

Contemporary Literature
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Module No. # 01

Lecture No. # 09

Six Degrees of Separation Contd.

Alright, so we are doing John Guare's Six degrees of separation. We **have already and we** are coming to the end of the play. We are on page 102 and we stopped where Paul, now he feels cornered by the social forces. The forces of the law etcetera, because he has been duping certain people and there has been a major tragedy because of his irresponsible acts. Now, the police is on the trail and this is his one final attempt to connect with Ouisa Kittredge. They talk over the phone.

Now, Tess goes. The detective appears. Flan, I have got that kid on the line. If you know if you remember, where we stopped last time? Flan is also on the other line. He is not as sympathetic as Ouisa as far as Paul is concerned. Detective: Find out where he is. The detective goes. Flan Mouse to Ouisa: Find out where he is because it says miming the words. They want the conversation to last that long, so that they can trace the call. Ouisa to Paul: Who is there? Look, why do not you come here. Where are you? I come there and you will have the cops waiting. You have to trust us. Why? Because, we like you. Flan mouths where is he? Who is there? It is I am not here Flan. It is flan. Are you in tonight? I could come and make a feast for you. We are going out now, but you could be here when we come back. Are you nuts! Tell a crook we are going out. The house is empty. Now, it is very clear that Ouisa is not mindful of these things. She does not really believe that Paul is such a big threat, but Flan does **ok**.

So, Flan says do not even tell him that we are out tonight because he may come and rob the house. Where are you going? To Sotheby's. So, this is the common reference. You know they are going to the Sotheby's. Flan grabs the phone. The key is under the mat. Now, Flan is getting extremely agitated because of Paul's presence in their lives and he says you just come over. We may not be around but the keys waiting for you. Come and

door you know rob the house. You are welcome to do so. He said out of extreme frustration and agitation. It is not really an invitation.

Paul: Hi! Can I come to Sotheby's?

Flan thrusts the phone back to Ouisa. Now, he cannot handle it anymore ok.

Ouisa: Hi!

I said hi to Flan.

Paul says hi

Flan: Hi

Sotheby's? That is wonderful, I will come.

You cannot.

Why? I was helpful last time. How was he helpful? Do you remember the very first Cezzane deal? Yes. So, he helped fixed the Cezzane deal between Flan Kittredge and Geoffery. He said that you see I was helpful and at that point you were quite happy with me, so why not now? I could be as helpful even today. Thank him. He was very help.
Ouisa hands Flan the phone.

Paul, you were helpful getting me this contract. Yeah, he had miss I accept that you were helpful. Really? I was thinking maybe that is what I should do is what you do in art, but making money out of art and meeting people and not working in an office. Now, what does it tell you about Paul?

Suddenly, the conversation jumps to something else altogether. See, right now he is worried about what is happening? What is going to happen to him because there is you know case on him? He is charged of betting a young man into committing suicide but now, suddenly he is afraid of his life. Now, suddenly he is talking career. So, I was thinking maybe that is what I should do what you would do in art, but making money out of art and meeting people or not working in an office. Does not tell you something about Paul's character? Look at you know an absolute absence of elaborate stage direction.

How many stage directions do you find in six degrees? See, how Guare differs from other playwrights in this man, in this way. I mean stage directions have been limited to bare minimum, am I right?

Why do you think? I mean we are not told anything about anyone. Is it true? We do not know what Ouisa looks like. We do not know the physical description which we just know at the beginning of the play. You have **you know** some mandatory direction and that too I think he wanted to establish the fact that they deal in art and there is a Kandinsky. Then, that Kandinsky also exists because it suggests something **right**. So, Kandinsky, that Kandinsky is revolving the painting where he has painted on either side of the canvas in two different styles. One side is geometric and somber and the other side is wild and vivid. The painting stops. It revolves and ups for the geometric side. A couple runs on stage in night dress, very agitated.

I am looking at the very first page. Flanders Kittredge is 44, Louisa Kittredge is 43. They are very attractive, they speak towards. Apart from this, you have that reference to when Elizabeth and Ricky and Paul are in the central park and where that attempt at the baring these two, we do not have any detailed stage directions. You do not learn much about the motivation of the characters. Do you? Why people behave the way they do? **Why is Paul** now again let me try, let me take you back to on the earlier track. So, why is Paul saying all this to the Kittredge's?

The burning desire to be somebody knowing fully. Well, that is just the impossibility. He will never be what he wants to be, he will never become. Now, only way he knows that he can somehow have a passing **you know** accessibility to these people is by assuming another identity. If he wants to enter the house of these rich people, he has to be a son of very extremely wealthy people. If he wants to communicate with the poor whites like Elizabeth Henrique, then he has to come down to their level, but at the same time telling them that look, I am after all not your level. I may be poor, but you know I come from a lineage. So, that desire to be something is special which most people have, which most of us do have, but somehow we are unwilling to confront it. Somehow, we are not this blatant about it as Paul is.

Paul, you remember again the Kandinsky, Paul. Perhaps Guare is trying to tell us that most of us represent the geometric side of the Kandinsky. All ordered and in patterns.

How well we conform to the norms, we are willing to and we are able to **most of us** but then there is a wild side and a vivid side which everyone may have but they are afraid to explore it, where Paul is not. So, although he is in inner, he is staring the face of imminent imprisonment, but he is still not scared. Perhaps he is, but there is a hope and he wants to just explore the possibility till the hilt. So, he is trying to convince. Now, he is getting desperate, but he is not coming across as desperate. He is still trying to be he is old charming, cheerful himself and let me come and help you.

That is the idea. Why do not you help me? Bail me out of this trouble and perhaps, I can help you fix another deal. After all, I did help you in getting that very important contract. That is the idea. So, in art but making money out of art and meeting people and also he is meeting people. See, this is another aspect of Paul's personality. He is the people's person. He is not an introverted kind of person. He likes to make a connection with everyone whether it is a poor or the rich and he wants to make a connection. However, clumsy he is, however inapt he may be, but he does make an attempt. So, **that is** perhaps that is what he is trying to tell us that I want to meet people and not just work in very straight jacketed kind of a surrounding all in an office.

You only see the glam side of it. There is a whole grotty side. Grotty? Glamour versus grotty. You see the glamorous aspect of art dealing, but there is also something extremely you know you have to do a lot of wheeling dealing kind of and it is not all that easy. You may see the parties, the tuxedos, the black ties and all those things but it is not as glamorous. There is a dark under current in the art field as in every other business. I could learn the grotty. You have to have art history to begin with. So, it is not just like you can jump and you should be able to talk about. You should have the language; you have to have economics **ok**. You need to know all these things to be able to work in a field which is so fiercely competitive. I am fast. I could do it. Do your kids want to and he leaves this dialogue just open ended because see, in Paul there is always that deep buried desire to be like the kids of these people, though he say just make me your (()). Implication is that I can take the place of your kids because do they want to be in your shoes. Do they want to help you out with these things? No. It is not really a profession you hand down from generation to generation.

There is not **you know** Kittredge's iron see kind of a business, but it is people, have to be trained people, and have to have the aptitude for this kind of business. I just cannot train

my kids into. You just cannot brain wash. What the hell I am talking, career counseling to you. Now, he is coming down, back to the practicality. It is you who embarrassed me in my building. You remember why did he? How did he embarrass him? Claiming to be his illegitimate son and he said you remember that door man spitting at Flan. You stole money. There is a warrant out for your arrest.

Ouisa cannot bear it anymore and she rests the phone away. Do not hang up. Paul, are you there? Paul to Flan: You made him hang up. Here you are. Who are you? What is your real name? If you let me stay with you, I will tell you. That night was the happiest night I ever had. Ouisa to Flan: It was the happiest night he ever had Flan. Oh! Please I am not a bull shitter but never bull shit a bull shitter? I am not, but at the same time he said I can see through you. I know what you are trying to get it. Flan goes. Ouisa: Why? Paul: You let me use all the parts of myself that night. Perhaps he was, so he felt so whole, so complete. That was a one single moment of his life. Then he was extremely happy.

Ouisa: It was magical, that Salinger stuff. The kind of a talk you gave us on JD Salinger, those catchers in the rye. That was beautiful. Paul: Graduation speech at Groton two years ago. Somebody's graduation speech at Groton and he memorized it. So, he is that good you know. So, he is a fast learner, he knows that. So, he actually memorized because from the beginning we were quite impressed with Paul's speech. Paul's exploration of the theme of catcher in the rye and he said now, he accepts. See it was somebody's graduation, somebody was awarded a doctorate and that person gave the speech and I just memorized it minute. Good! You are cooking other people's recipes.

Nothing is mine. I am not an original. He does not even have an identity. Did you see Donald Barthelme's obituary? I am going to ask you who is Donald Barthelme? He said collage was the art form of the twentieth century. Who is Donald Barthelme?

Akshaya yes you know it. He is he. Modern version snow white. Of modern version of snow white. Are you aware of that? There is a spin on the traditional story of snow white and the seven dwarfs and what is the spin, Akshaya? Characters.

It is one of the key post-modernistic contemporary literature, Donald Barthelme's Snow white and the seven dwarfs. You know the traditional story, the fairy tale of course, but

the spin is that now, white willingly and chooses to live in with seven dwarfs. Even, men who are who happen to be dwarfs. So, it is like an extremely free lifestyle that snow white is living. At the same time waiting for that so called prince charming and that prince charming could be any one and then she rattles off a list of all the existing real life princes. You know you have Prince Naruhito from Japan and then you have Prince Charles and you have prince that and this and she recalls who could be man. Just waiting for my prince charming to come and take me away because that is the way fairy tales are suppose to end **right**.

She says that I am waiting. I mean it could be anyone. Who could it be and then there is a list, you know she is quite savvy. She knows that there are number of eligible prince's floating around in the world. All that she has to do is to wait and she does that. So, that is the Barthelme version of snow white. So, what he says? He said collage was the art form of the twentieth century. Now, when we were talking about this concept called you remember, I asked you to read all the references. There are numerous references, literary, cultural, political and social lots several dimensions to this play. Nothing comes very overtly. It is not a directed play for heaven's sake.

He does not talk about this is good, that is bad **right**. He does not establish binaries in the, you remember binaries when we were talking about Pinter. We said everything was very clear cut black and white. Who were those two guys? Gus and Ben. The differences in the characters were quite very clearly established. The black and white crockery, everything is right you know, right in front of us. It is a play about binaries. Do you think this play is about binaries?

So, then this is the reference theme of sides in this play because this Kandinsky is painting (()) and the doctor fine he keeps insisting on the two sides varying and then **right**. Now, Paul he said is it clotty side to art. Yes. I mean perhaps not dichotomies as such. Yeah, but he makes clear that there is definitely more motives. I mean what is on the surfaces, not it is just a yeah. So, not as means perhaps dichotomy is not as clear as it is in Pinter. Yeah, but it is definitely there are as he says there are two sides.

Right, but what I was trying to say is that characters here are not in black and white **yeah**. So, of course there are binaries. He does talk about thus two sides that is something we have been talking from the beginning, two sides. Two sides of chaos and control. Chaos

and control and the ideas Kandinsky forms the crux of the play that there are certain aspects which cannot be controlled but then if Ouisa herself, I remember saying this class. If Ouisa has one aspect of a personality which is extremely well ordered and structured, she also gives into the wild side of a personality. So, there is a mix inside.

So, it is not like Ouisa and Kittredge's are rich, therefore bad. It is no longer that kind of mind. So, there is a binary inside one person. It is not like this and that. They ascend them. It is no longer that. So, be sensitive to that aspect that perhaps binaries do exist, but the same binaries may exist in the same person also. The two conflicts, the personality may be conflicted as you see very clearly in Ouisa's personality. She is always conflicted between the wild side of herself and the more controlled and the more ordered side of a character personality. Now, coming back to this, he said collage was the art form of the twentieth century.

Now, the play is replete with inter-textual references. So, we have lots of you know what references are those. We will also do some of the greater study of what is inter-textuality and how it is applicable to this play but my question is if I ask you to explain line like he said collage was the art form of the twentieth century. What do you understand?

What is collage? You know. First tell me that simple basic definition what is a collage? Putting together several images. You know they are different images, but they all exist to form a whole **right**. So, a different feature that is what it is being talked about. So, even personalities have different features and aspects and those aspects combine to form a whole. Even the place itself, it is structured in such a way. It takes a lot. It alludes to plenty of other material and then it forms a complete whole.

You remember the sentence. What does he say? That was the only copy of my PHD thesis. What does he say before that? It is stolen right. All my work is gone. I never bothered to get it photo copied. In this age of mechanical reproduction, you remember that. Does it ring a bell? In this age of mechanical production I lost my only copy of the thesis. I did not bother to get it Xerox because I am anti-reproduction, but then is he so? His whole personality is a collage.

He has taken it from so many different sources and tries to forge his own independent unique personality. That is what is perhaps you know that is the idea, that is the whole

post modernist thought that personalities are not like good and bad. Now, you get it Rehan? It is not like this and that. It is a mix of several aspects. The very sentence in this age of mechanical reproduction, where is it borrowed from? Walter Benjamin's famous essay 'The age of mechanical reproduction' where everything can be reproduced. Art can be reproduced. That was Walter Benjamin's position. You know we have all these reproductions of Mona Lisa and famous artist. Anyone can have a Mona Lisa hanging on the wall of their house? You do not need to purchase the original **right**. It is because we live in age of reproduction, mechanical reproduction.

So, that is what you know personality itself with a combination of several different features whether it is good or bad, they do not say. Whether this is a good thing happening or bad thing happening because there is again we are talking binaries good or bad. No, there is no such thing.

(()) mechanical reproduction (())

About how mechanical reproduction is this (())(())

Has it made the world of art more democratized? Yes that is the idea. So, it is not as if he is against it, is not as if he know so purity of form does not exist anymore. If you say that no, only the original works for me and nothing else. It does not work because the work of art is so precious, so beautiful. It should reach out to the lowest common denominator. That is the idea.

The people control the main (()).

Exactly, but now look, you know that sudden explosion of knowledge that is what internet is a great democratic course. Why? Because it has main knowledge available in the remotest part of the world. Some kind you know certain things which were not told or which were not accessible to certain kind of people. Now, it is there all over. So, but then there are also other conflicting theory that there are attempts made to control what goes on internet also and that is Mark Wood would say that, that is not a very healthy sign because all this kind of controlling what is happening here.

So, he said collage was the art form of that twentieth century. Everything is somebody else's. Now, this is the key to the play. Everything is somebody else's. So, therefore you

know even Kittredge's. Now, Ouisa questions herself whatever they possess, is somebody else's **right**. They possess an original Kandinsky which is not theirs actually. It remains with us for a few hours and then it will be shipped off towards Japan. Everything belongs to someone else's. Not your children. Not your life. Yes, you got me there. That is mine. It is no one else's. You do not sound happy. There is so much you do not know. You are so smart and so stupid. Never say I am stupid. Have some flexibility. You are stupid not to recognize what you could be.

What could I be? So much. With you behind me. Perhaps, you like that night? I have thought since you spent all your time laughing at us. No, that you have brought that awful hustling thing back to show us your contempt. I was so happy. I wanted to add sex to it. Do not you do that? Ouisa: No. I will tell you my name. Ouisa: Please. It is Paul Poitier hyphenated Kittredge. It is a hyphenated name. Ouisa: Paul, you need help. Go to the police. Turn yourself in. You will be over it all the sooner. You can start. You see everything is a collage. Everybody is a collage. I am a collage too. In case, I am a mix of all of you, maybe Sidney Poitier. May would have been his favorite actor who knows. So, he wants to take something, some influence from him and maybe he like the Kittredge's so much. So, he wants to be a part of Kittredge as well. So, I am not actually Paul, I am a mix of so many.

Start what? Your life. Will you help me? Ouisa stands and makes a decision. I will help you, but you have to go to the police and go to jail. Will you send me books and Polaroid's of you and cassettes and letters? Yes. So, now he is again coming. So, he is accepting it. I will if you, if you say so. I will turn myself in. I will go to the jail. He will be ready to face the possibility of being in jail and when in jail you know like any other concerned family member, would you send me do all these things which only a family do for each other **right**. So, will you send me books and Polaroid's and cassettes and letters?

Yes. Will you visit me? I will visit you. When you do, you will wear your best clothes and knock them dead. I will knock them dead but you have got to be careful in prison. You have to use condoms. I would not have sex in prison. I only have sex when I am happy. Go to the police. Will you take me? I will give you the name of the detective to see. I will be treated with care if you take me to the police. If they do not know you are special, they will kill you. So, this is perhaps another reference to the class difference

anywhere everywhere. It is not just America. If you do not know, you do not have the right kind of context. Then, even you are not safe, even in a prison. I may get killed.

I do not think they will kill you. Mrs. Louisa Kittredge, I am black. I will deliver you to them with kindness and affection. So, now she is coming around. She sees his point and she says, then I will accompany you. I will be kind and affectionate and when I am all these things, they would not treat you badly. I will plead guilty and go to prison and serve a few months. A few month tops. Then I will come out and work for you and learn. We will work that out. I want to know now. Yes. You will work for us. Learn all the trade, not just the grotty part. Top to bottom and live with you. No. Your kids are away. You should have your own place. You will help me find a place. We will help you find a place. I have no furniture. We will help you out. I made a list of things I liked in the museum Philadelphia Chippendale. What is that Philadelphia Chippendale? It is a kind of furniture, you know a chair **ok**. Ouisa burst out laughing. Believe it or not, we have two Philadelphia Chippendale chairs. I would rather have one nice piece than a room full of junk. Quality always you will have all that Philadelphia Chippendale.

Now, see how the conversation is floating, extremely freely. They are talking about being black in America and in the next breadth it goes on to Philadelphia Chippendale. All I have to do is to go to the police. Make it all history. Put it behind you. Tonight. It cannot be tonight. I will take you tomorrow. We have an auction tonight at Sotheby's. Bring me. I cannot. It is black tie you know. So, it is a like a very formal, very elitist kind of a gathering. You know you cannot be taken them. I have a black tie from the time I went to rainbow room. You remember the infamous rainbow room with Rick. Have you ever been to the rainbow room? Yes. What time do you have to be there? Eight o'clock. It is five thirty now. You could come get me now and take me to the police tonight and then go to Sotheby's. We are going to drinks before at the Pierre. Japanese? Germans. You are just like my father.

Now, we do not know who is Paul's father? Which father? Sidney! Paul, he is not your father and Flander's is not your father. Flan comes in dressed. Oh fuck! We have drinks with the Japanese at six fifteen. Get off that fucking phone. Is it that kid? Get him out of our life. Get off that phone or I will rip it out of the wall. Ouisa looks at Flan. Ouisa took call. Paul, I made a mistake. It is not the Germans. We will come right now and get you. Where are you? Tell me. I will take you to the police. They will treat you with dignity.

Paul, I am in the lobby of the Waverley movie theater on Sixth Avenue and Third Street. Ouisa will be there in half an hour. I will give you fifteen minutes grace time. We will be there. Paul, we love you. Ouisa I love you. Ouisa Kittredge. Hey bring a pink shirt. Ouisa: We will have a wonderful life. She hangs up. Paul goes into the dark. We can skip the schmoozing. Pick the boy up, take him to the police and be at Sotheby's before eight.

The detective appears. Flan, he is at the Waverley Theater, Sixth Avenue and Third Street, the lobby. We promised we would bring him to you. He is special. We would honor our promised. The detective nods and goes. Ouisa to us: We go traffic on the FDR. FDR is a street. Flan to us: We get there. I run into the theater. No one. Ouisa: A young black man. Black? Have you seen him? Flan to us: The girl in the box office said the police were there had arrested a young man, dragged him kicking, screaming into a Squad car. He was the kid waiting for his family. We could never get through or find out. Ouisa to us: We were not family. Flan to us: That detective was transferred. Ouisa to us: We did not know Paul's name. We call the president under. The president had made the arrest. Why were there other charges? We could not find out. We were not family. We did not know Paul's name. We call the district petunias office. We were not family. We did not know Paul's name. I call the criminal courts. I was not family. I did not know Paul's name. Why this kind of a refrain?

Yes Aditi. You are on the verge of saying something. They did their best, do not you think so. **That she tried to (()). Yeah** she had promised she had given him some hope that he can get on with him like put everything behind him. There is some possibility of a good future for him and all these things were possible for Paul, only if Ouisa Kittredge is at his side. Yeah and somehow she gave him some kind of Ouisa. Ouisa, her actual name is Louisa, but throughout the place is referred to as Ouisa. Ouisa in Greek language also means a kind of a spirit. Yeah, perhaps she symbolizes something for him.

So, I call the criminal courts, I was not family. I did not know Paul's name. They just knew him as someone Paul, but they all knew that this is not his actual name. I did not know. How could I find out because he was just taken away before they could reach? Why does it mean so much to you? He wanted to be us. Now, this is the theme of the play, perhaps a young black man, a young gay black man, a homeless black man. He is trying to forge upon with these people, perhaps because he wanted to be them.

Everything we are in the world, this poultry thing, our life he wanted to see. For Ouisa, they are nothing much. That is how she did not, this is our life **ok**.

What is it? Worth nothing much, but he wanted to be us. For him perhaps, we mend something. We symbolize something for Paul. All though, we may not we extremely appreciative of what we are. He stabbed himself to get in here. Remember that wound? He stabs himself whenever he wants to make a connection with these rich people. So, he stabbed, so he was going to those lengths. He envied us. We are not enough to be envied. Who are we to envy such? So, Flan like the papers said we have hearts. Who said New York does not have hearts. That was the headline.

Remember, having a heart is not the point. He was hardly taken in. We believed him for a few hours. He did more for us in a few hours than our children ever did. Now, see come look at this. You know there is such a deep chasm between parents and children and that person at least pretended to love us. Our children do not bother with even that. He wanted to be your child. Do not let that go. He set out in that park and said that man is my father. He is in trouble and we do not know how to help him. Helped him? He could have killed me and you. So, Flan is still cynical about him. You were attracted to him. Cut me out of that pathology. You are on your own. Ouisa: Attracted by youth and his talent and the embarrassing prospect of being in the movie version of cats. See you like all that. Did you put that in your Times Piece? When we turn him into anecdote to dine out on or dine in or, but it was an experience. I will not turn him into an anecdote. How do we fit? What happened to us into life without turning it into an anecdote with no teeth and a punch line, you will mouth over and over for years to come.

Tell the story about the imposter who came into our lives. That reminds of the time this boy and we become these human juke boxes spilling out these anecdotes, but it was an experience. How do we keep the experience? So, life is much more than a series or string of anecdotes. Life is an experience. Do not turn Paul into an anecdote. We may you know several years down the line we may go and talk about Paul as if that was just an incident, a minor incident, but it was not. It was an experience that taught us a lot. Treat him with that respect that is why I love paintings Cezzane. The problems you brought up are the problems painters are still dealing with color a structure.

Who those are problems? Ouisa: There is color in my life, but I am not aware of any structure. So, again we are talking about chaos control. Color could be wild and there is no structure in my life, no control. Flan to us: Cezzane would leave blank spaces in his canvases if he could not account for the brush stroke give a reason for the color. Ouisa: Then I am a collage of unaccounted for brush strokes. I am all random. God, Flan how much of your life can you account for? Flan: Are you drunk? The Cezzane sale went through. We are rich. Geoffery is rich. Tonight there is a Matisse. Next month there is a Bonnard and after that she considers him. These are the times I would take a knife and dig out your heart. Answer me? How much of your? Flan: Life can I account for? All I am a gambler. Ouisa: We are a terrible match. Ouisa to us: Time passes. Ouisa: I read today that a young man committed suicide in Riker's island. Tied a shirt around his neck and hanged him. Was it the pink shirt? This burst of color? The pink shirt. Was it Paul?

Who are you? We never found out who you are? Flan: I am sure it is not him. He will be back. We have not heard the last of him. The imagination. He will find a way. So, he is not that. He is a tough nut to crack. Flan to us: We have to go to an auction. I will get the elevator. Flan goes. Ouisa to us: But if it was the pink shirt, pink a burst of pink. This is Sistine Chapel. They have cleaned it and it is all these colors. Darling. Ouisa starts to go. She looks up. Paul is there wearing the pink shirt. Paul, the Kandinsky. It is painted on two sides. He glows for a moment and he is gone. She considers. She smiles. The Kandinsky begins its slow revolve.

Can you comment on the end? Krishna. Let us have, you have been silence throughout. Mam the end is natural. It leaves us to make a lot of questions. (()) throughout the class as you know you follow what is happening across certain extent, but think I just. (()) open ended. Yeah it is very open ended and (()). So, many question as (()) who is yeah who is for all. All things that have been mentioned in the. Well, the entire question of identity yeah is left open. Who are people? Anyway, they just tell us that they you know you guess get to see certain aspects, certain features or characteristics, but is that enough to know anyone? Not really. So, what are identities?

What goes into making of an identity? Paul was a person who at least made these people happy for some time. They could not say the same about others, even their own children. They are the children always bickering about so many things. So, this entire question about, do you think Paul is also used as symbol of something, the wild side of human

nature. Perhaps that it is also necessary ones. Everyone is in a while to be in touch with something which is less is structured. So, that is life and not just controlled, but then what happens to Paul, we never know.

We would not know and Ouisa never knows. The Kandinsky, it is painted on two sides. How does it end? It revolves. We really do not know. Chaos controlled, but we do not know it could be either way take you know you can somebody write. They keep on reading these bits and pieces of news every day. A young man committed suicide, a young man beaten to the death in prison **ok** but was it Paul. They would never know. The authorities would not release that information because they are not family and they did not even know his real name. How can they be so sure? We cannot be so sure about anything. So, those are the questions and then you know he glows for a moment and he is gone.

Of course, she knows it is not really Paul, but see her imagination. She now thinks of him. Then she considers. She smiles. So, this is you know recurring theme in all go as plays where mixed all this chaos. Some it is tragedy, some it is disconnect people are able to form some kind of connection, some kind of joy even in the middle of a great tragedy. That is the beauty of Guare's plays and we have been talking a lot about absurdist elements. Do you find that this play have anything of absurdism also? So, we have a corner. Can we have Abhay who were going to make a presentation on absurdism? Let us hear what they have to say and then perhaps you will be able to find some connection between the play and the philosophy of absurdism. Please, we have to give them a mike. Yeah you can come one at a time because we have only one mike. Raunak.

Good morning everyone. I will be talking about Martin Eslin essay on the theatre of the absurd. He starts off by saying that all these absurdist notions and the absurdist plays are not really that innovative on the surface as it appears to people like us. To a lay person, it might appear extremely iconoclastic can innovative, but in reality when we probe deeper and analyze the whole nature of evolution of this type of theatre, we realize that this is actually a sort of revisitation, revival of the old and ancient traditions given a new spin by these forward thinking and innovative authors.

So, since the audience comes with a preconceived notion of the way theatre and drama should be, the narrative and the naturalistic aspects are what they expect to see in theatre, but what the theatre of the absurd does is take all these notions and throw them out of the window and try and you know take all these old and established sequences and give them a sort of new spin. The age old traditions, a slim points out that the modern theatre of the absurd hocks back to are, number one pure theatre, number two cloning and magazines. Number three, verbal non-sense and finally, the literature of dream and fantasy.

Now, first of all the aspect of pure theatre. Now, pure theatre is supposed to be a form of theatre in which language is not merely an expression of meaning, but more than anything else, it is something that probes into the deepest recesses of human consciousness and tries to bring those elements out and in the process creating and alternate and sometime supernatural world. We see this in for instance, the music hall sequence in waiting for godot and in for instance, the ballets and mind plays of Beckett and (()). There is also a tendency to go back to the non-verbal forms of theatre.

Now, Eslin talks about the very ancient Mimus traditions of Rome where these plays. They would not really play, they were performed by these solo artists or at times you know a motley crew of characters who would improvise on the spot and create their own situations. So, Herman Rights is this historian and partial rediscovered of this Mimus tradition. He traces the evolution of the theatre of the absurd from the Mimus tradition of Rome to the *comedia dell'arte* of the Italian tradition. Finally, to Shakespeare's clown and to the modern work of the modern play rights that we have.

Now, the Italian tradition of the *comedian dell'arte* had light the *mimus*. Now, all these improvised and really spontaneous gag and there were you know the typical characters about like for instance, the Glutton, the senile old man, the Braggart etcetera. Throughout this line of you know *Mimus* and the *Comedia Del Art*, the most important thing that happened in the twentieth century which contributed to you know the evolution of the theatre of the absurd is the silent film comedy *jour*. This was you know the stars of this were obviously the Keystone Cops, Master Ketene and Charley Chaplin.

Now, these people brought to us a silent world in which we would see these bumbling characters who were you know caught in this web of mechanization and this sort of illustrates the alienation of human kind in this increasingly mechanical and modern

world. Freud, in one of his essays titled 'Delight in the Nonsense' says that the reason why people enjoy this kind of madness and nonsense so much is because they are able to you know break free from the straight jacket of logic that would not happen in real life and in this (()), one the play **right** that I discussed from my earlier presentation August, Steinberg he was the one who first brought the dream world into the you know dramatic arena. His three masterpieces in this type of theatre, *The Dream play*, *Two Damascus* and *The Ghost Sonata* are the foremost examples of the theatre of the absurd.

In these plays thus this you know paradigm shift from the objective reality that we experience on a very superficial level to the expression of the deepest inner meanings of human kind and human consciousness. So, this is this marks the water shed, the shift between the traditions from the traditional to the very modern. Another author who was not a dramatist, but had a profound impact on this jonour was (()). Now, his story's were about you know again loners and alienation and how the people struggle to find meaning in their normal everyday life. He was greatly attracted by theatre, but however, he never wrote a proper play. All we have from his writing as far as theatre is concerned is the first scene of this unfinished play and this scene is called the guardian of the crypt.

Now, in that there is this young prince who you know talks to this old guard of a grave and this old guard narrates to him how that the spirits from another region Netherlands are constantly trying to break. Break into our normal life. So, like I said he himself did not contribute that much to these dramatic plays. There was this whole series of adaptations of his literary works like for instance, this duo of Andre (()) and John Lewisburrogh. They adopted the trial which was one of (()) stories. This opened at the (()) on the 10th of October 1947. Now, this play was the first play that completely represented the theatre of the absurd as we know it today in it is mid-twentieth century form. We can say that it preceded the works of you know masters like Ionesco and Beckett. One bewildered critic after watching a performance of the trails said that this is not so much a play as it is a sort of collage and prestige of images phantoms and hallucinations. He said this is cinema, ballet and pantomime all at once. That is my part.