

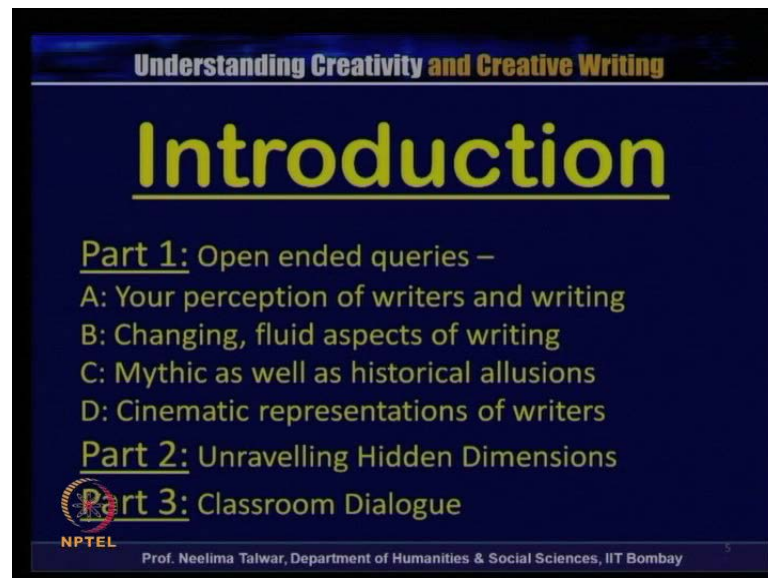
Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing
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Lecture - 14
Writers and Writing: The Dialogic Process

Hi, it is great to be back. This is the second module; in this module, we would focus on writers and writing. In the first module, we had talked about writing as a very important part of any creative process, because it is a kind of culmination, which clarifies the process whatever your creative focus may be. It may be on sports or it may be on science, technology, design or painting. So, that was a sort of overall general view.

In the second module, we will begin to look at writers and writings in greater detail. This lecture is titled Writers and Writing, and the module is titled to be a writer. Now, we have structured this first lecture in a manner that it lends better understanding to not only writing in terms of professional writing, but also how we can institutionalize it. This was a concern that we voiced in the first lecture also.

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So now, this section is actually organized in a certain way and I think, I would like to explain this to you that we have divided this particular lecture in three parts. The first part is open ended, and we deal with number of perception that you may have of writers

and writing. We look at changing fluid aspects of writing, and we look at mythic and as well as historical allusions, and we will also look at cinematic representations of writers. The purpose of this is to really get you to think about writing and its cultural significance. We assume diversity of viewpoints and we assume diversity of reading backgrounds and writing aspirations. So, with all that in mind, this particular part 1 is meant to really provoke certain open ended kind of response to what it means to be a writer.

The second part deals with unravelling hidden dimensions. In this part, the creative writing teaches pedagogic and creative intent is unravelled. In the third part, we bring you and the teacher together in some kind of a dialogue within the classroom. Now, even traditional class room really demands dialogue. In that sense, we really carry over from the traditional classroom and we are actually interested in placing creative writing class rooms, in relationship to what you have already learnt or the manner in which you already learn to reliterate, to think about literature and to raise questions about various definitions of literature. But in addition to that, we would really like to develop a certain special position or certain orientation that creative writing teaching and learning requires. So, this is the way the lecture is structured. It starts with general floating perceptions to the teachers own point of view and then, the ensuing classroom dialogue, which should help each one of you discover your hidden talent.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:22)

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Open Ended Queries - A

- Why do you want to write?
- What, in your opinion, is the writer's vocation?
- Does any particular writer come to mind when you think about the writer's vocation?
- Do you think of the writer as a male/female/androgynous figure?


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So, now we will start with the open ended queries. So, the first question that I like you to think about is that, why you want to write. This is again, in some ways close to the spirit of autotalic activity. In order to discover your autotalic drives or your inner drives, it is very very important to introspect to ask as many questions as you can, so that, you can really stay in tune with your inner voices. So, why do you want to write? It may not be possible to answer it in simple ways nor do we have a set of expecting answers. But basically, this is again a process of self discovery that may be necessary as you write. It may keep changing also. Your definition may keep changing. What, in your opinion, is the writer's vocation? So again, we assume varied exposure to reading, and social framework to cultural issues. In that sense, you may have your own opinion of what the writer's vocation is. A writer may or may not agree with your definition, but what is your sense of a writer's vocation.

Thus, any particular writer comes to mind when you think about the writer's vocation? So again, this happens you know. We live in a very imagistic culture. So, it may happen that you have certain set of people who immediately inspire you or they come to your mind when you think about the writer's vocation. They may bring a whole set of values and methodologies that you may associate with the writers vocation. Do you think of the writer as a male or female or androgynous figure? Now, if I were to really go in the confessional mode, I may quite be willing to share this.

So, great surprise in my mind when I often find that the women learners, when one teaches these courses, they often have a gendered view where they do not really necessarily place themselves at the centre or a woman at the centre of the writing process. They often seem to place the male as the writer. Mr.Nipole may like that idea, but I think we need to look at it much more critically.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:15)



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Open Ended Queries - B

- What does the term Poetic Licence evoke in your mind?
- What do you think about the widely quoted sentiment “the pen is mightier than the sword”?
- How has writing changed in the context of internet and communication technologies?
- Will cyborgs create new writings?

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So then, these are the set of questions and then, some others have been added. So, you often hear the term Poetic License, when you talk about writers or poets. The term poet is used as a synonym of writer and in that sense, you often hear the term Poetic License. What does the term Poetic License evoke in your mind? What do you think about the widely quoted sentiment “the pen is mightier than the sword?” How has writing changed in the context of the internet and communication technologies? Do you think cyborgs can create new writings? Now, it is quite possible that some of the words and terms that we are using in these set of questions may not be familiar or they may not be accessible to you. We would like you to work on these words and figure out their meaning and figure out your response. Again, you may like some questions and you may not like some other questions. But the idea is to provoke some kind of discussion on what it means to be a writer.

We thought that it may be a good idea to also dip into many images and many associations, many allusions, which means references that circulate in our cultural context. So, I picked up a few that certainly seem very intriguing and powerful. Yet, I really do not have an answer for the power and the ideas and the metaphors that they evoke.

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Open Ended Queries - C

- How do you respond to the mythic legends associated with the writing process?
- ❑ The split between Ganapati as a scribe and Ved Vyas as the creator of *Mahabharata*?

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But then, the most widely known, I think allusion here is to Ganapati as a scribe. The split between Ganapati as a scribe and Ved Vyas as the creator of Mahabharata. So, how do you respond to this kind of mythic legend associated with the writing process? Very very interesting ideas come to my mind. But I will share it after you are through with this activity. I do not know when that will happen.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:40)

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- ❖ The legend goes that Ved Vyas conceived the epic *Mahabharata* but he needed a scribe. Brahma recommended Ganapati because of his superior intellect. Ganapati agreed to be his scribe on the condition that his pen must not stop while taking dictation. Ved Vyas accepted this condition by demanding that Ganapati should write only after grasping the meaning of the dictated words.
- ❖ So the book was written on the barks of trees with a feather for a pen.

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The legend of course, if you are not familiar with it, it goes that Ved Vyas conceived the epic Mahabharata but he needed a scribe. Brahma recommended Ganapati because of his

superior intellect. Ganapati agreed to be his scribe on the condition that his pen must not stop while taking dictation. Ved Vyas accepted this condition by demanding that Ganapati should write only after grasping the meaning of the dictated words.

Very clever you know on the both sides. This is dialogic process. So, the book was written finally on the barks of trees with a feather for a pen. So, see what you feel about this allusion. The second one that comes to my mind and of course, I have slightly modified my own sense of connection because that is the way it evokes a response in my mind.

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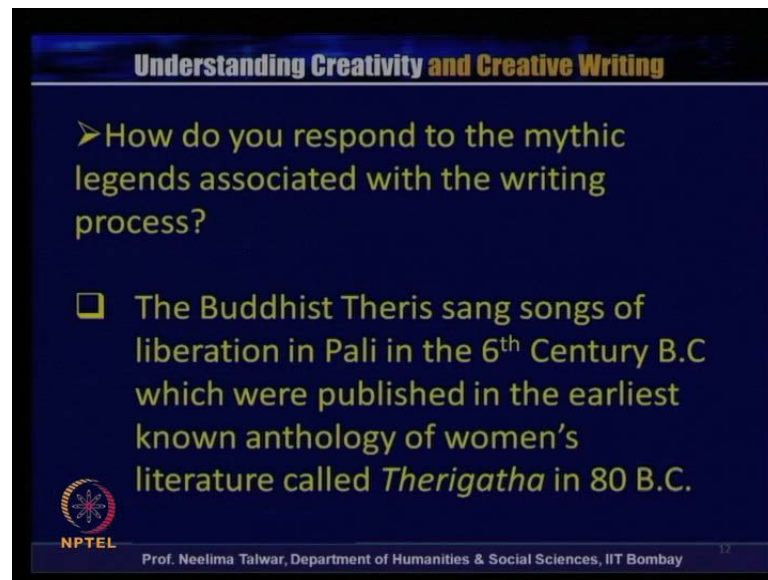
Open Ended Queries - C

- How do you respond to the mythic legends associated with the writing process?
- ❑ Eklavya's thumb as guru dakshina for Dronacharya not only affecting his skills in archery but also, in our interpretation, the ability to write.

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That is related to Eklavya tail, where Eklavya's thumb is sort as guru dakshina by Dronacharya. This affected his skill in archery and in my interpretation also, the ability to write. So again, the Eklavya myth and certain kind of aggression in withholding the possibility to write. That is the way I read it. You can read it in your own ways. The third is very interesting really and this refers to a historical situation. As I said, there are these varied illusions that we have dipped into and they are not really artificial. They are the ones that have been circulating in one's mind.


(Refer Slide Time: 11:40)



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➤ How do you respond to the mythic legends associated with the writing process?

- ❑ The Buddhist Theris sang songs of liberation in Pali in the 6th Century B.C which were published in the earliest known anthology of women's literature called *Therigatha* in 80 B.C.

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So, this one is related to the Buddhist Theris, who sang songs of liberation in Pali in the 6th century B.C in India. These were published in the earliest known anthology of women's literature called Therigatha in 80 B.C.

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Example of a song from *Therigatha*

MUTTA
[So free am I, so gloriously free]

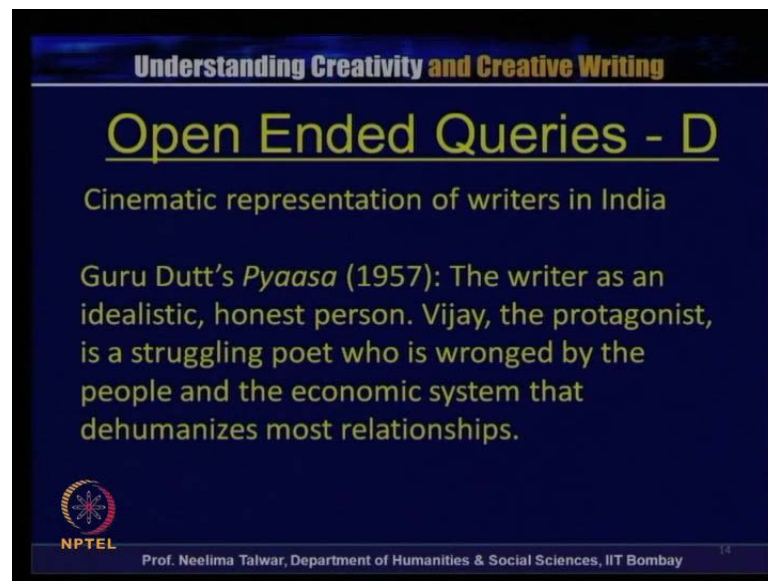
So free am I, so gloriously free,
Free from three petty things—
From mortar, from pestle and from my twisted lord,
Freed from rebirth and death I am,
And all that has held me down
Is hurled away.

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Of course, if you are not familiar with this illusion, the song is given and the source also is given towards the end. This is a very important milestone in women's writing. It is edited by Suzitharu and Gladita. So, we mentioned it towards the end. So, this is how the song goes. "So free am I", it is called MUTTA. "So free am I, so gloriously free. So free

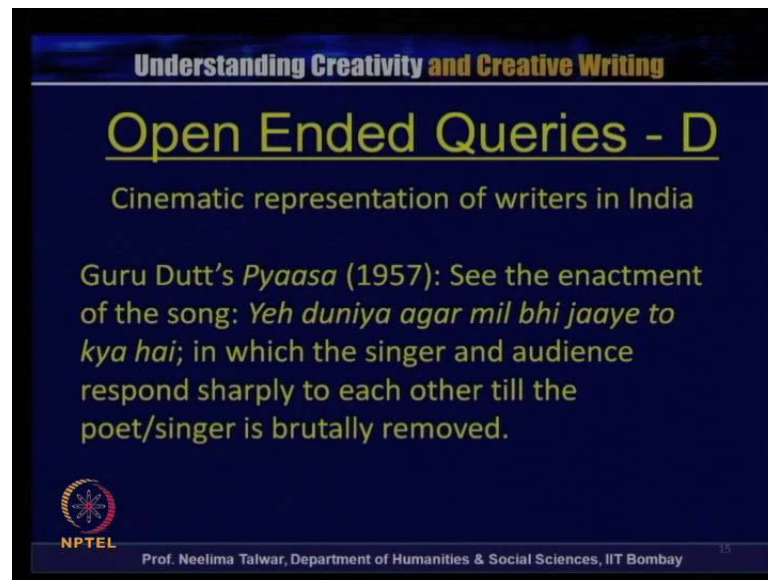
am I, so gloriously free, free from three petty things, from mortar, from pestle and from my twisted lord, freed from rebirth and death I am, and all that has held me down is hurled away”. So, this is another illusion for you to think about. It is really quite nice to be able to dip into the cinematic representation, because we are such a cinema oriented people. We love cinema and we also love the performing arts.

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Therefore, I think, right now we would look at two very contrasting images of the writer. One which refers to, which is projected in Guru Dutt's *Pyaasa*, which was released in 1957 and the other one will be *Bhagban*, which is released in 2003. In Guru Dutt's *Pyaasa*, the writer is shown as an idealistic, honest person. Vijay, the protagonist, is a struggling poet who is wronged by the people and also the economic system that has dehumanized most relationships. So, this overlaps between the economic system that requires certain kind of dehumanization and also the relationships that really work around economic survival. So, this is how he has projected the protagonist who is a struggling poet. In that frame of reference, instead of going over the film, I am sure you can dip into it. You can also go into YouTube and immediately dip into this song. It is one of the most memorable scenes from Indian cinema.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Open Ended Queries - D

Cinematic representation of writers in India

Guru Dutt's *Pyaasa* (1957): See the enactment of the song: *Yeh duniya agar mil bhi jaaye to kya hai*; in which the singer and audience respond sharply to each other till the poet/singer is brutally removed.


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So, in this enactment, which is titled “Yeh duniya agar mil bhi jaaye to kya hai”. The poet, who at this point is also the singer, presents his anger against the failures of the society. He lashes out and he also shares his agony with the audience by using very powerful and searing terms. Like, this is the kind of society, where if I were to use the words from this very famous lyric from and you know, he keeps this attack on the social system. It is very sharp and finally, the audience of course keeps responding. The audience response is very mobile. It keeps showing the response to each word and each term. At the end of it all, however, he is brutally removed from the scene.

Now, this was a very very romantic view of the writer, who is a truth seeker. In that sense, I have described this here as a vocation of the writer is born out of suffering. This seems to be the world view that is presented in this very famous film *Pyaasa*, where *Pyaasa* is also a metaphor of a human being, who is thirsty for love, thirsty for meaning and thirsty for creativity.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Open Ended Queries - D


Cinematic representation of writers in India – contrasting views of different times.

✓Guru Dutt's *Pyaasa* (1957): The vocation of the writer is born out of suffering. It is not seen as a socially or economically valuable way of life. The writer is a seeker of unalloyed truth and remains on the margins of society.

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So, it is a vocation born out of suffering. It is not seen as socially or economically valuable by people who surround the writer in his personal dealings. The writer is also seen as the seeker of unalloyed truth. He in this case, it is he there, since I cannot think of a women writer who is projected like this. But he remains on the margins of society. The corresponding female figure in the film is Gulabo, who also remains on the margins of society. So, this is one very powerful view of the writer, as a being who is in search of unalloyed truth and writing is a means of finding that truth. Also, if not the truth, then to be able to narrate ones understanding or what is going wrong with society at large. Very very powerful film and very powerful metaphor and very powerful point of view. As opposed to that, I suppose there is another kind of point of view, which of course, may also be part of the changing national discourse.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Open Ended Queries - D

Cinematic representation of writers in India – contrasting views of different times.

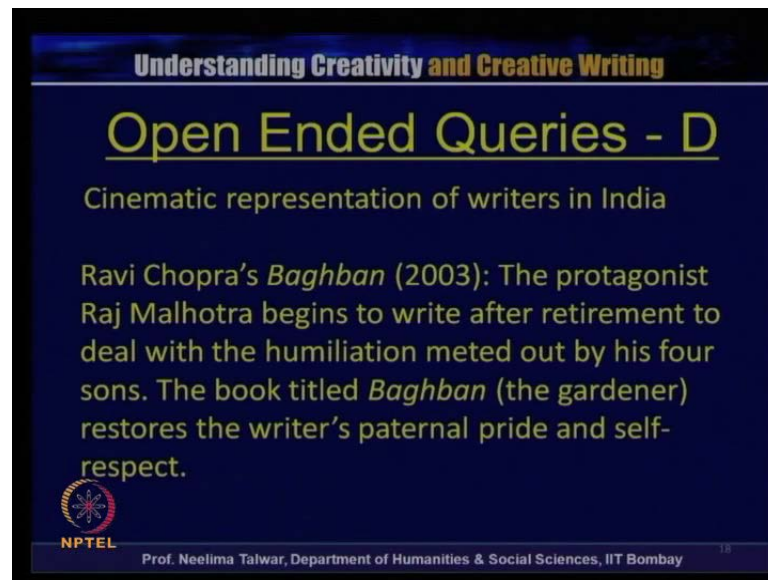
✓ Ravi Chopra's *Baghban* (2003): The protagonist's writing is born out of personal suffering in a reactive mode. Its a way of avenging one's lost place in the familial social setup. The theme of writing is glamorised by talking only about the end product – the book and the money.

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So, quite evidently from the period of Guru Dutt to Ravi Chopra in 2003, this is the ethos of liberalization and there is the very contrasting view of the writer in *Bhagbhan*. I picked it up because it has left a mark. Both these films have left a mark. I am sure many scholars would also agree with me that it is interesting to talk about these images that circulate. Now, the protagonist in this film, his writing is born out of personal suffering in a somewhat reactive mode. It is a way of avenging one's lost place in the familial social setup. The theme of writing or that is the vocation of writing is glamorized by talking about only the end product. That is, the book, although it talks about the suffering that caused the writing of the book, but the focus finally, is the triumphant quality of that book and the money that it fetched.

So again, this is a very different kind of feeling or different kind of image and sense of possibilities that this film also evokes. The protagonist, Raj Malhotra, begins to write after retirement. So, he is unlike the first writer, the writer in *Pyaasa*. His vocation is not really writing, but he begins to write after retirement to deal with the humiliation meted out by his four sons.

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Open Ended Queries - D

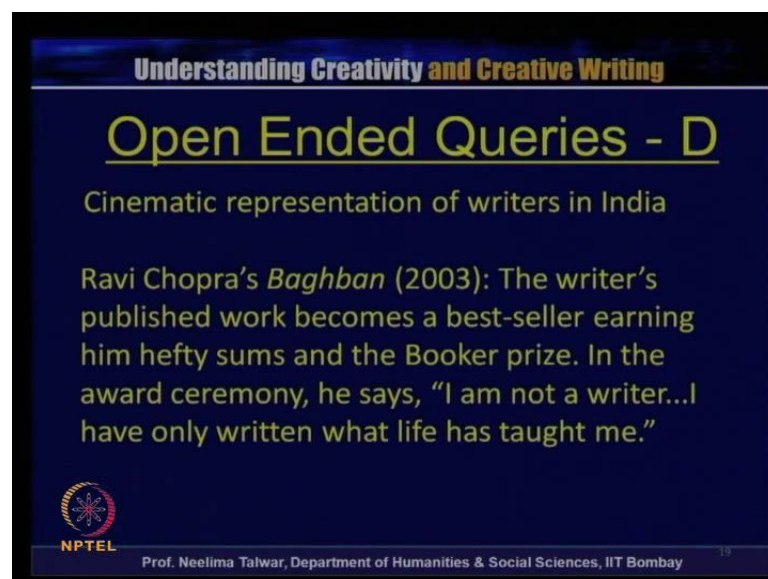
Cinematic representation of writers in India

Ravi Chopra's *Baghban* (2003): The protagonist Raj Malhotra begins to write after retirement to deal with the humiliation meted out by his four sons. The book titled *Baghban* (the gardener) restores the writer's paternal pride and self-respect.

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The book is titled *Baghban*, the Gardener. It is the father, the nurturer, the book is titled *Baghban* and it extends the same narrative, the life narrative, into the narrative in the shape of a book.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:32)




Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Open Ended Queries - D

Cinematic representation of writers in India

Ravi Chopra's *Baghban* (2003): The writer's published work becomes a best-seller earning him hefty sums and the Booker prize. In the award ceremony, he says, "I am not a writer...I have only written what life has taught me."

 NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay 19

So, the book restores the writer's paternal pride and self respect. The book that he finally publishes, it goes onto become a best seller, earning him hefty sums and the Booker Prize. In the award ceremony in the film, he says, "I am not a writer. I have only written

what life has taught me.” So, this is another take on writing and an interesting one and you can say what you feel about it.

Of course, you know, these are images, ideas, etcetera that circulate and I think, I would finally also like to place the writing teacher. So, to say in the framework of our dialogue because very often the question is, why does one want to teach writing? One can teach traditional literature courses. They are also very satisfying, but why is it that one feels this strong urge to create another kind of space and also teach writing.

So, I suppose certain bit of unravelling of hidden dimensions will help us in establishing better understanding of both sides. Very often, I do not feel that the students really see the teacher as a person, who is trying to aspire or to create something on his or her own ,because in the traditional literature courses, you usually teach canonized writing. Even if you teach writing, which is on the margins, in some ways you are a playing it oppositional, social, cultural role, but you do not invest your own presence in that to the extent that you would do while teaching writing.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

The Teacher's Point of View

➤ Why do I want to teach (creative) writing?

The classroom as the teacher's atelier (an artist's studio or workshop): A space for sharing new ideas about writing and the writing process. One's own writerly concerns shared explicitly or implicitly depending on the level of dialogue possible in a given group.

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So, there are couple of ideas that I would like to share with you. Perhaps, it may be quite alright to mention that many teachers of writing consider the classroom as the teacher's atelier. That is, like an artist studio or a workshop. It is a kind of a space for sharing new ideas about writing and the writing process. So you of course, are focused on the students, but you are also using this opportunity to choose ideas and eclectically and also

to share them with young people. Also in some ways, your own writerly concerns are shared explicitly or implicitly. It depends on the kind of dialogue that is possible in a group. It is not always possible for ground ones, presence and writing in such a direct way. So, it often depends on the nature of the dialogue which emerges. But at the same time, this is a kind of hidden dimension which animates the teaching process.

I would share a few things about this in a little while. Here are some of the samples of my writing. Rashmi Choudhary herself a Hindi writer and a doctoral student in the department of humanities and social sciences will read. The second sample chosen by professor Talwar is an excerpt from the play, *A Dream in Three Acts*. The introduction to the play has been described as an attempt to reconcile multiple voices and languages that co exists within the writer. In act 1, in a dream like encounter, Navaneeta, the protagonist, is seen in conversation with Seemondeviva. Navaneeta looks up to Vivah as a source of inspiration in her search for identity, which also needs to confront the diversity and multilinguality of her own cultural experience. The rest of the play deals with the struggle and celebration of search. The scene descriptions within the dialogues have not been included for this reading, though the introductory scene description will be read by Rashmi. The sequence has a dream like feel. The scene description has been read by Rashmi Choudhary. The part of Navaneeta will be played by Shikha lakhanpal and that of Seemondeviva is being played by Smitha pindakar.

A dream in Three Acts. Act 1. Two women enter. They are deeply engrossed in their conversation. One of them is Navaneeta, a young modern Indian woman dressed in a deep maroon muslin saree and an attractive woven blouse of the same color. She has a large red tikah on her forehead. The other woman is Seemondeviva. The French existential philosopher, who is wearing an osteal looking black frock and a black turban. Their dresses indicate not only the external cultural differences, but also the way they relate to themselves. Buwa is older and more analytical. Navaneeta is younger and more focused on sensory experience.

My dear, I am indeed pleased to meet you. But I am a bit surprised by your choice of locale for this interview. Madamuvo, it is to have undisturbed time with you that I ventured to suggest this location. As you know very well, the forest holds great fascination for women. A sense of peace sentiment and openness of sorts. So, I hope you

do not mind this place. Many young women of my generation have been greatly influenced by your ideas. Could we sit down and talk.

Are you talking about the second sex? The development of the male is comparatively simple. Women story is much more complex. From puberty to menopause, a woman is the theatre of the play that unfolds within her and in which she is not personally concerned. Our task is to discover how the nature of women has been affected throughout the course of history. We are concerned to find out what humanity has made of the human female.

Yes madam, (()). It is this very book and this very question that I am referring to, What humanity has made of the human female? Yes my dear. We will have to answer it for each our cultures. How would you answer this question?

Dowry, dowry deaths and news and teases, parda. Have you heard of these? That is what the Indian women is confronted with. A life within the four walls of the family. Yet, personally, when I am whom with my family, peace descends on me, I feel loved. The light of each morning fills me with gratitude. Why did you reject family and marriage as an alienating institution? Why did you want a life of isolation? Can I ask you a personal question? Why like a novel she came to stay? If you did not want any commitment from Sartor, why the agony over losing him to another women? Madam (()), what is our truth?

One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature.

Are we merely the products of culture osmosis? Can I ever view myself as I am or as I want to be?

My thoughts flow. My tails are French. My landscape is French. He went out again and again. I stayed a long while on the balcony. I watched an orange red crane turning against the blue background of the sky. I watched a black insect that drew a broad foaming icy furl across the heavens. The eternal use of the world makes me feel breathless. Some things I have loved have vanished. A great many others have been given to me. Yesterday evening, as I was going up the and the sky was crimson, it seems

to me like I was walking upon on an unknown planet, where the grass might be violet, the earth blue.

Madam uvo, I want to understand my reality through my own experience.

Yes, we love, we agonize, we want bliss, happiness. The free women is just being born. She will love more passionately. She will love more kindly. She will be happier.

Thank you Rashmi, Neha, Shikha and Smita for your participation. It is indeed a privilege to have you over and really do this. Somewhat dramatize reading for the video course. Rashmi is a doctoral student in sociology. Neha, you already know and she has background in literature. She is really committed to writing. Shikha is a student of M Phil and she specializes in environmental concerns and planning. Smita on the other hand is focused on gender studies.

So, you can see that these are all diverse kind of backgrounds. But all of them also are very keenly interested in the writing process and writing and finding their own sense of self. We will have them on board later on also. Now, coming back to my own writing while teaching the creativity and creative writing classes, I have actually rarely shared my own writing. But my writerly concerns have enabled me to be sensitive to the questions students often ask. On the other hand in the western framework, especially in countries like the US, UK, Australia, and Canada, writing classes are now routinely taught by published writers. In addition to that, they often invite reputed writers in order to be writers in residence and to add the value of institutional effort. I mention this because while teaching the creativity course in IIT Bombay, one have to steer the direction of this course amidst criticism oriented though contemporary humanities and social science courses and of course, the engineering and science courses.

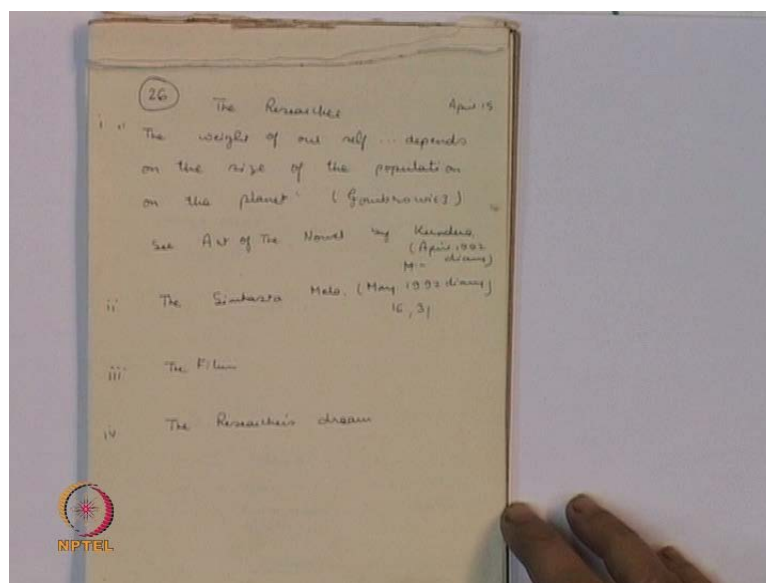
It could thrive, though in a limited way, primarily because it provided targeted one semester course work to those who wanted to explore this path. In other words, one still is at level of trying to create new cultural space, not only within just one course, but hopefully in multiple ways. So that, creativity oriented and creative writing oriented concerns can be explored more actively within the institution. By own creative problems, personally, could not be woven into this effort because of this lack of a earlier tradition of such an activity. For instance, my problem also is actually made complicated by the fact that I write in Hindi, which is my mother tongue. Sometimes, I write in Hindi

without thinking about it. Like, you saw this poem. You heard the poem. It just came to me. Occasionally, my multilinguality has surfaced strongly. So, A dream in Three Acts, actually later on deals with that multilinguality. I have not been able to use code mixing, because that multilinguality seems so rich and so powerful and infinitely more interesting. So, I really retained it by way of trying to see if one can find an audience for that kind of thought process. Then, sometimes without conscious planning, my writing flows in English.

So, it is very very hard for me to really deal with these issues and also offer these problem areas to students, in the early stages of their search. But in any case, for my own writing, I have let this happen naturally and publish poem, short stories and a play. A theme that has preoccupied be amongst many other concern is related to something that we will explore in the course further. This is related to the occasion of the scientist. Have been very very interested in what it means to be a scientist in India. To do science in India and the definition of science in India. I had been trying to explore this from number of angles, both analytical in my research work, but also in terms of creative writing. Because I feel that there are layers about it that can only be captured in the kind of space that fiction provides. So, what I will also like to do as a concluding part of this unravelling process that I ventured to share with you is to share my own notations in the kind of dairies that I have maintained regarding my writing.

So, of course, I feel that these ideas have been flowing within me unabated. Now, I need to really see how I can focus on them and give them proper shape. So, I really need to do that. But I will read and show you the pages of my own dairy.

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So, with reference to this theme of science, I have a notation with the title of either a short story or novel called the researcher. In which, I have noted down a statement from Gombroviz, the polish modern writer who said, “The way to of our self depends on the size of the population of the planet.” This particular statement by Gombroviz, which I think I read while looking at Kundera’s own writing and essays. It simmered within me and I have another notation on the same page which says, The Simhastha Mela, the researchers dream, the film.

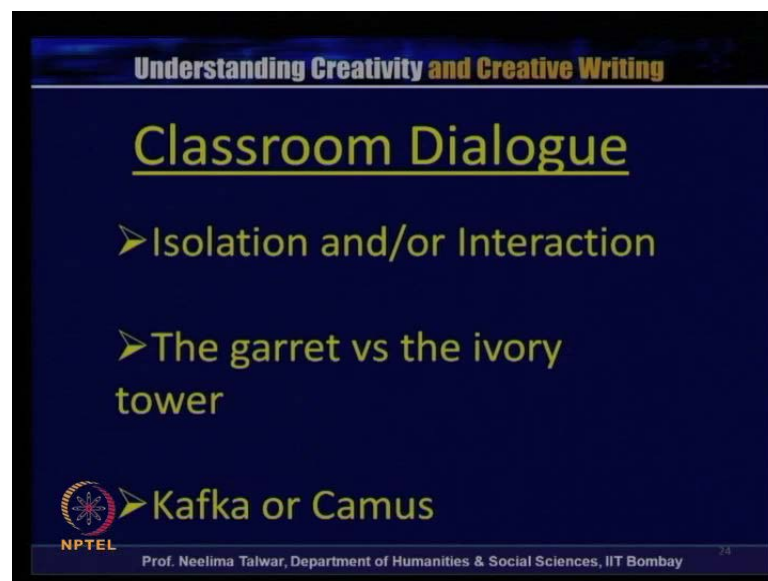
Then later on, at some other point in time, I have this other notation in my dairy with another title called, The Expenction of Species. I have this notation, which I will read about him. About an Indian scientist, who works on population control. A modern man’s fear of population explosion; personal history of excessively large family; research work; a quest and a reaction; the milling crowds; the repress, sobs, the cry of the unborn; Kumb’s scenario seen as a child; the quite lab; silence of the womb; the scientist playing God; a kind of nobility turning to evil. That is the notation. So, I think I have shared my own personal journey with you in a very limited way. I am sure this kind of sharing, when it occurs on both sides, it gives greater degree of understanding of each other choices and also the kind of world view, that we construct for ourselves.

Now, based on your own desire to write, your own perception of what writing as a vocation means, the teacher and you, and you establish dialogue with each other. The

dialogue is not a very simple process. But I think, it has to be active on both sides. The teacher should be a learner and you, the student, should also be a teacher. These two elements should coexist within the same person. We had talked about it in the first module as well now.


Let us look at some specific kind of predilections of the writer. While we bring writing into the classroom, there are certain issues that we need to talk about. Writers have always existed everywhere in the world. Nobody is going to stop anybody from writing. But when you begin to talk about institutionalization of writing, that is bring writerly concerns to the classroom, because you are also helping train people to look at the writers vocation as a potential future vocation for them. Then, I think some things need to be articulated.

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So, three ideas have been singled out to establish dialogue between students and teacher. So, with reference to writers vocation, we need to talk about the significance of both isolation and or interaction. We need to look at this metaphor of the garret versus the ivory tower. We can also look at two writers and some certain kind of metaphoric significance that they evoke, and that is Kafka and or Camus. So, let us see how we can develop this discussion. Now, in terms of isolation and or interaction, isolation can mean many things. But at this point, we are emphasizing the space and solitude necessary for writing.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Classroom Dialogue

➤ Isolation and/or Interaction

- ❑ Isolation can mean many things but at this point we are emphasizing the space and solitude necessary for writing: *A Room of One's Own* to write.
- ❑ Interaction is a crucial but difficult step in sharing either the challenges of one's writing process or a specific finished work with others.

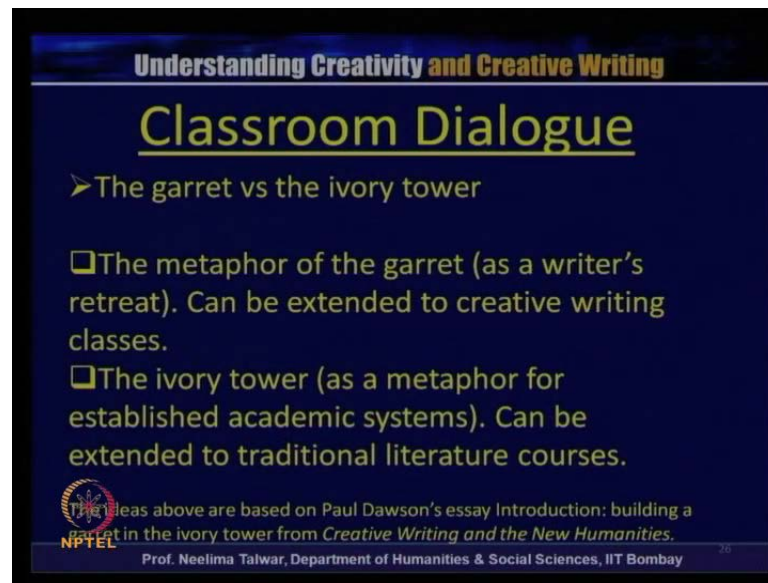
NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay 25

This is based on this very famous book that Virginia Woolf wrote, where she talked about the necessity and the significance of a room of one's own in order to be able to write. There is a kind of independence, there is a kind of autonomy, and there is a kind of space, either mental or physical, that is necessary in order to carry out the act of writing. So, isolation in terms of the solitude and space necessary for writing.

On the other hand interaction is equally important. But I think it is a kind of complicated for many many writers. Because in terms of your own writing related interaction, it is very difficult to judge at what point one can begin to share ones writing with other people. So therefore, I have described this in these words. Interaction is a crucial, but difficult step in sharing either the challenges of one's writing process or a specific finished work with others.

It does not come that easily. So, there is certain amount of judgment that is involved in reaching out and interacting with other people. So, in classroom scenario, we assume that interaction will help writers a great deal. But I think one has to keep in mind the sensitivities that are involved and sort of also help you realize that they may be certain kind of writing, where you may feel that you are not ready for interaction. So, these kinds of situations are very very common. So, isolation is necessary and so is interaction. You have to find your own balance in this regard.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Classroom Dialogue

➤ The garret vs the ivory tower

- ❑ The metaphor of the garret (as a writer's retreat). Can be extended to creative writing classes.
- ❑ The ivory tower (as a metaphor for established academic systems). Can be extended to traditional literature courses.

The ideas above are based on Paul Dawson's essay Introduction: building a garret in the ivory tower from *Creative Writing and the New Humanities*.

NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay

With the reference to bringing writing to the class room, there are some very very interesting ideas that Paul Dawson has raised in his recent study. A very important recent study titled Creative writing and the New Humanities, where he has looked at these very cleashade. In his own words, very cleashade, but also very useful metaphors of the garret versus the ivory tower. In his opinion, although the two seem to be at cross purposes, but actually, he wonders if that may be so. The garret, the metaphor of the garret is actually sort of associated with the writers retreat. According to him, this metaphor can be extended to the creative writing classes. Now, how does one do that?

The garret is associated with certain amount of isolation and also certain amount of deprivation, economic deprivation or certain social deprivation that writing demands. According to him, the garret has had certain amount of romantic association with creativity and authenticity of the writing process. It is also seen as outside of society. So, writing is outside of society. So, it evokes all these associations in his point of view. As opposed to that, ivory tower is a metaphor for established academic system. Often, it is seen as a negative description, because it seems to evoke the sense that it shelters the practitioners from harsh realities of actual life. Now, in his opinion, these two need not be separate. Although, actually if you look at the Pyaasa content, the content of Guru Dutt's Pyaasa, it again fix into the metaphor of the garret. Actually, the publishing world in that framework is actually linked to the ivory tower because it involves protection and it also does not challenge those who have undertaken the work too much. The garret, in




particular, and its association with Pyaasa and ivory tower in terms of certain privileged position in terms of Bhaghban can also be evoked.

But, in his opinion, the ivory tower and the garret are parable and parallel permeable metaphors, for the academic critic and the writer. So, in his opinion, they are metaphors, but they are permeable metaphors for the academic critic, in terms of the ivory tower metaphor and the writer, in terms of the garret metaphor. What he has tried to really establish in this book is to see how these two can be negotiated. It is not possible to do away with these concepts, because they do have certain element of truth in them. But at the same time, how does one negotiates these two, in order to institutionalize creative writing.

So, both in terms of institutionalization of creative writing and in terms of thinking about the writers vocation, I think you can look at these two and develop your own take on it. The next association if a class room dialogue, so, I suppose in a classroom situation, we could debate these two. We could talk about these two. We could have our take on these in order to pursue our own independent line of creative action. The other kind of question that I raised again in a metaphoric sense was in terms of its links with two different kinds of very very powerful writers of 20th century. They are Kafka and Albert Camus.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

	
Franz Kafka 1883 – 1924	Albert Camus 1913 - 1960
	
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27

If you are not familiar with the two writers, then according to most biographical accounts, Kafka, you know, did not want to publish his writing.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Classroom Dialogue

- According to most biographical accounts Franz Kafka, one of the most influential writers of the 20th century, did not want to publish his writing.
- Albert Camus on the other hand was deeply invested in wide ranging writing and publishing activities such as journalistic writing, philosophical essays, drama, short stories and novels.

NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay 28

So, there is a lot of material available on this whole issue. The second writer, Albert Camu, on the other hand was deeply invested in wide ranging writing and publishing activities, such as journalistic writing, philosophic essays, drama, short stories and novels.

(Refer Slide Time: 48:28)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Classroom Dialogue

➤ Kafka or Camus?

- Does one want to write with the clear aim to publish?
- Or does one want to treat one's writing as a way of making sense of the world?
- What genres would one like to devote oneself to?
- Which language/s would one like to write in?

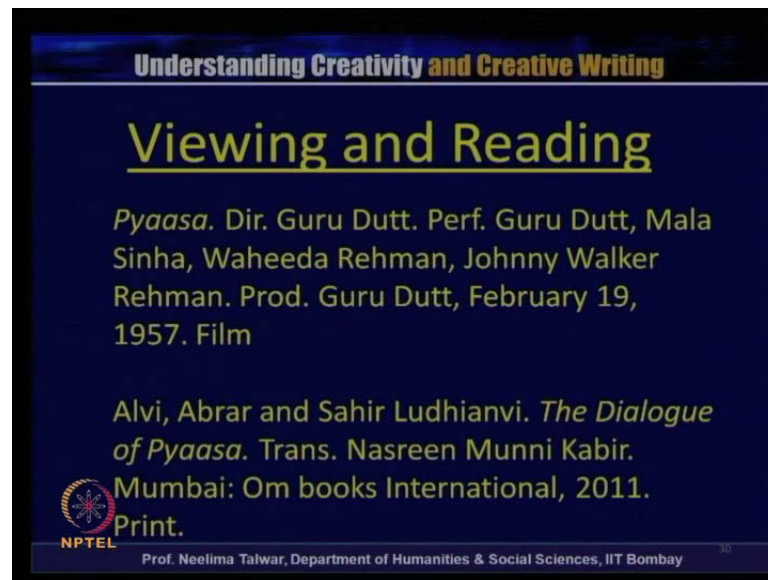
NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay 29

So now, when we talk about it, the question that we can debate is whether you want to be Kafka or Camus. That is, do you want to write with the clear aim to publish or do you want to treat your writing as a way of making sense of the world, but not necessarily publish it or publish it sporadically. Whenever you feel that some things can be shared with the world at large, but some, you want to keep to yourself. So, this is a question that you can ask. It gives you different kinds of space for yourself.

The other related question can also be linked to the genre that you would like to devote yourself to. Very often, people may have a sense of which genre makes them feel excited in terms of their writing. But while writing, they may shift their attention to another genre because that is also a kind of shifting ground. There are lots of blurred boundaries in terms of genre. So, again while talking about publishing or not publishing, one can also look at this question of genre while debating the writer's vocation. So, which genre would you like to devote yourself to? Writing contains a lot of possibility. So, we are also keeping that open ended. Different kinds of writing processes and products may be involved. The other question in tune with the multilingual cultural context that we inhabit is related to the language. Which language would one like to write in?

This famous case of Girish Karnad, which if I were understand it correctly, he has mentioned it in one of his editorial comments that he wanted to actually write in English, but when he sat down to write, he began to write a play in Kannada. That was Yayati. So, it may again be a question that can actually resolve only when you start writing more seriously. So now, this more or less concludes this first section, where we want you to reflect on writers and writing and the cultural significance that you or your society or your social framework associates with the writing process.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Viewing and Reading

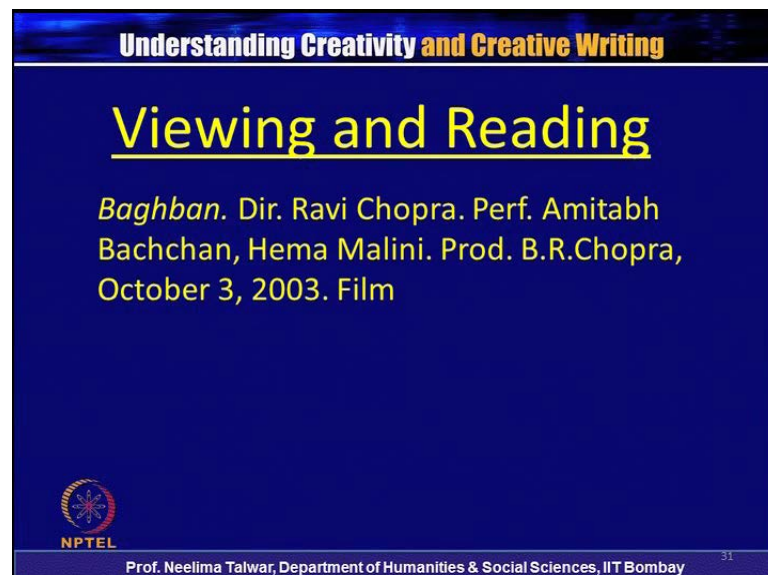
Pyaasa. Dir. Guru Dutt. Perf. Guru Dutt, Mala Sinha, Waheeda Rehman, Johnny Walker Rehman. Prod. Guru Dutt, February 19, 1957. Film

Alvi, Abrar and Sahir Ludhianvi. *The Dialogue of Pyaasa*. Trans. Nasreen Munni Kabir. Mumbai: Om books International, 2011. Print.

 NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay 30

We would recommend viewing of *Pyaasa* by Guru Dutt. It is a great film with some very very great moments and the dialogues are also available. There is a recent publishing trend, where the dialogues of some of the very famous Hindi films, the cult films have been translated, but they are also available in the original.


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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

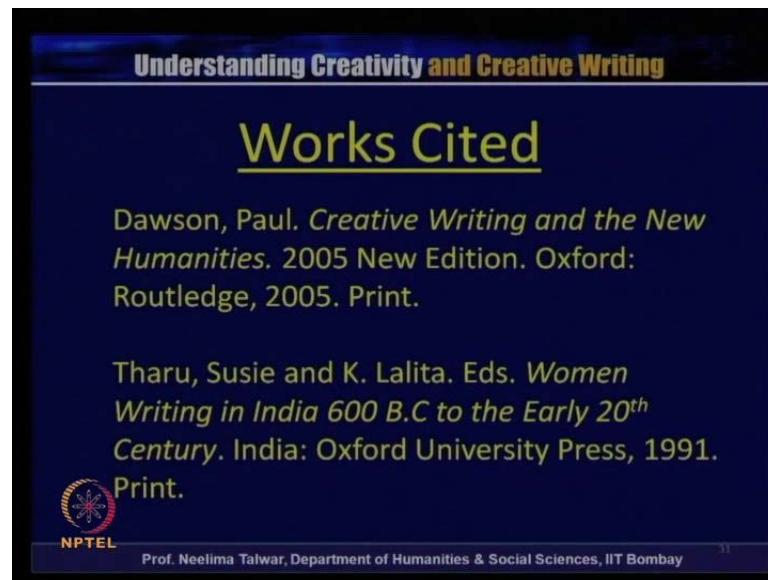
Viewing and Reading

Baghban. Dir. Ravi Chopra. Perf. Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini. Prod. B.R.Chopra, October 3, 2003. Film

 NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay 31

So, you can dip into the dialogues of *Pyaasa* in order to understand the total set of ideas that we have only briefly talked about.

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You can also look at Paul Dawson who has tried to establish creative writing as a mode of gaining knowledge. This is with reference to new humanities and many of the theoretical formulations of the last 20 years in teaching of literature and raising foundational questions about the definition of the term literature and hence, creative writing as a response to many of these foundational questions. Finally, Tharu and Lalita's *Women Writing in India*, from which we have taken the Therigatha songs. With this, we conclude this session. I hope you will think about of your own self much more actively before we embark on the journey to understand, what other writers have to say about the writing process.

Thank you.