

## **Contemporary Literature**

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### **Mod-01 Lec-26 Lecture-26**

Good afternoon, this is in continuation with our discussion on the genre of short story. So, today's story is "a meeting at last" by Hanif Kureishi, the noted British Pakistan born Pakistani, but British born and a British citizen, short story writer, novelist, dramatist as well as a screenplay writer Hanif Kureishi. So, this is story a meeting full stop at last. Look at the way the title is constructed, a meeting full stop at last. At last, it was meeting long overdue, long awaited and it happens finally. So, a touch of finality about it, a touch of that it unavailability about it.

So, it was a meeting that had to happen and at last it did take place. We will also see how this particular short story matches the paradigms of all features of a short story that we were discussing this morning. There are only two characters in this play and sorry in this short story, whereas the other the third character is referred to who is also a very important character, but that character is just mentioned in absentia. Hanif Kureishi, noted screen writer and playwright, he is better known for the screenplay of My Beautiful Laundrette, a play which explored the racial tensions between South Asians and the British in the south east part of London.

And then also his novel, the Buddha of suburbia which is another take on exploration of popular culture and how he refers and alludes to all tropes of popular culture while describing his relationship with the members of his family. Other noted works by Hanif Kureishi are Gabriel's gift, a novel and My Ear to His Heart, it is an autobiography. So, we will begin. Morgan's lover's husband held out his hand. So, it is just you know they come, the writer comes straight to the point, there is no building up, there is no tension, there is no exposition or rising action, he comes to the point.

We know there is a, at the onset we know there is a person called Morgan, he has a lover holds out his hand. So at last he said, I enjoyed watching you standing across the road, I was delighted when after some consideration you made up your mind to speak with me, will you sit down? Morgan, Eric, Morgan nodded, dropped his car keys on the table and sat down on the edge of a chair, he is very edgy, edge of a chair, he does not want to

make himself comfortable obviously, he is facing his lover's husband. So naturally, he cannot be completely at ease. The two men looked at one another. So, look at the very dramatic kind of a narration.

Hanif Kureishi, a screenwriter, also a noted playwright, he, the way he writes a story, it is almost like a play happening, also like a stage setting in a hotel. Eric said, are you drinking? In a while, maybe. Eric called for another bottle, they were already two on the table, so that it means he has been drinking. You do not mind if I do? Feel free, I do now. Eric finished his bottle and replaced it on the table with his fingers round the neck.

Morgan saw Eric's thin gold wedding ring. Caroline would always drop hers in a dish on the table in Morgan's hall and replace it when she left. Caroline is the lover, she would take off the wedding ring whenever she visited Morgan's house and would wear it again before leaving. Eric had said on the phone, is that Morgan? Now, he is just giving us a quick background of this meeting. Yes, Morgan replied, who? The voice went on, are you Caroline's boyfriend, but who is this? Asking, who are you? The man she lives with, Eric, her husband.

Right, I see. Good, you see. Eric had said, please on the phone, please meet me, please. Why? Morgan had said, why should I? There are some things I need to know. Eric named a coffee and the time it was later that day, he would be there, he could wait.

Morgan rang Caroline, she was in meetings as Eric must have known. Morgan deliberated all day, but it was not until the last moment, pacing up and down his front room where he was already late that he walked out of the house, got in his car and he stood across the road from the cafe. Although, Caroline had described Eric's parents, his inarticulate furies, the way his head hung when he felt low and even as Morgan laughed, the way he scratched his backside. Eric had been a shadow man, an unfocused dark figure that had lean across their life since they had met and while Morgan knew things about him that he did not need to know, he had little idea of what Eric knew of him. He had yet to find out what Caroline might have recently told him.

The last few days had been the craziest of Morgan's life. The waiter, the waitress brought Eric a beer. Morgan was about to order one for himself, but changed his mind and asked for water. Eric smiled grimly. So, how are you? Morgan knew that Eric worked long hours.

He came home late and got up after the children had gone to school. Looking at him, Morgan tried to visualize something Caroline had said. As she prepared for work in the morning, he lay in bed in his pajamas for an hour saying nothing, but thinking intently

with his hands over his eyes as if he were in pain and had to work something out. So, the picture that Caroline has portrayed of her husband is he was an uncommunicative husband, a disconnected husband who was not really there in spite of being physically present, but he was not very attentive to her. Caroline left for work as early as she could in order to phone Morgan from the office.

After a couple of months, Morgan requested her not to speak about Eric, but as Morgan's meetings with Caroline were arranged around Eric's absences, he was inevitably mentioned. Morgan said, what can I do for you? There are things I want to know. I am entitled. Are you? Do not I have any rights? Morgan knew that this man was not going to be easy. In the car, he had tried to prepare, but it was like revising for an exam without having been told the subject.

All right, Morgan said to calm him down. I understand you. After all, you have taken my life. Sorry, I mean my wife. My wife, Eric swigged at his bottle.

Then he took out a small pot of pills and shook it. It was empty. He said I am having to take these. He was upset, no doubt.

He would be in shock. Morgan was Caroline too, of course. Carol was aware that she had started with him to cheer herself up. She had two children and a good, if dull job. Then her best friend took a lover. Caroline met Morgan through work and decided immediately that he had the right credentials.

Love and romance suited her. Why had not she been dipped in such delight every day? She thought everything else could remain the same apart from her trait. As Morgan liked to say, there were consequences. Now, Caroline is leading. We are told something about Caroline who is leading on surface a good respectable life.

She has a job. She has a family. She has two children, but she is bored. Most modern people, she is bored of this supposedly mundane life. She wants something to spice up things. Now, she knows that her best friend has taken a lover and so does she.

Morgan has the right credentials. It is also said with a touch of irony. You see, to fall in love, you do not need to seek the right credentials, but here Morgan has been appraised by Caroline and she feels he is the right person to have an affair with. It has cheered her spirits while the affair is going on, but Morgan always had warned her that there would be consequences. You cannot get away with it so easily.

I am not moving out of my house, Eric said. It is my home. You are not intending to

take that away from me as well as my wife. Your wife, Caroline, Morgan said restoring her as her own person.

I did not steal her. I did not have to persuade her. She gave herself to me. She gave herself. She wanted you.

That is the truth. Eric stared waiting for him to continue, but Morgan said nothing. Reminding himself that he could walk out at any time that he did not have to take anything from this man. Eric said, do you want her? I think so. Yes. You are not sure after doing all this.

You are not sure. I did not say that. What do you mean then? Nothing, but perhaps he was not sure. Now, we see Morgan's point of view. Finally, he has been forced to examine his relationship with Caroline and when Eric asks him point blank whether he wants to take Caroline away, he is not very sure. This is a story which explores male emotions very well.

It gives both sides perspectives from both sides, the husbands as well as the lovers. We do not have Caroline, but we get glimpses of what Caroline goes through as well. Perhaps he was not sure. He had become used to their arrangement which was quite convenient to all. You see, there were too many hurried phone calls, misunderstood letters, snatched meetings and painful partings, but they had lived within it.

So, they had managed to survive all this craziness of romance. They even had a routine. He had received more from Eric's wife, seeing her twice a week than he had from any other woman. Otherwise, when he was not working, he visited art galleries with his daughter. He packed his shoulder bag, took his guide book and walked about parts of the city he had never seen.

He sat by the river and wrote notes about the past. What had he learnt through her? A reverence for the world, the ability to see feeling, certain created objects and other people as important, indeed invaluable. She had introduced him to the pleasures of carelessness. His affair with Caroline has been quite reckless and perhaps that has given him a spirit of adventure, which was till now missing in his life.

Caroline has been good to him. Caroline's influence or Caroline's presence in his life has been good for Morgan. We are told something about Morgan as well. He is a divorcee. He has a daughter, but after Caroline's entry in his life, he has started exploring things which he had not paid attention to earlier. He now looks at objects, the creative side of life.

He visits art galleries. He has developed an artistic streak, something which was missing in his life earlier. Eric said, I met Caroline when she was 21. She did not have a line on her face. Her cheeks were rosy.

She was acting in a play at university. Was she a good actress? She is good at a lot of things. Is it not she? Eric said, it was not long before we developed bad habits. What sort of things in our relationship? That is the word everyone uses. Eric said, we did not have the skill, the talent, the ability to get out of them.

How long have you known her? Two years. Two years. Morgan was confused. What did she tell you? Have not you been discussing it? Eric said, how long do you think will it take me to digest all this? Morgan said, what are you doing? He had been watching Eric's hands, wondering whether he would grasp the neck of the bottle, but Eric was hunting through the briefcase he had pulled out from under the table. What date? Surely, you remember that. Do not you too have anniversaries? When you first met, Eric dragged out a large red book.

My journal, perhaps I made a note that day. The past two years have to be rethought. Then you are deceived. Every day has another complexion. Eric wants to know.

He wants to get to the bottom of things. What triggered off this affair? He wants to know the exact date when it started. Since he is in a habit of keeping a journal, he wants to consult his journal. What exactly did he do or he did not do on that day when Caroline started his affair with Morgan? Morgan looked round at other people in the cafe. Eric flipped through the pages of the book.

When he saw Morgan watching, he shut the journal. Have you ever been deceived? Has that ever happened to you? I would not imagine so, said Morgan. How pompous and do you think that deceiving someone is alright? One might say that there are circumstances which make it inevitable. Eric said it falsifies everything. Your demeanor suggests that it does not matter.

Are you that cynical? This is important. Look at the century. Are not we all cynical? We have all turned into, we are totally indifferent towards other people's miseries. Sorry, I work in television news.

I know what goes on. Your cruelty is the same thing. Think of the Jews that other people do not have feelings, that they do not matter, that you can trample over them. I have not killed you, Eric. I could die of this. I could die. He remembered one night

when she had to get home to slip into bed with Eric.

Caroline had said, if only Eric would die, just die peacefully, quite peacefully. Eric leaned across the table. Have you felt rough then? Yes, over this, over this, over everything, but definitely over this. Good middle age is a lonely time without a doubt, said Morgan.

It is interesting, more lonely than any other time. Do you think? Yes, said Morgan. All you lack seems irrevocable. Eric said, between the age of 12 and 13, my elder brother whom I adored committed suicide. My father died of grief and my grandfather just died. Do you think I still miss them? How could you not? Eric drank his beer and thought about this.

You are right. There is a hole in me. He says, I wish there were a hole in you. Morgan said, she has listened to me and me to her. Eric said, you really pay attention to one another. Do you? There is something about being attentive to that makes you feel better.

I am never lonely when I am with her. You can be lonely even with, even when you are with someone, but with, in this relationship, they complete each other. That is what Morgan is trying to tell Eric. I have been determined this time not to shut myself off, but she is my wife. What is it people say these days? It is your problem.

It is my problem. Do you believe that? What do you think? Morgan had been drinking a lot of whiskey. He had been at university in the late 60s, but had identified with the puritanical left, not the hippies. These days, when he needed to switch off his brain, he noticed how tenacious consciousness was. Perhaps, he wanted to shut off his mind because in the past few days, he had been considering forgetting Caroline, forgetting them, forgetting about them all, Caroline, Eric and their kids.

Maybe, it is getting too much for him to handle. Maybe he would know now. Perhaps, the secrecy and her inaccessibility had kept them all at the right distance. Morgan realized he had been thinking for some time. He turned to Eric again who was tapping the bottle with his name.

I do like your house, said Eric, but it is big for one person. My house, did you say? Have you seen it? Yes. Morgan looked at Eric's eyes. He seemed rather spirited.

Morgan almost envied him. Hatred could give you great energy. Haven't you got anything better to do than stand outside my house? Haven't you got anything better to do than steal my wife? Eric pointed his finger at him. There are worse things than standing

outside people's house. You have stolen my wife. So, why cannot I come and observe you just out of curiosity? One day, Morgan, perhaps you will wake up and find in the morning that things are not the way they were last night, that everything you have has been sullied and corrupted in some way.

Can you imagine that? All right, said Morgan. Eric had knocked his bottle over. He put his napkin on the spilled beer and popped his bottle on top of that. So, look at the way the conversation is taking place between just two men. That is what we were talking about, limited characters, limited number of characters and that characters are not even fully developed. A short story writer does not have that luxury to develop his characters completely or fully, but he has to make do with whatever limitations, whatever constraints he has.

Look at the milieu also as a restaurant, a cafe where two men can have a peaceful conversation. A short story cannot afford to jump between various different settings, although there may be exceptions, but by and large, so, Hanif Kureishi sticks to this rule of focusing on a single plot. That is the relationship of these two men. You know, it is a love triangle. You have a woman and two men as the focus of attention and then, you have this is the story.

This triangle, this situation has to be resolved and setting is this cafe and thus, two characters, limited number of characters. He said, are you intending to take my children away? What? Why should I? I can tell you now, I have had that house altered to my specifications. I have a pagoda. I am not moving out and I am not selling it. Actually, to tell the truth, Eric had a sort of half-grin, half-grimace on his face.

I might be better off without my wife and kids. What? What did you say? Eric raised his eyebrows at him. You know what I mean, he said. Morgan's children were with their mother, the girl away at university, the boy at private school.

Both of them were doing well. Morgan had met Eric's kids only briefly. He had offered to take them in if Caroline was prepared to be with him. He was ready for that, he thought. He did not want to show the last task, but in time, one of the kids could say, become a chunky, the other a teenage prostitute and Morgan having fallen for their mother, my wife might find himself burdened.

He knew people it had happened to. He himself had done well in life. He had a divorce, but however, his children had done well, the boy at private school and the girl at the university. So, things were working fine for him, but what if Caroline does move in with him, along with her kids and what if things go wrong with the kids? He would end

up being burdened with that and he had never ever thought about that. At this moment, sitting face to face with Eric across the table, he is forced to think about all these possibilities and it is not a very attractive idea. He also says that he has been drinking a lot of late, which he had never done before.

Has Caroline been all that good to him? Hanishkureishi is trying to raise these issues. He may not give you all the comfortable answers and solutions, but there are complications in any relationship. Even in a relationship, which looks quite comfortable and very sorted out, but still it may not work out as well. My children are going to be pretty angry with you when they find out what you have done to us.

Yes, Morgan said, who could blame them? They are big and expensive. They eat like horses. Christ, Eric said, do you know about my job? Not as much as you know about mine. I should not think. Eric did not respond, but said, funny to think of you two talking about me.

I bet you would lie there wishing I would have a car crash. Morgan blinked. It is prestigious. In the newsroom, you know well paid, plenty of action, continuous turnover of stories, but it is bland, worthless. I can see that now and the people burn out. They are exhausted and on an adrenaline rush at the same time.

I have always wanted to take up walking, hill walking, you know, boots and rucksacks. I want to write a novel and travel and have adventures. This could be an opportunity. So, even in their tragedy, they are looking for possibilities. Even in their situation, which is far from happy, they are looking, they are considering well, it could not be all that bad.

There are some good things also that can come out of it. Maybe he can afford to give up his job for a while and take up something, which he had already wanted to do, travel, go, you know, for mountain, for a hike, read books, write something, some things which he had always wanted to do, but did not have the time for. Perhaps, this could be a perfect opportunity to pursue whatever he had always wanted to do. Morgan wondered at this. Caroline had said that Eric took little interest in the outside world except through the medium of journalism. The way things looked, smelled, tasted, held no fascination for him, nor did the inner motives of living people, whereas Morgan and Caroline, dawdling in a bar with their hands, playing on one another, loved to discuss the relationships of mutual acquaintances as if together they might distill the spirit of a working love.

Morgan picked up his car keys. He said, sounds good. You would be fine then, Eric. Best of luck. Thanks a bunch. Eric showed no sign of moving. He said, what do you like about her? Morgan wanted to shout at him. He wanted to pound on the table in front



of him saying, I love her as if I have lifted the dish of life up to my face and burst through it into the wonderland of love forever.

Eric was dancing up. What is it? What you like about her? If you do not know, maybe you would be good enough to leave us alone. So, you see the story, it started with a climax, the two men meeting each other in a restaurant, one already knowing that they have a common interest, Caroline, between them. And now, we look at the falling action. There is a deep rift between the two men.

There is tension in the air and it is the play, sorry, the story is coming. You know, reaching its denouement. Look, Eric, Morgan said, if you calm yourself a minute, I will say this. More than a year ago, she said she wanted to be with me.

I have been waiting for her. He pointed at Eric. You have had your time with her. You have had plenty. I would say you have had enough.

Now, it is my turn. He got up and walked to the door. It was simple. Then, it felt good to be outside. He did not look back. Morgan sat in the car and sighed. He started off and stopped at the lights on the corner.

He was thinking he would go to the super market. Caroline could come round after work and he would cook. He would mix her favorite drink, a whiskey mac. She would appreciate being looked after. Eric pulled open the door, got in and shut the door.

Morgan stared at him. The driver behind him beeped his horn repeatedly. Morgan drove across the road. Do you want me to drop you somewhere? I have not finished with you, said Eric. Morgan looked alternately at the road and at Eric. Eric was sitting in his car, in his seat with his feet on his rubber mat.

Morgan was swearing under his breath. Eric said, what are you going to do? Have you decided? Morgan drove on. He saw that Eric had picked up a piece of paper from the dashboard. Morgan remembered it was a shopping list that Caroline had made out for him. Eric put it back.

Morgan turned the car round and accelerated. We will go to her office now and discuss it with her. Is that what you want? I am sure she will tell you everything you want to know. Otherwise, let me know when you want to get out, said Morgan.

Say when. Eric just stared ahead. Morgan thought he had been afraid of happiness and kept it away. He had been afraid of other people and had kept them away. He was still

afraid, but it was too late for that. So, this is Morgan's story.

He has been afraid all his life of things known and unknown. He has kept himself hidden from other people. He had just created a wall around him. He did not want people. He avoided confrontations.

He avoided showdowns, but now, he knew that he cannot run away from situations anymore. This is the time now. It is high time that he learns to take a stand. Suddenly he banged the steering wheel and said, what? Said Eric.

I have decided, said Morgan. The answer is yes. He is to everything that I do love her and I do want to be with her. Now, you must get out. He stopped the car. Out, I said. Driving away, he watched Eric in the mirror getting smaller and smaller with one swift decision of his.

He has made Eric small. He has reduced Eric's importance. Eric who was standing, looming large over their relationship for such a long time, he had to resort to lying, cheating and evading situations, evading, deferring from taking any action or decisions, but now, with one, with this making up of his mind, it is now clear that he is going to be with Caroline, the woman who makes him happy indeed. With that, the story ends. I would like to draw your attention to again the same features of a short story.

In this story, we find that it lacks magnitude. It says important things. It says serious things about relationships, about male emotions.

However, it is not a very long story. It is a typical short story. There is a plot. There is a problem. There is some kind of a solution as well. Although, there are typically, it is not rich in details. It has a unique and single effect on the readers of course, because it is not, it does not digress or divert in any form.

Limited number of characters, yes and singularity of a setting, yes. It is one single set and that is all setting. That is all that matters here. Spareness of situation and setting, yes and then, story begins from with a climax and ends in quick resolution at the new. So, you will see how well this particular story fits into the parameters of a short story. However, I would like to move on to another short story.

This is called Associations in Blue and you will feel how different these two stories are in terms of plot, character and setting. So, Associations in Blue by Krista Wolf. Who was it? Shouted with joy when blue was born. She opens with a quotation by Pablo Neruda. I will repeat, who was it? Shouted with joy when blue was born. The color, the

reference is to the color blue and as the title of the story says, Associations in Blue and now, you find that Pablo Neruda raises a question, what happened when the color blue was born? Krista Wolf gives a very feminist repost to Neruda.

She says, you ask odd questions Pablo, blue, born, but did not it always exist? As the sky blue over the landscape of childhood, as the most everlasting blue there is, outside is the loveliest blue sky and here, you are inside huddling over your book. This is a reference to Gates theory of color. Blue of the sky reveals to us basic law of color. So, blue of sky, it has always been there. So, what is so unusual about the color blue? She asks, you are going to turn into a blue stalking after all, then you would not get a husband later on.

This is satire. If you intellectualize everything, then you are going to turn into a blue stalking. Blue stalking is an intellectual kind of a woman and whenever a woman is supposed to be extremely intelligent, the idea is she would not find a husband and she is in a way ridiculing people like Pablo Neruda. If you think too much, you would not find a husband. Blue road stories, Anne Murray's boyfriend said he wants to bring her down the blue from out of the sky.

You see, who is this Anne Murray? You do not know. So, see how this particular story, a piece defies the logic of a short story. You do not have a plot here. You do not have characters here. References to just anyone, you know, Anne Murray is not a major character here.

She is any woman. So, Anne Murray's boyfriend said he wants to bring her down the blue from out of the sky. You know, most lovers do that. They promise the impossible. So, he, her boyfriend promised her to bring down the blue from out of the sky. I am going to bring you the blue down from heaven. Lodi, that is just the sort of thing guys like him say talking a blue streak and now, look at the various associations of blue.

So, the entire story is a word play on the color blue, but she claims he is true to her, a likely story. She is blonde. So, she should wear blue, her boyfriend says. So, it is like reinforcing the stereotype blonde girl, a blue dress looks good on her. So, blue, blue, all my clothes are blue.

Blue is the color of faithfulness generally believed to be, but lately she has red shoes. He actually gave them to her. Red and blue are finery to the soul and for the wife of the clown, they make a fine gown. So, this fellow is just like a clown. He may not be a professional clown, but the way he talks, he is a joker and he has given her red shoes and along with her blue dress, she makes a fine wife for a clown like him.

Her boyfriend likes to paint the town blue now and then. It is a spin on painting the town red. Maybe he is not very faithful to her. He paints the town blue, not red. Blue today, blue tomorrow and blue again the day after that. Blue Monday, you have heard of having Monday blues when after the weekend, people do not want to work, get out of their beds.

So, Monday morning blues. See what I mean? Blue idle on Monday, hungry on Tuesday, that is a proverb. We all know that scene, but right now, unfortunately, he is outside staggering across the square singing cornflower blue is the sky beside the mighty Rhine. Totally blue the man is that is dead drunk.

He is past help from a blue cross nurse. Cornflower blue are women's eyes by the mighty wine. Boys are they ever. Boy are they ever. Recently, he beat her black and blue. See and then, her brother said now that guy is in for a big blue surprise and gave him a good beating. Once again, he got off lightly with a black and blue eye.

That is fine, but now, let us hope Anne-Marie will stop pulling blue wool over her eyes about him. Even she cannot be that blue eyed. From the blue mountains, we are coming my dear. Oh my darling, you are so far from here.

We used to sing it. You know it is like a rhyme, a childhood rhyme. She remembers the teachers as dumb as we are fear. The sky is blue. The weather is fine. Dear teacher, we want to go out for a walk. I suppose you kids want a blue ink report to your parents. That is how the teacher would return. Instead, why do not you memorize the colors of the rainbow? Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet or are you just interested in hearing somewhere something about the war again when the blue bottles were flying around our guy's ears? What else is like wasps, the insects flying around the soldiers ears? Forward march, a song, the blue coated dragoons are riding with trumpets and drums through the gates.

So, another association for the color blue. Blue is also the color of the military. Cannot you all sing something nice for once? The beautiful blue denue that was the first waltz I danced with Hans.

Yes, it is the same old story. Things ended badly with her blue jacket sailor. Great can get over it. A blue jacket lad, he sails the sea. He loved a girl, but he had not a penny. The maidens disgraced and who is to blame? The amorous sailor with no penny to his name. That sort of tale can end badly.

Madame X had just had to be carted off by the police with their blue light flashing. Police men also have the blue light flashing on their car, atop their car. So, Madame X is a woman of dubious reputation. Blue cyanide is my guess. Her lips already looked quite blue. In a case like that, help always arrives too late whenever someone takes blue cyanide.

Blue can be a color of love, of patriotism, of honor, of innocence, childhood nursery rhymes. It could also be the color of cyanide. The sleek dude who left her in the lurch supposedly has blue blood. At least that is what he told her.

Blue blood is royalty. So, some girl who has been dumped by a person who supposedly had blue blood. We all know about king blue beard. It is a reference to a folk tale by Charles Perrault. The strange night had a beard that was all blue and she had a dread of it and felt uneasy every time she looked at him. If only people had paid attention to her feelings, but he gave her a blue arctic fox as a gift which is a rare breed and she thought a man like that cannot lie and went weak at the knees. So, how women get fooled by people? There was that good for nothing person who would paint the town red or blue and then there was this person who pretended to be royalty or was indeed royalty, but still treated the girl the same way.

So, they are not much of a difference. This is going to cost you a pretty blue penny or two. You will have to earn them first. I will do it even so. We always use blue ink to sign the clean copy, but first draw me up a blue print please. After all with a scheme like this, you do not want to just take off into the wild blue yonder, but some people aim at the wild blue yonder and hit the black bull's eye. You cannot just take a risk. So, wild blue yonder is like taking a risk and in spite of taking risks, some people may succeed whereas, others might fail. So, it is just talking in big metaphors having fun with words here, with language, associative power of blues, but if we want to look at the features of a short story, there are no characters here.

There is no plot here. It is just fragments, some very clever fragments woven together. An extremely good example of intertextuality as you were talking when you were doing John Guare, you know making allusions and references to various texts, to nursery rhymes, to high bro culture, to music, to folk tales and all this while doing a word play on blue. We used to fill up the milk can with blueberries in two hours and by the afternoon, the cake was baked.

Carp poached blue at New Year's, never. Carp should be served in a beer sauce and poached trout is a dish for posh people. Blue simply is not a color for stuff to eat. So, you do not eat blue colored dishes. Better suited to flours, violets for instance, a violet in

the meadow stood bent over an unknown. It was a lovely violet. Blue cabbage that is bluish red cabbage down south, well that is ok with me.

And there is blue liquor and there is blue master cheese with blue mold in it, not something I like. I will never understand how people can grow blue potatoes and name them blue mice. Gates theory of colors, so now we have reference to Gates.

This color creates a peculiar and almost inexpressible effect on the eye. As a color, it represents an energy. Blue Pablo is the color of longing. Is that what you meant? Spring lets its blue ribbon flutter through the air again. The blue hills in the blue distance on horizons of two blue. Blue flags to Berlin, Prussian blue, Berlin blue, an important blue pigment made of ferrous sulphate and potassium ferrocyanide, a delicate stroke on China.

Blue suggests so many things. It suggests so many different shades of colors. Blue too has a variety of shades. There is no specific blue. Blue has range of shades in it. You do not just have a blanket term blue, a color which suits all occasions and all purposes. Blue suggests different things at different time to different people. That is blue. You have Prussian blue, you have Berlin blue, you also have cyanide blue.

Which blue are you talking about, Pablo? The deep cobalt blue of glass vases, bowls and ashtrays, my favorite color. Tablecloths printed with indigo in classic patterns, a craft that is dying out. So, once in my life to be by the blue Adriatic, oh heaven radiant azure. The blue butterfly fluttering ahead of us, the blue bird on the curtain that the artist Bloomberg used at the cabaret of Russian immigrants in 1920s Berlin, Kandinsky's blue rider school of painters, Franz Mark's painting, the tower of blue horses, Picasso's blue period, the unforgettable blue of eaves clean at the museum in Nice. Just as we feel inclined to pursue an attractive object that is clean from us, so we like to look at blue not because it pushes towards us, but because it draws us after it.

That is the power of blue. So, blue is many things to many people. The blue hour between daylight and dreaming, night blue, dove gray blue. Light from the fountain in the grim fairy tale which when the trusty and unjustly treated soldiers light his pipe in it not only gives him reparation, but a whole kingdom and the king's daughter to boot. That is the only way to go. General Franco's ghastly blue division in the Spanish civil war.

So, blue can be artistic. Blue can be Picasso's blue, Kandinsky's blue, eaves clean blue, but then you also have the Spanish Spanish dictator general Franco. His army was also called the blue division. The blue flag of the European union and the care packages of

food that the Americans are dropping in Afghanistan are now blue and no longer yellow. So, people can tell them apart from the yellow cluster bombs that they are dropping at the same time. She is drawing attention to the implicit irony, the paradox in the situation.

The same army claiming to restore democracy in Afghanistan which is dropping yellow bombs on its people is at the same time dropping care packages also. How hypocritical. That is what Krista Wolf is telling us while dropping care packages. So, in order to distinguish between bombs and care packages, the color of the packages is also blue which is quite hilarious. On the other hand, you have the blue flower Pablo, the symbol of German romanticism, a creation of Count Friedrich von Herzenberg known as Novelis. Novelis is a pseudonym of Count Herzenberg, the protagonist of whose novel, Heinrich von Auftingen sees it in a dream, a tall pale blue flower that is stood by the spring and touched him with its wide shining petals.

He saw nothing but the flower and contemplated it for a long time with inexpressible tenderness. He pursues this image of longing, seeing in it a bulwark against the uniformity and habitual tenderness of life, a magic charm against the monotony of the earthly. But who was it shouted with joy when blue was born? What were you thinking Pablo? We do not know, but I think it was the extraterrestrials who shouted with joy at the birth of the earth, the blue planet. So, this is, you know, blue is a color of joy and earth is the only place to be with all its weaknesses, with all its flaws. So, a very good example of a short story which does not follow any of the features, which any of its characteristics, but still makes, you know, for a good read and also an eminently good example of intertextuality, where so many illusions are made just by playing on the word blue. So, thank you very much. you