

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing
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Lecture - 10
Divergences and Convergences

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Review of ideas explored

- Diversity and its blends in languages, cultures, academic realm/domains through a focus on the evolving sense of self.
- Exploring notions of play, creativity & enjoyment to strengthen the sense of self. See Csikszentmihalyi's "Flow; The Psychology of Optimal Experience"
- Contextualising the evolving sense of self.

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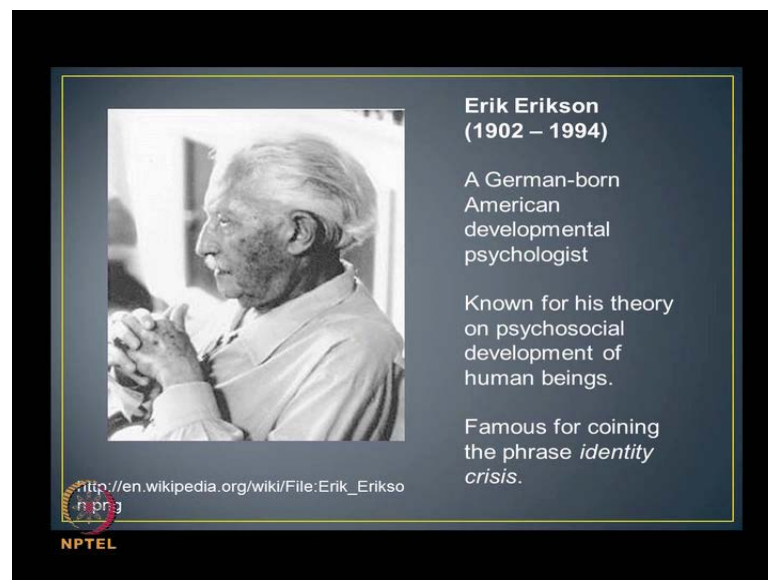
This lecture is titled divergences and convergences. And as the title itself indicates, we are interested in reviewing ideas that we have explored earlier. And in addition to that we also want to keep adding to the previous ideas. So, let us first of all review the ideas that we have explored so far by looking at each one of these carefully. Later on, we will also develop more refined activities around these ideas.

So, let us look at this first slide, which tries to recapture what we had said earlier. We had looked at diversity and its blends in languages, cultures, academic realm or domains through a focus on the evolving sense of self. For that purpose, we also looked at the notions of play, creativity and enjoyment to strengthen the sense of self. For which the students presented their views on Csikszentmihalyi's notion of flow or autotelic activity activities that really we feel very deeply involved with, and therefore we are willing to invest more energy and derive greater pleasure from these activities. So that is why we had looked at the notion of flow in order to strengthen the sense of the self.

Later on professor Csikszentmihalyi went on to develop the notion of flow as a (()) complex thing which is not good in itself, because you know the notion of flow or deep absorption and enjoyment can be used for very creative as well as fairly distractive activities also, because the notion of creation and distraction is really highly dependent on the value system of a given society.

So, keeping that complexity and difficulty of that notion in mind, professor Csikszentmihalyi later on develop the idea further, and he explained it in flow the psychology of optimal experience where the term optimal of course, refers to the most desirable or satisfactory experience. And in that he tried to establish the need for the sense of the self to be strengthened through activities that are autotelic and he actually also tried to explain why he feels that symbolic activities that is the term that he used in this next essay, which refers to you know internally devised reasons for choosing an activity and ascribing certain value to it. So, he talked about the significance of these inner drives once again in psychology of optimal experience. So, the idea was to understand the evolving sense of the self, as you grow up and to also find ways in which one can you know continue to grow and find one's bearings.

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A presentation slide with a dark blue background. On the left, there is a black and white photograph of Erik Erikson, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a light-colored shirt, looking slightly to the left. To the right of the photo, the text reads: "Erik Erikson (1902 – 1994)", "A German-born American developmental psychologist", "Known for his theory on psychosocial development of human beings.", and "Famous for coining the phrase *identity crisis*." At the bottom left of the slide, there is a small logo for NPTEL (National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning) and a URL: "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Erik_Erikso".

Erik Erikson
(1902 – 1994)

A German-born
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Known for his theory
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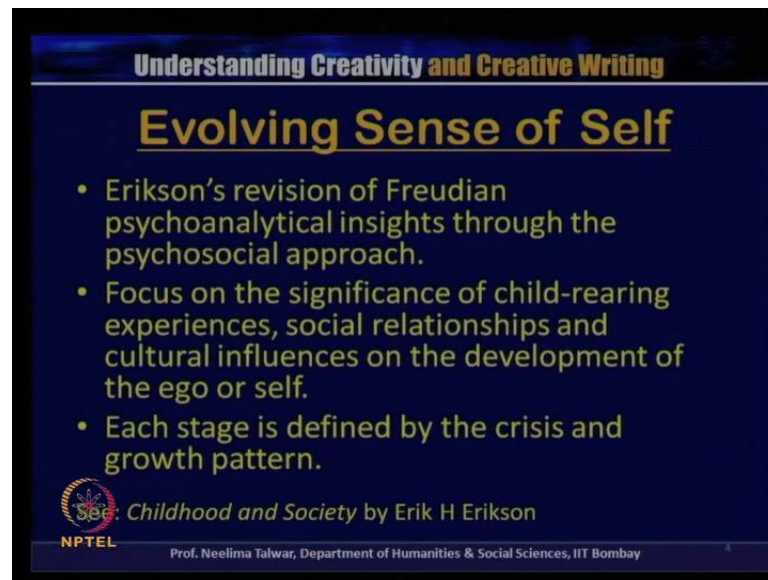
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Erik_Erikso

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In order to take this idea further, what I would like to do is to again, go to the resource of psychology, but this time to look at Erik Erikson's childhood and society in which he offered this notion of psycho social stages. And though idea behind psycho social stages

is to basically try and see how you know as biologically we grow within different stages of our life's. There are different desires and also social institutions and social relationships that define our growth patterns.


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Evolving Sense of Self

- Erikson's revision of Freudian psychoanalytical insights through the psychosocial approach.
- Focus on the significance of child-rearing experiences, social relationships and cultural influences on the development of the ego or self.
- Each stage is defined by the crisis and growth pattern.


 *See: Childhood and Society by Erik H Erikson*

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So, therefore, he looked at these stages and I am going to primarily concentrate on, you know the stage of childhood and not so much on infancy, but each stage that he has identified is defined by the pattern of crisis and growth. A sense that you know you have entered a new realm of experience and at the same time, the sense that you know this also can be resolved and also experienced in a very, very positive manner.

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Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development	
Approximate Age	Psycho Social Crisis
Infant - 18 months	Trust vs. Mistrust
18 months - 3 years	Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt
3 - 5 years	Initiative vs. Guilt
5 -13 years	Industry vs. Inferiority
13 -21 years	Identity vs. Role Confusion
21- 39 years	Intimacy vs. Isolation
40 - 65 years	Generativity vs. Stagnation
65 and older	Ego Integrity vs. Despair

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So, this what we are briefly going to look at only to add to what we have already done.


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Psychosocial Insights

- Childhood
 - 4th stage
 - 6 yrs to start of puberty
 - Crisis: Industry v. Inferiority

“Thus the inner stage seems all set for ‘entrance into life’, except that life must first be school life, whether school is field or jungle or classroom.” (250)

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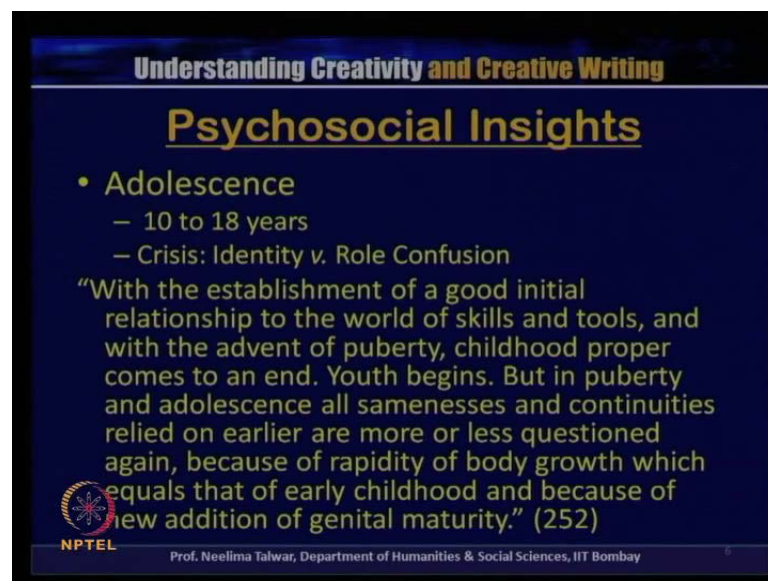
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So, let us look at this next slide, where Erik Erikson has talked about the fourth stage of a human being's life. Of course, he calls it eight stages of man, but in any case this is the fourth stage where he says that you know six years to start of puberty this is the stage covered in this period that he has identified which is marked by industry versus growth. Now, the idea behind this again is, let us try and see what he has to say about this particular stage. According to him the inner stage seems all set for entrance into life;

except that life must be school life, life must first be school life, whether school is field or jungle or classroom and that is really a marvelous statement, I thought, because he is not restricted to only societies and economic groups, where you which you know where childhood is defined by through academics although. We belong to that framework, but it can also be a process of learning when a child sort of enters, the world of any occupation your training for any occupation, whether a the child is in forest area or you know wherever.

So, now in other words, this is a stage of learning, learning vocations, learning skills for future vocations, and the reason I have chosen this stage for discussion with you is because I am gradually beginning to also contextualize this whole discussion of creativity in terms of the institutions within which you have grown, and the institutions which have also in that sense shaped you. So, let us say this is the first important stage of entry into the world, when you have being prepared for a vocation.

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Psychosocial Insights

- **Adolescence**
 - 10 to 18 years
 - Crisis: Identity v. Role Confusion

“With the establishment of a good initial relationship to the world of skills and tools, and with the advent of puberty, childhood proper comes to an end. Youth begins. But in puberty and adolescence all samenesses and continuities relied on earlier are more or less questioned again, because of rapidity of body growth which equals that of early childhood and because of new addition of genital maturity.” (252)

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The second stage is that of adolescence, which according to him is a period, which covers 10 to 18 years, and it is defined by identity versus role confusion these quotations are directly from the book. So, whichever way professor Erikson has explained the terms we have retained those references, verbatim.

Now, in this particular stage and let me quickly read the relevant part that in puberty and adolescence all sameness's and continuities relied on earlier are more or less questioned

again. So, there is sort of kind of consolidation that occurs in a particular stage and then new sort of abilities have to develop. So, according to him all sameness's and continuities relied on earlier are more or less questioned again because of rapidity of body growth which equals that of early childhood and because of new edition of genital maturity, so this what he has to say.

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Psychosocial Insights

- **Young adulthood**
 - 19 to 40 years
 - Crisis: Intimacy v. Isolation

“The strength acquired at any stage is tested by the necessity to transcend it in such a way that the individual can take chances in the next stage with what was most vulnerably precious in the previous one. Thus, the young adult, emerging from the search for and the insistence on identity, is eager and willing to fuse his identity with that of others...” (255)

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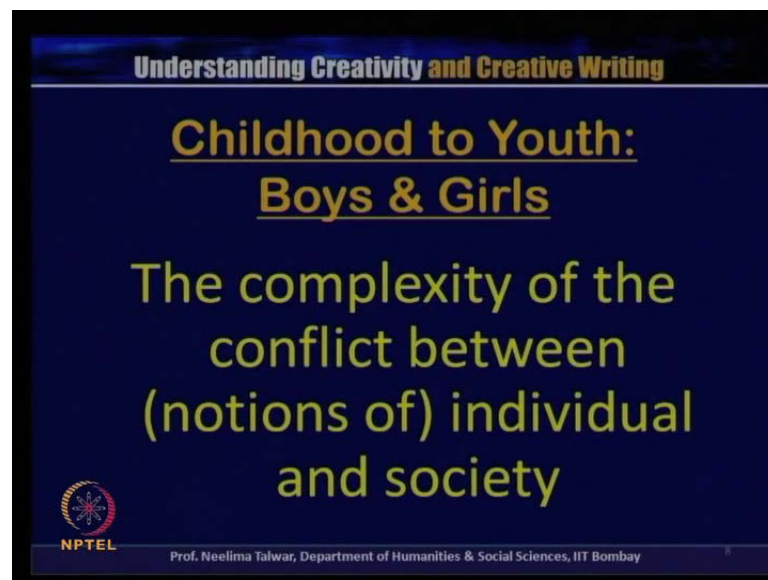
And if he move to next slide that refers to youth and adulthood and discovers a very large period of 19 to 40 years, and the crisis here is related to intimacy versus isolation. So, again here he points out that the strength acquired at any stage is tested by the necessity to transcend it in such a way that the individual can take chances in the next stage with what was most vulnerably precious in the previous one. So, what was vulnerably precious in the previous stage was a sense of identity. Now in this stage according to him the young adult emerging from the sense from the search for and the insistence on identity is eager and willing to fuse his or her identity with that of others.

I am sort of feel very troubled by this constant use of only the male gender. So, that is something that I think while using language I would like you to remain as gender sensitive as possible, but in any case according to him, so again the search for identity and then you know extending that identity, according to him to fuse the identity with that of others. So, larger sense of participation in the world emerges in this stage. You can keep these stages in mind, you know, I am not really suggesting that it is a very simple

kind of module, and a simple kind of framework that will explain everything about each stage, because we craft our and we create our own sort of life patterns also. And the cultural differences can also be, so important in defining our identities.

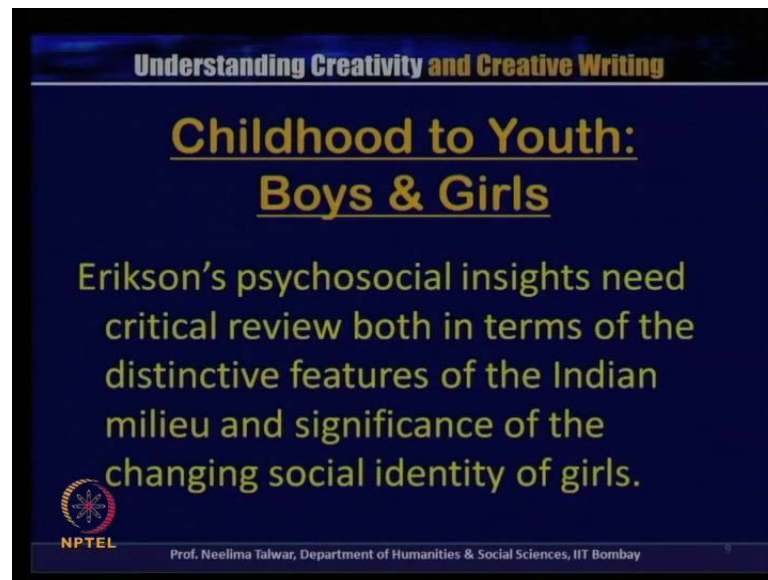
So, I have actually tried to point out very clearly, in order to want you again simplification, I mean although I am using these structures. So that there is a sense that we can talk about various complexities in ways that lend to clarity of understanding, but at the same time after gaining a certain clarity I think one has to sort of abandon to simplistic thinking. So that kind of balance between simplistic thinking and clarity I think, I would like you to keep that in mind.

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And therefore, I would like to point out to you that the complexity of conflict between notions of the individual and society also. They vary such a lot from society to society that you know this pattern can have very different results.


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The other aspect of Erikson's psychosocial insights, it needs critical review both in terms of distinctive features of the Indian milieu, but also the significance of the changing social identity of girls, because in his explicatory model, I do not get the sense that he really has actively understood the life pattern of girls very clearly. And I am sure there are very important scholars who have contributed to that field to enhance the various stages in terms of the pattern of life of girls, in terms of their biological growth patterns and also in terms of the psycho social diminutions that ensue. So, this is missing from the study, but we keep this in mind in terms of a certain sense of evolving, the idea of evolving self, the idea of the crucial nature of childhood experience and so it gives us a kind of anchor and clarity. So, please try and review it critically, but the whole idea is to come back to the context in which right now we are working.

When I talk about IIT system, please remember that I am equally interested in any other system you may be part of. The only reason I need to talk about the IIT system is, because that is the system in which I am teaching and most of my students belong to that framework, but the ideas that we are talking about they are relevant for every kind of educational system. And therefore, I hope you will maintain that balance and not really sort of feel that this is an IIT centric discussion, because it is actually a wider discussion.

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IIT System and Student Experience/s

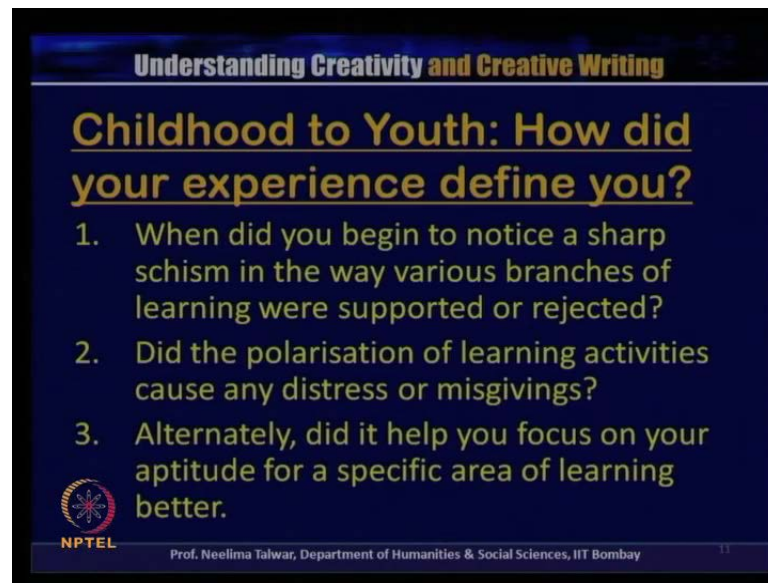
- Focus on engineering/technology
- Social valorisation of engineering/technology by middle class India
- Childhood to adolescence dedicated to gaining entry in a competitive system

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So far as the IIT system is concerned there is inevitably focus on engineering and technology education. And there is also apart from the academic nature of the institution which of course, you know has its you know great importance, but there is also this social valorization of engineering and technology by middle class in India which pumps up these institutions, and also many processes through which you as a young person may have gone through in order to enter the IIT system.

For example, from childhood to adolescence you may be dedicated to this very focus study of subjects that can help you gain entry in a very, very competitive system. We have to keep these things in mind, in order to now within these systems and within these context, find our bearings in such a way that we can give strength to our sense of self, not really to sort of rewrite what has happened, but to rewrite a new script, so to say.

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Childhood to Youth: How did your experience define you?

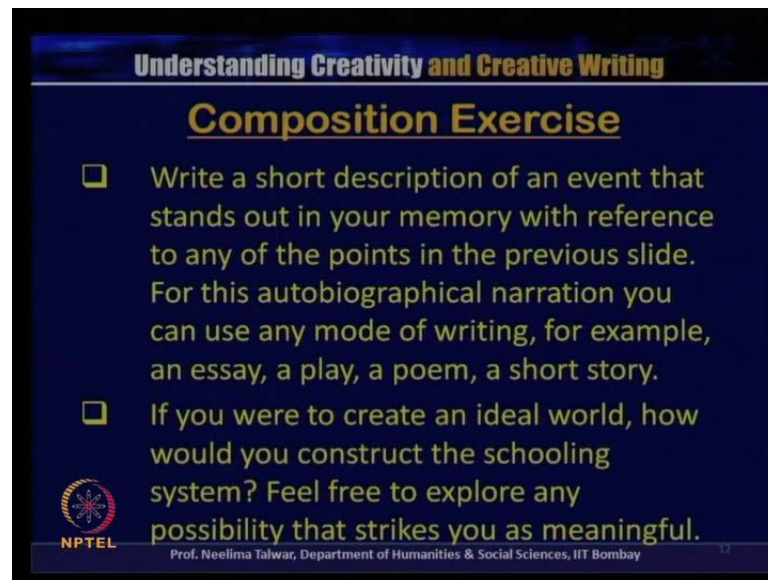
1. When did you begin to notice a sharp schism in the way various branches of learning were supported or rejected?
2. Did the polarisation of learning activities cause any distress or misgivings?
3. Alternately, did it help you focus on your aptitude for a specific area of learning better.

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So, now a few questions perhaps can be posed for your consideration, and let us look them at very carefully. I like you to look at the slide carefully because these are questions that you can actually think about a great deal and very carefully. So, let us say if you were to keep this spectrum of childhood to adolescence or early youth pattern in mind. So, let my question to you is when did you begin to notice a sharp schism in the way various branches of learning were supported or rejected? So, the assumption behind this question is related to the fact that of course, children are prepared to sort of find their occupation, their vocation through training. And also therefore, there are various kinds of subjects that are taught various ways through which children are taught.

So, my question is related to this sort of concern about what happen to you during that process, can you look back and think about it not look back in anger, but look back in sterns of trying to understand a sort of pattern that is now part of you. So, when did you begin to notice a sharp schism in the way various branches of learning were supported or rejected, during your schooling. Did the polarization of learning activities cause any distress or misgivings? I deliberately kept this question open ended, because I really cannot predict which way your sort of response will go. The third question is did this polarization help you focus on your aptitude for a specific area of learning better? So, there are all kind of possibilities to do.

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The slide has a dark blue background with yellow and white text. At the top, the title 'Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing' is in yellow. Below it, the section 'Composition Exercise' is in yellow and underlined. There are two bullet points, each preceded by a yellow square icon. The first bullet point asks to write a short description of an event that stands out in memory, with reference to the previous slide, and allows for any mode of writing like an essay, play, poem, or short story. The second bullet point asks how to construct an ideal schooling system, encouraging exploration of any meaningful possibility. At the bottom left is the NPTEL logo, and at the bottom center is the text 'Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay'. A small '12' is in the bottom right corner.

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Composition Exercise

- ❑ Write a short description of an event that stands out in your memory with reference to any of the points in the previous slide. For this autobiographical narration you can use any mode of writing, for example, an essay, a play, a poem, a short story.
- ❑ If you were to create an ideal world, how would you construct the schooling system? Feel free to explore any possibility that strikes you as meaningful.

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So, do think about these questions and then based on this reflection, write a short description of an event that stands out in your memory with reference to any of the points in the previous slide. For this autobiographical narration, you can use any mode of writing, for example, an essay, a play, a poem, a short story. Secondly, if you were to create an ideal world, how would you construct the schooling system?

And I really like you to feel free to explore it, explore any possibility that strikes you without feeling hampered at all. So, now, that you know this kind of composition exercise would be undertaken by you the whole idea is related to experience, knowledge-building, composition that is these are the three activities that we are trying to evoke in different combinations, and that is why we have labeled this particular lecture divergences and convergences.