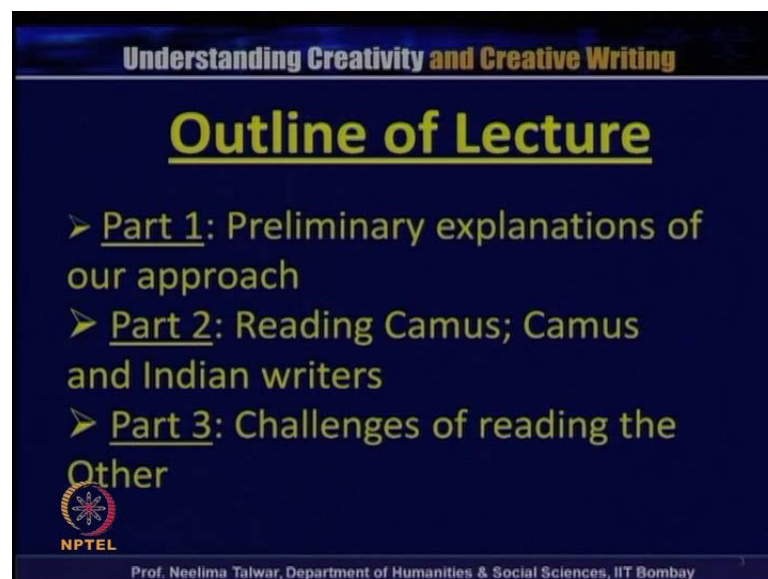


Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing
Prof. Neelima Talwar
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Lecture - 17
Writers on Writing: Albert Camus

Hi, lecture four and five of this module, are devoted to the writings of much admired Albert Camus. The reasons we picked up Albert Camus is, because his literary diaries, formed a very important part, of the creativity elective in IIT Bombay. That particular way of teaching creativity and creative writing within the elective framework, it depended a lot on one's own intuitive grasp of the subject, because as I said we did not really want to be in the imitative mold. So, will be able to share some of the work that we did, although let me also at the outset point out, that often we are not able to really undertake detail textual analysis, because of copyright reasons. We are very aware of the difficulties that these impose on us, and therefore we are using material in a very conservative manner.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:23)



This particular lecture is divided into three parts; and all these three parts actually, are devoted to this attempt, to find the best way, or the optimal way of generating creativity and understanding it. So, some of the ideas that we had discussed earlier, these are interwoven in the first part, which I have described as preliminary explanations of our

approach. These may also be seen as somewhat, pre critical frameworks or ideas, that we have place before you again, because many of you may not have been exposed to literary analysis of the kind; that the textual details required. So, we are placing some critical ideas before you again. So, we hope that you will begin to, you know familiarize yourself with the terms that we are using, we will keep refining them, and reusing them later on.

The second part deals with reading Camus, and Camus Indian connection; that is mainly to justify, why we picked up Albert Camus and not any other writer. The reasons are actually related to some of the historical links, that develop between Camus writing and that of Indian writers in various regional languages, as well as in English. Part three deals with some of the challenges of reading the other. This notion of the other, is a very complicated one, but also very important one. So, what we sort of doing is to, link it to the fact that, for us also Camus is the other, and he is the canonized other. So, therefore, both issues of cannon formation, which are also subject to critics, and they are being debated very vigorously, and I think rightly so, but at the same time, what is it mean to read a canonized writer from another cultural location. So, by enlarge this is the framework, and let me explain it in greater detail now.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:00)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

The Nature of Writing

Important Ideas with reference to Lecture 1 of Module 2

- The changing, fluid aspects of writing as a form
- Unpredictable experiential patterns that lead to creativity
- Varied student exposure to writers and writers' vocation and hence the need to find common ground for discussion

NPTEL

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

For example, we have already discussed these ideas, so I am, this is an interwoven sort of pattern. We had earlier talked about, the changing fluid aspects of writing as a form. The

fact that once you commit yourself to creative writing, it requires certain understanding of the unpredictable experiential patterns, that it may come from. That is why we are very keen on this element of search, which is really embedded or which also emerges from our own context, from our own consciousness. Although reading critically is also important, but the, you know greatest danger of that position, is related to reading in an imitative mold. So, how does one read and at the same time, how does one listen to one self. So, there are these elements, which actually make writing very exciting, because it helps you undertake deeper journey into your own consciousness, so we place that before you very carefully.

Now, of course, constantly one is concerned about, the varied student exposure to writers; that is you may have (()) different writers, or you may have read very few writers, and also you may have read them randomly, without really thinking about them very carefully. The other thing that we have kept in mind is, that if you want to start writing seriously, often u really do not have sufficient understanding of writing as a vocation, because like every vocation it has its own demands, it has it its own ways of organizing the writing process, however unpredictable it may be. So, we have kept that in mind in sort of simplifying the discussion, and clarifying it also, without actually losing a sense of complexity; that is been a hard task for us, but that is an attempt to communicate with you, in terms of the variety of backgrounds, educational reading backgrounds you come from, and to then find a common ground, that creates resonances and is also useful for you.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:34)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Changing Approaches to Teaching of Writing

- Creativity, Writing
- Teaching of Creative Writing: 20th century phenomenon : Tussle between freelance writers and writing within institutions
- Constant striving for meaningful content and form to create new work.

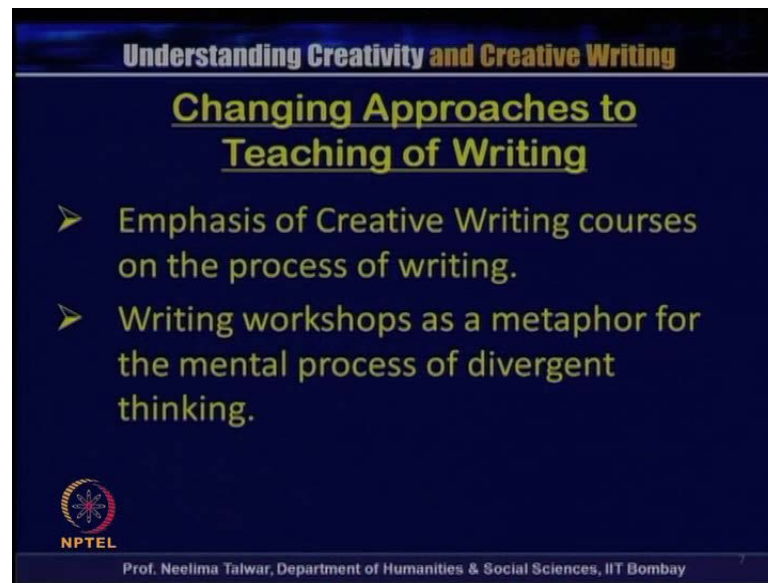
NPTEL

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

The other idea that we had talked about, and I think we had sort of almost (()) this point, is related to the fact that, creativity and writing, you know these are contested terms. We have pointed out that teaching of creative writing; that's sort of a term, which needs to be place within the academic setup. And immediately this really tends to evoke this kind of tussle between freelance writers and writing within the institutions. Writing does require great deal of autonomy, it requires of course, valuation, but it also requires tremendous amount of internal space, to really create. Institutions often tend to impose their value system on the writer. So whether you can survive within a pre given value system, in order to create autonomous independent work; that is something that I suppose writers, have to deal with if they are within the institutional location.

Now, for you and me who are already part of an institutional location, these questions still need to be addressed, these questions still actually remain very vital, in order to keep us very alert to certain kind of complicity that may develop, between our thought processes and the institutions, that may impose value systems that we want to alter. So, in other words it is this contestation, that perhaps we want you to keep in mind, at whatever level you can understand it, again to find more productive more creative more fruitful directions for yourself. So, finally within this thought process, this constant striving for meaning full content or to really define our direction. So, this is the sort of interwoven pattern that I was talking about.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:04)

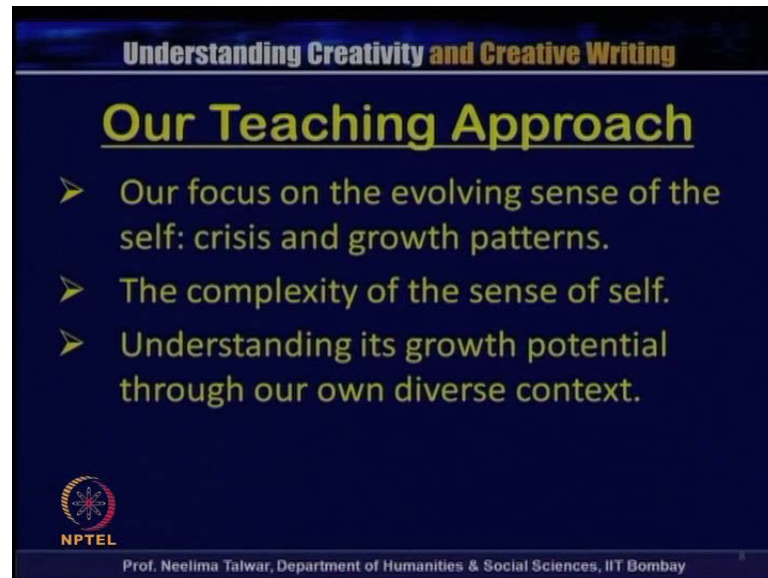


The other idea from the last lecture that we have, we can pick up for a fruitful way of, also placing Camus in a sort of productive framework, is related to the fact, that even the institutionalized creative writing programs else were in the world, they do devote their attention to the process of writing. For us we need to enlarge that sense of the process, by not only talking about the esthetic process per say, but also creativity in terms of issues, within our society, within our own institutional framework, or at whatever level we want to really place this enquiry, we need to pay attention, to what we consider is creative for our self. We will again use some of the useful ideas from pre given sources, or sources that I have already shown, enough potential for further discussion, but will bring it back to independent way of formulating our own work. One thing I again wanted to emphasizes, related it is related to writing workshops.

You know many of the creative writing classes. They function more like writing workshops. Although I must say that, I prefer a blend of the traditional lecture mould, or seminar mould, and then the writing workshop mould, because as I said we have an enlarged framework within which we wish to operate, but the writing workshop as a matter for, as we have noted, is really very useful module, because it allows for divergent thinking. And I think those of you who are on the other side right now listening to me, I hope you would have a situation, where a lot of you get-together, and you decide a certain issues. And also try and listen to each other, in terms of how you know look at the same literally problem, or same creative issue, how you can problematize it. And by

sort of talking about different ways of doing it, I think this really encourages very important democratic processes, but it also helps you arrive at your own decision in a much better manner.


(Refer Slide Time: 11:47)



Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Our Teaching Approach

- Our focus on the evolving sense of the self: crisis and growth patterns.
- The complexity of the sense of self.
- Understanding its growth potential through our own diverse context.

 NPTEL

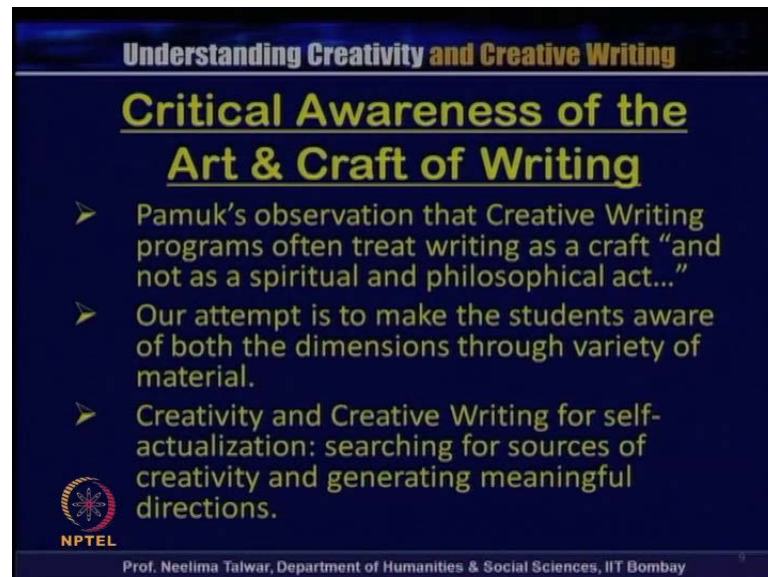
Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay

So, now our focus of course has been, on the youthful audience that we have in mind, whether they are within institutions or out of outside of institutions. I think one is thinking of young people who wants to start a writing career, and also therefore, we have encourage you to look at some of the modules, that deal with an evolving sense of the self, and not really stay with a very static narrow definition of your own self, and also try and see the crisis and growth patterns, in order into understand your own sensibility. So, that you understand the complexity of your own self, and as Sikshant Mihai has had pointed out.

This complexity of the self, is actually meant to help any individual understand the fuller potential, that he or she is capable of; that is why we are keen on, you know connecting to the insights of offered by developmental psychology. Interestingly developmental psychology also has borrowed a lot from, many of the older more ancient, but at the same time I would say enduring philosophical insights, from the Indian setup. So, in some ways, if you really begin look at it more carefully, many notions from developmental psychology, specially mass los notion of self actualization, many of these issues they have an overlap with philosophical tradition, that you may be familiar with,

although not in a systematic manor, but even in terms of general statements, that are made and you here them in your surroundings and at home etcetera. We had also in order to look at the esthetic aspect of writing; we had picked up some of the writers, and teachers of writing.


(Refer Slide Time: 14:00)



Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Critical Awareness of the Art & Craft of Writing

- Pamuk's observation that Creative Writing programs often treat writing as a craft "and not as a spiritual and philosophical act..."
- Our attempt is to make the students aware of both the dimensions through variety of material.
- Creativity and Creative Writing for self-actualization: searching for sources of creativity and generating meaningful directions.

 NPTEL

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


And I think it is very useful to remember, that you know, on the one hand one is talking about the sense of the self, and enlarging the scope of our discussion, before launching our attempt to study one or two writers whom we have single doubt, because they provide very interesting insight into, the way the literally process unfolds, they show the sign pose of that process, they do not reveal the whole process. So, I think again a writer like Pamuk when he had pointed out that writing, you know is of course, has a spiritual and philosophical dimension, and also that it is a craft. The sense of the craft is also very important. So, we do not want to lose out on a balanced approach, and therefore, both these dimension will try and evoke as we go along.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:55)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Critical Awareness of the Art & Craft of Writing

- The critical question/s regarding reading writers' preparatory notebooks or autobiographical insights or analytical essays about their vocation.
- The two diverse non-Indian examples selected in this module indicate the possibilities and limitations of such an exercise.

 NPTEL

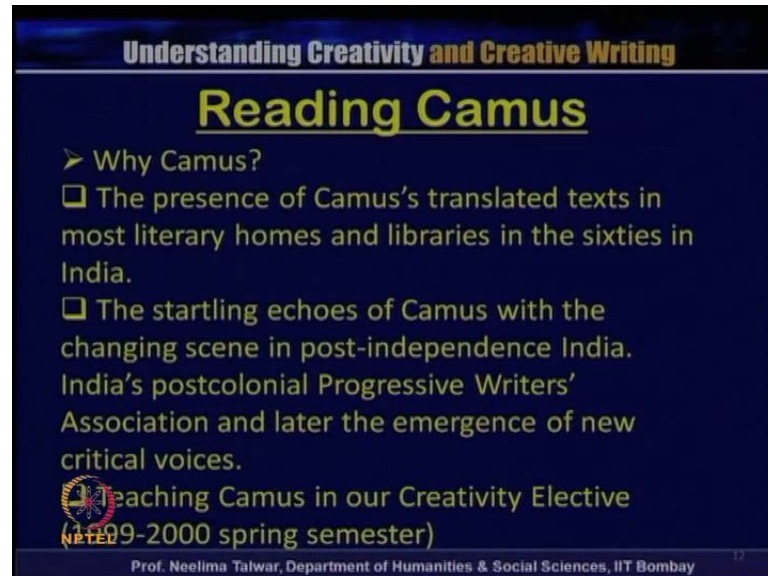
Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay

I have said here that the critical questions, regarding reading writers' preparatory notebooks, or autobiographical insights or analytical essays about their vocation, have been chosen very deliberately, and in that sense we had departed from traditional literary, you know studies mode, where the primary focus would have been on the creative writing; such as essay, fiction, drama, poetry etcetera. And very rarely would a literally traditional literary course, would start with a writer on his or her own writing, but we have given importance to that, because that is what we want to learn, are their sign pose, are their ways, in which we can understand the writing process better, through the accounts and documents, that the writers themselves have provided. For example, Albert Camus wrote his literary notebooks in pencil in a notebook, absolutely without any thought of publishing it. He was persuaded to publish it much later, when his work gained the kind of, you know following that, you know that we know about now, but at that time he really had no clue that he would do that.

And of course, there are different writers who maintain different kinds of notebook. So, they have a different way of, even showing their writing process in a creative work, but we are more interested in this separated material, that is available to us, in terms of what the writer has to say about, how he or she looks at this very complex process, and then learn from it in our own way. Now, of course so far as Albert Camus concerned, in order to understand what Albert Camus means to, many writers in India. I think we need to look at some of the historical events; that have unfolded around him. It this is of course a

brief presentation, I have elsewhere discussed this in greater detail, that paper is also refer to in the reading list, so if you are interested you can have a look at it.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:25)



But basically I sort of feel that, the presence of Albert Camus who wrote in French, but his translated text, they became available in most libraries and homes in the 60s in India. Now of course I am talking about libraries, that stock literary material. The startling echoes of Camus, with the word felt with the changing scenes in post-independence India, but let me explain it in a proper way. After independence the most visible writer's position was linked to the progressive writer's movement in India. I have called it the postcolonial progressive writers movement, and many of the writers across many languages, they felt that through literary activity, you know by writing about different character, by you know writing place about different issues, by writing essays about unfolding national concerns.


They were contributing to this accelerating task of nation building, after independence, and prior to that for fighting for the kind of freedom that every nation requires. But gradually that voice became much more complicated in terms of, you know post-independence situation, when more and more and many problems of the nation emerged, there the voices became much more critical, and not simply though the voices of celebration of nation building. Camus seems to have created some kind of resonance in the second stage of our nationalist writing process.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:38)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Reading Camus

- Pan-Indian perspective. “It is no accident that the most potent foreign influences on Indian writing today are Camus, Dostoyevsky, Kafka and Sartre.” (27) Adil Jussawalla’s editorial comments to *New Writing in India* published in 1974.
- Jussawalla’s observation refers to the contradictory pulls of social commitment and existential despair.

 NPTEL

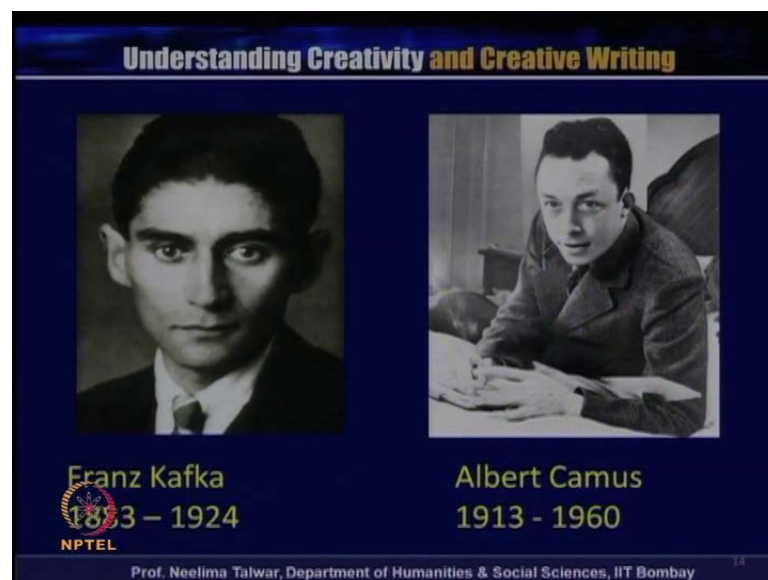
Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay

I remember reading this particular statement that Adil Jussawalla made, when he published what was called new writing in India then, and it is really seemed very new at that time, because this was really provided a much needed pan Indian prospective, in terms of Indian writing from various regions, that was translated in into English. Much of it had this kind of progressive zest, and at the same time a sense of critical distancing that I was just describing to you a minute ago. He pointed out in that editorial that it is no accident, that the most potent foreign influences on Indian writing today are Camus, Dostoyevsky, Kafka, and Sartre. Now Camus and Sartre they of course belong to, what is described as the existentialist movement in France. Of course Camus did not like that label. Dostoyevsky was a very important very Intriguing Russian writer; we will refer to some of his work later on. The very powerful voice, and wrote many if sort of novels that dipped into ideas, and how they shape human consciousness sometimes how they consume human beings completely. Kafka again is extremely important and, so he is club these together.

I do just want to add one more name, I think around this time although Jussawalla has not really looked into this connection, but I think Simone de Beauvoir the French existentialist who worked with Sartre. Her work also began to create, a fairly a major impact on the feminist consciousness in India. And if you want to see these connections, may be you can pick up a woman writing in India, and some of the editorial canons there, will help you understand this influence. So, the point is that in the process of our

own search, we have been shaped by ideas, that have come from different parts of the world, and that is the way the dialogue ought to be. But Jussawalla's observation I have singled out primarily, because the rest of that essay, and the choice of material in new writing in India. It shows certain amount of tension, between what is a very often perceive by Indian critics and thinkers, as a contradictory pool between social commitment, and existential despair. The term existential despair gets linked to what philosophers like Camus, Sartre etcetera were talking about. I will explain it in a minute, but I am just trying to mainly again suggest that, Camus presence in India is really fairly, I think a palpable phenomenon.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:48)



Between France Kafka and Albert Camus, why have we chosen Camus. Now, this of course a personal choice, although these are really very important writers.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:59)

The slide is titled "Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing" at the top. Below it, the main heading is "Two Contrasting Figures". The content is presented in two bullet points, each preceded by a square icon. The first bullet point discusses Franz Kafka, and the second discusses Albert Camus. At the bottom left, there is a small circular logo with the letters "AS" and "NATEL" below it. The footer text identifies the professor and department.

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Two Contrasting Figures

- 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 (Algerian born French writer, winner of Nobel Prize in Literature 1957) 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.

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

But let me just go over some of the contrast between them, and perhaps that will help you understand, why we have chosen Camus over Kafka, not because of any literary judgment, that we have making, but because of personal choices, that do color these exercises, because if we were to choose Kafka, we also had excess to his notebooks, but we have not done that. Kafka as you know, who is of course the one of the most influential writers of 20th century. Camus of course is also equally important, because of what he said, and also the diversity of activities with which he was engaged.


So, he (()) of provided a sense of very a complete literary personality, and in that sense I think to the progressive writers and writers in India who, were engaged in this task of nation building, this feeling that a writer is also a public intellectual, a public figure. A writer is also you know a person who's accountable in terms of what, how he wants to present problem. Not in this way a politician etcetera is, but in terms of certain space within the community, or within the language group, in which the writer operates. I think that was still there, and therefore the appeal of Camus was really very great. And also you know there is a kind of startling surprise, that his writing brought to our consciousness. So, I think it is, this sense of reticence of Kafka, that I felt, you know I actually did not really take a very critical stand as I said.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:53)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Two Contrasting Figures

- ❑ Camus's active engagement with writing and contemporary politics marked him as a public intellectual.
- ❑ Kafka consciously remained enigmatic: a writer working in intense state of isolation.
- ❑ Both are modernists: captured the theme of exile, alienation.

 NPTEL

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

16

I was more attracted by Camus, and also the fact, therefore that it would sort of help us, deal with many different positions, that we want to take about our own writing, whether we want to have to place it within the framework of social commitment, or within the framework of, a sort of critiquing estranging ourselves from a social framework, in order first understand it fully, and then commit ourselves to any social action.


(Refer Slide Time: 25:21)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Camus's Intellectual Position

"Considered as artists, we perhaps have no need to interfere in the affairs of the world. But considered as men, yes. ...I cannot keep from being drawn toward everyday life, toward those, whoever they may be, who are humiliated and debased. They need to hope and if all keep silent...they will be forever deprived of hope and we with them." (190)

See "The Artist and His Time" in *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* translated by Justin O'Brien (1955)

 NPTEL

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

17

So, in that sense, let me again place some of the key ideas from Albert Camus, before you, so that whatever I have said is substantiated. As I said we are slightly conservative

in terms of quotations, because of copyright conventions. Now this particular statement that he made about the writers, or role was made in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, which is a very famous book of essays, written by Albert Camus, and after that he wrote *The Rebel*. I think it is important to place those two books together, because Camus did not want to stay with ideas he propounded, in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, I will talk about that a little later, when I come to the next slide. But here he says; considered as artist, we perhaps had no need to interfere in the affairs of the world, but considered as men; yes, I cannot keep from being drawn toward everyday life, toward those, whoever they may be, who are humiliated and debased, they need to hope, and if all keep silent, they will be forever deprived of hope, and we with them.

So, I am sure I need not say more, because I have already talked about, a certain sense of this engagement with a culture, and the engagement with margin a lives; the oppress, the dispossessed that Camus was very sharply aware of, because he himself actually, was located in that framework, and you know he was born in a very low middle class family in France, and he was born in Algeria, but he was French. And also he continues to feel very deeply, concerned about issues of marginality.

So, this again, is a key statement from Albert Camus about, what the writer can do in the world today; that was the subtitle of this essay, which I read elsewhere. The other important idea; philosophical idea, and we should not be afraid of the term philosophical. A lot of times people begin to sort of feel worried, if they can understand these ideas or not. We are not really taking a full pledge course in philosophy and philosophical discourse, but at the same time, even in terms of writing processes, when you think about their, you know mechanism and their rational, you are actually philosophizing. So, you need not worry about terms, please get friendly with the terms.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:21)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Reading Camus

Camus's philosophical quest: notion of Absurdity
"A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity." (13)
See Albert Camus's *The Myth of Sisyphus*

NPTEL

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

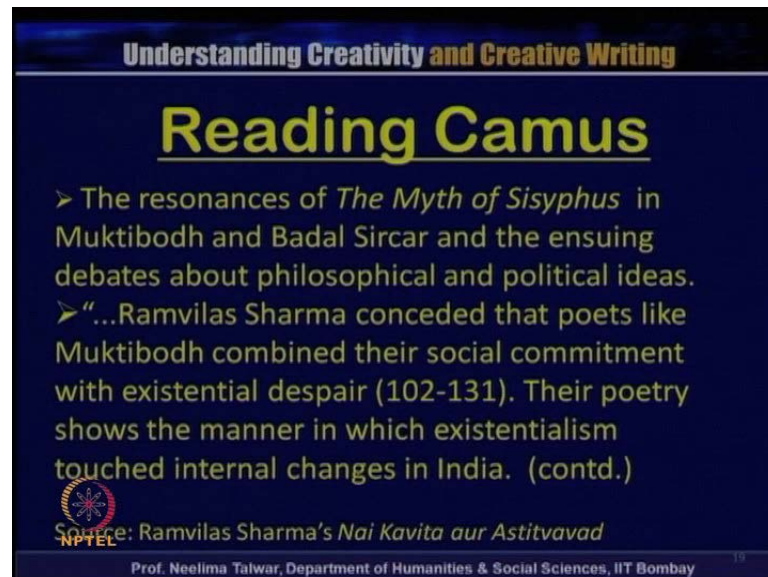
So, Camus's philosophical notion is expressed, in the notion of absurdity. Now this is again a technical term, and therefore you should place it within his existentialist philosophy. Although as I said, he did not like that term, but often Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus, they are club together, in terms of a common term, the existentialist philosophy. I am not going into that, but I am just extrapolating one particular statement, about absurdity. And of course, later on he had many more explanations to provide, to clarify this notion of absurdity, and what he meant by it. We will come to that also in the next lecture. But this is the state of mind, the state of mind of absurdity, that startlingly a sort of started kind of chain reaction, in the Indian consciousness also.

He says a world that can be explained, even with bad reasons, is a familiar world, but on the other hand, in a universe, suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger, his exile is without remedy. Since, he is deprived of the memory of a lost home, or the hope of a promise land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity.

Now, this therefore, is the second, you know key statement and as I point out you, that in the Indian location, already there was this strong progressive commitment to social issues of marginality of justice, freedom etcetera. And on the other hand, there is this other sort of, dominant way of looking at a world where pre given meaning does not

make sense, to the individual. So, there is a kind of a rupture, there is kind of sharp change in one's experiential orientation. So, this led to a lot of debates, in terms of Indian writers, and in fact I remember Ramvilas Sharma whose book on a new poetry and existentialism in Hindi.


(Refer Slide Time: 31:23)



Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Reading Camus

- The resonances of *The Myth of Sisyphus* in Muktibodh and Badal Sircar and the ensuing debates about philosophical and political ideas.
- "...Ramvilas Sharma conceded that poets like Muktibodh combined their social commitment with existential despair (102-131). Their poetry shows the manner in which existentialism touched internal changes in India. (contd.)

 **Source:** Ramvilas Sharma's *Nai Kavita aur Astitvavad*

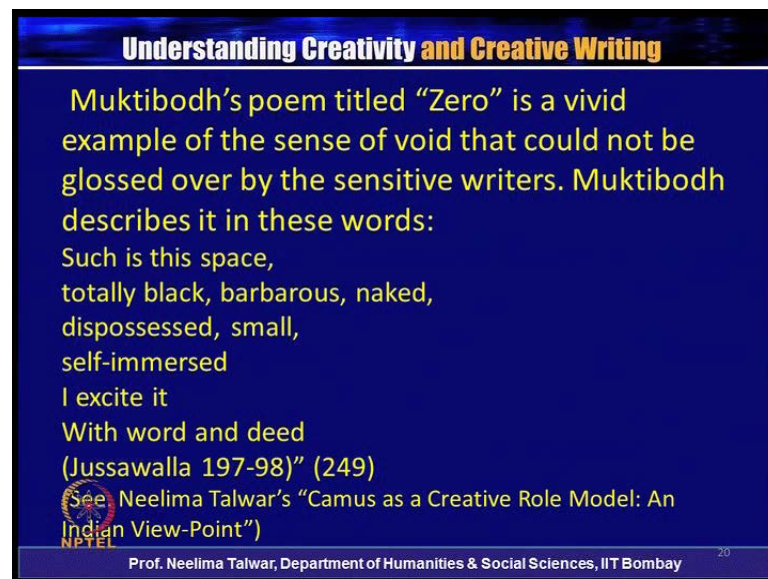
Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay

It is translated as Nai Kavita aur Astitvavad, existentialism is Astitvavad, and new poetry is of course, Nai Kavita. He referred to Muktibodh, the very important Hindi poet, very important voice, in terms of experimental poetry in, modern Hindi writing. And he actually, basically finally conceded, despite his misgivings about existentialism and their impact of the notion of absurdity, and related writing. He had polarized it; in terms of progressive you know writing on the one hand, progressive thought process on the one hand, and on the other hand. This writing of existential despair, is the sharp polarization between the two groups, and it continues to exist. But in terms of Muktibodh, finally he pointed out, that poets like Muktibodh combined their social commitment with existential despair, and so he conceded that, you know this blend also, it gives a different nuance, different intensity to the notion of social commitment, which is born out of the fact that pre given value systems do not justify the world.

And at the same time there is need to, give meaning to one's activities and to one's value systems, in a manner that you really bring justice to most people. So, in that sense, this really very close to Camus's own evolution, but it had its own locus, in terms of the

internal changes, that work unfolding in India. I thought I would just read excerpt from, one of Muktibodh's poems, which tries to capture this void, that he really talks about, time in again in his writing. There is a write you know diary that Muktibodh wrote Ek Sahityak ki Dairy, but again I did not find it very useful unfortunately, and therefore I decided not to share it with you, but you know if you get interested in Muktibodh, this much that you can also discover there.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:50)



Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Muktibodh's poem titled "Zero" is a vivid example of the sense of void that could not be glossed over by the sensitive writers. Muktibodh describes it in these words:

Such is this space,
totally black, barbarous, naked,
dispossessed, small,
self-immersed
I excite it
With word and deed
(Jussawalla 197-98)" (249)

See Neelima Talwar's "Camus as a Creative Role Model: An Indian View-Point")

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

20

This particular poem is titled "Zero", and it is a vivid example of the sense of void, that could not be glossed over by the sensitive writers. So, this is how, he describes it in these words. These are excerpts you have to read the full poem, may be in the original to really get the full flavor. Such is this space, totally black, barbarous, naked, dispossessed, small, self immersed, I excited with word and deed. So, that is Muktibodh's sense of, what this void this sense of absurdity.

This sense of lack of the connect with meaning system that is provided. So this is to suggest that, when we picked up Albert Camus, there was already a kind of ethos within which we were functioning, but at the same time this is not to suggest, that the students had the same connect, because I belong to another generation, and the student belong to yet very different generation. So, this really, it still requires speaking up a text like Albert Camus's, even diaries or fiction or essays. It requires reorientation, and also one cannot quite predict, how his students would take to this writing at all. So, I again I felt that it is


necessary to place some of the challenges of reading a writer like Camus, who we can describe as the other. In fact, as I said he is the canonized other. So how do we deal with this sense of otherness of Camus, and at the same time, as I said we do not want to be imitative, but we are in the discovery mode, we read these writers in the mode of discovering, something important about the craft, and also about the philosophy of writing.

(Refer Slide Time: 36:13)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Reading the Other:
Notion of the Other

- Otherness in the sense of an entity in contrast to which an identity is constructed.
- Self and not-self = the existence of alternative viewpoint

 NPTEL

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

Now in terms of otherness one can say that, the word itself and like you to play around with, the notion of the other. Otherness perhaps, is can be posited against an entity, in contrast to which, one is constructing an identity. So, the reader as the self, the writer as the other; that is one simple kind of relationship, but that are many issues that we need to really content with. This otherness in some ways, therefore when it is beneficial and it is working very well, as in the case of let us say, I the reader and Camus the writer, Pamuk the reader and Camus the writer. Then that otherness is a kind of a mirror, that sort of shows as something about ourselves.

(Refer Slide Time: 37:13)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Reading Camus

Pamuk's comment on his Camus connection:

"When we are attached to a writer, it is not just because he ushered us into a world that continues to haunt us, but because he has in some measure made us who we are. Camus, like Dostoyevsky, like Borges, is for me this kind of elemental writer. (contd.)

NPTEL

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

23

Let us see what Pamuk has to say about Camus, is fascinating, even I really feel very connected to this statement. He says, this from another essay, I think other colors book of essay. He says when we are attached to a writer, it is not just because he ushered as into a world that continues to haunt us, but because he has some measure made us who we are. Camus, like Dostoyevsky, like Borges, is for me this kind elemental writer.

(Refer Slide Time: 37:49)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Reading Camus

Pamuk's comment on his Camus connection:

Such a writer's prose ushers one into a landscape waiting to be filled with meaning, suggesting nonetheless, that any literature with metaphysical designs has – like life – limitless possibilities." (159)

See Orhan Pamuk's *Other Colours*

NPTEL

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

24

Such a writers prose ushers one into a landscape, waiting to be filled with meaning, suggesting nonetheless, that any literature with metaphysical designs has, like live

limitless possibilities. (()) I mean very eloquently expressed, but that is the kind of connection sometimes, writers are able to make in the consciousness of the reader. I am not suggesting that the same writers will work for you, but I was fascinated by Pamuk's comment, because it really in some ways very close to my own personal experience, and also my reasons for choosing Camus for creative writing program.

(Refer Slide Time: 38:49)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Approach:
Interconnected Reading

- Reading of creative work along with literary notebooks, essays and autobiographical material.
- Some critical issues: Reading and interpreting a canonized writer from another historical period, location, language, culture pose a constant challenge in the reading process.

Translations: linguistic and cultural

NPTEL

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

Now, the approach that we have developed, and I think this will be substantiated in the next lecture, is related to interconnected reading; that is if even though we have chosen a particular writer. It really not possible to look at all his writing at one go, is just impossible within a semester, we are talking about a semester long course. So, now what we did is to place the literary notebooks, the essays, along with the fictional or other creative of the writers.

But some of the critical questions about otherness; that really we cannot ignore, are related to the fact that, this reading and interpretation of canonized writers from another historical period, location, language, culture poses a constant challenge in the reading process, because also remember that, this is the translation from original French into English. So, there are lots of debates about different translations also, and we are translating it culturally. So, what we have still tried to sort of suggest is that, despite these difficulties and complexities which we can integrate in our discussion. There is still

some important common ground, they provide in terms of the insights that provided about, the complex interviewing of the writer's life, and his/ her act of imagination.

(Refer Slide Time: 40:32)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Finding Common Ground

- The focus in writing related courses is to learn from the complex interweaving of the writer's life and his/her acts of imagination.
- The chosen texts are not prescriptive although they are "prescribed" reading material.
- The interconnections can help the student in honing the craft as well as understand the cohesive patterns of creativity.

NPTEL

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

So, how is this texture, how does it unfold, how does it develop; that is what we really want to understand, you know since all of you want to be writers and. So, we want to understand this kind of complex interviewing. So, here is our life, here is our experience, and in what way does the imagination take a leap, and therefore in that sense, Camus again provides these sign pose, where it is no clear formulae, and therefore I want to emphasize that these are not prescriptive text, but they are prescribed reading material, I want to make the distinction.

(Refer Slide Time: 41:14)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Critical Concerns

- Canon formation is a value laden activity.
- Canonized writers are re-read time and again from different vantage points.
- The historical approach to reading a writer's work clashes with the reader's own artistic & historical concerns.
- The reader may discover aspects of the work that the writer may have evoked or repressed unintentionally.

NPTEL

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

The other issue, which is again critically very important, is the fact that, when we deal with a canonized writer, then we have to recognize that, and Camus is a canonized writer, he was you Nobel prize winner, and he is almost a very big cultural institution now, but canon formation is also a value laden activity. So, what you consider important, and what you do not consider important. All those battles of value and judgments have fought within canon formation, and therefore canonized writers are also reread time and again from different vantage points. I think it is sort of useful to emphasize the historical approach; that is, apart from the canonization. I think the fact that the writer is placed within another historical location, and you the reader, is placed in an entirely different historical location; that would bring some very fruitful positions in deciphering the writing.

So, you may be aware of the canonical status of a writer, that finally what you feel from the vantage point of your own historical location, is very important. So, the reader may discover aspects of the work, that the writer may have evoked, or repressed unintentionally. now that is a whole area of concern, and I want to mention that Edward Sayeed after writing Orientalism, in which he pointed out, how western way of constructing the orient is a hegemonic activity, and therefore it is full of stereotyping that needs to critete.

(Refer Slide Time: 43:13)

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Said's Critical Observations

- Camus needs to be re-read from the Algerian perspective as his connections to France (despite his own marginalisation) and Algeria (its colony) are problematic.
- According to Said, this reading may 'unblock and release aspects hidden, taken for granted, or denied by Camus.' (112)

See Edward Said's comment in the section titled "Camus and the French Imperial Experience" from *Culture and Imperialism*.

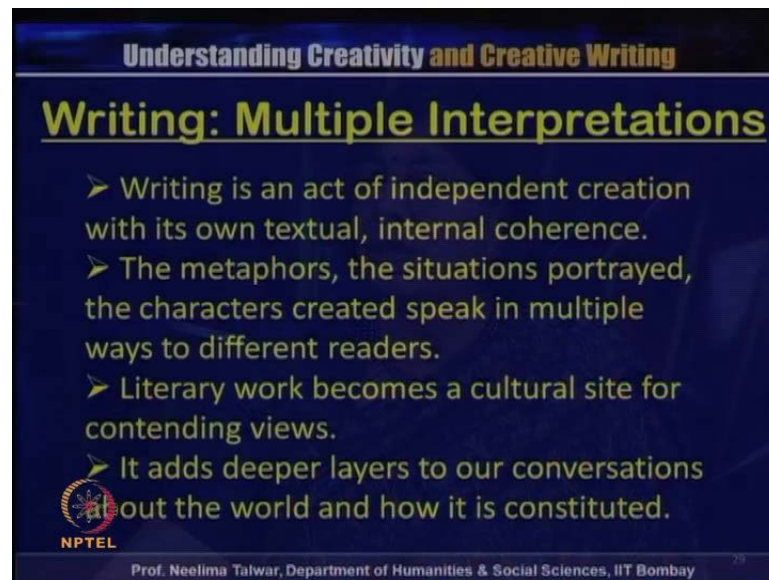
NPTEL

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

After that he wrote this other very important study, titled culture and imperialism, in which he sort of emphasize that despite the egalitarian outlook of Albert Camus, despite his socialist commitment, despite his political role in the French underground, and his highly significant philosophical discussion of absurdity, meaning of life etcetera. His great fiction, despite all these the fact is that, there is complexity that we need to see independent of Camus own self view, and this what he, I think has to say, I think primarily, because he feels that Camus needs to be reread from the Algerian prospective. Remember Camus was born in Algeria, although he was French, was born in Algeria to a lower middle class family and, but you know according to Edward sayeed, somewhere even his hegemonic tendencies, those are hegemonic tendencies of imperialize framework of France.

It sort of has not left Camus untouched, and from that point of view, he says that this reading, re reading of Albert Camus from the Algerian point of view, may unblock and release aspects hidden, taken for granted, or denied by Camus. That really is a very weighty, very important statement, and therefore when we deal with canonize writers. Let us be aware of some of these difficulties, because we are not thinking only of our own reading, we are also looking at the reading of others, in order to really strengthen our critical acumen.

(Refer Slide Time: 45:14)



Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Writing: Multiple Interpretations

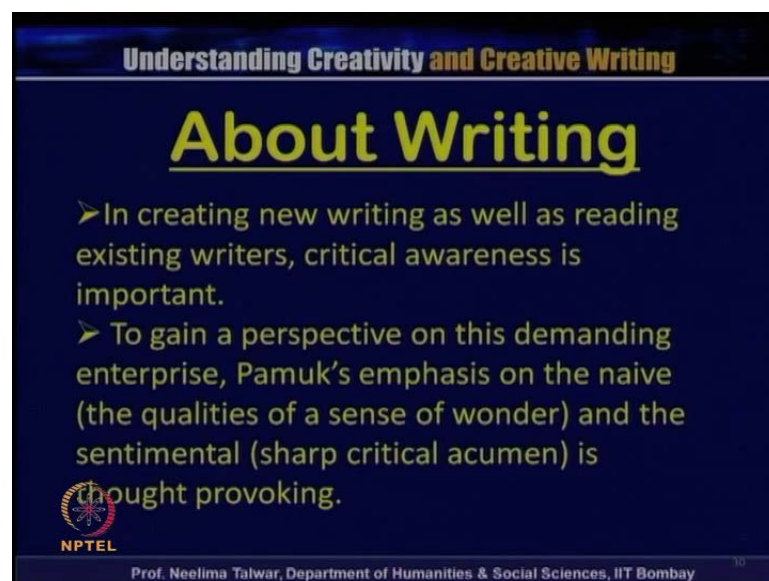
- Writing is an act of independent creation with its own textual, internal coherence.
- The metaphors, the situations portrayed, the characters created speak in multiple ways to different readers.
- Literary work becomes a cultural site for contending views.
- It adds deeper layers to our conversations about the world and how it is constituted.

NPTEL

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

So, then finally, you know we recognize that writing and reading both, require. Writing is of course, they require independence; writing is an act of independent, creation with its own textual internal coherence. So, each work has that textual internal coherence, but it needs to be opened up for discussion, and therefore very often literary work becomes a cultural sight for contending views, but instead of looking at it as a negative process, we should see it as a process, that adds deeper layers to our conversations about the world, and how it is constituted.

(Refer Slide Time: 45:48)



Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

About Writing

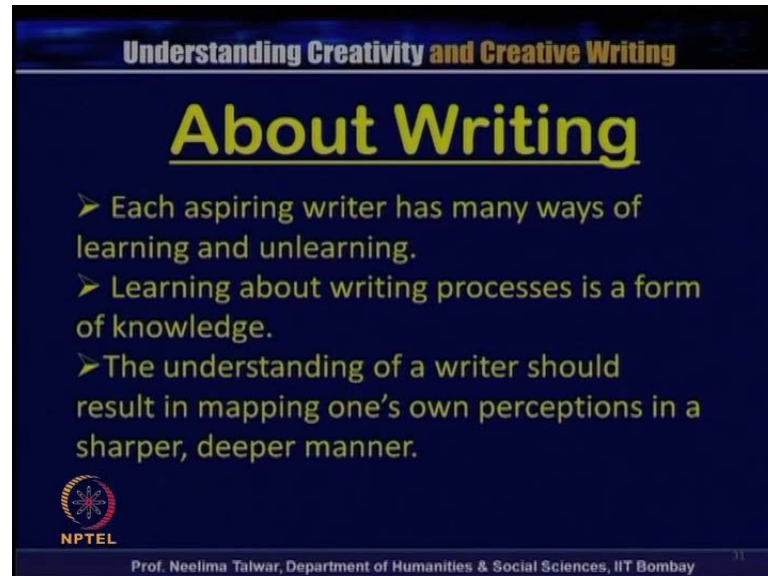
- In creating new writing as well as reading existing writers, critical awareness is important.
- To gain a perspective on this demanding enterprise, Pamuk's emphasis on the naive (the qualities of a sense of wonder) and the sentimental (sharp critical acumen) is thought provoking.

NPTEL

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

So, I think finally I would say that Pamuk's emphasis on the naive and the sentimental is worth thinking about.

(Refer Slide Time: 45:56)



The slide is titled "Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing" at the top. Below that, the main title "About Writing" is displayed in a large, bold, yellow font. The slide contains three bullet points, each preceded by a yellow arrowhead. The first bullet point states: "➤ Each aspiring writer has many ways of learning and unlearning." The second bullet point states: "➤ Learning about writing processes is a form of knowledge." The third bullet point states: "➤ The understanding of a writer should result in mapping one's own perceptions in a sharper, deeper manner." At the bottom left of the slide is the NPTEL logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a stylized flower or star inside, and the text "NPTEL" below it. At the bottom right, the text "Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay" is written in a small font. A small number "11" is also visible in the bottom right corner.

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

About Writing

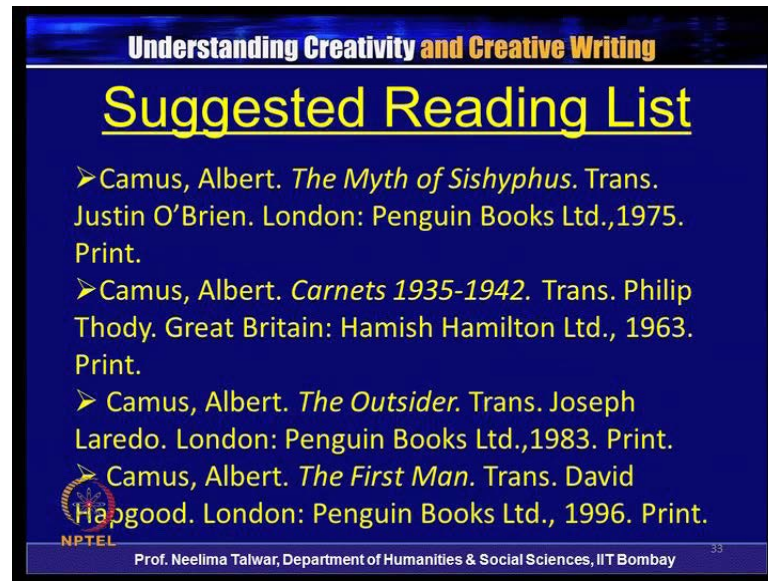
- Each aspiring writer has many ways of learning and unlearning.
- Learning about writing processes is a form of knowledge.
- The understanding of a writer should result in mapping one's own perceptions in a sharper, deeper manner.

NPTEL

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

And each aspiring writer has many ways of learning and unlearning. I think unlearning is also equally important, may be patterns that one has learned earlier, which need to be discarded; that is part of the creative process, editing out what is not working. So, learning about writing processes, is a form of knowledge, and that is what we wish to develop through our detail discussion of Albert Camus literary diaries, and some of his writing, and later on Adbudh's essay in the next two lectures.

(Refer Slide Time: 46:31)



The slide has a dark blue background with a lighter blue header. The header text is 'Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing' in a bold, sans-serif font. Below the header, the title 'Suggested Reading List' is written in a large, yellow, serif font and underlined. The list contains four entries, each preceded by a yellow right-pointing arrow. The text is in a yellow, serif font. The first entry is 'Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Trans. Justin O'Brien. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1975. Print.' The second is 'Camus, Albert. *Carnets 1935-1942*. Trans. Philip Thody. Great Britain: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1963. Print.' The third is 'Camus, Albert. *The Outsider*. Trans. Joseph Laredo. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1983. Print.' The fourth is 'Camus, Albert. *The First Man*. Trans. David Hapgood. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1996. Print.' At the bottom left is the NPTEL logo, and at the bottom right is the text 'Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay' and the number '33'.

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Suggested Reading List

- Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Trans. Justin O'Brien. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1975. Print.
- Camus, Albert. *Carnets 1935-1942*. Trans. Philip Thody. Great Britain: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1963. Print.
- Camus, Albert. *The Outsider*. Trans. Joseph Laredo. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1983. Print.
- Camus, Albert. *The First Man*. Trans. David Hapgood. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1996. Print.

NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay 33

So, then that is what is awaiting you, and this is our reading list we have already mentioned much of it, and therefore, I will just rush through it.

Thank you.