Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing Prof. Neelima Talwar Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Lecture - 13 Being and Doing: Writing as performance

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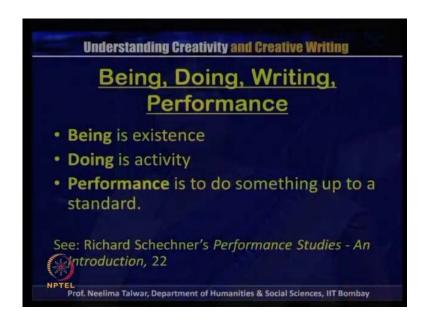
This is the concluding lecture of the first module of this course; the lecture is divided into two parts. The first part, it deals with the convergence and divergence theme primarily to create common ground for creativity, the second part reworks exercises for writing performance. So, let me start with the title of this lecture, which is being, doing, writing as performance. What do I mean by these? I am again not introducing completely new terms, but I am refining some of the ideas that we have already discussed in different ways. This may give you another kind of perspective on the same thought process. While I was actually working out this title, it just immediately came to my mind, when I came to the concluding lecture.

And I realized with certain amount of pleasure and surprise that an essay that Richard Schechner had written in performance studies and introduction, and this chapter title is a chapter two is titled what is performance? This had resurfaced in my consciousness you know and therefore, it is highly influence this way of describing our perception; it is highly influence by this essay and this approach. But it is certainly also modified because

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we have applied it to the writing process whereas, professor richard schechner; has tried to enlarge the scope of human theatre and its patterns of behavior and how to theorize about variety of instrumental and symbolic activities.

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So therefore, let me now come to the terms of reference, being is existence. Doing is activity and performance is to do something up to a standard.

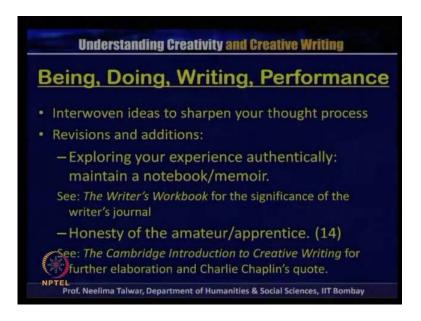
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Now, what does that mean and how do we handle these ideas. Thus what what do I want to do with these ideas? So, then what I am again trying to draw your attention to is this

connection between experience, which is seamless, perennially in flux reflection, which requires pause and it also leads to self expression. But this self expression when it is a conscious act of communication that is performing up to a certain standard, it requires working out crafting. And in that sense, this particular approach of writing as performance is also devoted to to the processes of writing that required, first the writing process then the drafting, redrafting and editing editing out of material that does not seem to really hold; the kind of significance one would like to highlight.

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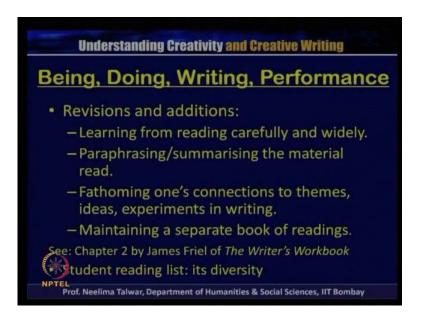


So, from that point of view what we have done is again to bring all the elements of the earlier lectures into some kind of focus for you. And therefore, in while talking about these ideas. Let me go over some of these important connections and I will spend more time with one or two new ideas that I have introduced here. So, the first thing is to maintain the writers notebook or a kind of memoir. So, that you can dip into it for further refinement of your writing process; this innovatively may be an a kind of act of random writing. It may also be an act that captures your epiphanic moments. So, it depends on you as to how you describe it actor, this is one step, which was seen as a preliminary step for the writing process.

The second idea was related to the honesty of the amateur or the apprentice. And this idea again is not an idea that does not demand. Certain amount of focus and activity from you; on the other hand what it does is to require on the one hand a sense of wonder that

really makes you ride, makes you see the world from your own perspectives; and relish that perspective. But, at the same time there is this perpetual sense of learning that is involved in this process. And therefore, this is the second major step, which often is ignored by apprentices or new writers. Although if you look at the suggestion that many of the professional writers have given across the board. It is constantly to suggest the need for reading; and to share their own process of reading very significant aspect of their growth and also their search for their own distinctive voices.

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We will take this up in the second module when we talk about writers their own prospectives an reading as waiters by looking that this process in a slower more elaborate manner. The other idea is related to revisions and editions; that is it is not just enough to read cursorily and retain some resemblance of you want to retain from that reading, but I think this reading should be careful process. So, you can learn from reading carefully and widely; the next step very crucial step is the ability to paraphrase or summarize the important aspect of the content you have gone through. And third thing is this ability to fathom your own contention to themes ideas experiments in this writings. So, this constant search, which should animate this process; and I think one good way of handling this is to maintain a separate book of readings.

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So, separated from your memoirs although, some of the writers we are going to the discuss later on specially Albert Camus. He did not quite separate the two. But I think I would sort of feel more comfortable; if you separate the true, so that you can see the overall had between the process is some interesting waves. So know the other aspect of writing process is related to the language that your going to use and of course, you are using English. As I said you can also apply these ideas to writing in your own mother tongue I think they are equally relevant. And if I were to give course on hindi writing; then I suppose some of the examples would vary. But none of the ideas and attitudes would vary at all.

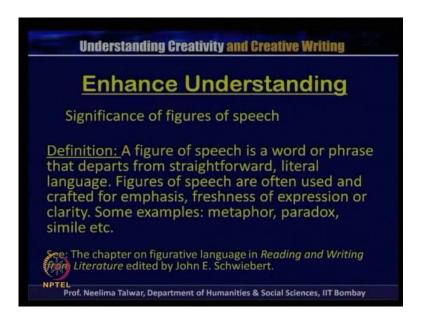
So, the first thing is grasp of standard English the second is need for active exploration of words and their connotations I find. Many of the students are fairly weak on this area because they just take words for granted. I think that should be revived vocabulary development should not just be seen as memory or memorizing words and new words there meanings etcetera. But you should also begin to see, which of the words lead to perceptual growth. For example, the word luminal that I had added to your vocabulary last time; I feel that is the kind of the word which you can you growth with many of these words require experience they generate their own dynamics.

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And therefore, I think it is important to see which set of words can help you in your perceptual growth. There will be sudden moment of recognition of a new insight that has develop through new word. And that is a marvelous process you should not deny yourself that process. The next important ideas seems to be related to sense of judgment and really this is very very important, because I see all kinds of very awkward over laps between the domains that I have just listed for certain amount of judgment. That you required appropriate use of language in different situations and for different purposes; for example, if you are using English for formal letters official communication your English will be different from your other languages use for mobile smses or for informal communication, and then again distinctly different academic writing with its own rules and regulations and protocols and off course creative writing.

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Of cause say that in creative writing you can use all of these ways of writing which is true. For I think you need to have certain amount of judgment about this matter. And this really not to tame your sensibility; but I mainly to make you more educated and sensitive person because otherwise often the all kinds of the aprons that can you know affect you inter action and your writing also. One important idea know that I would like to share with you is the significance of figures of speech so far, I have really not discussed this idea, and so we are building block by block and so please add this block as very vital one.

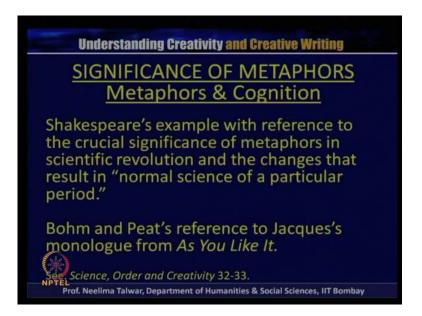
The figures of speech of cause when be undertake literary education, we often talk about that this whole idea in terms of hu how figures of speech are happen you used an crafted for emphasis, freshness of expression or clarity. And so, we often give the examples of metaphor, paradoxes, similes, etcetera. In order to highlight this idea; but I want to add to that discussion in a slightly different way. And this departure from that is not a departure in terms of doing it in radically different way but by brining in the theme of convergence and divergence by looking at metaphor as an activity, which actually permiates every day language also. And at the same time some of the very important thinkers of scientific creativity have used this insight about the significance of metaphor in scientific creativity, in a very very interesting manner, where a literary and scientific creativity are brought together.

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So, I want really use this opportunity to share this idea, which I have really cherished for very very long time. Some indeed very glad that I am able to share this with you, the insight comes from two physicist. And there bomb and pete, one of them was a quantum physicists other one describe himself and holistic physicists, I leave that. Those tax and description to you; but set see first what metaphase and then you we look at how peat and bohm have ling literacy creativity with scientific creativity by placing metaphor, as very crucial element of the process of the cognition. So, know this is what metaphor? So, in metaphor it is figure of speech, which establishes comparison between to different things are ideas.

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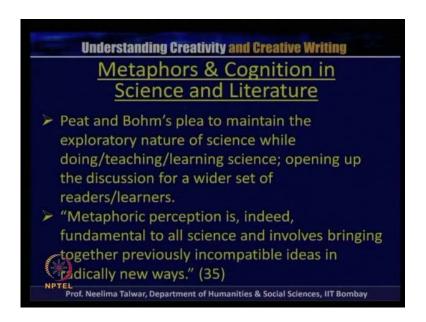
And what bohm peat had done is to depend to metaphor from shakespeare but also the frame of reference in which they have undertaken this explanation, is really related to scientific progress and scientific revolution. So, let me first give you the title of the work so, that you can see the contexts little better. So, I am sort of not able to see the full title I think I given it of the end this is science order and creativity. And in this chapter they talk about scientific revolution and cure shall significance of metaphors is scientific revolutions and in there prospect you and prescription of scientific revolution, normal science often is display by leaps of imagination that great science is undertaken. And this particular chapter which is devoted to metaphors they talk about the example of newton, and they also talk about the example of Archimedes. So now, they actually give the example of newton in terms of this very will know example of the falling apple and how through that image, and through the comparison of the falling metaphor.

This comparison between the falling metaphor and the moon and the earth he, he developed very rigorously and mathematically this whole important theory of universal gravitation. So, let me read what they have said they with references to metaphors in the case of newton, and how this actually required a leap of the imagination. And then I will also read out there interpretation of Shakespeares metaphor in all the world is stage, and also there hypotheses that scientific and literary creativity have the same sense of sudden perception of two very different setup of ideas, which lead to new paradigm. So, then this is what they have to say about the example from newton work according to them it

involved a radically new mental perception, radically new mental perception although that mental perception is shaped by the discourse within the field. And they actually go back in to it I am not scientist so I think, if you are a scientist and you are watching this you are better equipped to understand this idea in its intricacies. So, according to them it involved a radically new mental perception of nature, it was newton who perceive the universal implications of the fall of the apple.

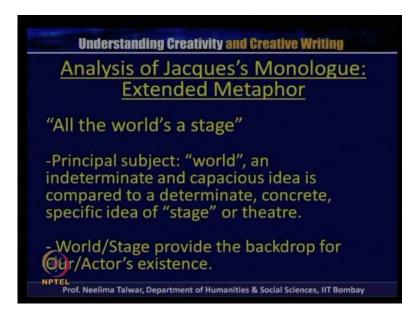
For example, Newtons initial insight into the nature of the universal gravitation, it came from this metaphor that developed in his mind, which can be translated in this manner and again I am paraphrasing from bohm and peat. So this can be expressed in metaphoric form as the moon is an apple, which is then extended to the moon is an earth. So these are different in other moon is different from the earth from the apple but similar, in the sense that day attract each other and obey the same laws of motion. So, then after th after establishing this connection, which a was result of leap of imagination in it was also an expression of heightened perception according to them off course this metaphor was un folded in mathematical language by you know through the theory that he established.

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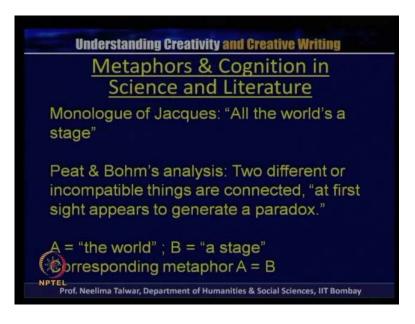
And then off course it led to corroborative experiments in order to you know accept, this theory and so on an so far. So, according to them metaphors are really very very crucial aspect of scientific creativity and the leaps that science that taken from stage to stage. So, let me again read their specific statement about metaphor, metaphoric perception is indeed fundamental to all science and involves bringing together previously incompatible ideas in radically new ways. For this is what they have to say, and then they went on to look at the example from Shakespeare and the reason they picked this up is this, because they felt that for a known scientist. I suppose like being and many others it is somewhat difficult to understand these scientific leaps that easily.

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But according to them these can be understood very clearly, if you look at literary metaphors, which reach a larger audience. So, the they picked up Jacques's monologue from shakespeares as you like it. Where ill just read the first five lines all the words a stage and all the men and women merely players. They have their exists and there entrances, and one man in his time plays in many parts. So, this is the except that they have chosen in that book. And according to them these two ideas, the world aa being a stage.

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These are two different or incompatible things and at first side they appear to generate a paradox. And therefore, an again I am quoting from peat and bohm, if A is the world and B is a stage, then the corresponding metaphor would be A is equal to B. But common sense dictates, that the word is not a stage. Therefore, A cancels B the metaphor therefore, appears to involve a simultaneous equating and negating of two ideas concepts or objects. According to them this leads to heightened perception; so, very very interesting moment of heightened perception. And that's, where creativity emerges, its a combination of startlingly new come you know ideas expressions etcetera.

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So, you atleast to heightened perception and then according to them shakespeare proceeds to unfold, the inner meaning of the metaphor by exploring the subtle similarities between A and B. And finally, and I think before I read this, what you can do? Is to undertake this analysis yourself; although I have also tried to do the traditional literary analysis in the you know power point and the slide, that I have shared with you. But I think you can also undertake the exercise yourself, and I feel like to if you begin to have a hold on metaphors. It will really help you in a very very big way. So, now this is how they conclude this idea. In perceiving a new idea in science the mind is involved is a similar form of creative perception, as when it engages a poetic metaphor.

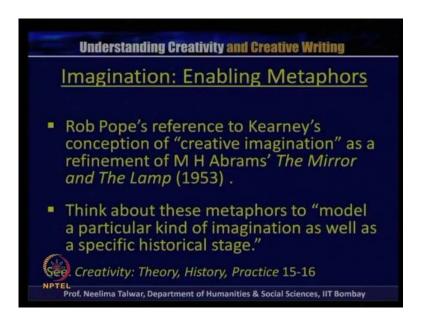
However, in science it is essential to unfold the meaning of the metaphor in even greater and more literal detail while in poetry the metaphor may remain relatively implicit that is the beauty of poetry it remen and remains vibrant and keeps growing and you can interpret it in different ways at different points in your life so this is an absolutely marvelous take on metaphors and I will like you to add this to the pool of ideas that we have shared and also see its connections in everyday life also that can also lead to lot of inventiveness even while describing characters and also describing there perception and many other ideas. Let me add a slightly mode complicated idea here I actually debated weather I should add this idea or not but I have a feeling that many of you may be ready to actually explore ideas at a fairly complex level also. So with a duo apologies you know I would say that if this idea works for you treat it as something that you want to think about right now otherwise see this as an add on and look at it whenever you feel like it.

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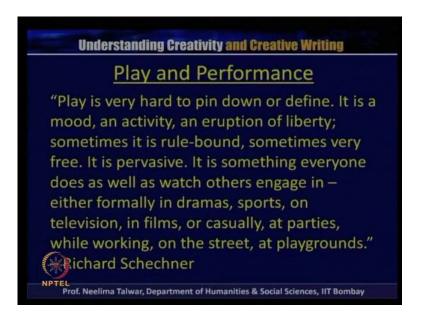
I have also given you the resource for selecting this idea which is rob popes wonderful book on creativity but he I will explain where this idea comes from in a minute but, lets see now some enabling metaphors for the imagination so we been talking about leaps of imagination and how metaphors can be key element in this whole process and therefore, now some of the enabling metaphors are imagination as a mirror, imagination as a lamp, imagination as a labyrinth of looking glasses and as I said this is a complex idea from a lot of theoretical work that has gone on.

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And what rob pope is referring to is Kearney's conception of creative imagination as a further refinement of M H Abrams very famous study the mirror and the lamp and what he has advised is to think about these metaphors to model a particular kind of imagination as well as a specific historical stage. Now it is difficult to decipher there is statement so easily but as I said this is a layer that I added on and you can keep it in a bains and also come back to it whenever you feel ready for it.

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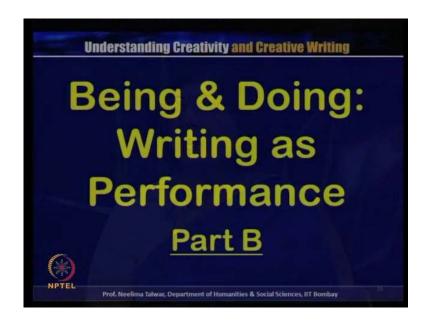
While talking about imagination and my suggestion is to play around with these enabling metaphors and therefore, what I would like to do is to also quickly dip into this allusive nature of play that Richard Schechner has talked about in play and performance from the same source you know in the same book that I mentioned earlier and I think I will not read this full quotation but mainly it talks about the allusive nature of play.

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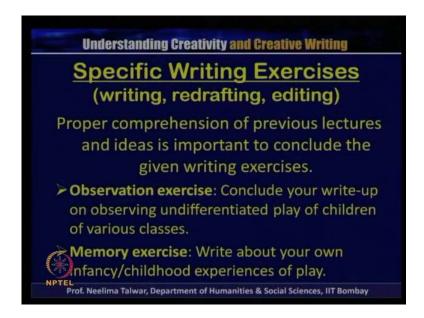
And therefore, I think I would leave it at that and move on to also some of the terms that have been generated by him in order to describe play free play Maya-lila playing in the dark dark play.

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And then I think this is time to move to the second part which now begins to tie up the discussion around writing as performance. And now let us look at the series of you know activities and exercises that now we have identified as further kind of refinement of the earlier exercises that have already been shared with you, so I will not actually read everything here in detail.

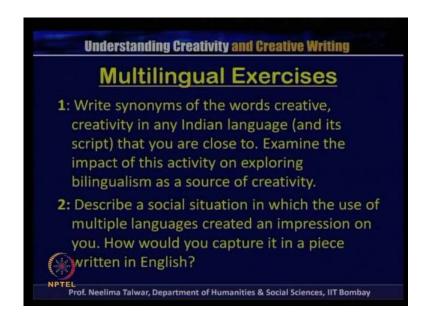
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But what I would like you to do is to mainly keep one or two main ideas in mind and look at the power point yourself the slide yourself and also dip into earlier lectures in

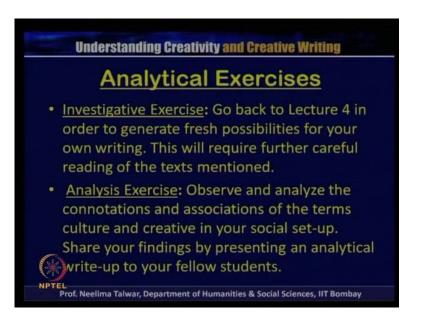
order to make sure that you I have understood the ideas properly, so that is way my statement here is related to proper comprehension of previous lectures and ideas in order to conclude given writing exercises.

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That the first one is observation exercise the second is memory exercise the third is multilingual exercise there are two multilingual exercises because again remember we have talked about the vitality of multilinguality because it is really that that's where some kind of fresh energies can be generated a lot of advertisers now use this strategy but I think advertising is a very different kind of outlook where as the search for authenticity that a writer undertakes is a different kind of activity, so I think you can do a lot of interesting work by exploring your multilinguality.

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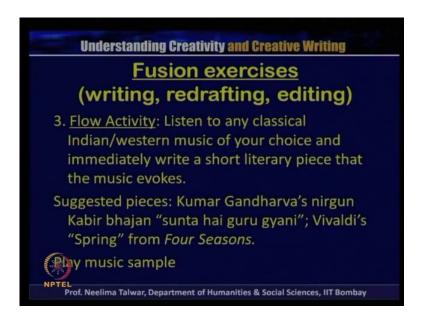
So, the two exercises are given here then there is an investigative exercises we call it investigative because it would be possible for you to sort of see, if you can also look at some of the words the key words that we have discussed earlier and undertake certain amount of careful investigation in order to see how the worlds culture and creative are used in your setup because that can also give you some idea about different kinds of values that circulate change and redefine the world around us, so that is again take on earlier exercise.

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The next one is fusion exercise we have given lead terms here and these lead terms I think express our point of view very clearly in point of view where we want certain amount of fusion we do not want polarization in your thinking process, because I feel that that's an obstacle to the wonderful potential that you have and, so in that sense these two exercises again are fusion exercises. And I think you can have a look at it and undertake them yourself.

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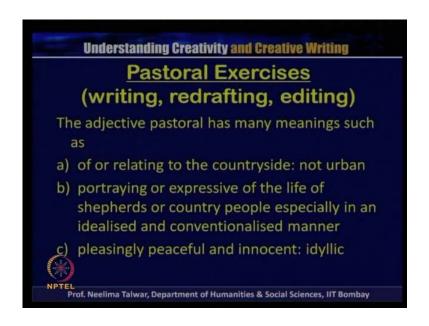
The next exercises is a flow exercise within fusion activities it is a flow exercise and the reason we have described it as flow is because while listening to great music I think you are able to reach a state of mind which is close to that of flow that is of total absorption and, so now we have picked up two pieces for your consideration, so what would we recommend here is to listen to these two pieces. I would really like you to listen to them but in case you really do not feel comfortable with this music you can listen to something else but these are really great pieces so what you can do is to listen to this music an immediately write a short literary piece that the music evokes so the suggested pieces the first one is kumar gandharvas nirgun kabir bhajan sunta hai guru gyani

And actually even within this particular kabir bhajan what I would like you to really notice is the part a which is captured in these words this is I think to words the last bit of this composition now in my own perception these two lines evoke the convergence theme that is a kind of nirguni scientific take of swords, where without the name (( ))

seems like a and also without the name you would just see water for what it is so to me seems like that kind of nirgun observation, which also is a starting point of scientific observation to, so you can again listen to see this piece and see what you feel about it the second piece that I have recommended is also a piece that I love very much it is Vivaldi's spring from four seasons and it's Vivaldi's was an Italian composer and this is a violin culture tone now this cloture tone has a sonnet its very interesting.

It has a sonnet, because it is lot of debit about who wrote the sonnet but it is the many people believe Vivaldi himself wrote the sonnet it also have some very interesting instruction like in the second movement of this piece Vivaldi would like to retain the sound of the barking dog also what I actually I mean love the music for itself but what I also you found really very interesting is that he wrote much of his music for the female music in this house orphan girls which you know he was involved with he was taking care of these young abundant orphans and, so much of his music was composed during this period by there is teaching these young children also he is trying to empower them. So, these a lot there are lot of layers in this music that you can also try and shift. So, this is an exercise an bay much like you to undertake and enjoy.

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The next one is of course the pastoral activity, where the adjective pastoral we do recognise we did not really explain it earlier quite deliberately but we do recognize at it

has many meanings and connotations and you can look at all these meanings and try and see how you you nature.

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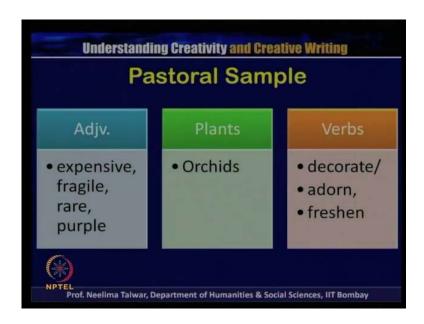
So, we are relating nature two pastoral so write about nature as per your understanding of the terms nature and pastoral in order to establish personal relationship with this phenomenal and this is also of fresh idea that we have included endorsed in this course because I do feel that our relationship to a natural so its a pre given no doubt about it and it can also be seen in so many different ways but at the same time this is something that can help us see ourselves better and also establish better relationships with world around us, not just the social, the cultural but also in terms of nature and also its larger ramifications today.

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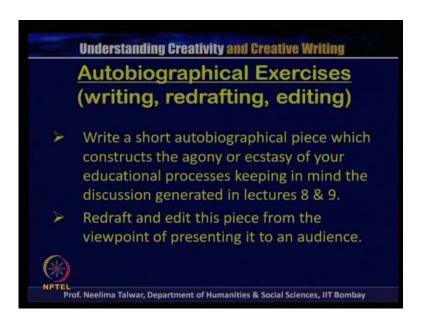
In the middle of the blank page within the same frame of reference you can undertaken an activity, which we have actually borrowed from another text that is available but in the middle of the blank page write down a list of plants or animals and to the left of this list write a column of adjectives, which describes the plants animals their creature special features memories they evoke and to the right of the lest write column of verbs which illuminate the features of the subject. The work should be energetic and exact you can dip into culture and nature related discussions undertaken in lectures 5 and 8. Before you undertake this exercise Neha had undertaken this exercise actually she undertook this exercise and in a fairly elaborate kind of the manner but we decided that at this point in time what we would you is to choose only an accessible example.

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So, we have chosen a very small part of what she had undertaken, because we constantly also trying to see, if our ideas make sense or not, if tried with the students, who have undertaken the courses, but sometimes we also try and undertake these exercises ourselves in order to keep learning and also keep exploring the effectiveness of our ideas. So, she chose the plant or kid, and the adjectives that she is chosen are expensive fragile, rare, purple, and the verbs that's has she chosen her decorate, adorn, freshen; this is just to give you feel for what can be done.

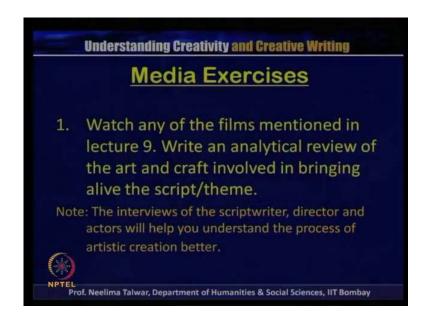
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The other activity that is added to the list of their ideas that we have already shared and this is to give a sharp of focus on writing is to write short autobiographical piece, which constructs the agony or ecstasy of your educational processes keeping in mind the discussion generated in lectures 8 and 9.

Redraft and edit this piece from the viewpoint of presenting it to an audience. And that is very important because sometimes if you feel that writing in a vacuum, you may not be able to really refine at the process of your own writing very much, but if you have a sense of an audience. So, you may not think about a specific audience, because of course once something is printed as margarita output has to mentioned this is a work we will this is an essay. We will discuss later on this is once something is printed then it gains different kinds of meanings. But it is very good for writer to have at least some sense of audience. So, try and do that and redraft and edit it from the point to view of presenting it to an audience. And if possible, present it to your friends.

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The next exercise again is a very I think very entertaining and interesting exercise and this is related to the media watch any of the films mentioned in lecture 9 write an analytical review of the art and craft involved in bringing alive the script or theme. So, the interviews of the scriptwriter, director and actors will help you understand the process of artistic creation better.

I missed out on that whole package of DVDs that mister Hirani had released after 3 idiots you know came out in the public space but so, I do not really know if what you think of that material but certainly with the social network the material that is available is exceedingly interesting and I think we can really do a lot with that material by way of engaging with this whole process of team work in some of the forms that we are taking about. These writing can be isolating but lets say in film making its a lot of team work is involved so even a young theme is not really seen only from the point of the view of the young it is also seen from the point of view of the older people mercy fully. So, now other media exercise I think relates to the young medium that has really changed everything around as.

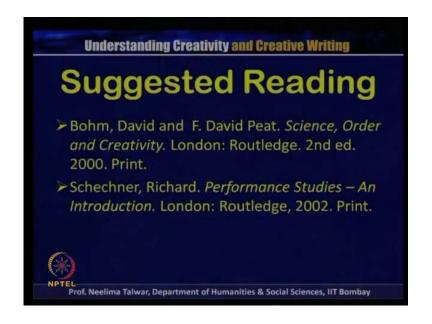
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So what I have done it is to choose this statement a very interesting statement made by Brenda Laurel regarding computers and so, you can examine this idea it is taken from book called a companion digital literary studies that came out of couple of years back and this is what the statement is.

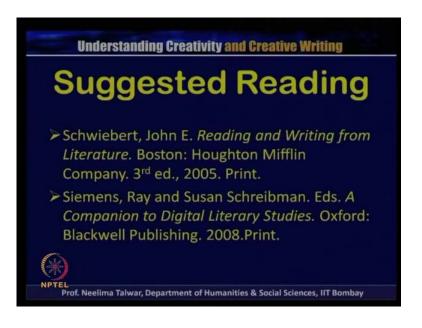
Every users interaction with the computer is a unique performance and moreover it is one that like theatre typically involves an element of make believe it is your young medium see what you have to say about this, so respond to it and create a peace or create a performance or create some team work by doing different things you know, by way of more ideas in this regard I think I already identified the essay and in reading list you can also see this once again.

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So, now the reading list that we have suggested here actually we have suggested only two books really speaking. So, this earlier book that I talked about if you want you can just have look at it, because we only used one statement, we have not really used the concept and the approach in radical way and that's why we just have a retain this here. So, you can have a look at these digital literary studies or just feed the world Brenda Laurel in google search and gain more access to material. So, then Bohm and David peat we definitely you know we would like to explore further ourselves and Schechners performance studies also is a very interesting take on many of these ideas of a performance theatre human behavior in different situations and its variety.

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So, any way to more books I think that we have identified are related to reading and writing from literature specially sobers are chapter on metaphors although we really have not use this book much but, we while offering or ideas to you. We have also been reviewing new fresh material and this is a new way of teaching literature it is very vibrant.

So thought we would include this reference too and the last one Sieman Ray and Susan Schreben Schrebman editors companion to digital literary studies and that that's what we dipped into for performance and interaction idea. I think that's about all that we have for you and these concludes the first module for us and I think we are beginning to feel more excited many of these ideas will be developed further the in the subsequent modules I hope you will stay on board and also give us feedback about what these ideas have done for you.

Thank you.