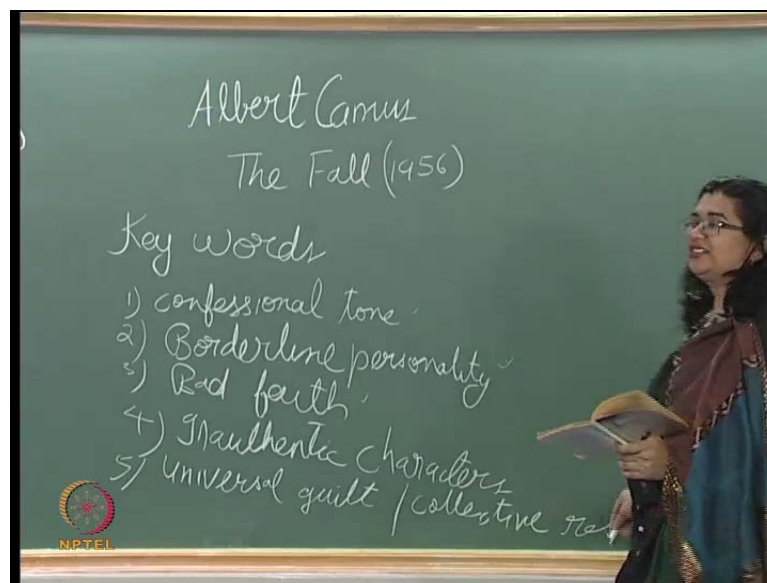


Contemporary Literature
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Lecture No. # 21
Albert Camus The Fall Contd.

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We will continue with Albert Camus' *The Fall*, 1956 and the keywords in today's lecture would be, Camus confessional tone, of course, which we have already done last time.

Borderline personality, we will reflect on this in detail. The philosophy of bad faith and inauthenticity; also, the idea of universal guilt and collective responsibility, as it is found in the works of the major existentialist writers of all times.

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So, let us move on to page nineteen, where we have the speaker, do you remember the speaker, Jean-Baptiste Clamence? He is a lawyer by profession and he is sitting in Mexico City, a bar in Amsterdam. It is a cold winter night. He is addressing an unidentified interlocutor, who, at the end, we will see who it turns out to be. But, throughout the novella, the suspense about his identity is maintained, **ok**.

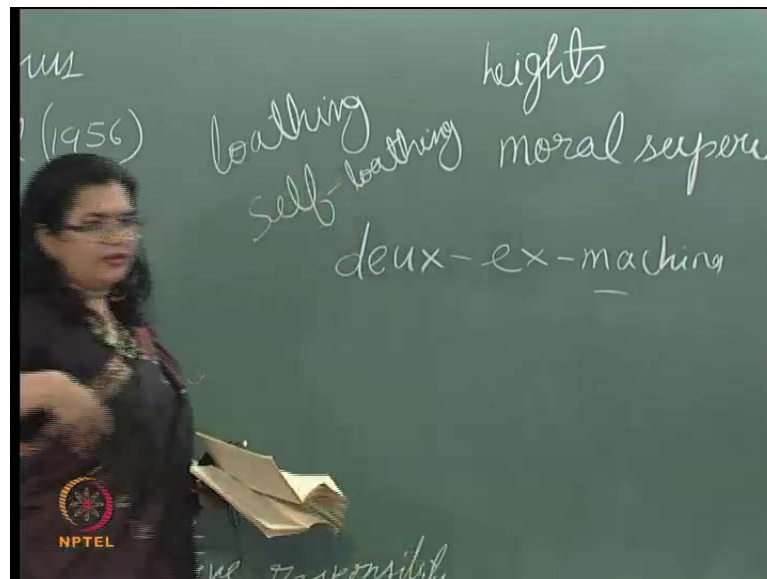
So, page nineteen. Let us pause on these heights. Now, you understand, what I meant, when I spoke of aiming higher; I was talking; it so happens of those supreme summits, the only places I can really live; yes, I have never felt comfortable, except in lofty surroundings; even in the details of daily life, I need to feel above; **above**, look at the way it is italicized; he needs to be, feel above; he needs to feel superior to everybody; I prefer the bus to the underground, and then, he gives a list of a places, which he feels are physically above others. So, I preferred the bus to the underground, under, underground, are the trains, open carriages to taxis, terraces to being indoors. I was an amateur pilot in planes, in which one's head is in the open, while on boats, I was the eternal pacer of the top deck.

So, it is almost like, you know, having a borderline personality, where you are so much full of a superiority; the entire idea is that, to feel superior and over and above other, **other** fellow human beings; so, and which also emanates, perhaps, from some deep-seated sense of insecurity. Therefore, so, therefore, in psychiatric terms, it is called a

borderline, having a borderline personality. In the mountains, I used to flee the deep valleys, for the passes and plateaus; at the very least, I was a man of the uplands; if fate had forced me to choose between manual labor at a lab or as a roofer, do not worry, I would have chosen the roofs, and become acquainted with dizziness. So, dizziness, **dizziness** equated with delusions of grandeur; he, **he** would not like to a work or even be physically down, but always over and above; always existing on heights.

Coal bunkers, ship holds, subways, grottos, pits were repulsive to me; all these places and spaces, which suggest underground, which, **which** suggest a level below, he loathes those places; I had even developed a special loathing for a speleologist. So, you know, the people who study caves, who had the nerve to fill the front page of our newspapers and whose activities nauseated me; striving to descend two thousand feet, at the risk of getting one's head caught in a rocky funnel, seemed to me, the exploit of perverted, or traumatized characters; there was something criminal underlying it.

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So, see, while low, having, or while expressing such deep seated loathing for people, for those below, for people below, in a way, Jean-Baptiste Clamence also expresses self-loathing. Why would he want to be, or why would he like to exist above everyone, all the time? So, it also reflects on some sense of self-loathing and it is in this sense of self-loathing, that the entire novel is narrated; in a very, in a deeply confessional tone, where

he debates on the ideals of justice, morality and all. We will go, move on to page twenty one.

My profession, satisfied most happily that vocation for summits; it cleansed me of all bitterness towards my neighbor, whom I always obliged, without ever owing him anything; it set me above the judge, whom I judged in return; in turn, above the defendant, whom I forced to gratitude; just consider this, I lived with impunity. He could go scot free anytime. He, **he** felt, he was above everyone. He could get away with any crime and he felt that, by, **by** living in these heights, physical heights equated to moral superiority.

So, he was able to live with a sense of some, great, deep sense of moral superiority and he was answerable to none. He was, he could get away with impunity on everything, and that gave him a sense of, you know, a power, a power of, over, power over other people; whoever come, came, **came** near him, including his colleagues, people he interacted in his professional terms, and also, his so called, friends; he had a sense of superiority, when he, when dealing with these people at all levels.

I was concerned in (()) judgment; I was not on the floor of the courtroom, but somewhere in the (()) like those Gods, that are brought down by machinery, from time to time to transfigure the action, and give it its meaning; after all, living aloft is still the only way of being seen and hailed by the largest number. Now, here Gods would be brought down by machinery, this is a reference to the Greek theater of, and the term is *deus-ex-machina*, where the, during a play, Gods would be brought down through an artificial equipment, an artificial machine, and they would be brought down to the level of the stage, and they would set, of course, everything right.

So, he felt that, because he existed, because he loved to exist on heights, he felt, as if he is among that level, that exalted level; he is among the Pantheon of Gods, just the way the Greek Gods were; and, whenever he would mingle with the common people, including the judges, including the defendants, whenever he was in the courtroom, he felt that, he has been brought down to their level, by some, **some** artificial equipment, like a machine and after completing his work, he would go back to his heights; that is the idea. We will move on to page twenty three, where he talks about his background.

I was of respectable, but humble birth, and yet, on certain mornings, let me confess it humbly, I felt like a king's son or a burning bush; burning bush is a reference to the Bible, where Moses sights a burning bush. Moses is, of course, you know, he give, gives people, The Ten Commandments, the word of God and he is God's agent. So, he almost felt, as if, he is nothing less than God's agent, a king's son; it was not a matter, mind you, of the certainty, ahead of being more intelligent than everyone else; besides such certainties is of no consequence because, so many imbeciles share it. But, he obviously feel that, he is not among one of those imbeciles; others may be, but not him; he was decidedly more intelligent than anyone else; no, as a result of being showered with blessings, I felt, I hesitate to admit, marked out. So, almost like, if you can interpret it in anyway, marked out is also, he stood out; he felt that, he stood out because of his obvious virtues, of his obvious bounties; however, marked out could also be, Cain's Mark, who killed his brother Abel, and he was marked for eternity by God. Perhaps, it could be even that. Personally marked out among all, for that long and uninterrupted success. So, he felt invincible; he felt un-vanquishable; no one could touch him.

This, after all was a result of my modesty; I refused to attribute that success to my own merits and could not believe that, the conjunction in a single person of such different and such extreme virtues, was the result of chance alone; this is why, in my happy life, I felt somehow that, what happiness, that, that happiness was authorized by some higher decree. So, he felt that, he was indeed marked by God; he was the chosen one, to lead such a happy, successful and you know, unchallenged life. When I add that, I had no religion, you can see even better, how extraordinary that conviction was; whether ordinary or not, it served for some time, to raise me above the daily routine; I literally soared for a period of years, for which, to tell the truth, I still long in my heart of hearts; I soared until the evening when...Again, notice the reference to that particular evening and we do not know what exactly happened. He keeps on skirting the issue. Perhaps, something that has left him scarred for life, and therefore, this, **this** need to confess, to, **to** an utter stranger, because, who else would you confess to; you know, who else can you have this kind, who else with, can you have, you know, this kind of heart to heart talk with, if not a stranger? But then, again he goes back, he does not complete, what happened that evening.

But no, that is another matter and it must be forgotten; anyway, I am, perhaps, exaggerating; I was at ease in everything, to be sure, but at the same time, satisfied with nothing; each joy made me desire another. So, this covetousness, is another evil, another sin, that he harbors along with his, you know, this supreme ego, the great pride, he nurtures in himself; along with that, it is also the need to possess everything, that comes his way. Each joy made me desire another; I went from festivity to festivity; on occasion, I danced for nights on end, even madder about people and life; at times, late on those nights, when the dancing, the slight intoxication, my wild enthusiasm, everyone's violent unrestraint, would feel, sorry, would fill me with a tired and overwhelmed rapture; it would seem to me, at the breaking point of fatigue and for a second's flash, that at last I understood the secret of creatures of the, and of the world; but, my fatigue would disappear the next day and with it, the secret; I would rush forth (()); I ran on like that, always heaped with favors, never satiated, without knowing where to stop, until the day, until the evening rather, when the music stopped and the lights went out.

So, something happened on that particular evening, when things changed forever and then, the lights went out and the music stopped. It could also be a metaphor for, you know, living a life of unadulterated pleasure; you know, some kind of, living a life which is full with grandeur, obscenely grand kind of life, and he, he could not have enough of that; but one day, everything changed, and he does not come to that point, what made him, what made that remarkable change in his life. What, what evening? Now, perhaps; the interlocutor has commented, and he is responding. As we saw the other day that, we never get to hear the, that unidentified listener at all; it is through Jean-Baptiste Clamence, that we hear the listeners' words. What? What evening? I will get to it; be patient with me; in our certain way I am sticking to my subject, with all that about friends and connections; you see, I have heard of a man, whose friend had been imprisoned and who slept on the floor of his room every night, in order not to enjoy a comfort, of which his friend had been deprived.

Who (()) monsieur will sleep on the floor for us? Am I capable of it myself? Look, I would like to be and I shall be; yes, we shall all be capable of it one day and that will be salvation; but it is not easy, for friendship is absent-minded, or at least, unavailing; it is incapable of achieving what it wants; maybe, after all, it does not want it enough; maybe, we do not love life enough; have you noticed that, death alone awakens our feeling? So,

again, as we were talking in the beginning, *The Fall*, reflects on the nature of evil, on the nature of justice and also, on the nature of, or on the finality of death. Only death is final and that is what he says. Have you noticed that, death alone awakens our feelings and then, he goes on why, **why** he says so.

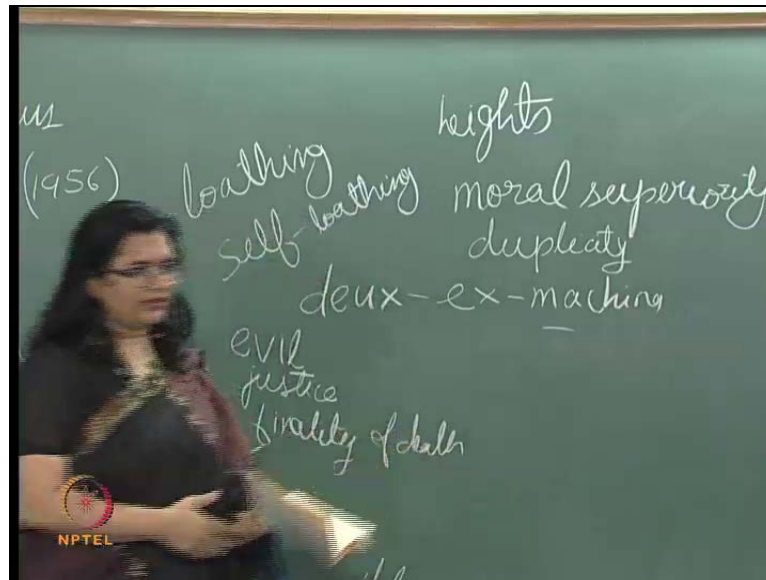
How we love the friends who have just left us? Is it not true for all of, all of us? How we admire those of our teachers, who have ceased to speak, their mouths filled with earth? Then, the expression of admiration springs forth naturally; that admiration, they were, perhaps expecting from us, all lifelong; how do you know, why we are always more just and more generous toward the dead? The reason is simple; with them, there is no obligation; they leave us free, and we can take our time, fit the testimonial in between a cocktail party and a nice little mistress, in our spare time; in short, if they forced us to anything, it would be to remembering and we have a short memory; no, it is the recently dead, we love among our friends; the painful dead, our emotion, ourselves after all.

So, again, this is a very deep comment on the nature of human being; the essential nature of human beings; we do not appreciate people, when they are alive; but, we claim to remember them, we claim to appreciate them, once they are gone; because then, we, **we** are not obligated to them in any way, and we would like to appear good; we would like to speak well of the dead. So, the recently dead are those, of whom we speak the best. For instance, I had a friend I generally avoided; he rather bored me, and besides, he was something of a moralist; but, when he was on his death bed, I was there; do not worry; I never missed a day; he died satisfied, with me holding both my hands; a woman who used to chase after me and in vain, had the good sense to die young; what room in my heart at once and when, in addition, it is a suicide; lord, what a delightful commotion. So, look at the way he craves for that kind of attention. From the beginning, we have been told that, he loved being on heights; he loved being morally superior to others; he loved being the center of attraction and this is the commentary, not just on Jean-Baptiste Clamence's nature, but rather, a commentary, a scathing attack rather, on, **on** mankind, on human civilization, on the larger human nature, that we are all; we all pretend, we all perform, all the time.

As he says in the beginning that, even in the courtroom, I was at my best behavior; I have used my best tone, my best manners; why, because, we are performing all the time; and when he realizes that somebody has committed suicide over him, how wonderful;

this is what, something fills him with a great sense of achievement; it satisfies his ego. One's telephone rings, one's heart overflows and the sentences, intentionally short, yet heavy with implications; one's restrained suffering and even, yes, a bit of self accusation; this is the way man is, (()) monsieur; he has two faces.

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Now, we are talking about duplicity of mankind. Two faces; he cannot love, without self-love; notice your neighbors, if perchance a death takes place in the building; they were asleep in their little routine and suddenly, for example, the concierge dies; concierge is the, is a person who maintains the building. In European societies, it is a very, you know, a common position. At once, they awake, bestir themselves, get the details, commiserate; a newly dead man and the show begins at last; they need tragedy, do you not know? Human beings need tragedy; that is, almost, he uses the word, it is their little transcendence; their aperitif; it is like an intoxication; other people's tragedy, death in other people's homes, it becomes a matter of interest for all; it is sort of a, gives people something to, you know, ponder over, to talk about, to discuss; it is almost like an entertainment. Actually, is it mere chance, that I should speak of a concierge? I had one, really ill-favored, malice-incarnate; a monster of insignificance and rancor who would have discouraged a Franciscan. Even a priest would have felt discouraged by her; even, she would have annoyed even a monk; where he, she could have tested the patience of a priest, she was that ill-tempered.

I had even given up speaking to him; but by his mere existence, he compromised my customary contentedness; he died and I went to his funeral; can you tell me why? Why, he hated him; he, **he** confesses that, that he hated that concierge; but he still, when he died, he went to his funeral; why, because, he wants to look good; because, he wants to appear as a superior to others; although it was well known that he did not like that person, he hated that person. He avoided that concierge, but he still, when the concierge dies, he attends his funeral. He is good to his wife, to the widow of the concierge; that speaks well of Jean-Baptiste Clamence and therefore, he went there. We will skip a few pages, and go, move on to page twenty nine.

But, I at least, did not have that excuse; I was not bored, because I was riding on crest of a wave; on the evening I am speaking about...Again, the reference to the evening; I am about, I can say that, I was even less bored than ever, and yet, you see it was a fine autumn evening; still warm in town and already damp over the Seine; night was falling; the sky still bright in the west, was darkening; the street lamps were glowing dimly; I was walking up the quays of the left bank towards the **Pont Des Arts**; the river was gleaming between the stalls of the second-hand book sellers; **Pont Des Arts** is a famous harbor and it is also very well known for having stalls of second hand books along the quays, **ok.** (()), he mentions it very frequently, in all his short stories, which are set in Paris; second-hand book stores, the stalls set along the quays of the Paris, on Pont Des Arts; there were, but few people on the quays; Paris was already at dinner.

This is already, you know, it is very clear reference to (()); I was trampling the dusty yellow leaves that still recalled summer; gradually the sky was filling with stars, that could be seen for a moment, after leaving street lamp and moving on towards another; I enjoy the return of silence; the evening's mildness; the emptiness of Paris; I was happy; the evenings, sorry, the day had been good; a blind man, the reduced sentence that I had hoped for, a cordial (()) from my client, a few generous actions, and in the afternoon, a brilliant improvisation, in the company of several friends, on the hard heartedness of our governing class, and the hypocrisy of our leaders.

So, the usual topics and the day was good; a success, a successful day; a blind man; you remember his penchant for helping blind men cross the streets; he would, you know, compete with others in this department; also, he had won a case, it was a good day at the court; he had won the gratitude of the defendant and socially also, he had made a

conquest; it, **it** was a very great evening, a very successful evening for him; and, he was returning and he talked about the usual topics of his times, the hard-heartedness of the government, the hypocrisy of our leaders; Camus' is being extremely satirical here; we talk about the hypocrisy and hard-heartedness of people, of others, but what about us? Are we not hypocrites? Is Jean-Baptiste Clamence not a hypocrite? I had gone up on to the...So, he is coming to that, point of that particular evening, the action which was, you know, a life changing movement for him; I had gone up on to the Pont Des Arts, deserted at that hour, to look at the river, that could hardly be made out now; night had come; facing the statue of the (()), I dominated the (()); I felt rising within me, a vast feeling of power and I do not know how to express it, of completion, which cheered my heart; I straightened up and was about to light a cigarette, the cigarette of satisfaction, when at that very moment, a laugh burst out behind me; taken by surprise, I suddenly wheeled around; there was no one there; I stepped to the railing, no barge or boat; I turned back towards the island, and again, heard the laughter behind me; a little farther off, as if it were going downstream; I stood there motionless, the sound of the laughter was decreasing, but I could still hear it distinctly, behind me; coming from nowhere, unless, from the water; at the same time, I was aware of the rapid beating of my heart; please, do not misunderstand me; there was nothing mysterious about that laugh; it was a good, hearty, almost friendly laugh, which put everything properly in its place; soon, I could hear nothing more; anyway, I returned to the quays, went up the (()), bought some cigarettes, which I did not need; I was dazed and I was breathing fast; that evening, I rang up a friend, who was not at home; I was hesitating about going out, when suddenly, I heard laughter under my windows; I opened them; on the pavement, in fact, some youths were noisily saying good night; I shrugged my shoulders, as I closed my windows; after all, I had a brief to study; I went into the bathroom, to drink a glass of water; my reflection was smiling in the mirror, but it seemed to me that, my smile was ((**doubled**)).

Now, this laughter, this mysterious laughter that he hears, as he is walking on Pont Des Arts, this is a life changing moment for him; who is laughing at him and this, he looks around; he feels that, laughter is, no, there is nothing extraordinary about that laughter. But he feels it; he senses it; what is going on? Who is that person? He sees no one. He waits, and then, he goes back home and again, from outside his window, he hears that, almost, an identical laughter, and outside, when he looks outside, there is no one else, but

a group of young people. When he looks at himself, when he looks in the mirror, when he looks at his reflection in the mirror, he finds himself smiling and he says my smile was doubled. All, that moment, he realizes that, he has been, his life is nothing, but a sham. He has been leading a life of lies and falsehood; a double life; a life full of duplicity and dishonesty. What? Forgive me; I was thinking of something else; I will see you again tomorrow, probably; tomorrow, yes, that is right; no, **no**; I cannot stay; besides, I am being called for a consultation by the brown bear you see over there. See, **see**, frequent references to human beings as animals; there is a gorilla out there; **there** is a brown bear over there; a decent fellow to be sure, whom the police are meanly persecuting, out of sheer perversity; although I am a judge-penitent, I have my sideline here; I am the legal councilor of these good people; I studied the laws of the country and built up a clientele in this quarter, where diplomas are not required; it was not easy, but I inspire confidence, do I not?

I have a good hearty laugh and an energetic hand shake, and those are trump cards. But then, we know that of course, that his laughter and his handshakes and his generousities and his little acts of kindness, they are just a pack of lies. Besides, I settled a few difficult cases out of self interest, to begin with, and later, out of conviction; if pimps and thieves were invariably sentenced, all decent people would get to thinking, they themselves, were constantly innocent; and, in my opinion, alright, alright, I am coming; that is what must be avoided at all costs; otherwise, everything would be just a joke. So, no one should be allowed to exist on a moral platitude, on a moral pedestal. Everyone, there is an underlying sense of evil in everyone, and no one should be allowed to think that, they are better than others; that they are superior to others; and this, as we know, you know, it is said in, all this is said in the context of the Second World War, immediately after the Nazi atrocities, especially on the Jews. So, no one should feel that, they are superior to anyone else; that is the idea. We will move on to the third chapter.

I am indeed grateful to you. Monsieur compatriot, for your curiosity; however, there is nothing extraordinary about my story; since you are interested I will tell you that, I thought a little about that laugh, for a few days; then, forgot about it; once in a great while, I seem to hear it within me; but most of the time, without making any effort, I thought of other things; yes, I must admit that, I ceased to walk along, along the Paris quays; whenever I travel along them, in a car or bus, a sort of silence would descend on

me; I was waiting, I believe; but I would cross the Seine; nothing would happen and I would breathe again. So, what is it? What do you think that...What is the reason for this, hearing of this, **this** particular voice, or these voices? It could be his troubled conscience; it could be the awareness, that he is leading a life of hypocrisy and lies. I also had some trouble with my health at that time; nothing definite; a dejection perhaps, a sort of difficulty in recovering my good spirits; I saw doctors, who gave me stimulants; I was alternately stimulated and depressed; life became less easy for me; when the body is sad, the heart languishes; it seemed to me that, I was half unlearn, unlearning, what I had never learnt and yet, knew so well, how to live; yes, I think it was probably then, that everything began; how beautiful the canals are this evening? I like the breath of stagnant waters, the smell of dead leaves soaking in the canal and the funeral scent rising from the barges loaded with the flowers; and no, **no**, there is nothing morbid about such a taste, I assure you; on the contrary, it is a deliberate act on my part; the truth is that, I force myself to admire these canals; what I like most in the world is Sicily, you see, and especially from the top of Etna, in the sunlight, provided, I dominate the island and the sea; Java too, but at the time the of the trade-winds.

Yes, I went there in my youth, in a general way; I like all islands; it is easier to dominate them; I am well aware that, one cannot get along without dominating, or being served; every man needs slaves as he needs fresh air. So, again, this is the commentary on the society. We cannot live, without the sense of possessing, or lording over someone. Commanding is breathing; we need someone underneath; we need someone, to totally control over. You agree with me? And, even the most destitute, manages to breathe; the lowest man in the social scale, still has his wife or his child; if he is unmarried, a dog; the essential thing after all, is being able to get angry with someone, who has no right to answer back. So, perhaps, this is a commentary on the Jewish predicament. They did not have the power to strike back and therefore, it was extremely easy to control them, to execute them, to persecute them. One does not answer back to one's father. See, this is what we have been taught; you know the expression; in one way, it is very odd; to whom should one answer back in this world, if not to what one loves? In another way, it is convincing; somebody has to have the last word.

So, it is again, the same reference, as he was talking about earlier; that it, this is the dog eat **dog** world; all about the survival of the fittest; the big fish eats the small one.

Otherwise, every reason can be met with another one, and there would never be an end to it; power, on the other hand, settles everything; it took time, but we finally, finally, realize that; for instance, you must have noticed that our old Europe, at last, philosophizes in the right way; we no longer say, as in simple times, this is my opinion, what are your objects, objections? We have become lucid; for the dialogue, we have substituted the **communicae**; this is the truth, we say; you can discuss it as much as you want, we are not interested; but in a few years, there will be the police to show you, I am right. So, earlier, this, during the earlier times, we used to have a dialogue; but now, the dialogue is no longer possible; the total art of communication has undergone a change; this is the truth, because, this is my opinion; you can do whatever you want; earlier, there would be multiplicity of viewpoints; people would seek, would encourage a debate; but not in these times; the times that Camus is writing about.

So, there is one truth and that is the dictator's truth. Page thirty seven. I have to admit it humbly Monsieur Compatriot, I was always bursting with vanities. So, he goes back; again, we are looking at the dramatic monologue technique employed by Camus; that, that this, that lengthy dialogue, that lengthy monologue, which Jean-Baptiste Clamence is using, we get glimpses of the speakers' characters, good or bad. He may try to portray him as a superior man; but while doing so, a totally different side of his character emerges; that is what a dramatic monologue is supposed to do. I, I, I, is the refrain of my whole life and perhaps also, of the modern man. It is, **it is** too, there is too much of emphasis on individualism, on the individual; there is too much of attention to one's own self, and not for the betterment of the society. I could never speak without boasting; especially if I did so, that shattering discretion of which I was a master; it is quite true that, I always lived free and powerful; I simply felt released in my relations with everyone else, for the excellent reason that, I recognize no equals. So, he, I had no equal, equals; I was the best, and that is how I lived. So, you know, he lived in bad faith; that is what we are talking about here; it is like living a life, totally devoted to, you know, self attention and to one's own selfish interest, without a care to other people.

He does not even respect people; deep down, we all know, he does not care, he does not respect; but he wants to look good, in, **in** the eyes of the other people, and therefore, this façade, this, **this** sham he maintains, about being an ideal kind of a gentleman. It is quite true that, I always lived free and powerful; I simply felt released in my relations with

everyone else for the excellent reason, that I recognized no equals; I always considered myself, more intelligent than anyone else, as I have told you; but also, more sensitive and more skillful, a crackshot, an incomparable driver, a better lover; even in the fields in which it was easy for me to verify my inferiority, like tennis, for instance, in which I was, but a passable partner, it was hard for me, not to think that, with a little time for practice, I would surpass the best players; I found nothing, but superior, superiorities in myself, and this explained my good will and serenity; when I was concerned with others, it was out of pure condescension, in utter freedom; and all the credit went to me; my self-esteem would go up a degree.

So, Jean-Baptiste Clamence, a formal lawyer from Paris, he is in a confessional tone. He is sitting in Mexico City, a pub, along with a silent interlocutor, an interlocutor who speaks only intermittently, very sporadically. And, while doing so, he is unraveling his own truthful character; a life full of lies, a life full of shams, a life full of subtle cruelties, which he would never admit. He gloated in his, in his virtues; in all his, you know, superficial appearances, and full of belief that, he is superior, superior to others and that is the essence of a modern man, according to Camus, that, he feels, that he is superior and better, than everyone else.

Coming to page fifty two, that particular night in November, two or three years before the evening, when I thought I heard laughter behind me, I was returning to the left bank and to my home, by way of the Pont Royal; it was an hour past midnight; a fine rain was falling; a drizzle rather, that scattered the few people on the streets; I had just left a mistress, who was surely already asleep; I was enjoying that walk; a little numb, my body calmed and irrigated by a flow of blood, rather like the falling rain; on the bridge, I passed behind a figure leaning over the railing and seemed to stare at the river; on closer view, I made out, a slim young woman, dressed in black; between her dark hair and coat collar could be seen, the back of her neck, cool and damp, which stirred me; but I went on, after a moments' hesitation; at the end of the bridge, I followed the quay, towards Sainte (()), where I lived; I had already gone some fifty yards, when I heard the sound, which despite the distance, seemed dreadfully loud, in the midnight silence; of a body striking the water; I stopped short, but without turning around; almost at once, I heard a cry, repeated several times, which was going downstream; then, it abruptly seized; the silence that followed, as the night suddenly stood still, seemed interminable; I wanted to

run and yet, did not move an inch; I was trembling, I believe, from cold and shock; I told myself, that I have to be quick; and I felt an irresistible weakness steal over me; I have forgotten what I thought then; too late, too far, or something of the sort; I was still listening, as I stood motionless; then, slowly in the rain, I went away; I told no one; but here we are; here is my house, my refuge; tomorrow? Yes, if you wish; I would like to take you to the island of (()), so that, you can see the (()); let us meet at eleven at Mexico City; what? That woman, oh I do not know; really I do not know; the next day and the day following, I did not read the papers.

Now, see this is the life, which is living in denial; a life of bad faith and inauthentic character. He refuses to take responsibility, but he is haunted continuously by that event. Exactly, this is what he has been coming to, all, **all** along. On a particular evening, he had seen, he had been witness, to a young woman committing suicide. She jumped in the river and Jean-Baptiste Clamence, the person who prides himself on being the savior of the underprivileged, the downtrodden, you know, the weaker sections of society, what did he do? He does, he did nothing. He did not even attempt to save, or rescue the woman, and this guilt weighs on his soul throughout. But, that is later. But, at that point, he did not feel any, much about it. Subsequently, he started hearing those laughter. So, now, we understand the meanings, the reason, behind those mysterious laughter. It is his conscience. It is his inner self, that is mocking him. It is telling him that, his entire life is nothing; the absurdity of his existence, where he has been pretending to be something, which he was not actually.

And, this is what Camus is trying to draw our attention to, that, most of the time, even when we have the power and the means to do something, we do not, you know, we do not take responsibility and we refuse to accept the guilt. And, this is the reason, for much, for many of the tragedies that happen around us. So, it is not just a group of people, that unleash terror on someone; it is, it is also us, people who remain quiet and silent, about these atrocities. He could not even save a young woman from drowning; then, how he could do anything about those thousands and millions of Jews, being executed. So, he does not take his responsibility. He does not act on time and therefore, it weighs on his conscience. This is what The Fall is all about. **Thank you very much.**