

American Literature & Culture
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Mod 04 Lecture Number 20
Good Country People (Lecture 14)

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(Professor – student conversation starts)

Professor: Ok, so let's get down to the point. I think there aren't enough good country people in the world. Start; let's start now discussion over that one. I think there aren't enough good country people in the world. Do you know, know what is a motif; Anukrupa

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Professor: Anukrupa, what's a motif, motif?

Student: something that runs commonly through the course of story and repeats itself.

Professor: So, runs through, something common, that runs through. It can, give me something, give me some, what is that something, what is that,

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Professor: that is common and runs through

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Student: An object that reoccurs

Professor: An object, it can be an object,

Student: Image

Professor: Good, an image.

Student: A dialog

Professor: So object, image, dialog, you know, in films you also have a piece of music, no?
Yeah. Like Jazz music, James Bond, it somehow

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Professor: what does a motif do?

Student: It brings back, it helps you relate to that

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Student: other situation.

Student: Brings back memories

Professor: The focus

Student: Yeah

Professor: It brings back, focuses the attention

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Professor: of what this story, what this plot is all about. Ok

Student: It serves like an identity marker for the

Professor: Marker, it's a marker, it's an associative marker. It brings, it ties up several ideas.

Student: Series of themes which might otherwise seem unrelated

Professor: Unrelated, yeah

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Professor: so repeatedly we have this expression here.

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Professor: Good Country People, let's not forget that, so that's the title of the story and here again we come back to this place, point, there aren't good country people in the world, and just pay attention to the fact that this is not the first time that this expression occurs. It will occur throughout the story, because that's what the story is all about. And we were talking about the irony implicit in the title, and irony throughout the story. Now next page, we are talking about

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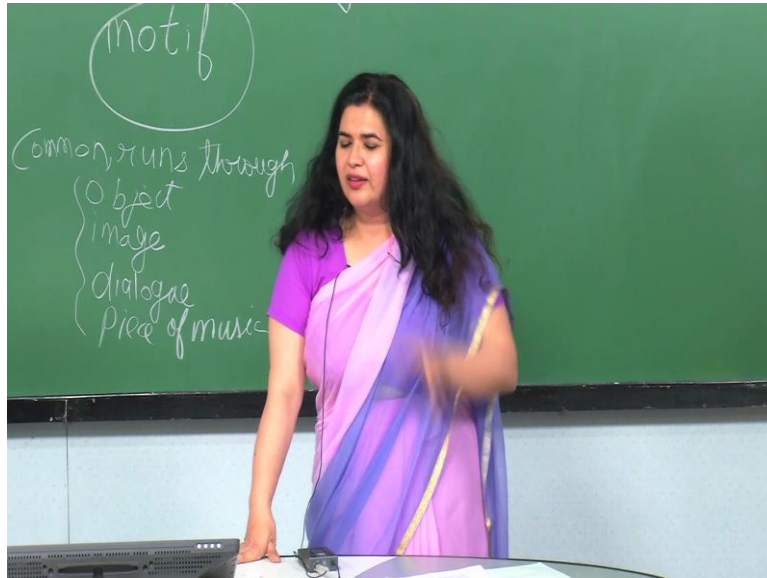


Professor: he and Joy had the same condition. So he and Joy had the same condition. She knew that her eyes were filling with tears but she collected herself quickly and murmured, "Won't you stay for dinner? We'd love to have you!" and was sorry the instant she heard herself say it.

Ok, why? Why does she have tears in her eyes? Look at the para earlier above.

"I guess a lot of boys come telling you they're working their way through college but I'm not going to tell you that. Somehow, I don't want to go to college. I want to devote my life to Christian service. And I got this heart condition. I may not live long."

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Professor: So this makes her eyes fill with tears because she too has a heart condition, remember the doctors have already told her mother, she is not going to see 45, yeah and she is already somewhere in her 30s, yeah, and this kind of a relatedness. Now do you think this boy has known about this family? Any idea, are we given any indication that perhaps he has done his homework on these people?

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Student: No idea

Professor: We aren't given any hint or indication

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Professor: but why not?

Student: He thinks that they are called as (())

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Professor: But that could also be a ploy? Yes.

Student: He says my friends say that you are good people.

Professor: I know, some, yeah, so my, my friends say

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Professor: there is lot of ambiguity here and it will never be sorted out. This puzzle will never solved, be never solved because no one is going to tell us whether he had it all planned or not.

Student: There is a possibility that he targets

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Professor: Exactly, he targets certain people

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Professor: who have certain conditions, yes, so perhaps, that is a, later on, you will realize. I want you to connect this passage to the ending,

“Yes mam,” he said in an abashed voice. “I would sher love to do that!”

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Professor: Now this kind of accent, Midwestern accent, Christian, sherr and all those, what do all these things suggest? Now look at her, she is a PhD in philosophy, Ok, definitely, she must be having a certain way of speaking and we have already been told how she speaks, the kinds of things she likes to read, very abstract, things that a lay person would find it very difficult to relate or to understand. But here you have this person who is a real salt of the earth, someone who completely fits the bill of good country boy. Ok, and again think of the, general notions about being a good country boy. I would, and calling people mam and Sir, this is another style, another device that people try to, you know, warm up to some people, Ok, giving you excessive respect.

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Professor: Joy had given him one look on being introduced to him and then throughout the meal had not glanced at him again. He had addressed several remarks to her, which she had pretended not to hear. Mrs. Hopewell could not understand deliberate rudeness, although she lived with it, and she felt she had always to overflow with hospitality to make up for Joy's lack of courtesy. She urged him to talk about himself and he did. He said he was the seventh child of twelve and that his father had been crushed under a tree when he himself was eight years old. He had been crushed very badly, in fact, almost cut in two

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Professor: The other day, we were talking about, it's a story about body horror and the way he describes his father's death, may, may not be true, Ok but then why, why is the writer so much insistent on giving us these details? Why do you think? Excessive interest in body parts, mutation, disfigurements, heart conditions, diseases, body fluids, all these things are talked in a very, talked about in a very naturalistic matter of fact way.

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Student: Sort of morbid fascination

Professor: With, with body, and not with the whole body but with

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Professor: Yeah, body parts, Ok, so cut into half, and practicably not recognizable. His mother had got along the best she could by hard working and she had always seen that her children went to Sunday School and that they read the Bible every evening. He was now nineteen years old and he had been selling Bibles for 4 months. In that time he had sold 77 Bibles and had the promise of two more sales.

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Professor: This is a very good record, in such a short span of time selling 44, how many Bibles?

Student: 77

Professor: Yeah, 77 Bibles is perhaps a record of sorts, Ok and that too, in an area, in a remote area like this where people already have Bibles, yeah. But he can, he is a kind of salesman who can really hard-sell his products. And also, repeated emphasis on the fact that he is a very, he comes from a certain kind of family, where nothing else is important but Christianity and religion. Also he wanted to become

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Professor: a missionary because he thought that was the way you could do most for people.

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Professor: Now you are trying to create an image of yourself. This is what I, now compare him with Hulga. Is she into this image building project, yes or no?

Student: She is building a different kind of image.

Professor: Exactly

Student: Yeah

Professor: She too wants to build a project, she may be rude, brusque, abrupt what not, but that is also a part of a, cultivated yes. Both of them are performing. Later on, when the love-making scene comes, you will realize how much of performance is underway here.

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Professor: "He who lost his life shall find it," he said simply and he was so sincere, so genuine and earnest that Mrs. Hopewell would not for the world have smiled. He prevented

his peas from sliding onto the table by blocking them with a piece of bread which he later cleaned his plate with. She could see Joy observing sidewise how he handled his knife and fork and she saw too that every few minutes, the boy would dart a keen appraising glance at the girl as if he were trying to attract her attention.

After dinner Joy cleared the dishes off the table and disappeared and Mrs. Hopewell was left to talk with him. He told her again about his childhood and his father's accident and about various things that had happened to him. Every five minutes or so, she would stifle a yawn. He sat for two hours until finally she told him she must go because she had an appointment in town. He packed his Bibles and thanked her and prepared to leave, but in the doorway he stopped and wring her hand and said that not on any of his trips had he met a lady as nice as her and he asked if he could come again.

She had said she would always be happy to see him. Joy had been standing in the road, apparently looking at something in the distance, when he came down the steps toward her, bent to the side with his heavy valise. He stopped where she was standing and confronted her directly. Mrs. Hopewell could not hear what he said but she trembled to think what Joy would say to him. She could see that after a minute Joy said something and that then the boy began to speak again, making an excited gesture with his free hand.

After a minute Joy said something else at which the boy began to speak once more. Then to her amazement, Mrs. Hopewell saw the two of them walk off together, toward the gate. Joy had walked all the way to the gate with him and Mrs. Hopewell could not imagine what they had said to each other, and she had not yet dared to ask.

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Professor: Joy finds nice boys unattractive and boring and unappealing, you know. What does she say?

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Student: Smelling of stupidity.

Professor: Smelling of stupidity.

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Professor: So what's so special about this boy? Isn't he a nice boy? He is trying so hard to project his niceties and niceness on everyone, so why, why she is interested because this is the first time she has taken the trouble to walk to the gate. She doesn't even leave her house but what could he, how did this fellow who is so run-of-the-mill, such a common person and how does he make her change her behavior?

Student: There is commonness like; He tells her he also has a heart disease

Professor: Heart disease

Student: Commonness because of that, maybe she becomes (())

Professor: Is it, yeah Ok good, so they are joined together because of their diseases. That is one thing, anything else? The macabre of their past, her leg has been shot off in a freak accident, hunting accident, Ok. His father died, he was killed by the tree fall, cut into half, Ok. Do you think these are the kinds of things that can excite people, sexually excite people? This is the theory of body horror. That macabre, grotesque, they can also lead to, lead towards sexual excitement, now there is Canadian filmmaker called David Cronenberg, are you aware of him, heard of him?

Student: Yes

Professor: Oh, you talked about the Naked Lunch, yes, yes, so, so he made a film on the movie, yeah.

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Professor: David Cronenberg is called the master of body horror, Ok, why? Because in all his films, this is something

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Professor: which is a very accepted theory, you talk about the body, the ugliness of body, the fluids, excrements, blood Ok and flesh being described, an operation; there is a movie called, it is also based on the novel called The Dead Ringers. It's about twins where both of them are doctors, gynecologists. And then women's internal organs are described at great length and because they are gynecologists, they specialize in fertility, Ok, women who can't have children, they treat them and there are all kinds of descriptions of female anatomy. And the female and the instruments that examine these body parts. Ok, so this is what; it is done and shown in great detail on screen.

Ok, many people are put off by what is this. There is another movie, I don't know; have you ever heard of this author called J. G. Ballard? Ballard, you must have, Ok. He has written a novel called Crash. Ok, he is also a North American writer, and David Cronenberg made this movie called Crash and you must watch it. Ok, you may note it down somewhere, Dead Ringers and Crash. And Crash has another, Azhar would you know about Crash?

Student: I haven't watched it.

Professor: But have you heard of it?

Student: Yeah. There is a new (()) by David Cronenberg

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Student: which is like opposite to what you said about Dead Ringers like it is about an abortion, woman walks into an abortion clinic

Professor: Ok

Student: The same thing, the instruments, and all that, and then the abortion being done.

Professor: Ok

Student: It is like a 10 minute shot

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Professor: Alright. Why is it totally opposite to what I, I think..?

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Student: In terms of

Professor: I think it is quite related to what I just said.

Student: Yeah, in one, killing.

Professor: Oh, Ok

Student: Yeah

Professor: But again

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Professor: interest in body parts, yes. And also then I was talking about Crash, and Crash has an extremely macabre and interesting premise. People who get involved in car accidents, Ok now can you recall the famous celebrities who have been killed?

Student: James Dean

Professor: James Dean, Ok

Student: Diana

Professor: Yeah but this movie was made much before that tragedy. , there are a couple of; there was this great Hollywood actress who married into Royalty, Grace Kelly.

Student: Princess of (())

Professor: Yeah, she too died in a road accident. And there were a couple of other actor, cinestars and sportspeople also. Now, there is this cult in Crash of people who actually emulate and try to stage those same accidents but they don't die. But they do these things repeatedly. And they are bruised and cut and there are scars and they wear it very proudly like a badge. Ok and they get sexually excited by their blood, their bruises, their bandages, their fractures. What is it about? Why are we talking about, it can't be about only body horror, what is the?

Student: Celebrity worship

Professor: Good, celebrity worship on one hand but it is also talking about that people no longer, we are living in those times when we can't make any connection with people unless we are, we crash together. Otherwise husbands and wives, parents and children we all live together but there is no connection, real connection. The only real connection we can make with is with people whom we crash into. Ok so if there are accidents, road accidents so

victims look at each other before dying. And their eyes meet and there is a connection which I never saw. So this kind of description on screen, I mean I know it is horrible. But what we are talking about, but what Flannery O'Connor must have said 50 years ago, that is the, it is the same premise, so you can connect these things, alright.

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Professor: I will skip a couple of paras and I will go to

Hulga had cracked her two eggs into a saucer and was bringing them to the table along with a cup of coffee that she had filled too full. She sat down carefully and began to eat, meaning to keep Mrs. Freeman there by questions if for any reason she showed an inclination to leave. She could perceive her mother's eye on her. The first round-about question would be about the Bible salesman and she did not wish to bring it on. "How did he pop her neck?" she asked.

And they talked of these things. We will move on to the next page.

Hulga got up and stumped, with about twice the noise that was necessary, into her room and locked the door. She was to meet the Bible salesman at ten o'clock at the gate. She had thought about it half the night. She had started thinking of it as a great joke and then she had begun to see profound implications in it. She had lain in bed imagining dialogues for them that were insane on the surface but that reached below the depths that no Bible salesman would be aware of. Their conversation yesterday had been of this kind.

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Professor: Now this is the kind of connection that she makes. What kind of a connection do you think, Rukma, is being talked about?

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Student: Condensing

Professor: Exactly

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Professor: she is a PhD in Philosophy. She can make these deep, profound statements.

Student: somebody could actually

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Student: raise up to the standard

Professor: Look up to

Student: and have a conversation with her

Professor: Exactly and he would be willing to, he will,

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M: he will be willing to what, subject himself to her. Ok, and that is the kind of, so we talk about feminism, Ok and here is a kind of typical toy boy that she, I mean look at her age. She is in her early 30s. He is 19, Ok. She looks at herself as a kind of mentor, as a kind of a teacher, and a lover who can initiate this rustic good country boy into finer things of life, Ok and because he is so low, so she feels that in spite of her disfigurement, she is, he is still not good enough for her. And he will be willing to place herself, place himself completely to his, to her mercy.

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Professor: He had stopped in front

So we are talking about power games again, power relations, sexual politics.

He had stopped in front of her and had simply stood there. His face was bony and sweaty and bright, with a little pointed nose in the center of it, and his look was different from what it had been at the dinner table. He was gazing at her with open curiosity, with fascination, like a child watching a new fantastic animal at the zoo

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Professor: Yesterday somebody made a presentation on Laura Mulvey and the Gaze, yes, Ok so can you relate these ideas? The way, what kind of a thing that Hulga appears to be? It's a toy; it's a freak, Ok. It's like a, it's like a zoo animal that has to be regarded and studied.

Student: An object of marvel

Professor: An object, yeah, how could you be like the way you are? Ok. You remember we, we have also done a movie called Lola Montez

Student: Yes

Professor: Yes, how is, Lola Montez used to be femina fatale of her times, but what is she reduced to?

Student: Circus

Professor: A circus freak, yes, so freaks jump all around the dwarfs and all, the circus ringmaster and she is forced to tell

Student: (())

Professor: Answer you know, lascivious questions about her, love affairs, and then later on she is forced to sell kisses for, you know, certain amount of money, 5 pence and all that, so women being reduced to caricatures.

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Professor: His gaze seemed somehow familiar but she could not think where she had been regarded with it before. For almost a minute he didn't say anything. Then on what seemed an insuck of breath, he whispered, "You ever ate a chicken that was two days old?"

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Professor: Now what kind of a romantic statement is that?

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Professor: The girl looked at him stonily. He might have just put this question up for consideration at the meeting of a philosophical association. “Yes,” she presently replied as if she had considered it from all angles. “It must have been mighty small!” he said triumphantly and shook all over with little nervous giggles

Don't you think it is quite weird? Yes

Getting very red in the face and subsiding finally into his gaze of complete admiration, while the girl's expression remained exactly the same “How old are you? She waited some time before she answered. “Seventeen”

His smiles came in succession like waves breaking on the surface of a little lake. “I see you got a wooden leg. I think you're real brave. I think you're real sweet.” The girl stood blank and solid and silent.

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Professor: It is so much like Hemingway, na, Hemingway kind of structures.

Student: It is ironical she wants to (())

Professor: Yes but he finds the wooden leg sweet, Ok because he is the kind of man who could, who asks the question like have you ever eaten a 2 day old chicken, yeah.

“Walk to the gate with me,” he said. “You’re a brave sweet little thing and I liked you the minute I seen you”

Is he talking about the chicken?

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Professor: that is 2 days?

Student: Yeah

Professor: Yeah, yeah, it is not a cooked chicken he is talked about, yes, so, I made a mistake here. Two day old chicken, so again this is quite, we are not talking about the rottenness of chicken but what are we talking about? Do you think, now I can see the connection here? Is he comparing himself to that chicken, a young chicken, a spring chicken just came out, and two day chicken how small it would be? Yeah. Generally do we cook a chicken that is 2 day old? Ok, we, people even for culinary purposes, they cook a full blown chicken, ok, not a 2 day chicken. So again we are talking about the weirdness and macabreness out there. I mean, it's quite a perverted story, I know. And they are perverted characters.

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Professor: “You’re a brave sweet little thing and I liked you the minute I seen you walk in the door.” Hulga began to move forward. “What’s your name?” he asked, smiling down on the top of her head.

Hulga began to move forward. “What’s your name?” he asked, smiling down on the top of her head. “Hulga,” she said. “Hulga, Hulga. Hulga. I never heard of anybody name Hulga before. You’re shy, aren’t you, Hulga?” he asked. She nodded, watching his large red hand on the handle of the giant valise. “I like girls that wear glasses. I think a lot. I’m not like these people that a serious thought don’t ever enter their heads. It’s because I may die.” “I may die too,” she said suddenly and looked up at him. His eyes were very small and brown, glittering feverishly.

Ashwin, can you read his part listen onwards?

Student: Yeah. “Listen, don’t you think some people was meant to meet on account of what all they got in common and all? Like they both think serious thoughts and all?”

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Professor: He shifted the valise to his other hand so that the hand nearest her

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Professor: was free. He caught hold of her elbow and shook it a little. Yeah.

Student: “I don’t work on Saturday,” he said. “I like to walk

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Student: in the woods and see what Mother Nature is wearing. O'er the hills and far away.
Picnics and things. Couldn't we go on a picnic tomorrow? Say yes, Hulga,"
Professor: He said and gave her a dying look as if he felt

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Professor: his insides about to drop out of him. He had even seemed to sway slightly toward her. Anu, read the next para.
Student: During the night she had imagined that she seduced him. She imagined that the two of them walked on the place until they came to the storage barn

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Student: beyond the two back fields and there, she imagined, that things came to such a pass that she very easily seduced him and that then, of course, she had to reckon with his remorse. True genius can get an idea across even to an inferior mind. She imagined that she took his remorse in hand and changed it into a deeper understanding of life. She took all his shame away and turned it into something useful.

She set off for the gate at exactly ten o'clock, escaping without drawing Mrs. Hopewell's attention. She didn't take anything to eat, forgetting that food is usually taken on a picnic. She wore a pair of slacks and a dirty white shirt, and as an afterthought, she had put some Vapex on the collar of it since she did not own any perfume. When she reached the gate no one was there.

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Professor: It's like an inhaler, Ok. She wants certain fragrance from her, some sort of a fragrance which is little pleasant, Ok since she didn't. She is a kind of woman, yes, who would never buy, she is a staunch feminist and also she is not a kind of woman who wants to attract men and only those women who want to attract men use or need these kinds of things, that's the idea, Ok. She doesn't but for the first time, she is turned on by a guy, Ok. this huge age difference, does it mean anything to you? Would you like to comment on this? I mean she says she is 17 and of course, he doesn't believe it. They are just trying to make some conversation.

Student: It is also possible that he is also not what he is saying?

Professor: But he looks, we can take him at his face value here. We really don't have any reason to disbelieve him on this one.

Student: Yeah

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Student: and Mrs. Hopewell also is not suspicious about his age.

Student: Is it possible that she feels some sort of, like insecurity about, I mean, how obviously like she is unattractive and may be

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Student: that's why a younger man

Student: Inexperienced

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Professor: Who could, inexperienced, yeah, so a younger man, inexperienced who she can initiate into things, so she seduces him. She dreams that she has seduced him.

Student: Is that why he will have remorse after?

Student: No, that's because of the Christians...

Student: Ok

Student: I think

Professor: Ok, yeah, Rukma can you read the next para? She looked up and down

Student: She looked up and down the empty highway and had the furious feeling that she had been tricked, that he only meant

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Student: to make her walk to the gate after the idea of him. Then suddenly he stood up, very tall, from behind a bush on the opposite embankment. Smiling, he lifted his hat which was new and wide-brimmed. He had not worn it yesterday and she wondered if he had bought it for the occasion. It was toast-colored with a red and white band around it and was slightly too large for him. He stepped from behind the bush still carrying the black valise. He had on the same suit and the same yellow socks sucked down in his shoes from walking. He crossed the highway and said, "I knew you'd come!"

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Professor: The girl wondered acidly how he had known this. She pointed to the valise and asked, "Why did you bring your Bibles?" Now see, this is very interesting. We have been talking of this mysterious, enigmatic box from the beginning. So he carries his valise. When he first opens that valise, it has Bibles.

Student: He took her elbow, smiling down on her as if he could not stop. "You can never tell when you'll need the word of God, Hulga," he said. She had a moment in which she doubted that this was actually happening

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Student: and then they began to climb the embankment. They went down into the pasture toward the woods. The boy walked lightly by her side, bouncing on his toes. The valise did not seem to be heavy today; he even swung it. They crossed half the pasture without saying anything and then, putting his hand easily on the small of her back, he asked softly, “Where does your wooden leg join on?”

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Professor: She turned an ugly red and glared at him and for an instant the boy looked abashed. “I didn’t mean you no harm,” he said. “I only meant you’re so brave and all. I guess God takes care of you.” “No, I don’t even believe in God.” At this he stopped and whistled. “No!” he exclaimed as if he were too astonished to say anything else.

She walked on and in a second he was bouncing at her side, fanning with his hat. “That’s very unusual for a girl,” he remarked, watching her out of the corner of his eye. When they reached the edge of the wood, he put his hand on her back again and drew her against him without a word and kissed her heavily.

The kiss, which had more pressure than feeling behind it, produced that extra surge of adrenalin in the girl that enables one to carry a packed trunk out of a burning house, but in her, the power went at once to the brain. Even before he released her, her mind, clear and detached and ironic anyway, was regarding him from a great distance, with amusement but with pity.

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Professor: This is the first time she has been kissed. With less feelings and more urgency, more like a sexual urgency. She feels aroused but she still wants to, I don't think this is the first time for him. Definitely this is the first time for her. Ok, she is the inexperienced one and she is the one who has plans of seducing him, so how the hunter becomes the hunted, yes.

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Professor: Again we are talking about reversal of sexual roles and politics, and power games that couples play.

She had never been kissed before and she was pleased to discover that it was an unexceptional experience and all a matter of the mind's control.

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Professor: Now, what do you think of this

Student: Everything from a very social, logical point

Professor: Intellectual

Student: Intellectual, yeah

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Professor: Intellectualize even matters related to sex and love, Ok.

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Professor: I can maintain my ironic distance from a kiss.

Student: Very confident of her

Professor: Control

Student: Yeah

Professor: Over her mind and her body. She thinks she has complete, yes, anything interesting you would like to add?

Student: We were comparing her

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Student: to another character. Amy Farrah Fowler from The Big Bang Theory

Student: A TV series

Professor: Oh

Student: But she is very, she kind of loses

Student: Yeah, but at the beginning. she is

Student: Yeah

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Professor: But you know, having sex without feeling, this is also one trait of extreme feminism. I can do, you know generally it is a man's prerogative that I can have sex and then I can completely detach myself. But here, Hulga, all her life, she has been determined to have complete control over, we know she is a control freak and you know, because of her

condition, she has become all the more, a control freak. But when wanted, she has been having her way around with the people at home. So she thinks that she can get her way in the world. Now this is an experience, she says so what's the big deal? I know I can detach myself from this, so he is the one who is going to get carried away. He will be in love, and yes, he will be blown away by me and then perhaps, you know, out of pity or out of mercy, I will give him something. I may not.

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Professor: Some people might enjoy drain water if they were told it was vodka. And why do we have this kind of sentence here?

Student: It's all in the mind

Professor: It's all in the mind.

When the boy, looking expectant but uncertain, pushed her gently away, she turned and walked on, saying nothing as if such business, for her, were common enough.

These things happen to me all the time. Ok, boys lose control. And kiss me passionately. It's nothing new to me.

He came along panting at her side, trying to help her when he saw a root that she might trip over. He caught and held back the long swaying blades of thorn vine until she had passed beyond them. She led the way and he came breathing heavily behind her. Then they came out on a sunlit hillside, sloping softly into another one a little smaller. Beyond, they could see the rusted top of the old barn where the extra hay was stored.

You know the place of rendezvous, well, kinds of places where lovers would go.

The hill was sprinkled with small pink weeds. “Then you ain’t saved?” he asked suddenly, stopping.

Ashmita and Arya Prakash, can you read the, take turns, paragraph each? The girl smiled

Student: It was the first time she had smiled at him at all. “In my economy,” she said, “I’m saved and you are damned but I told you I didn’t believe in God.”

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Student: Nothing seemed to destroy the boy’s look of admiration. He gazed at her now as if the fantastic animal at the zoo had put its paw through the bars and given him a loving poke. She thought he looked as if he wanted to kiss her again and she walked on before he had the chance.

Student: “Isn’t there somewhere we can sit down sometime?” he murmured, his voice softening toward the end of the sentence.

Student: “In that barn,” she said.

Student: They made for it rapidly as if it might slide away like a train. It was a large two-story barn, cool and dark inside. The boy pointed up the ladder that led into the loft and said, “It’s too bad we can’t go up there.

Student: “Why can’t we?” she asked.

Student: “Yer leg,” he said reverently.

Professor: This

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Professor: don't you think, reverently is an ironic thing? Reverently means why? Why reverently? He could, she could have used the word concernedly or sincerely or earnestly, yeah, feelingly but reverently?

Student: The dominant feeling is awe Yeah, he still really in awe and how, the kind of person she is despite her disfigurement, that's she is still, so

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Student: in control of everything

Student: It is ironic.

Student: Is it ironic here?

Student: I mean I don't know.

Professor: yeah, it could be

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Professor: it may not be ironic. Perhaps the reverence is, as you were talking about, the attraction is because of the disfigurement. Otherwise, without that, there wouldn't have been any attraction to begin with, yeah. So he is odd by her condition and that's what appeals to him. So we are talking about the human beast, the perversion, yeah

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Professor: The girl gave him a contemptuous look and putting both hands, I mean, what you think of me; I can do it as well as any other person.

she climbed it while he stood below, apparently awestruck. She pulled herself expertly through the opening and then looked down at him and said, "Well, come on if your coming," and he began to climb the ladder, awkwardly bringing the suitcase with him. "You won't need the Bible," she says again.

“You never can tell,” he said, panting. After he had got into the loft, he was a few seconds catching his breath. She had sat down in a pile of straw. A wide sheath of sunlight,

I will skip a few lines.

The boy dropped down by her side and put one arm under her and the other over her and began methodically kissing her face, making little noises like a fish. He did not remove his hat but it was pushed far enough back not to interfere. When her glasses got in his way, he took them off of her and slipped them into his pocket.

Why should he take her glasses and slip them into his pocket? We will come to it.

The girl at first did not return any of the kisses but presently she began to and after she had put several on his cheek, she reached his lips and remained there, kissing him again and again as if she were trying to draw all the breath out of him. His breath was clear and sweet like a child's and the kisses were sticky like a child's. He mumbled about loving her and about knowing when he first seen her that he loved her, but the mumbling was like the sleepy fretting of a child being put to sleep by his mother. Her mind, throughout this, never stopped or lost itself for a second to her feelings. “You ain't said you loved me none,” he whispered finally, pulling back from her. “You got to say that.”

She looked away from him off into the hollow sky and then down at a black ridge and then down farther into what appeared to be two green swelling lakes. She didn't realize he had taken her glasses but this landscape could not seem exceptional to her for she seldom paid any close attention to her surroundings.

She never bothered about nature, remember?

“You got to say it. You got to say you love me.”

She was always careful how she committed herself. “In a sense, if you use the word loosely, you might say that.”

So she still is in control or giving impression of it.

“But it's not a word I use. I don't have illusions. I'm one of those people who see through to nothing.”

You know, I can have sex without love; I am that kind of a person.

The boy was frowning. "You got to say it. I said it and you got to say it", like a typical date, teenage, you have to say you love me.

"You poor baby, It's just as well you don't understand," and she pulled him back, and she pulled him by the neck, face-down, against her. "We are all damned," she said, "but some of us have taken off our blindfolds and see that there's nothing to see. It's a kind of salvation."

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Professor: The sooner you accept there is no such thing as love, Ok, so again we are talking naturalism here? Yeah, no feeling, sex for the sake of it, Ok a physical hunger, you satisfy it and carry on with your life. And that's her intention. She is definitely not in love although she wants to experiment sex.

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Professor: The boy's astonished eyes looked blankly through the ends of her hair. "Okay, but do you love me or don't?" "Yes," she said and added, "in a sense. But I must tell you something. There mustn't be anything dishonest between us. "I am 30 years old; I have a number of degrees."

How does it matter?

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Professor: She could have just said I am 30 years old, you know. That's it.

Student: Educated woman,

Student: (()) could be intimidated by (())

Professor: You see I am older and more sophisticated and highly educated woman. I am almost like your mother, you know. This child imagery coming repeatedly, yeah so if we got

to do this, let's get on with it. Otherwise let's not bring feelings into it, Ok. I can intellectualize these things, you can't. I have degrees. What would you know about?

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Professor: The boy's look was irritated but dogged. "I don't care, I don't care a thing about what all you done." degrees, what you all done. "I just want to know if you love me or don't cher?" and he caught her to him and wildly planted her face with kisses until she said, "Yes, yes." "Okay then, "Prove it." She smiled, looking dreamily and you know, what she could have thought, what could be going on in her mind. You prove it, that's. you consent to sex with me, that's the way I will prove.

"How?" she asked, feeling that he should be delayed a little. He leaned over and put his lips to her ear. "Show me where your wooden leg joins on," The girl uttered a sharp little cry and her face instantly drained of color. The obscenity of the suggestion was not what shocked her. As a child she had sometimes been subject to feelings of shame but education had removed the last traces of that as a good surgeon scrapes for cancer; she would no more have felt it over what he was asking than she would have believed in his Bible. But she was as sensitive about the artificial leg as a peacock about his tail. No one ever touched it but her. She took care of it as someone else would his soul, in private and almost with her own eyes turned away. "No," she said.

"I known it," "You're just playing me for a sucker." "Oh no, no, no!" she cried. "It joins on at the knee. Only at the knee. Why do you want to see it?" The boy gave her a long

penetrating look. “it’s what makes you different. You ain’t like anybody else.” She sat staring at him. There was nothing about her face or her round freezing-blue eyes to indicate that this had moved her; but she felt as if her heart had stopped and left her mind to pump her blood. She decided that for the first time in her life she was face to face with real innocence.

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Professor: Why does she regard him with this kind of an innocent, it is a like, what is it to her? This suggestion which is so obscene and horrifying?

Student: (())

Professor: Then she begins to realize it is only by way of innocence that he has made such ghastly remark. He didn't mean no harm. That is how she tries to interpret this. Now look at the difference between them. With all her education, she is not able to understand the human depravity. Ok with nothing, with no education and with just worldly and earthy kind of a charm, this man is able to probe into the psychological depths of this unfinished girl.

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Professor: Alright, it was like surrendering to him completely. It was like losing her own life and finding it again, miraculously in his.

Very gently, he began to roll the slack leg up. The artificial limb, in a white sock and brown flat shoe, was bound in a heavy material like canvas and ended in an ugly jointure where it was attached to the stump. The boy's face and his voice were entirely reverent as he uncovered it and said, "Now show me how to take it off and on."

She took it off for him and put it back on again and then he took it off himself, handling it as tenderly as if it were a real one. "See!" he said with a delighted child's face. "Now I can do it myself!" "Put it back on," She was thinking that she would run away with him and that every night he would take the leg off and every morning put it back on again. "Put it back on". "Not yet, Leave it off for awhile. You got me instead."

She gave a little cry of alarm but he pushed her down and began to kiss her again. Without the leg she felt entirely dependent on him. Her brain seemed to have stopped thinking altogether and to be about some other function that it was not very good at. Different expressions raced back and forth over her face. Every now and then the boy, his eyes like two steel spikes, would glance behind him where the leg stood. Finally she pushed him off and said, "Put it back on me now."

“Wait,” he said. He leaned the other way and pulled the valise toward him and opened it. It had a pale blue spotted lining and there were only two Bibles in it. He took one of these out and opened the cover of it. It was hollow and contained a pocket flask of whiskey, a pack of cards, and a small blue box with printing on it.

So this is the

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Professor: valise of the Bible man, playing cards and a whisky, Ok and there is a pouch.

He laid these out in front of her one at a time in an evenly-spaced row

Do you think this is again some kind of a game that they are playing?

Student: Looks like a sacrifice.

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Student: There are these things that are being presented like offering at the shrine of a goddess.

Professor: Don't you think if there is a touch

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Professor: not just a small touch but a huge touch of sado machoism here?

Student: Yeah

Professor: Both of them are enjoying this kind of a game, games couples play. She is at her, with her leg off; she has completely lost control of herself.

He put the blue box

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Professor: in her hand. THIS PRODUCT TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE PREVENTION OF DISEASE, she read, and dropped it. The boy was unscrewing the top of the flask. He stopped and pointed, with a smile, to the deck of cards. It was not an ordinary deck but one with an obscene picture on the back of each card. “Take a swig,” he said, offering her the bottle first. He held it in front of her, but like one mesmerized, she did not move.

Now see,

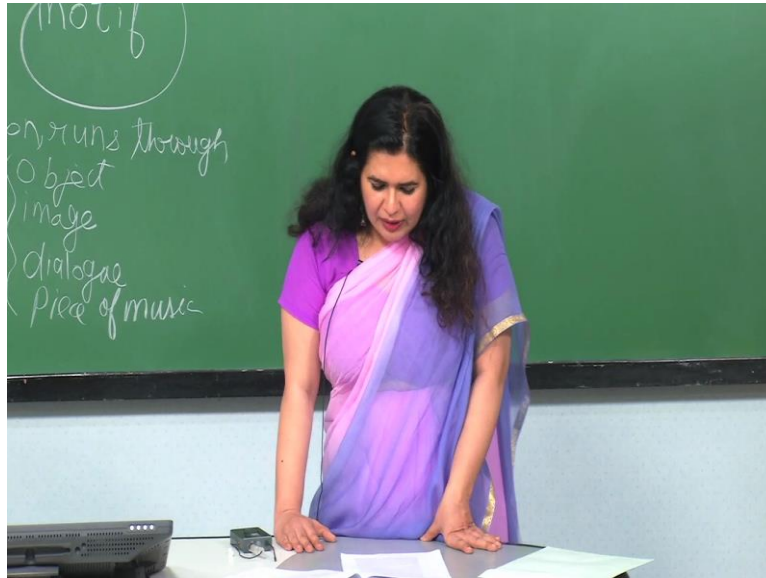
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Professor: he is teaching her things. She has never done these things, never seen these things. Obscene pictures, we are talking about pornography here. Flannery O'Connor those times, 1950s, we are talking about still censorship and there were lot of restrictions on freedom of

expression and she is using all these and prevention of disease, you know what kinds of products, we are talking about.

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Professor: Her voice when she spoke had an almost pleading sound. “Aren’t you,” she murmured, “aren’t you just good country people?”

How could you? Ok, sex is one thing but liquor and obscenity and pornography, you are good country people.

The boy cocked his head. Sorry. He looked as if he were just beginning to understand that she might be trying to insult him. “Yes,” he said, curling his lip slightly, “but it ain’t held me back none. I’m as good as you any day in the week.” “Give me my leg,” she said. He pushed it farther away with his foot. “Come on now; let’s begin to have us a good time. We ain’t got to know one another good yet.”

“Give me my leg!” she screamed and tried to lunge for it but he pushed her down easily.

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Professor: Why this sudden change in her mood?

Student: Now she is vulnerable

Student: Uptil that point it was about

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Student: taking the leg. Now after this

Student: And she thought she knew him. She said...

Professor: The child.

Student: She thought she had him all figured out.

Professor: Yes

Student: And the first time.

Professor: And this is the first time she is facing evil face to face.

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Professor: “What’s the matter with you all of a sudden?” he asked, frowning as he screwed the top on the flask and put it quickly back inside the Bible.

The flask in the Bible, Ok.

“You just a while ago said you didn’t believe in nothing. I thought you was some girl!”

Her face was almost purple. “You’re a Christian! You’re a fine Christian! You’re just like them all – say one thing and do another. You’re a perfect Christian”

The boy’s mouth was set angrily. “I hope you don’t think, that I believe in that crap! I may sell Bibles but I know which end is up and I wasn’t born yesterday and I know where I’m going!”

“Give me my leg!” she screeched. He jumped up so quickly that she barely saw him sweep the cards and the blue box back into the Bible and throw the Bible into the valise. She saw him grab the leg and then she saw it for an instant slanted forlornly across the inside of the suitcase with a Bible at either side of its opposite ends. He slammed the lid shut and snatched up the valise and swung it down the hole and then stepped through himself. When all of him had passed but his head, he turned and regarded her with a look that no longer had any admiration in it. “I’ve gotten a lot of interesting things,” he said. “One time I got a woman’s glass eye this way.”

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Professor: So a one eyed woman, a girl who has lost her eye in an accident. I made her remove her eye of her.

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Professor: And you needn't to think you'll catch me because Pointer ain't really my name. I use a different name at every house I call at and don't stay nowhere long. And I'll tell you another thing, Hulga," he said, using the name as if he didn't think much of it, "you ain't so smart. I been believing in nothing ever since I was born!" and then the toast-colored hat disappeared down the hole and the girl was left, sitting on the straw in the dusty sunlight. When she turned her churning face toward the opening, she saw his blue figure struggling successfully over the green speckled lake.

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Professor: So this incident has taught her more than any PhD could have taught about human life and human nature and depravity.

And suddenly look at the sudden shift of scenery or landscape.

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Professor: Mrs. Hopewell and Mrs. Freeman, who were in the back pasture, digging up onions, diggions, again were homely scene, right, a domestic scene, saw him emerge a little later from the woods and head across the meadow towards the highway. “Why, that looks like that nice dull young man that tried to sell me a Bible yesterday,” Mrs. Hopewell said, squinting. “He must have been selling them to the Negroes back in there. He was so simple,” she said, “but I guess the world would be better off if we were all that simple.”

If only we, we could be all be nice like him, Ok. Mrs. Freeman's gaze drove forward and just touched him before he disappeared under the hill. Then she returned her attention to the evil-smelling onion shoot she was lifting from the ground. "Some can't be that simple," she said. "I know I never could."

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What an ironical, you know it is not possible to be that naive, that innocent. I can't be and the evil smelling onion. Ok, so they have all seen evil, evil that comes to sell Bibles, and they have failed to recognize, a good country people. Alright then.