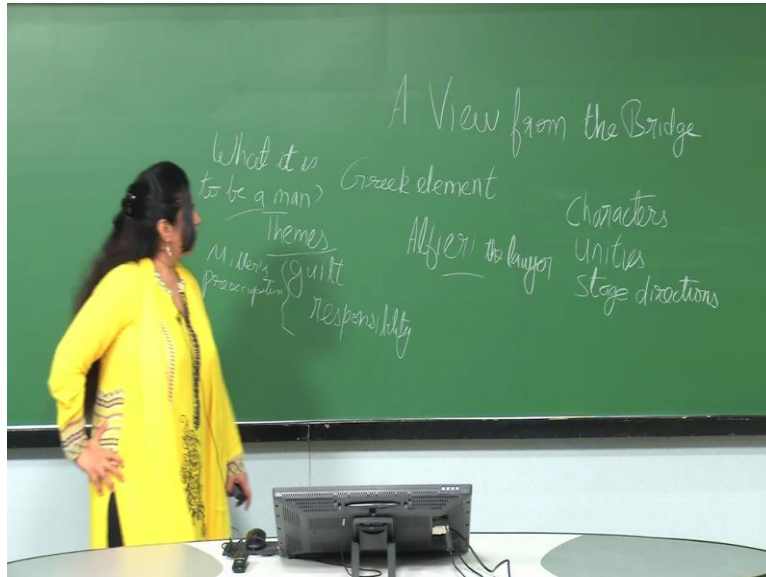


**American Literature & Culture**  
**Prof. Aysha Iqbal Vishwamohan**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Science**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Madras**  
**Mod 06 Lecture Number 35**  
**Arthur Miller A View from the Bridge (Lecture 29)**

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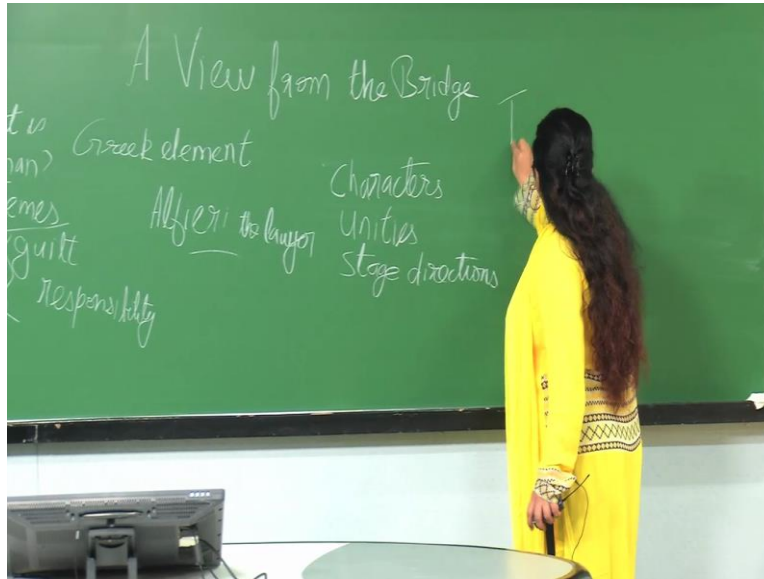
(Professor – student conversation starts)

Professor: So good morning. We will start with A View from the Bridge, Arthur Miller's play that was a part of a double bill as I was telling you the other day, along with A Memory of Two Mondays. Remember we were talking about two plays as double bill, so Memory of Two Mondays was the smaller, lower budget play and this was also staged simultaneously, the other play that is the view from the bridge. Now which bridge could he mean? Good, because it is set in Brooklyn and Brooklyn is, what is Brooklyn known for? What kinds of people live in Brooklyn?

Student: Immigrants

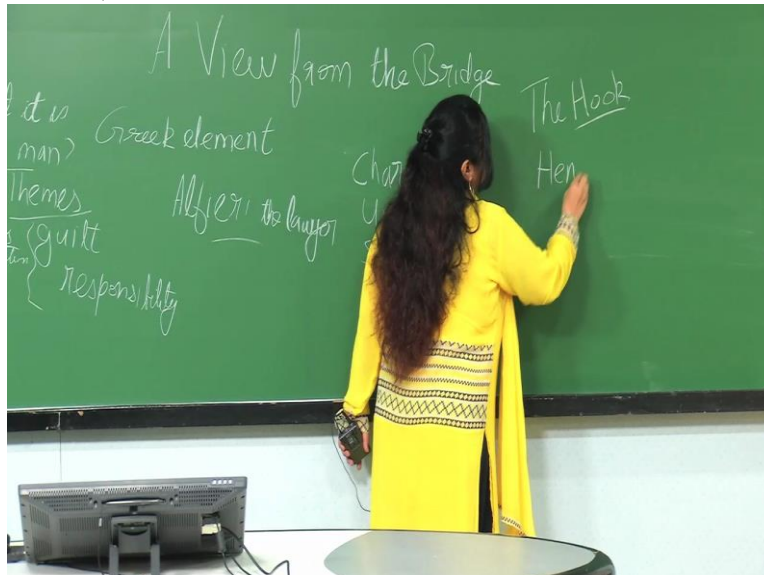
Professor: Immigrants good and also people of various ethnic varieties; so immigrants and as she rightly pointed out, so various ethnicities particularly Jews, not so rich Jews and especially Italian Americans. So this is a play about first and second generation Italian Americans. So we are talking about immigration issues now. Now before I move on to whatever I have written on board, this is standard stuff but I want you to

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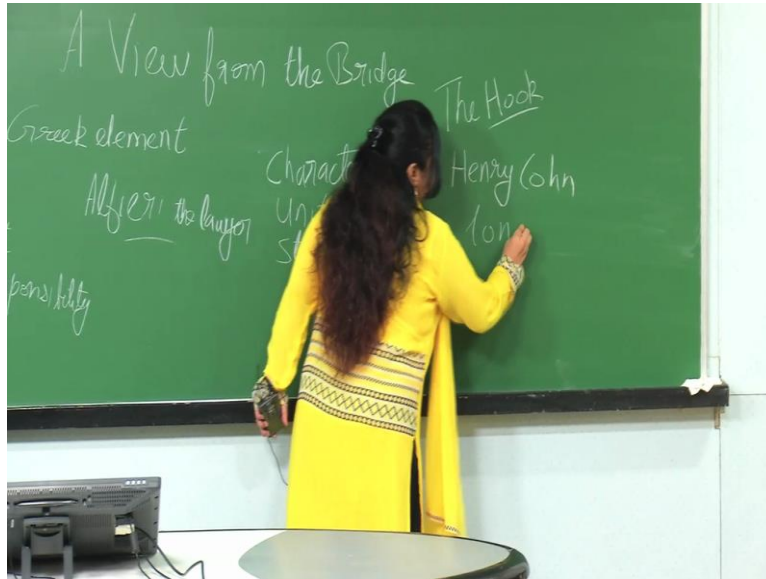
Professor: have a background about why Miller wrote the play A View from the Bridge. See, Miller was once commissioned after enormous success of the Death of a Salesman to write a movie script for Columbia Pictures Ok and Columbia Pictures interestingly was also owned by immigrants, Jew immigrants and the boss, this may not be too relevant for you people now but just know it in a larger context. Columbia Pictures was owned

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Professor: by a Jew called Henry Cohn, who was and you know people apply all kind of Jews, Jewish stereotypes to Henry Cohn so Miller was commissioned to write the script about the lives of

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Professor: longshoremen. Who are these people, who work at the docks? Let us say, as porters, as coolies. These are the longshoremen who work at the docks, shipyards. Miller did a lot of research. He was commissioned to do the writing and write the dialog and screen play for a movie and he had never done a movie before that. So he thought it is a great opportunity to do this and he researched for quite a while, he collected lot of material about the lives and attitudes of longshoremen; what were the social contexts, political contexts in which they operated and he discovered a lot of the startling facts.

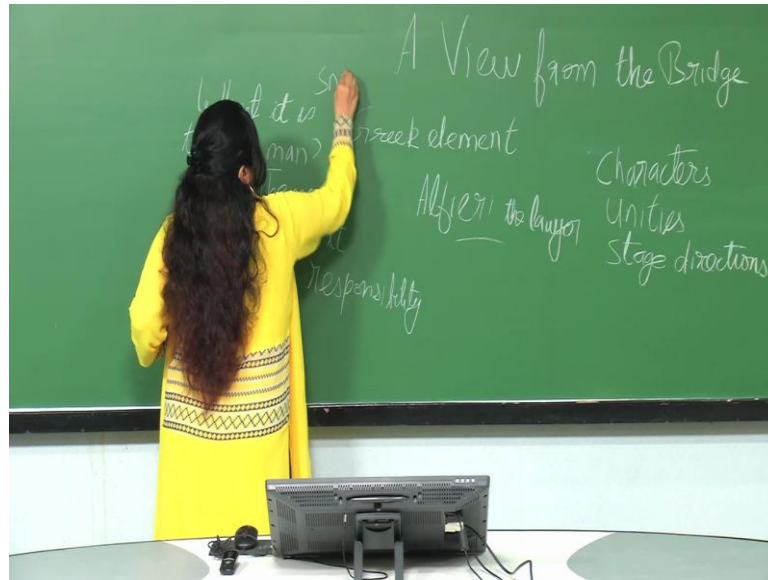
He called his script, the first draft as the Hook, Ok, The Hook, and it was given to Henry Cohn of Columbia Pictures and by that time, Miller was already one of those, you know, who was named by, know, the McCarthy Commission and during the trials his name had come up. So immediately he became an outcast that this person is dangerous. So Henry Cohn, true to his style, he said he does not want anything to do with Miller or his script and he can take his script and do whatever he wants to do. And it was also the, you remember who the director he often collaborated with on-stage?

Student: Elia

Professor: Elia Kazan, yeah. Elia Kazan was supposed to direct the picture based on The Hook but Elia Kazan was in the good books of Henry Cohn because he has named names. So Elia Kazan remained while Miller was chucked out. That is the background. But Miller had done lot of work anyway and he had shared his research with Elia Kazan and Henry Cohn so his work was quite good and they were interested in this material, they didn't, they weren't interested in Miller. So that's another thing that Miller used all that material and wrote the

play, *The View from the Bridge*, Ok because he had already done a lot of work on that. And Elia Kazan used part of that material or at least channeled some of it, into which film? Good, *On the Waterfront*, so that, while *A View from the Bridge* is about snitches or rats

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Professor: and how rats should be punished, *On the Waterfront* has a contrary ideology that it is alright to be a rat at times. Ok, that is Kazan talking and this is Miller talking, that this is what you do to snitches. Both plays, both the film as well as the play, they are about snitches and rats or moles as we call them, Ok. Uh interestingly when he was researching *The Hook*, Miller found a lot of disturbing elements in the underbelly of this section of society and most importantly how pathetic the lives of longshoremen were, because they weren't given the work on regular basis.

They were just, I am sure some of you must have watched the film *Deewar*. Ok, Salim-Javed scripted the film, Amitabh Bachchan acted in it, Ok and you remember how he starts off in the film; as a dockyard coolie. Yeah and there perhaps you will remember, in the initial stages, when he is a coolie, there are some scenes, there are some big businesses and they have their henchmen planted at the docks who distribute who is going to do what work on a day and they will collect their share at the end of the day. Do you remember that?

Ok, so that's what Miller discovered even in America. That this was a practice, very common, very prevalent among the society, there were mafia at work, Ok who would assign which longshoreman is going to do what kind of work today and they would just come and wait in

long queues like beggars, who is going to get work today and then the mafia lord would come down from his, step out from his limousine and throw chits and they would just like animals, go after those slips of paper and try to, and whoever would get a number, Ok so No 1, whoever has got that token number 1 or token number 10, he is given work today, so that is the way it operate, so subhuman, inhuman conditions. So Miller tried to expose that. Before that, the facts were known but they were not so widely publicized. So there was a social, so Miller is a social realist, above anything else. Ok, he applies a lot of dramatic techniques.

But you have done Tennessee Williams. Tennessee Williams, yes but Tennessee Williams and Miller, how so they differ? You would define Tennessee Williams brand of realism as poetic realism, very inward. His characters are inward looking. Miller's characters are voluble; they talk as well they express themselves. It is always, Miller's plays are basically considered as vehicles of social consciousness and social message. There is, whatever they may be, Ok, they may be about family relationships, they may be about brothers versus brothers and father versus sons, man versus his, know, man in confrontation with his social circumstances but they are always, at the core they are always about, or interrogation or they are always interrogating something about the social conditions, OK and very much realist, very much grounded in realism.

So he used, he uses a range of technical devices, most prominently expressionism. He liked the technique a lot. He said a lot of what a character, a lot of what goes on inside the head of a character can be expressed by using expressionism, expressionistic techniques on stage but at the same time his concern was always with society. Remember this, Ok. One very distinct feature of, distinction rather between American Literature and European literature, what is it? European literature, the hero in European literature is always at conflict with himself, right? Think Kafka's heroes, Ok; Think (( )) Pru's heroes, Ok they are of course novels but even if you look at Strindberg or any other, Pirandello yeah, so heroes are at conflict within the, conflict is within himself, lascivious society. American hero most of the time is confronting social conditions. So perhaps this is the difference between the old European and new American world. So, society by, in old Europe everything is settled too much, so there is, you can't do much about changing the social order, social system. In American life, yes you can. So it is always there.

The other day I was telling you Miller's legacy and how it resonates in the works of people like Tony Kushner, Ok who has written Angels in America most famously, that is his most famous work. But he has also written, remember the screenplays of films such as Munich, Eric Bana's Munich which was directed by Steven Spielberg and also quite recently, Lincoln and (()) screen play by the great Tony Kushner. Now consider how it is man versus social conditions. Even still that idea prevails. Then another important dramatist who is influenced by Miller's dramaturgy is David Mamet and we were talking about Glengarry Glen Ross, Ok which is like reworking of Miller's Death of a Salesman and subversion of The Great American Dream.

If you watch a movie like American Beauty again, that is also commentary on social circumstances, Ok. This, and American Beauty is about a dysfunctional family but what is the reason for dysfunction? See people have drawn parallels between American Beauty which has a screen play by the dramatist screen writer Alan Ball and Miller's Death of a Salesman. So what is the conflict? The reason is the central premise of American Beauty is that suburbia has just gone to the dogs and American families; there is no such thing as an ideal American family. Ok but what is the reason for this situation or this condition?

Well the title itself gives it away, American Beauty; they chase a dream Ok, which is beyond reach. Ok, they have an idealized kind of life which is beyond reach. Ok that is just not possible, so and the social circumstances are so competitive, so cut-throat that it is very difficult for people to live up to. Remember Lester Burnham, that is the hero in American Beauty, what is his problem? At work? He is emasculated at work, he is emasculated at home. Why is he emasculated at home, because his wife thinks he is not successful enough? Ok, he is a loser, he is a goner.

And wife always competes with the best, she is a real estate person, agent Ok and she doesn't sell enough houses and she constantly berates herself in private but in public she puts up a brave and very cheerful persona so that, you know that is what all the self-help guides tell you to do. Put up a front, Ok, do your best, dress your best, look your best, something good will happen. She lives by that adage. The daughter, she wants to collect money for her dress enhancement. Therefore, society tells you how a beautiful woman should look like, what should be her proportions like, Ok so that again, a commentary on social condition. So this is

what I wanted to tell you about Miller and his preoccupation with society; that is very much there. Now, we will be looking at the Greek elements in the play

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Professor: Ok and as the other day I was telling you, All my Sons is a text book example of a Greek play. It has the theme of conflict between fathers and sons; father, son, father leading indirectly to the death of his sons and vice-versa. Son leads the death, causes the suicide of his father, so theme of patricide. Ok. We also talk about the characters. Some of the characters, they are distinctly Grecian in nature. Unities are observed more or less, Ok. It is a very, specially unity of action, Ok. Unity of place as well, everything takes place at, mostly in one place but unity of action is extremely, is very well preserved. And then also pay attention to voluminous stage directions. You have done Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. There are lengthy stage directions there. This play has as many, OK.

This play also has a lot of stage directions and Miller being totally in control of what he wants you to see and what he wants, how he wants the play to be directed. There are several, recent American playwrights who have done away with stage directions. You don't get to, but here, there are some playwrights who tell you the color of the heroine's hair, Ok. the color of hero's hair, the color of clothes and all, everything is just described in great detail, Ok. The material of hero's suit, Ok, silk shirt or tattered shirt or T shirt or whatever, Ok. All these things are given to us but younger playwrights, they do not observe so much. So here, you will find ample stage directions, Ok. there is also an interesting character Alfieri, the lawyer who you will meet as the play opens, the play opens with his soliloquy, Ok you have to tell me what his function is.

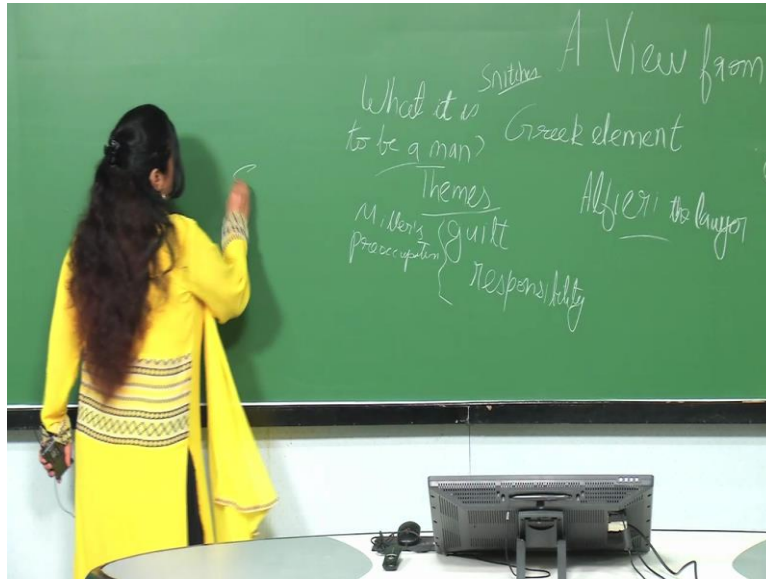
Themes, we were talking about when I introduced *The View from the Bridge* to you, or Miller to you rather, I told you that guilt and responsibility, so, what sort of guilt are we talking about now? It is a philosophical question. What is guilt? The premise is that we are all responsible for each other. There is a sense of social responsibility, see. Who said *For Whom the Bell tolls*? Good, before Hemingway, John Donne, never ask *For whom the bell tolls*, it tolls for thee. So the idea is death of every man diminishes you, Ok and this idea was extremely prevalent especially during the Holocaust, also during the Wars, the great Wars and also during the Holocaust that it is none of my business.

You can't say that. Even if you are not killing anyone, you can't just sit back. If you don't protest, you are participating in that. That is the premise. So there has to be a larger sense of responsibility. You are not responsible only for, *Am I my brother's keeper?* that is what Cain said when Able is killed. So this is not the, yeah, you are not just responsible for your immediate surroundings or immediate relatives but you are also a global citizen. So every man's death is supposed to influence you.

Miller as an activist, the other day we were talking about that also. So that has to be there and if you don't do that, if you don't take up responsibility, you are guilty of letting down. So guilt remains. The guilty feelings remain and Miller's, according to Miller, it is very difficult to overcome this kind of guilt when you don't like up to your responsibility. When you have to learn with the guilt, there is no getting away. In order to attain self-hood, yeah, in order to become something more than, you know you have done ego and superego, Ok. So, Miller's idea of being a responsible citizen is to attain that level of superego. Now these are the themes you will find here and then most importantly, *A View from the Bridge* should be read from the perspective of, or theories of masculinity. So there are a number of characters. Particularly, there is some, our hero Eddie Carbone

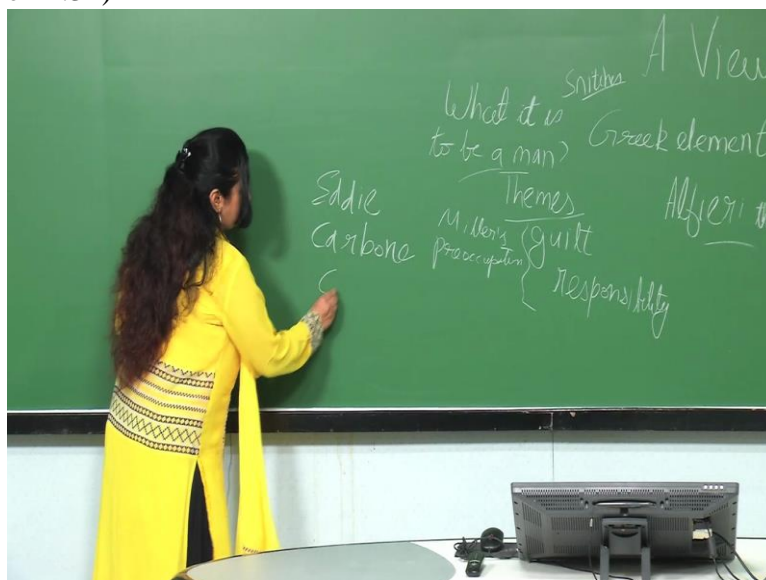


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Professor: or Eddie Carbone whatever way you want to pronounce his name, Eddie Carbone, Italian American longshoreman, Eddie Carbone. Then you have two Italian immigrants Rudolpho and Marco and they are, they come straight from Sicily. So before you start imagining the Godfather kind of set up, they are anything but. Ok so they are immigrants who have come to gain their, or earn their livelihood in America, because we are told that in Italy there is lot of beauty, there is lot of scenery but there is no job, there is no work, therefore people come but what the problem is that, those two cousins and they are, those cousins, they are not Eddie's cousins directly

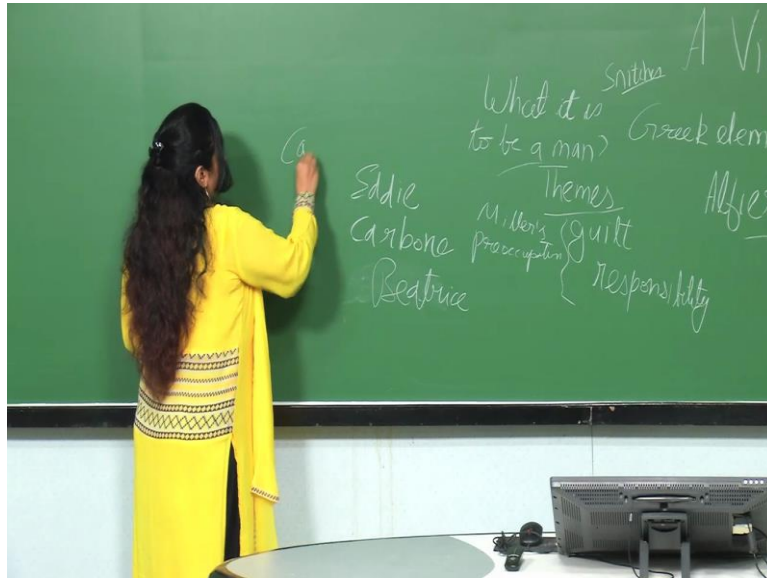
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Professor: but his wife's. So he is a 40 something man. And he has, Oh, I am sorry, Katherine is not his wife. Beatrice, Ok, so Beatrice, they are Beatrice's cousins and Eddie houses them

because you are responsible for your fellow countrymen. That is the idea here. And then Eddie has a niece, an orphan niece.

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And here is another Grecian character, this she is a 16-year old girl, Catherine, he is 40, she is 16 and he has a middle-aged wife in whom he has lost interest but he is developing feeling for his niece. Ok and that is the basic premise. So now you have 3 kinds of masculinities here; Rudolpho's masculinity who is a very young and extremely good looking immigrant. The poor Sicilian who comes here, and who starts living with Eddie, Ok then you have Eddie Carbone, a very, , you know, a typical, traditional Italian American and then you have Marco. Ok so all these kinds so you can pit Eddie's masculinity and Rudolpho's masculinity as two ends of the spectrum. And where do you fit in all the other, here? So this is the background. You have any question, any comment here?

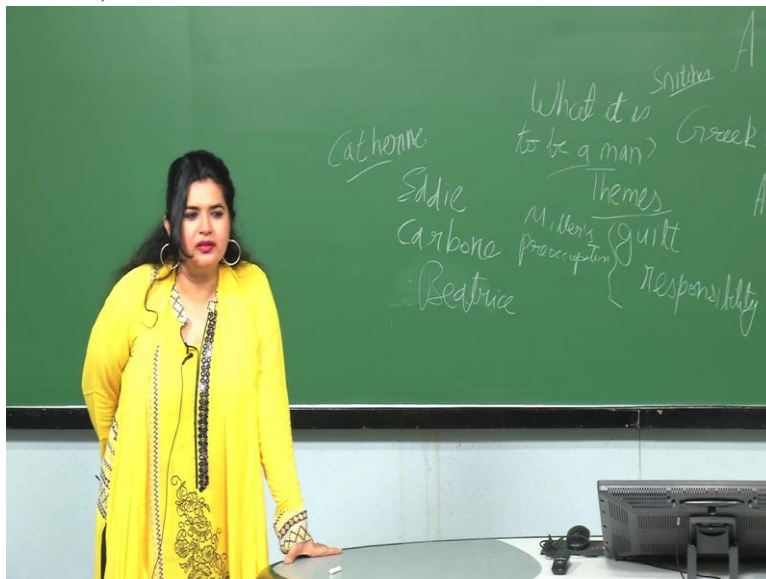
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Student: Catherine is Beatrice's sister?

Professor: No, sister's daughter, yeah,

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Professor: she is Beatrice's sister's daughter, her parents are dead, so she has been brought up in the family like their own child. And interestingly Eddie and Beatrice do not have any children. Uh, let me read out the stage directions for you and then we will have a discussion.

It's a 1956 play.

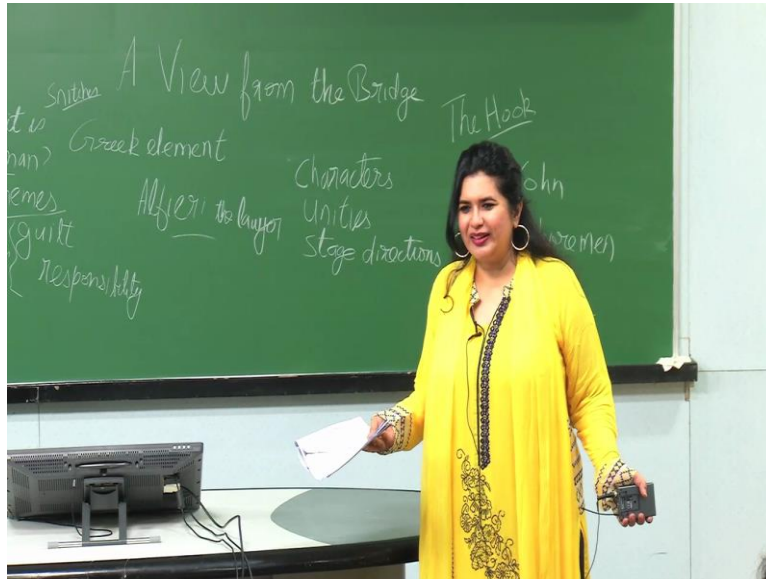
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Professor: So Act 1, the street and house front of a tenement building. You know tenement building? Again reinforces the idea that is a very poor neighborhood. The front is skeletal entirely. The main acting area is the living dining room of Eddie's apartment. It is a worker's flat, clean, sparse, homely. There is a rocker down front. What is a rocker, rocking chair kind of. A round tiny dining table at center with chairs and a portable phonograph; phonograph is going to play a very important role here. You know phonograph? May be some of you would be familiar with the old-fashioned record player.

Ok, you must have seen in your grandparents' home, record player and also those stereos, there used to be those long playing LPs. Before you started downloading music, at back a bedroom door and opening to the kitchen, none of these interiors are seen at the right, forestage. This is Mr. Alfieri's law office. He is a lawyer. We were just talking about Alfieri, the lawyer. Interestingly, some researcher has pointed out that there is always a lawyer in Arthur Miller. Very interesting, people when you do research, the things you can stumble upon.

(Refer Slide Time 26:59)



Professor: So in his, if someone has done reading of all his plays, there is always a lawyer character. Why? The answer is simple, his pre-occupation with social realism, Ok and society and lawyers for us, Ok, what do lawyers do? For us, I don't know but generally, what is a lawyer's profession supposed to be like? To uphold, to enforce, to preserve the sanctity of law, so that is what he is supposed to do. That's what lawyers do in Miller's plays. There is also a telephone booth. Now this is very interesting. Telephone booth is also going to play a very important role. This is not used until the last scene so it may be covered or left in, Miller is telling you all these things; that it is up to the stage direction or the director or the director of the play to do whatever they want. He wants a telephone booth on stage.

It can be shown or it cannot be shown, it is up to you. Stairway leads up to the apartment and then further up to the next storey which is not seen. Ramps representing the street run upstage and off to the right and left as the curtain rises, Louis and Mike, longshorem are pitching coins against the building at left, a distant foghorn blows. Enter Alfieri, a lawyer in his 50s, turning grey. He is sportly, good-humored and thoughtful. The two pitchers nod to him as he passes. He crosses the stage to his desk, removes his hat, runs his fingers through his hair and grinning, speaks to the audience. Shubjeet, now speak to the audience.

(Refer Slide Time 28:57)



Student: You wouldn't have known it, but something amusing has just happened. You see how easily they nod to me? That is because I am a lawyer. In this neighborhood, to meet a lawyer or a priest on the street is unlucky. They are only thought of in connection with disasters and they would rather not get too close. I often think that behind their suspicious nod of theirs, there is 3000 years of distrust. A lawyer means the law and in Sicily, from where their fathers came, the law has not been a friendly idea since the Greeks were beaten. I am inclined to notice the ruin, the ruins in things, perhaps because I was born in Italy. I only came here when I was 25. In those days, Al Capone the greatest Carthaginian of all was learning his trade on these pavements and Frankie Yale himself was cut precisely in half by a machine gun on the corner of Union Street, two blocks away. Oh there were many here who were justly shot by unjust men. Justice is very important here.

(Refer Slide Time 30:06)



Professor: Justly shot by unjust men. Now this is Godfather meting out justice. Justly shot by unjust men, so they may not be legally entitled or empowered to punish those who have been doing some, some injustice round the neighborhood. But once they are punished by these so-called unjust men, people who pursue illegal activities, they are respected. These men are respected because they have enforced law. It is very interesting and it tells you the entire socio-political system from which the Mafia must have (()), yes.

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Student: But this is Red Hook, not Sicily. This is the slum that faces the bay on the seaward side of Brooklyn bridge. This is the gullet of New York swallowing the tonnage of the world. And now, we are quite civilized, quite American. Now we settle for half, and I like it better. I no longer keep pistol in my filing cabinet. And my practice is entirely unromantic. My wife

has warned me so have my friends. They tell me the people in this neighborhood lack elegance, glamour.

After all, who have I dealt with in my life? Longshoremen and their wives, and fathers and grandfathers, compensation cases, evictions, family squabbles – the petty troubles of the poor – and yet . . . every few years there is still a case, and as the parties tell me what the trouble is, the flat air in my office suddenly washes in with the green scent of the sea, the dust in this air is blown away and the thought comes that in some Caesar’s year, in Calabria perhaps or on the cliff at Syracuse, another lawyer, quite differently dressed, heard the same complaint and sat there as powerless as I, and watched it run its bloody course.

(Refer Slide Time 32:00)



Professor: Ok So he is mentioning all these ancient romantic places, yeah so, what are the places that he mentions? Carsage (()),

Student: Syracuse

Professor: Syracuse

Student: Calabria

Professor: Calabria, now references are to these Italian and Grecian lands, Ok. Their old fashioned justice would be meted out or doled out to people. Now I am an American now, that's what he is telling the audience. I am an American now. But what does that mean? But once in a while a case, my practice is very prosaic, that is what he is telling you and therefore I like it better? I no longer keep a pistol or revolver in my desk. But once in a while, there comes a case and this dust and this air, it just vanishes and I start smelling the dust and air of



my homeland or at least from the place where my ancestors came. What does it mean? Good, two senses or ideas of justice clash here.

Ok, so it is a different kind of American, American legal system is very different from the old fashioned Italian system of justice, Ok and which is much more romantic, more glamorous of course, yeah unlike this American system of law and order. So this is what, today I deal only with law problem, problems of the longshoremen and their petty case and all, but once in a while, something comes up, which takes me back, harks back to the times of those, perhaps the Oedipus and Euripides, and why not, yeah so that is something that completely shakes me out of complacency. Now what is Alfieri doing here? He is talking to us, fine. You can say he is breaking the fourth wall, fine Ok but that's not the main preoccupation of this play, breaking the fourth wall or bastion. Something else; so when I talked to you about the Grecian or Greek element here; where would you place a character like Alfieri? What is his role?

Student: The story teller.

Professor: The story teller, the narrator and is there a technical term?

Student: Chorus

Professor: Ok, there is a chorus. So, in Oedipus, you knew you had met the Chorus. What did the chorus do in Oedipus, Zarine? There were chorus, choric characters, right? What do they do, what function do they perform in Oedipus? What function do they perform?

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Student: Chorus (())

Professor: Also the role of chorus is

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Professor: to comment on what's happening on stage, Ok and also foretell what's going to happen. And also tell you the history of this is, yeah. So we are told that once upon a land, sorry, once upon a time, this land was ruled by a great king called so and so. But once he was, once he was killed and once he died then this great king came along and he responded to the questions of What's that, Sphinx, yeah and then he took over the land, Ok. We are told, we are also given some sort of history, we are also told what is happening right now, our kingdom is going through difficult period, difficult time, we are having plague and drought and what not, Ok, so a famine or something like that.

That is how Oedipus opens. So chorus tells you what has been going on, what is the history and what is the current situation and comments on it. In Oedipus there is lot of commentary, on-going commentary on the action. They do less of foretelling. In Oedipus, chorus does not do much of foretelling. I don't remember if they do it at all. They prophesize yeah, but so does he, in very oblique way. But what is he doing here? He is telling us about the history of justice in certain parts of the world and also in America today and he is also going to comment now and then on what is happening in the play, Ok so he performs the role of the chorus.

So Alfieri is the Greek character here. Also look at the name. It is very, you know, quite antique. So it is a, and remember, if you do all these, you know, competitive exams and all and particularly when you read a book like literary terms it is by M. H. Abraham, you will

come across this term chorus, it is one of the terms listed there and you will understand there and they have given a lot of description that chorus doesn't always mean a group. Chorus can also be one single character. We call that choric character. Ok, so there is chorus, group of people or there is chorus, a single person but generally it has a different nomenclature that is a choric character. Uh, Eugene O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra, Mourning Becomes Electra, not morning, but Mourning Becomes Electra, there is a character, a single character who is a choric character. In Thornton Wilder's play Our Town, the stage Manager is the choric character. And in this play, Alfieri is the choric character.

(Refer Slide Time 38:32)



Student: Well, I'll see ya, fellas.

Student: You workin' tomorrow?

Student: Yeah, there's another day yet on that ship. See ya, Louis.

Student: Hi, Eddie!

Student: Where you goin' all dressed up?

Student: I just got it. You like it?

Student: Yeah, it's nice. And what happened to your hair?

Student: You like it? I fixed it different.

Student: Beautiful. Turn around, lemme see in the back. Oh, if your mother was alive to see you now! She wouldn't believe it.

Student: You like it, huh?

Student: You look like one of them girls that went to college. Where you goin'?

Student: Wait'll B comes in, I'll tell you something. Here, sit down.

Student: Hurry up, will you, B?

Student: What's goin' on?

Student: I'll get you a beer, all right?

Student: Well, tell me what happened. Come over here, talk to me.

Student: I want to wait till B comes in.

Student: Guess how much we paid for the skirt.

Student: I think it's too short, ain't it?

Student: No! not when I stand up

Student: Yeah, but you gotta sit down sometimes.

Student: Eddie, it's the style now. I mean, if you see me walkin' down the street.

Student: Listen, you been givin' me the willies the way you walk down the street, I mean it.

Student: Why?

Student: Catherine, I don't want to be a pest, but I'm tellin' you you're walkin' wavy.

Student: I'm walkin' wavy?

Student: Now don't aggravate me, Katie, you are walkin' wavy! I don't like the looks they're givin' you in the candy store; And with them new high heels on the sidewalk – clack, clack, clack. The heads are turnin' like windmills.

Student: But those guys look at all the girls, you know that.

Student: You ain't 'all the girls'.

Student: What do you want me to do? You want me to –

Student: Now don't get mad, kid.

Student: Well, I don't know what you want from me.

Student: Katie, I promised your mother on her deathbed. I'm responsible for you. You're a baby, you don't understand these things. I mean like when you stand here by the window, wavin' outside.

Student: I was wavin' to Louis!

Student: Listen, I could tell you things about Louis which you wouldn't wave to him no more.

Student: Hey, I wish there was one guy you couldn't tell me things about!

Student: Catherine, do me a favor, will you? You're gettin' to be a big girl now, you gotta keep yourself more, you can't be so friendly, kid. Hey, B, what're you doin' in there? Get her in here, will you? I got news for her.

Professor: Ok Shilpa, you can read first, B, Beatrice

Student: What?

Student: Her cousins landed.

Student: No! B! Your cousins!

Student: What?

Student: Your cousins got in!

Student: What are you talkin' about? Where?

Student: I was just knockin' off work before and Tony Bereli comes over to me; he says the ship is in the North River.

Student: They're all right?

Student: He didn't see them yet, they're still on board. But as soon as they get off he'll meet them. He figures about ten o'clock they'll be here

Student: And they'll let them off the ship all right? That's fixed, heh?

Student: Sure, they give them regular seamen papers and they walk off with the crew. Don't worry about it, B, there's nothin' to it.

Professor: Ok, so what are we talking about? Illegal immigration

(Refer Slide Time 41:45)



Professor: Ok and in America there are very strict rules about immigration. It has always been there. Now it has gone to a another level, Ok but even those days immigration laws were extremely severe because America was considered the land of, the promised land and people wanted to dwell there, everyone wanted to come. They are talking before all these

days of turbulence that we see today, but even then there were strict laws against illegal immigration and that is what we are seeing here, yes?

(Refer Slide Time 42:21)



Student: Couple of hours they'll be here.

Student: What's happening? They wasn't supposed to be till next Thursday.

Student: I don't know; they put them on any ship they can get them out on. Maybe the other ship they was supposed to take there was some danger – What you cryin' about?

Student: I'm – I just – I can't believe it! I didn't even buy a new table cloth; I was gonna wash the walls –

Student: Listen, they'll think it's a millionaire's house compared to the way they live. Don't worry about the walls. They'll be thankful. Whyn't you run down buy a table cloth. Go ahead, here.

Student: There's no stores open now.

Student: You was gonna put a new cover on the chair.

Student: I know – well, I thought it was gonna be next week! I was gonna clean the walls, I was gonna wax the floors.

Student: Maybe Mrs. Dondero upstairs –

Student: No, hers is worse than this one; my God, I don't even have nothin' to eat for them!

Student: Hey, hey! Take it easy.

Student: No, I'm just nervous, that's all. I'll make the fish.

Student: You're savin' their lives, what're you worryin' about the table cloth? They probably didn't see a table cloth in their whole life where they come from.

Student: I'm just worried about you, that's all I'm worried.

Student: Listen, as long as they know where they're gonna sleep.

Student: I told them in the letters. They're sleepin' on the floor.

Student: Beatrice, all I'm worried about is you got such a heart that I'll end up on the floor with you, and they'll be in our bed.

Student: All right, stop it.

Student: Because as soon as you see a tired relative, I end up on the floor.

Student: When did you end up on the floor?

Student: When your father's house burned down I didn't end up on the floor?

Student: Well, their house burned down!

Student: Yeah, but it didn't keep burnin' for two weeks!

Student: All right, look, I'll tell them to go someplace else.

Student: Now wait a minute. Beatrice! I just don't want you bein' pushed around, that's all. You got too big a heart. What're you so touchy?

Student: I'm just afraid if it don't turn out good you'll be mad at me.

Student: Listen, if everybody keeps his mouth shut, nothin' can happen. They'll pay for their board.

Student: Oh, I told them.

Student: Then what the hell. It's an honor, B. I mean it. I was just thinkin' before, comin' home, suppose my father didn't come to this country, and I was starvin' like them over there . . . and I had people in America could keep me a couple of months? The man would be honored to lend me a place to sleep.

Student: You see what he is? Mmm! You're an angel! God'll bless you. You'll see you'll get a blessing for this!

Student: I'll settle for my own bed.

Student: Go, Baby, set the table.

Student: We didn't tell him about me yet.

Student: Let him eat first then we'll tell him. Bring everything in.

Student: What's all that about? Where's she goin'?

Student: Noplace. It's very good news, Eddie. I want you to be happy.

Student: What's goin' on?

Student: She's got a job.

Student: What job? She's gonna finish school.

Student: Eddie, you won't believe it –

Student: No – no, you gonna finish school. What kinda job, what do you mean? All of a sudden you –

Student: Listen a minute, it's wonderful.

Student: It's not wonderful. You'll never get nowheres unless you finish school. You can't take no job. Why didn't you ask me before you take a job?

Student: She's askin' you now, she didn't take nothin' yet.

Student: Listen a minute! I came to school this morning and the principal called me out of the class, see? To go to his office.

Student: Yeah?

Student: So I went in and he says to me he's got my records, y'know? And there's a company wants a girl right away. It ain't

Student: Exactly

Student: It ain't exactly a secretary, it's a stenographer first, but pretty soon you get to be secretary. And he says to me that I'm the best student in the whole class –

Student: You hear that?

Student: Well why not? Sure she's the best.

Student: I'm the best student, he says, and if I want, I should take the job and the end of the year he'll let me take the examination and he'll give me the certificate. So I'll save practically a year!

Student: Where's the job? What company?

Student: It's a big plumbing company over Nostrand Avenue.

Student: Nostrand Avenue and where?

Student: It's someplace by the Navy Yard.

Student: Fifty dollars a week, Eddie.

Student: Fifty?

Student: I swear.

Student: What about all the stuff you wouldn't learn this year, though?

Student: There's nothin' more to learn, Eddie, I just gotta practice from now on. I know all the symbols and I know the keyboard. I'll just get faster, that's all. And when I'm workin' I'll keep gettin' better and better, you see?

Student: Work is the best practice anyway.



Student: That ain't what I wanted, though.

Student: Why! It's a great big company –

Student: I don't like that neighborhood over there.

Student: It's a block and half from the subway, he says.

Student: Near the Navy Yard plenty can happen in a block and a half. And a plumbin' company! That's one step over the water front. They're practically longshoremen.

Student: Yeah, but she'll be in the office, Eddie.

Student: I know she'll be in the office, but that ain't what I had in mind.

Student: Listen, she's gotta go to work sometime

Student: Listen, B, she'll be with a lotta plumbers? And sailors up and down the street? So what did she go to school for?

Student: But it's fifty a week, Eddie.

Student: Look, did I ask you for money? I supported you this long I support you a little more. Please, do me a favor, will ya? I want you to be with different kind of people. I want you to be in a nice office. Maybe a lawyer's office someplace in New York in one of them nice buildings. I mean if you're gonna get outa here then get out; don't go practically in the same kind of neighborhood.

Student: Go, Baby, bring in the supper. Think about it a little bit, Eddie. Please. She's crazy to start work. It's not a little shop, it's a big company. Some day she could be a secretary. They picked her out of the whole class. What are you worried about? She could take care of herself. She'll get out of the subway and be in the office in two minutes.

Student: I know that neighborhood, B, I don't like it.

Student: Listen, if nothin' happened to her in this neighborhood it ain't gonna happen noplacelse. Look, you gotta get used to it; she's no baby no more. Tell her to take it. You hear me? I don't understand you; she's seventeen years old, you gonna keep her in the house all her life?

Student: What kinda remark is that?

Student: Well, I don't understand when it ends. First it was gonna be when she graduated high school, so she graduated high school. Then it was gonna be when she learned stenographer, so she learned stenographer. So what're we gonna wait for now? I mean it, Eddie, sometimes I don't understand you; they picked her out of the whole class, it's an honor for her.

Student: With your hair that way you look like a madonna, you know that? You're the madonna type.

Professor: Ok, you remember we have been talking about Madonna (()) binaries (())

(Refer Slide Time 48:48)



Professor: on the play, it is a very Freudian play. I am sure you got the undercurrent, so yeah. A girl, if she is confined within protective gaze of her guardians, Ok he takes, he looks, he is not really aware, see this is not Lolita. Ok he is not aware of his feelings for her, exact nature of his feelings for Catherine, Ok. He thinks that he is being very protective. It is just like Tony Montana feels for his sister. He doesn't want anyone else to touch his sister, his sister to go out, with, it is always you go out with a nice guy, I mean what nice guy is she going to find in that neighborhood, so that's what and she tries to reason out.

So Beatrice is the voice of reason in the play. She always tries to reason out things that you will, see, in this neighborhood, this is the class of men she is going to meet; this is her fate, Ok. You are not going to meet Ok, CEO or a President of a company or something you know, or may be someone from Columbia University. That's not going to happen. So let her get out of this place and let her get started to work, that's what she is destined for. He doesn't so he never realizes that he is being not just over protective but also a little jealous of who she goes out with; so the Madonna (()) binary at work, at work.

At home she is the baby, she is a, she is the object which should be preserved, whose chastity, sanctity should be preserved. But once she goes out there and mingles with not so good class of people then you never know what she turns into. So, therefore when those longshoremen, come in and she meets the younger men, there are two brothers Marco and Rudolpho so, when she comes in contact with Rudolpho, yeah, it is like she is being contaminated from, he

has put her on the pedestal. So you are almost like Madonna, very chaste object for me. But, and he doesn't want her to come in contact with any other man, any other than him. Any comment that you would want to make?

Student: She said you will get a blessing for this.

Professor: Yes

Student: (( ))

Professor: Yeah that is ironical but not ironical when we did now. Because this is what a man's got to do. Man's got to be responsible for all his fellow human beings, especially for your own countrymen, Ok and if something is, if someone is coming and he is able to help, then why not? He is supposed to do that and God will bless you for that. Although we know, by the time the play ends, it is very, it's an ironical statement. Ok, so thank you very much and we will continue in the next class.

(Professor – student conversation ends)