

Feminist Writings
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Interactive Session - 2

SHIKRITI: Hello everyone, welcome to the course on feminist writing this is Shikriti Shandan.

MOHIT: And this is Mohit Sharma. Today we are going to take up some stories from the course and we are going to see some common themes and issues which are at work in the in these stories and we will start with “The Fly.”

SHIKRITI: “The Fly by Katherine Mansfield”.

MOHIT: This story is from the time of first world war and here we see how the masculinity, we see the crisis of masculinity that started with the beginning of the (first world war) from the 20th century and how the event the big event that the first world war was.

SHIKRITI: Right.

MOHIT: It provoked that crisis and masculinity which led to a lot of repercussions and the effects of which we see in this in this story.

SHIKRITI: Right and when we talk about war we can see that the all the young men are engaged in the war and so the older men here sit in quantum plate and their loss when we see that both (())(1:08) both of them have lost their sons and we also see that very different ways in which both these characters express and understand their grief and come to terms with it and that tells us a lot about the characters themselves and their the different kinds of masculinities that they propagate.

MOHIT: Right, along with the crises of masculinity another important consequence of the loss of causality of young males in the war is the inclusion of females out in the work field in the work force.

SHIKRITI: Yes, of course.

MOHIT: And out out of the household basically.

SHIKRITI: Right, because in the absence of all the men, women had to take charge of the family and they extended society.

MOHIT: And this is something that is very certainly shown in the in the story in which we see the two old men sitting in their offices almost crammed in their offices, talking about their past, talking about their furnitures while we see we while we hear about Woodifield's daughters and his wife they are out there, they are at the Belgium visiting the sun's.

SHIKRITI: The graze on the, yes and that tells a lot again about the character of Woodifield himself that he was the senile old man and he he manifest that kind of weak masculinity that we might say and he is completely incharge of his like he is not incharge, his wife and his girls are incharge of him and they decide when he will go out, what he will wear. So basically he shows that he is the man whose life is completely in control of women where we see a lot of role reversal.

MOHIT: Right, so he is the obvious face of the weak masculinity that we see at the beginning of the story.

SHIKRITI: And that is contrasted with the strong masculinity of the (())(2:45) who is shown as independent and upright and strong and no need of anyone support.

MOHIT: Yeah, and in the first two paragraphs the strength and the force and the vigour of the boss is like shown in different terms and we see that he talks about his furniture and he says that he is (())(3:01).

SHIKRITI: In a exhibitionist way like he is trying to show off and these things that he is showing off are material things.

MOHIT: Right.

SHIKRITI: So we can see that how masculinity again is linked to acquiring of material wealth and that kind of ego and pride that he is showing off to Woodifield because he is just the opposite of what (())(3:20) and he is not in control of (everything) anything and the boss in contrast the control of everything.

MOHIT: Right and it is the exterior that that is being contrasted by the weak with the disintegrated masculinity of Woodifield and which provokes Woodifield and he provokes him and he gives him like he gives him (())(3:42) and then he says that you know we know what they do not know and that it is good.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, so it shows that how whisky is again a symbol for masculinity and manliness because women are not supposed to know anything about it.

MOHIT: Right and they are kind of showering up their masculinity against the against the so called ignorance of women and.

SHIKRITI: Women and.

MOHIT: They do not know anything, we are still incharge so to say.

SHIKRITI: So exactly and then I feel that the way boss offers whisky to Woodifield in a way and Woodifield does not know what it is and he is guessing, it shows that who is in the more position of power.

MOHIT: Right.

SHIKRITI: Like the boss in a greater position of power and he is he embraces the greater the stronger masculinity so he is in a position of power to offer whisky to Woodifield who is again the senile old man. So as we have giving him some agency in that sense.

MOHIT: Yeah, and the senility is the loss of agency of Woodifield is highlighted by the almost infantilization of Woodifield.

SHIKRITI: Exactly.

MOHIT: And we see that he peaks at (0)(4:40) across the desk at boss as if a kid (0)(4:43) across from his pram.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, and the author uses constantly childish or baby metaphors when explaining the character of Woodifield.

MOHIT: Right, the boss says that take this whisky it would not hurt a child.

SHIKRITI: Right, right so.

MOHIT: So he is patronizing him a lot.

SHIKRITI: Exactly and he Woodifield I guess is used to being patronized even by his family so that is his character, I think this contrast again Woodifield and bosses contrast the character Woodifield brings out the manliness of boss even more and makes it very apparent to the audience and where we see the kind of material goods that he is trying to show off, he is

taking pride in these these are also extended part of his embodiment, so his own pride his own auras a man that he feels.

MOHIT: Yeah and his furniture and his pens and his whisky.

SHIKRITI: Exactly yeah that this is all part of his control that he feels as a masculine man the control that he has over his own life as well as the extended society.

MOHIT: And all of it builds up to the reversal that happens in the middle when Woodifield when Woodifield talks about the visit by his wife and his daughters to the.

SHIKRITI: To the grave.

MOHIT: Yeah.

SHIKRITI: Yes.

MOHIT: And that is when we get to know that since we start to sense the (())(5:54) presence of the spectral photograph that he has talked about in the story.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, he amidst all the new things that is the only old thing that stands out in the office or on the boss's desk.

MOHIT: And the only unchanging and old thing is the photograph against which he is trying to constantly renew his force, renew his vigour by getting new furniture by getting new things and by reading financial times with the paper narrative and all of that.

SHIKRITI: Right, so again we can see in here also there is this contrast between the personal and the extended world.

MOHIT: Right.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, what is private and what is public.

MOHIT: Yeah.

SHIKRITI: Because these material things emphasize on the public sphere of life and the personal the private sphere is the sun's photograph so again we can see this sort of binary that is created by the (())(6:39).

MOHIT: Public performance of patriarchy which is which is which is used to compensate for the inner fragility that is present.

SHIKRITI: Inner fragility, yes and then and which also demands that you do not acknowledge grief or you do not perform grief or yeah in this story you see a performance of grief but then you do not see the involuntary exhibition the natural flow of grief is not there in the boss's character.

MOHIT: Yeah, and interestingly that is the that is the very interesting way to depict the emasculation that the boss undergoes because we see that when he when Woodfield mentions the graves and he mentions that means such a mundane way that it is so nice in Belgium and they have such nice broad parks and like the girls were haggling over the pot of jams.

SHIKRITI: The pot of jams, yeah.

MOHIT: So he has he has internalized the loss, he has internalized and he is.

SHIKRITI: He has a sort of detached detachment towards that grief, right. So I think it shows two things, one that previously Sir also mentioned about the trauma tourism that how because of the world war the different the foreign countries became the site to visit and and that led to the tourism economy and capitalism and also so it shows that kind of a side aspect of war and also it shows how Woodfield has come to terms with his grief and he has become detached and he can speak about his own son like another character.

MOHIT: He has internalized it as a part of his narrative memory.

SHIKRITI: Exactly.

MOHIT: That is the narrative of his life and he has excepted it and on the other hand he see that the boss when Woodfield leaves that something has happened to him and then he then he then he tries to initiate the ritual which we get to know.

SHIKRITI: Ha, for him that grief is very rich realistic and he takes great pride in the fact that he can perform or he can he can organize his grief in a way.

MOHIT: Right, only the mention of his son is enough to like throw him into spasms of tears and agony.

SHIKRITI: Exactly.

MOHIT: And then then he realizes to his own horror that he cannot cry.

SHIKRITI: He cannot cry, yeah.

MOHIT: And this public performance of hysteria and this organized (8:45) of hysteria that he prouds himself of so much in that way is falling down.

SHIKRITI: That does not happen, yeah that because and then he also comes to understand that he cannot manipulate the circumstances forever because for even for him that grief would die after some point of time as he says that he is my son how can I forget him like he is that pain will always be fresh in my mind but then.

MOHIT: Others others may forget, I will not forget.

SHIKRITI: Others may forget and he will take he is taking the sort of pride that he loves his as if he loves his son more than Woodifield loves his son or others love their sons. So feels that he is superior in every aspect, be is the material change in his office or his strong upright character that contrast with Woodifield or his ability to cry or grief about his son. So he loves to take pride we can see that the bosses character is actually one that of a very proud and (9:37).

MOHIT: Yeah, and he needs to do that because for like his son is the extension of his masculinity, he is the one who will replace him, he is the one who will inherit the business.

SHIKRITI: Exactly.

MOHIT: And says in the story we see that he has built up his own empire so to give it to his son to inherit to for his son to inherit and this this presents a very dark reality in front of him that this is this is the end.

SHIKRITI: This is the end and the bosses son was supposed to be a part of extension of the boss himself, right. So yeah that is what.

MOHIT: Which is like probably we can also sense something like that from the fact that both the boss and the son are not named (10:18) name.

SHIKRITI: Exactly, they are not named and when we talk about the son's photograph also we see that there is a very grim very sodded sort of expression that hangs on his face and even

the boss says that this is not the usual expressions, so we can say that war changes men in a way that when you are in a setting of a war something as big as world war 1 and then it changes men in a certain way that they also have to behave they also have to embrace a kind of masculinity that is demanded from them, right so the young boys, normal characteristics or expressions are subsumed by this (10:58) masculinity.

MOHIT: This is something that we get to see in other like war poems as well, poems by.

SHIKRITI: Right, photograph when Woodifield shows was the son's photograph we can consider it to turning point in the story from which the story and the boss asks me see to leave him alone so that nobody comes to the room, nobody disturbs him and Woodifield also takes his departure so that the boss can be alone in the room and you know make his performance of grief.

MOHIT: Yeah, and in the interruption that he encounters in his performance their the episode of the fly starts and then he sees that a fly and that is a very interesting imagery that we see and like it you can look at it in so many ways that the fly is lost you.

SHIKRITI: So many ways so so many different possible interpretations to it.

MOHIT: Yeah.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, so the most obvious way of understanding is the relating the fly to the son because the.

MOHIT: Yeah, the lost youth which is like killed uselessly in the war, it is the waste is something which we see in the way, he almost wastes fly.

SHIKRITI: The fly, while while all the time wanting the fly to fight back just as he expected his son to fight back and if his son had not died in the war which again death is a kind of weakness that you lost, right. So if the son had won or he had lived then I think that would have.

MOHIT: It would have make him more proud it.

SHIKRITI: More, yeah exactly so that would have catered to his understanding of masculinity, exactly but then that does not happen. So he is trying to repeat the same episode that the same incident that happen to his son and in a symbolic way with the fly and

imagining almost imagining his the fly in similar circumstances as the son and wanted him to fight back, but then both the son and the fly shared the same fate in the end.

MOHIT: Yeah, it was as the fevers wishing for the resurrection of eye but doing everything in his power to kill him and this is something which which kind of symbiosis war like the old men cause the war, the young men are the ones to die in the war.

SHIKRITI: Exactly.

MOHIT: And the old men realize the futility of the war only too late by the time.

SHIKRITI: And shows that how war is all about the power politics, whoever has the power and it is all about the money and the power and there is nothing to glorify really in it.

MOHIT: And so the so the disruption in his performance of hysteria which it is by after the fly's death it is made even worse and after that he sent something which is completely crumbling inside him and then we then we see that he wants to do something but he cannot remember what is it something that he wanted to do, so the memory of it is erased the tragic memory of it is erased from his mind.

SHIKRITI: Right, and it also shows that how his his strong masculinity (has become) is slowly becoming unstable and he comes to almost symbolize Woodifield himself because in the beginning we are told that Woodifield has problems with the memory and he has a hard time remembering things. So towards the end we can see that the bosses masculinity is also challenged and he is also having a very difficult time remembering or making sense of what is happening around him, so strong the very strong masculinity that he represented towards the beginning of the story is shattered and challenged and he almost comes to symbolize or and he almost becomes similar to Woodifield's character towards the end.

MOHIT: Right, and it is as if the performance of hysteria is the pivot on which the whole (()) (14:27) of masculinity which he presents to the word as the strong study men (())(14:31) on despite being older than Woodifield.

SHIKRITI: Exactly.

MOHIT: That that whole (())(14:35) is built is like centred on the pivot, which is the performance of hysteria the performance of grief and the performance of trauma and once that is removed from the picture the whole (())(14:44) comes crumbling down.

SHIKRITI: Crumbling down, because that performance had an agency of its own that that he had the power to (())(14:51) but after the sadomasochistic episode that happened with the fly I think there is something that changed within the boss himself internally and in his own character, in his own understanding of things and therefore towards the end he does not possess the same agency that he started with at the beginning of the story.

MOHIT: And in a way it is a failure of memory like he the memory serves as the (age) serves as the vehicle for the performance like at the end his memory fails in when his memory fails he is the essence that he has perpetuated the essence of the ritual of masculinity like it collapses and that is when the last line is for the life of him he could not remember.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, but when we talk about the last part of the fly the short story fly and the ending, so most people see obviously the boss as a cruel person trying to repeatedly kill the fly and every time the fly tries to leave and shakes its limbs and everything and its wings and tries to get up and the boss puts another blob of ink and so it is a very cruel manifestation but we also have to understand that it is a sadomasochistic phenomenon that operates here. So in the way of inflicting pain to the fly the boss is also inflicting pain to himself in a certain way and that pain I think in the end transforms him and breaks down his strong masculinity.

MOHIT: It is like a mini replay of the performance of war only only the one in which he wants the fly to win.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, exactly.

MOHIT: And but in the end it could not win.

SHIKRITI: Yeah.

MOHIT: So like this is also something that we see in war poems by Wilfred Owen and other people in which we see that the the very internal character is changed and made grim by the experience of war which is which is also something that we see in the photo as well.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, and when you are talking about war poetry then the certain poets that celebrate war that glorify the you know the sacrifice that is there in the war, but interestingly when you talk about Wilfred Owen and in his poems like futility and other poems.

MOHIT: Yeah.

SHIKRITI: He is the one who brings out the pathos and the futility of war itself, the entire machinery of war.

MOHIT: Yeah, against which this youth is like there is no agency the individual youth.

SHIKRITI: Right, as if they are just sacrificed in the name of the nation and then they are glorified but then that glory is something that is very fragile and something that does not amount to anything.

MOHIT: Yeah, and I think the consumption of the boss changes the turning point comes when Woodifield mentions that he thought that you know when he he imagines that Woodifield's girls are looking at the grave of his son and that is something when his perspective completely shifts, he no longer can see his son in that ideal young and unchanging light in which which he has built up in his own imagination for the performance of his own hysteria in grief.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, exactly and then when we even talk about the girls looking at the graves, we also see that there is a kind of warrism at play here that the girls are looking at something external to them and receiving a sort of pleasure in a way in a very twisted (())(18:04) way that pleasure operates. So there is a waristic principle that is at play here and there is the trauma, tourism that is at work so all these highlight to the different aspects of war that is not only the fighting or the the fight or the winning or the glorification or the patronization so there are other things that play here.

MOHIT: and the gaze of the other make it real, makes it real something which is susceptible to decay and like death.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, death and how these two gazes are contrasted? Because when the boss is looking at the son's photograph he has a vision of the son and when the daughters are looking at the graves or the dead you know the son's and they have a different version of their understanding so.

MOHIT: That is the impersonal gaze which acknowledges the dead and the decay.

SHIKRITI: Right, exactly and the boss's gaze is something that had a hope for the son's future and to extend his own legacy.

MOHIT: I think we can say that world war 1 is an event which kind of catalysed the crises the masculinity which is which we see in this poem in the story and then which which is something that we will discuss in the next story which we will take (19:19) as well so we will do that. So the next text that we will discuss is "Tickets Please" story by D. H. Lawrence and this is another story which deals with the situation in England (post world war 2) post world war 1 during world war 1 and this is another story which which deals with similar issues the crises in masculinity which happened after world war 1 and the (19:42).

SHIKRITI: So they have like similar settings so for the both the stories.

MOHIT: This story is in a rural setting, it is a semi urban (19:49) town in which and we see that it is story about Annie a woman who is conducted in a tram and in this story we see that it is explicitly said that this is a tramline which is run entirely by women as if there are some invalids in cripples who are the drivers and then the whole batch of conductors is are women.

SHIKRITI: Are women, so like extending from the fly we can say that where is in that in the short story fly the two main characters were male and the women were only a sort of absence presence in the form of Woodfield's girls, but we see very active present women characters in the D. H. Lawrence's short story which is.

MOHIT: They implied presence in the fly is made real and very concrete in.

SHIKRITI: Very concrete and even in the beginning we can see that these women they have occupation so they are working women and they have that kind of agency and power so they are not totally in a position of powerlessness so the comment that the boss made that you know whisky and the women will not know anything about it, I think in this in the setting of this story the women are not marginalized to that extent or they are not subjugated to that extent and we have very in the very central heart of the story we have women characters and towards the end we will see how they they are the actually the one who take charge of circumstances.

MOHIT: This is this is the this is the kind of reality which the boss refused to accept.

SHIKRITI: Accept totally.

MOHIT: And in it we see there we see the description of how (21:28) the life in trans can be like in the (21:31) town can be like which is the terminus from a big station, from a big

town, big city and we see that the people who ride in these (21:39) are very earthy rigid individuals who work in (21:43).

SHIKRITI: Yeah, so labourers and workers.

MOHIT: Yeah, yeah and we see that we see that the conductors the women conductors who work in these (21:51) are very hardy folks and they deal with them properly with their like with equal vigour, with equal strength and that the position then the occupation of the job that they have it gives them sort of agency to deal and to counter at with equal force the any kind of masculine effect or the presence that.

SHIKRITI: So we can say that in the short story the women occupy the masculine subject positions because they are working in a position where men are expected to work in circumstances and they are in exchanges with other men and interactions also show that there is a sort of masculine femininity that they symbolize.

MOHIT: Yeah.

SHIKRITI: You know that femininity is very different from the one that we traditionally associate to women say in the 19th century because when they are home bound and supposed to take care of family and they are soft and they are you know very.

MOHIT: So like we see that they ask for tickets and then they snap back at the the small talk that some some some customers often make at their expense and we see them deal with these things in a very very strong way in a very assertive way and so this is something that like there is a there is a point in which the story says that the these these women run the most dangerous tramline in England.

SHIKRITI: Exactly, exactly so that is the that is what I was trying to get at that it shows this story presents a very different kind of femininity that we are otherwise used to understand and one that is not vulnerable to hysteria, one that is not vulnerable to all sorts of weaknesses and we see very real life strong women characters who are working in the work force who are participating in the work force and in the society and culture and in equal footing with the men.

MOHIT: Yeah, and it is a word in which like women occupy the centre stage along with other other presences which are marginalized by the presence of the traditional white youth male white youth which is disappeared because of the causality of the war and in such a in such a

scenario when we are acquainted with the figure of John Joseph Rainer who interestingly somebody that we deduce is who who managed to avoid getting drafted in the war.

SHIKRITI: Right, so that is again something that says a lot about his masculinity because his characters represented at someone who is you know who is very outgoing and who flirts with women and who represents that kind of macho masculinity.

MOHIT: That is a very patriarchal and old fashion traditional way of masculinity.

SHIKRITI: Traditional way, yeah exactly.

MOHIT: It is undermined by this undermined by this implication that he (())(24:47) the draft, he drafts the (())(24:48).

SHIKRITI: Yeah, and he did not go to the war and the so masculinity (oseph's masculinity) John's masculinity is not actually that strong that he outwardly exhibits it to be.

MOHIT: And we are we are told right away that he is somebody who flirts with these women (())(25:03).

SHIKRITI: All the girls and he takes him for granted in a way that they will always reciprocate to his feelings and he thinks he is that kind of a he represents that kind of a masculine vigour that these women will create for.

MOHIT: And then we see that like it we have seen the story that he flirts with the it is it is a common knowledge sort of it is common knowledge that he flirts a lot of women, a lot of girls in the same occupation and eventually they leave the they leave the job of this because of biological reasons and so it is very interesting to see that he goes on about his predatory ways.

SHIKRITI: Exactly, yeah so a very animalistic predatory kind of imagery or metaphors that are used when even describing his character by Lawrence and we can see that how he goes about his business very unapologetically as if whatever the consequences that these women are facing is something that he does not have to catted to, right? And they so that is completely their responsibilities and we see that he is very comfortable in his shoes, in his masculinity, in his patriarchal exhibitions of patriarchy and and when we come to the climax of the story or the turning point we see how that role is completely reversed and how he

becomes his vulnerable character who is stripped of all all forces, all powers of masculinity and he is almost become.

MOHIT: Emasculate.

SHIKRITI: Emasculate.

MOHIT: He is emasculated in this range which is plotted by all the girls.

SHIKRITI: Right.

MOHIT: Before that like there is something very interesting we can discuss that and his visit to the and his visit to the (())(26:43) and we see that there is a very sensual, very sensory energy in the atmosphere which is something which is also something very very typical of Lawrence because Lawrence's stories are imbued with that physical vigour.

SHIKRITI: Exactly.

MOHIT: With that intensity in the physical.

SHIKRITI: That sexual tension.

MOHIT: Experience, the sexual tension and the and the characters need to experience the word around their around themselves in very concrete sensory terms and they respond to their own emotions and their desires.

SHIKRITI: And if we follow the (())(27:17) or the language you know you see how the metaphors are sexual we can read them in a way that they again the sexual tension that Mohit was talking about is very well represented the language of the text itself so even without apparently giving out that kind of expression so you can if you read it against the (())(27:38) then you can see these kind of very sexually charged metaphors that are there.

MOHIT: So in that particular scenario we see that Annie has gone to the fair but she is alone and she wants to be with someone, she has that sensual need which she feels and she is very aware of she wants to be with somebody, she has a guy but she is not with him and then she senses, she sees John Joseph there and she wants to she wants to she wants a male company, she goes out.

SHIKRITI: I think this is also very interesting that because it comments on the female sexuality which is understood always to be passive so female women are understood as a

sexual beings you know only receivers of sexuality and not performance in the sexual feel. So when we see the character of Annie and we see that how she herself seeks male company so it is a more realistic picture of both the sexes and how they perform in the sexual world.

MOHIT: And this sexual kind of empowerment we can say this sexual empowerment coincides with the occupation of vocational empowerment that these girls have experienced in the first decades of the 20th century and it coincides with that and she wants to be with somebody, she sees John Joseph she hangs out with him and then they both seeks each other out (0)(29:02).

SHIKRITI: Right, so there is equal participation from both the sexes.

MOHIT: Ha, although there is some sort of manipulation going on.

SHIKRITI: Obviously, yeah and we can see that there are discrepancies of power underlining.

MOHIT: Definitely.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, but atleast there is some participation from the women in the in the (0)(29:20).

MOHIT: She is even though even though even though he is exerting some of his power, some of his influence, some of his charm but I think the difference here is that she is acting on her desires.

SHIKRITI: Right.

MOHIT: It is not she is not acting against her desires, she is acting on her desires, she wants something out of it and she seeks to get it eventually.

SHIKRITI: Yeah.

MOHIT: And there we see that when she does not get it when she realizes the incorrigible nature of John Joseph then she like plots her revenge then she.

SHIKRITI: Hmm, and then how how this sort of collective revenge that happens.

MOHIT: Yeah, like the female solidarity.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, solidarity.

MOHIT: Becomes a very effective weapon to counter sexual harassment or harassment (()) (30:04).

SHIKRITI: In the work force especially, yeah that the story talks about.

MOHIT: Yeah, so this is something very interesting that like sexual harassment in a domestic sphere is different kind of a situation to deal with but here we see that the.

SHIKRITI: In the work force.

MOHIT: In the work force in the work force even though you are empowered, even though your agency.

SHIKRITI: Right.

MOHIT: But the dynamics of work place offer a different kind of situation.

SHIKRITI: Yeah.

MOHIT: In which solidarity becomes a very important and necessary weapon.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, very necessary for women because even when we see them participating in the work force and going out and having that kind of agency, we see the power structure remains the same, so it is basically replication of that domestic structure with different manifestations.

MOHIT: Yeah.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, so and in order to counter that wherever solidarity if we see the it reminds me of the Goblin Market the solidarity between the two sisters, where we see that in a very kind of domestic kind of setting where the two sisters come together, support each other, we see all the women here coming together, supporting each other in a very outward setting that is not domestic you know work force.

MOHIT: To counter the external male.

SHIKRITI: Yeah.

MOHIT: External male threat (())(31:12) to say like unlike let us say the domestics were where the threat comes from within.

SHIKRITI: Inside the family.

MOHIT: Yeah, inside the family this situation is something in which the threat is external unconstrained by some some constraints which may be present in the domestic space.

SHIKRITI: So even when the women are.

MOHIT: Solidarity becomes all the more important.

SHIKRITI: Exactly, so even when women are outside we are not empowered completely as we see in this story they are still manipulated and almost hunted down by men who are in a position. So I think John Joseph's position is also important here because he is even in the work in the work force he is in a higher superior position, so in a position of more power than these girls, so.

MOHIT: Which is why it is always the girls who are leaving the job not him.

SHIKRITI: Not him, exactly.

MOHIT: Then we then we see move on to this episode where the girls have finally plotted their revenge and they invite they know that (she) is going to be there and when all of the girls are then they then they stage this elaborate kind of relaxed fake relaxed scene of meeting, so yeah so in this episode we see that when he comes in and he sits and all the girls prod him in a very settle way to reveal sort of the (())(32:37) that he uses.

SHIKRITI: Exactly, so this is part of their revenge mechanism.

MOHIT: Right and then they slowly start making fun of the very (())(32:45) that he says.

SHIKRITI: Exactly, and all this time John Joseph is not aware of what is happening to him.

MOHIT: Yeah.

SHIKRITI: And he feels that these women are giving him a lot of importance and or something along the.

MOHIT: Right.

SHIKRITI: But though he is also slightly suspicious in the way because when we see the girls expressions be it the tone in which they are speaking or the phrases that they use, you know

there is something is wrong and there is a sort of sinister energy that is presence that is present in the situation.

MOHIT: Right, when his () (33:16) are used when his () (33:19) are started to get used against him, he senses that there is some sort of () (33:24) presence in the scene.

SHIKRITI: Exactly, scene and there is a reversal of power play that is totally happening here because from the power that is being totally with John, it is not shifted with the women and he is in a position where he is the most vulnerable, he is where the taking out of Annie's belt again I think is a very symbolic event.

MOHIT: Right, and before that when usually he is the one who seduces a girl and takes her out with him into the night and then this is the this time the girls ask him that who are you going to take?

SHIKRITI: Right.

MOHIT: And that is the moment when he notices the power has shifted from him to the girls.

SHIKRITI: Exactly.

MOHIT: Because they are the ones asserting, they are probably their desire, their need to go out. So we see that the power shifting and then slowly it gets more and more sinister.

SHIKRITI: Right, so we see the girls more deriving a sort of a kind of pleasure which we can read as sexual pleasure.

MOHIT: Is the reclamation of sexual agency.

SHIKRITI: Agency, yeah.

MOHIT: And assertion.

SHIKRITI: Exactly, so we see that and the kind of sort of animalistic beastial characters that they signify and so towards the end of the story we see that the again the John is completely emasculated.

MOHIT: Completely emasculated.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, hence () (34:41) of all his power and all his agencies and totally in the you know vulnerable to the situation and it mercy of the girls.

MOHIT: We can see that it happened in three stages like initially his own (())(34:53), his own strategies are unmasked and undermined and then in the second stage there is a physical violation which is sort of a revenge or a revenge or a reassertion of physical energy or physical superimosity sort of and then in the end when they force the girls force her to reply, force her to reply who he is going out, he is going out with and when he replies that Annie and then she immediately rejects him.

SHIKRITI: Exactly.

MOHIT: So this final rejection is the final (())(35:22) in the (())(35:23) to say with which they completely emasculate him and they completely deny and reject his agency.

SHIKRITI: We see that he is bleeding and he is suffering and he is almost begging.

MOHIT: He slims away very in a very (())(35:33) way.

SHIKRITI: Yeah, exactly so we do not know what is going to happen the next day again when they come back for work and the same kind of power dynamics is again implemented, but for the time being we can see that the agency has totally shifted from John to these women and they have successfully organised their revenge against him.

MOHIT: It is very interesting to see that this revenge is something which happens out of the work roles that they have.

SHIKRITI: Exactly.

MOHIT: So the work roles.

SHIKRITI: Even out of the work hours.

MOHIT: Yeah, so that was something that was constraining the girls because the power that he asserted and he is exercised.

SHIKRITI: As a boss.

MOHIT: As a boss, so here they get to exact the revenge that they needed to be.

SHIKRITI: Exactly.

MOHIT: Like this is I think such a this story has a very strong resonance with the me too movement and the resurgence of vocal opposition to the violence that is still exerted against women.

SHIKRITI: Exerted in the work force.

MOHIT: Yeah.

SHIKRITI: I think we will discuss more about it towards the later lectures where.

MOHIT: We can discuss this in association with other stories that we discussed.

SHIKRITI: Exactly and we will come back definitely come back to the me too movement, towards the last few lectures or the last in the last lecture where we all discussed all the text together and sort of summarize this total series.

MOHIT: So I think like both of these stories give us very interesting perspective on how the masculinity is was thrown into crises at the beginning of the 20th century and some (reso) some aspects of it which still remain very relevant to this day.

SHIKRITI: Exactly and which also shows us the different kinds of masculinities that are at play in society and how they can be shattered if need be.

MOHIT: Right, so we will get back to it.

SHIKRITI: In the next lecture.

MOHIT: Yeah, we will see you later.

SHIKRITI: Thank you so much.

MOHIT: Thank you so much.