating something from the life of Galileo from yeah what these emerging both friction as is merging is merging infection with.

Are you aware of a term called Historiography? Yes.

Fine, now I do not want to get into historiography, but you are closer to that. Then inter-textuality, give me example of inter-textuality from a literary text drama will give pose certain problem, but six degrees is inter-textuality and six degree are so interconnected. We cannot do away with it, but any example that you can think of. You gave me the definition. You say inter-textuality is references within text or references to other texts. What would it mean and what does it do? I will give you a small exercise also from Six degrees. Are you having your text today? Good ok.

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Please be ready with your texts. Just a brief introduction to what is inter-textuality. So, the term was first introduced by, are you familiar with this name. She is a French theoretician Julia Kristeva. In a her article called word, dialogue and the novel, this is the article in which she coined the word inter-textuality word, dialogue and the novel and she derives from the theories of the linguist Ferdinand Saussure and literary critic Michael Bakhtin. Any idea, anything that you can tell me about these two guys, these two theoreticians.

The notion of inter-textuality is derived from the theories of Bakhtin and Saussure. Now, Saussure is known for his theories of semiotics and signs. Signs as SIGNS and Bakhtin is of course, famous for his theories and the famous expressions dialogic, a text is dialogic heteroglossic and polyphonic. A text a work of art literary text according to Bakhtin is dialogic, polyphonic and heteroglossic.

What does it mean? Not mono, but di, hetero and poly. What does it tell you? Now, a work of art can be interpreted in several ways. So, it speaks in several voices, get the idea. A work of art is not an end in itself **alright**. Who put forward the idea, the notion of death of the author? All these ideas are interconnected. You know the French critic Roland Barthes. He put forward the idea of death of the author.

Now, what does it mean? Which author is that? Who is dead? He has no right to say how some thing is interpreted. I mean it is after the person is reading it, I mean once something has been written. It is I mean you cannot just say it is my intellectual property. You cannot force people to understand the text and say one side way. So, according to Roland Barthes, the author dies once he finishes the product and once the product goes into the hands of the readers. Then the reader has the right to interpret the work of art, the text, the literature in whatever way he or she wants.

So, that means that the work of art is not an end in itself. It is open to every reader now. Therefore, these ideas of dialogia and heteroglossia are important because every reader brings along with himself or herself several other you know notions and everything is brought or the way they read, the way they approach at text is influenced by their background, their knowledge and their prior reading. For example, we might as readers miss out on several inter-textual references in Six degrees of a separation. Is it possible or not? It is quite possible because it is so dense with references.

What Guare wants us to see and the way we see it may differ entirely because we may not be able to catch up with every reference that Guare is making. The same can be said of Tarantino cinema packed with references, packed with illusions. It is a pastiche, it is a parody **right**. Several references people have done written books on Tarantino cinema. The way he keeps on I mean perfection is definitive text of post modernist cinema. He borrows from all over the place. He plays with the structure and form of the film and that is possible in literature also. We were talking about the novel, the French lieutenant's

Women. John Fowls where the author John Fowls give us a choice of endings. You reader has the choice to pick and choose the kind of ending you want and he gives us a couple of endings ok. Not one definite and fixed reading.

Now, coming back to this notion, Saussure and Bakhtin theories of language and literature at work of art is open to several interpretations. So, that is the origin of inter-textuality. Inter-textuality is the shaping of text meaning by other texts. I would like you to again go through Six degrees of separation and feel if inter-textuality is the shaping of one text meaning by other texts. How is six degrees shape by reading or readings of other texts? **Ok.**

It can refer to authors borrowing and transformation of a prior text or to a readers referencing of one text in reading another. So, meaning is not directly transferred from the author to the reader where inter-textuality is concerned, but instead meaning is filtered through a series of codes. It is mediated through multiple signs and codes and if we are able to get them, we are able to understand the text the way it is supposed to be read. I mean we are able to derive the ultimate pleasure from a text that is the idea. Literature is done you know people write novels and plays for a variety of reasons, but the ultimate aim is to provide enjoyment, aesthetic pleasure and aesthetic pleasure can be derived if we are able to sense the meaning through a variety of codes which a writer employs in conveying certain kind of meanings. So, if the reader is able to understand those codes, if he is able to break those codes, all the signs and symbols, he is suppose to understand and enjoy a text better than someone who really does not, who is not able to understand all those complexities which are implicit in our work of art.

So, two sets of theoretician's, structuralist and post-structuralist. Now, when we talk about people like Julia Kristeva, they fall in the category of post structuralist. Structuralists try to use in the concept of inter-textuality to arrive at a set of fixed meaning for the text. However, post structuralist, they use the term inter-textuality to disrupt the notion of a fixed meaning. The idea is that the text can be interpreted in several different ways and therefore, there is inter-textuality and that is how they use it. Structuralist on the other hand, they use it to find a definite meaning. So, if we remember when you stopped, we finished our reading of Six degrees of separation, I think Krishna said it is open ended. It is not able to construct a definite ending for this play **right**. We do not know and that is the pleasure of reading, that constitutes the pressure of reading

because like it or not the author refuses to give us send easy closure which is so post modernist in its form.

So, a keen to the idea of inter-textuality is also the idea of a pastiche. So, what is the pastiche mix of several, what? Yes Adithi. Several styles and forms. Give me the example of a pastiche. Abhay you can also attempt example of a pastiche.

How does he do it? I can (()) the style of narration from because you mentioned pulp fiction. I mean the page that varies, I mean say (()) like the long drawn drawn-out conversation in certain parts. Like for example, when john (()) to dinner yeah (()) and how long and winding their conversations are and you know the dance on the dance floor yeah is the reference to what (()) own image we are talking about pulp fiction ok and it is a through bank on this Saturday night fever days. So, therefore it is a pastiche. A better example would be kill-bill. Why kill-bill is a classic example of a pastiche film, why?

What does he do, not just that exactly yeah come out with it. How Japanese samurai ideas of the samurai yeah yeah carry on honor duty traveler, yeah honor duty and there exception skill and the swords, the idea of the sword been very important. How does that become a pastiche? No, it is. There are different ideas. First like she said. Of the like he said like of the bride and the idea of corrupted field like something that suppose to such mean to be pure. I mean the bride on a wedding day.

Now, see if you remember you just mentioned Japanese samurai concept of honor right. It is there. The samurai sword yeah, Ninjas yes. In kill-bill one we have an occasion to understand Japanese Anime if you remember. You remember that sequence combination of Japanese Anime. Then in kill-bill two, there is a reference to this entire mythology of western, the wild-west if you remember and then you also have concept of blaxploitation yeah. What is blaxploitation?

Yes Raisa? What is the jonour of exploitation in cinema? It is just get to African Americans. Is it just that or is it just that not necessarily, but a certain stereo type of course, but you know certain kind of life style. So, maybe you may not find necessarily black people in kill-bill, maybe not. Right of the beginning but she is not a stereo typical but the cons, the life style is there. You know the fist fight, the knife fight you know that kind of you know people fighting all over the place that you know. So, what I mean by pastiche is that in kill-bill series of films Correntino, sorry Tarantino collapses several

kinds of (O) in a film and then it become and therefore, it can qualify for a good example of a pastiche ok.

So, blending of multiple (O). Inter-textuality again becomes, now if I ask you to qualify or categories six degrees, what is its jauner? Is it a tragedy in the same style as the crucible or Oedipus? No, is it a thought provoking like brushed? No, yes it does not employ elimination. So, it cannot be a tragedy or comedy. In that sense, yeah in the strictest sense if I ask you to classify it, what is what jauner? Many people would call it a comedy. Akshaya has doubts. Doubt written on all over her face. Seriously, he has yeah. It is a tragic comedy.

So, what I am trying to tell you is that it is very difficult to pigeon hole six degrees of separation and therefore, a pastiche is that work of art which is very difficult to classify or categorize. You do not know because you go and read the reviews of six degrees. It is very difficult. Everybody just differs on everything. You do not know what is it about? Is it about racism? Is it about homosexuality? Is it about a class difference? Is it about the snobbery of the upper classes? Is it about the plight of the poor whites and the poor blacks in America? What is it? Is it about the art circle, the exclusive art circle of New York? What is it about? You do not know. How does it end? Does he die? Who was he? Who was Paul? Does he actually die or he is out their duping other people? We do not know yeah. What we do know is that in some sort of way he just barges. You know like the recurring word or the expression in Six degrees is you know burst of color remember.

Yeah they use it several times in. Flan uses it, Ouisa uses it like a burst of color (O) burst of color just arise on the scene. Burst on the scene and changes everything. So, their lives are not what they use to be anymore ok and they feel that in some certain way, they have been touched by Paul's presence. Therefore, they do not want him to reduce as mere anecdote or as a mere incident in their lives. So, we do not want him to become just as a

dinner table conversation topic. He meant much more to us. At the same time, they know that he has committed a crime although inadvertently he is instrumental in driving Rick to suicide. So, he has to be punished for that, but it is not tragic in the true essence, it is not a real comedy also. It is thought provoking, it is not just to generate. It is not just there to generate a few laughs; it is not a preachy play. So, therefore it is very difficult to categorize. It is a pastiche ok. So, inter-textuality also in Julia Kristeva words is a collage

of ideas, a mosaic of quotations. Can you give me some example? Six degrees of separation, collage of ideas, a mosaic of quotations.

You can consult your books of course. It is not an exam. Theoreticians also talk about two kinds of inter-textuality. One is vertical and one is horizontal. Now, according to theoreticians, horizontal inter-textuality means books referring to other books, books making references to other books. Vertical textual inter-textuality means books referring to other works of art or some socio-political situations. Now, other works of art could be music, cinema, painting anything that constitutes art ok, so vertical and horizontal.

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Now, let us talk about some you know examples of inter-textuality in six degrees of separation. Can you give me some examples and how and why Guare uses them? First, I would like to have categories instead of you know I remember I gave you this to ponder over the weekend. So, just tell me. Give me certain categories of references. Socio-cultural. I will also give slash pop culture. Do you have literary references? Political. Give me some very prominent examples. Social-cultural can I just take it here pop art ok. Now, if you have your text, I mean one very good example of art and inter-textuality Kandinsky. The presence of Kandinsky itself and that too double sided painted on both sides. One abstract and another more wild and vivid.

So, suggesting both side of personality, two sidester. if you remember doctor Fines **yeah** doctor Fines says it at one point there are two sides to everything. Throughout the play **yeah** we are made to understand that there are two sides. There cannot be one you know monologic understanding of any situation, any person. So, therefore you know that refers that stress on dialogic, on the presence of heteroglossia many voices, the acceptance of polyphony. However, I mean at one point I am just tempted to talk about that dialogue where Ouisa says that it is very quite when kids are away. It comes at the beginning. A low noise caution I mean is it. So, good of course, it is orderly, but then what is that brought you? Disconnect and alienation with your own children right. So, that means there is a need for lots of noises, lots of voices in order to become more wholesome, more connected ok.

You can live in isolation, in quietude or peace, but in that process you are just disconnecting yourself from everyone around you. Dadaism, yes you have cats, you have

catcher in the rye, you have young, you have references to references to Freud. Yes you are saying something. Popular culture **yes**.

Greta Garbo, who was a known recluse **yeah**. She just disconnected herself from rest of the society, lived in her own ivory tower, mysterious and enigmatic. Nobody ever knew what she was in real life but now, you let us go to that point where he talks about Sydney Pointier. Good, page 23. Now, see page 23, I will just retell of his list of movie. Among his forty two films are, No way, Outcry, The beloved country, Blackboard, Jungle, The defined ones, Risen in the sun, Release of the field, The heat of the night, To serve with love, Shoot to kill and of course, Guess who is coming to dinner. Now, do you find some parallels? Guess, who is coming to dinner? Do you think there is some inter-textuality happening here and then what does he do immediately after this? He makes dinner for them **ok**.

What is the theme and idea of Guess who is coming to dinner? Not just preaching, but also accepting the whole heartedly, with open and wide arms people who are not who are not like you, people from other race, from other community that is important and what is happening here. So, this is a very direct reference **yeah**. It is a very direct inter-textual reference to the movie because here it is a very nice, very clever spin on the movie, on the theme of the movie because there Sydney Poitier character is a very straight forward, nice, educated, well adjusted kind of black who would be accepted by any one **ok** but then here, Guare is making you know a very cunning reference to accept him to this person who is anything, but that character from Guess who is coming to dinner. He is most unlike the character with Sydney Pointier played in Guess who is coming to dinner, but then accepting this person is also making a connection **right**, it also tantamounts of making a connection with your people.

Anything else that you feel was worth mentioning here? Inter-textual reference. Sixteen century Florence, all the restaurants, genius at every corner, why? How is it important here? **Right**, good Renaissance period, sixteenth century Florence **yeah**. He is a genius in every corner when imagination was at its peak, so when different ideas were propping all the time.

So, then you look at this young man who is just bubbling with imagination. Who makes such a passionate plea for imagination and then catcher in the rye? What is so inter-

textual about the catcher in the rye and why do you think that Guare chose only catcher in the rye and not Tom Sawyer or Huck Finn. For deviates from the norm? So, () of Seigel Kandinsky yes Olden coal field is a very good example of the chaos of side of Kandinsky. He is a classic adolescence who is a misfit, a non-conformist teenage and that is what Paul is because he is not your average Sydney Poitier kind of a good guy. He is more in the category of hold in coal field yeah. Do you think that is Annie? It is a peak on? How the investors () you know high society functions both English () pot of jam yeah, piece thing a tiny things which are so important to them and troops of upper class. English hand luster shoes and pot of jam. They are like symbols of the upper class aristocratic class ok.

Perhaps that is what he wants to be. You know that is I mean when I was reading a play, I have also felt that Sisene chapel and slapping the hand of god. Would it mean anything in the context, in the inter-textual context of the play? It signified the ease which had as in it will remark connect yeah. You do not need six people. You can achieve some of the near impossible by this reaching out yeah, so that could be you do not even need a chain of six people yeah between you and the person with whom you want to make a contact. Just reach out and touch it. Touch the impossible. KGB and McCarthy. McCarthy KGB, you have assassination, assassination of president, attempted assassination of president, also those sovietoroids in South Africa, Gorbachev. Yes, all these events are extremely important when the play was written. Yes, John Lenin assassination. Yes, he also makes references to Chekov, yes Agatha Christy. Incidentally Guare is both, Agatha Christy and Chekov happens to be personal favorites of John Guare.

So, that would be you know just acknowledging the masters, acknowledging people whom he admire so much. I was also thinking of the quality of mercy is not strain ok. Now, this is and there is an irony on that at one place and the quality of mercy exists throughout in a very ironical fashion. Quality of mercy you know the New Yorkers with the heart that is what the headline screams, remember and then you go back to the quality of mercy is not a strain. In the beginning you have those people who are ready to welcome a rich man's son because he is wounded and he has been mugged and they give him shelter, then dress his wounds. So, the headline say New Yorkers, who says New Yorkers do not have a heart. At the same time, they are also you know when they go after him they are quite ruthless. yeah Who says that quality of mercy is not strange. No,

I am not I am saying I am asking the question. I mean the quality of mercy, I mean it is mentioned here in a very ironical way, in a very ironical text inter-textual way.

Anything else that strikes? When Paul having the converse of final conversation over the phone, he says I just read Andy Warhol's dairies **yeah** and Andy Warhol, great pop culture artist and he is known for that painting, the soup can and also those beautiful Elizabeth Taylor and Marlin Monroe collages paintings. What else? The famous quotation, what was it? Famous quote by Andy Warhol. Fifteen minutes of fame. Do you think there is some kind of a connection? Paul, how? He wanted his fifteen minutes of rich people? He wants just that you know one night connection with very rich people just that.

He does not want anything more than that but he wants to experience that kind of life which he knows that otherwise he would never have the opportunity to explore or to live. Rainbow room is an extremely upscale kind of a restaurant, extremely expensive. The only way someone like Paul can have access to rainbow room is by robbing someone, some gullible person and Rick and Elizabeth just happen to come in his way **yeah**. So, therefore Andy Warhol's reference is important I think because of this entire idea of fifteen minutes of fame. Also, when he is plastered all over the newspapers, this person he becomes famous although. In famous, but that is what Andy Warhol says that it really does not matter whether it is fame or notoriety. Yeah as long as people know about you, it is ok.

So, Paul also is following Andy Warhol. So, therefore the reference to Andy Warhol was also a known homosexual. Yes Rehan. **Since, it all that Guare explicitly calls them (()) yes and (()) culture of nave roping and they wanted associate with the celebrities yes yeah.** So, this entire culture, the people are falling over each other to become associated with celebrities to come into limelight. Also deep down, you have the deep dog desire to star and cats as humans ok.

However, brief you know just extras, but you are there on the screen. People know you. people are going to watch you that alone you know gives them a kick. So, again a reference to fifteen minutes of fame. So, now you see how and again as I was talking to you earlier on Walter Benjamin famous quote in this age of mechanical reproduction in my only copy of my dedication is lost. So, that is another spin on Walter Benjamin's

famous essay the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. Inter-textuality to conclude has been used by several writers down the line for several purposes. For example, John Steinbeck in his *East of Eden*. He searched the entire story of the biblical genesis in America.

Then you have James Joyce *Ulysses* which is you know a take on Homer's *Odyssey* set in modern Dublin of course. You have a novel like *A Thousand Acres*. Are you familiar with that novel which is the retelling of the story of King Lear? Shakespeare's *King Lear* but told from the point of view of the so called wicked daughters. Remember, King Lear had three daughters. One is the model virtuous daughter and two very wicked selfish daughters. So, the story is told from the point of view of those daughters set in contemporary America and then of course, you have *Wide Sargasso Sea* which is a retelling of the *Madwoman in the Attic* story from the point of view of Bertha, the mad wife, Mr. Rochester's mad wife who was never allowed to step out. Who always kept hidden in the attic, so that she never interferes with Mr. Rochester's day to day life and you know Mr. Rochester can also marry in peace, but does not happen in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. So, the *Wide Sargasso Sea* is retelling of the *Madwoman in the Attic* story from the wife's point of view.

Any questions, any comments? So, when you read *Six Degrees of Separation* again, you will find that what Julia Christopher says the collage of ideas and a mosaic of quotations everything is there. It is all present here. So, read the play when you know the next time you read it, read it from that perspective. Alright, thank you.