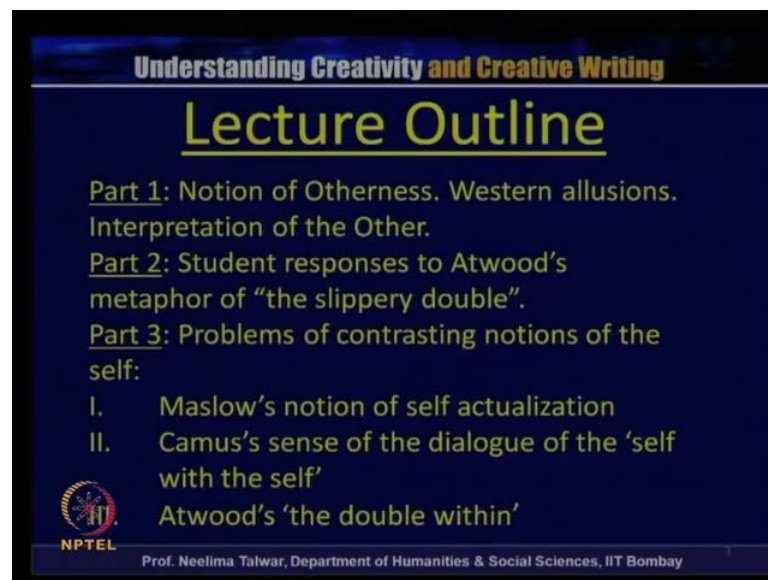


Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing
Prof. Neelima Talwar
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Lecture - 20
Reading and Writing

Hi, this is the lecture that we promised you last time, when we pointed out that we would carry forward certain amount of textual analysis of the second chapter of Atwood's negotiating with the dead. That chapter is titled the jekyll hand and the hyde hand and the slippery double. So, this particular lecture is titled reading and writing, reading the other and this is based on the slippery double. I do want to point out that this focus on the hand in the title of the essay the Jekyll hand, the Hyde hand reminded me very strongly of this famous you know fragment which is available from Marks's writing on art where he described the hand as not only the organ of labor, but also a product of labor. So, let us see how this sense of the double is tied to the use of the hand to write. The lecture is divided into three parts.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Lecture Outline

Part 1: Notion of Otherness. Western allusions. Interpretation of the Other.

Part 2: Student responses to Atwood's metaphor of "the slippery double".

Part 3: Problems of contrasting notions of the self:

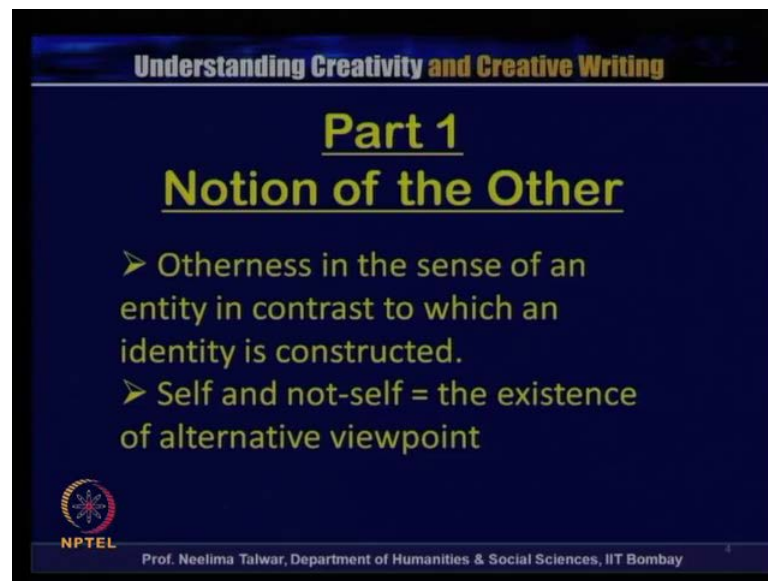
- I. Maslow's notion of self actualization
- II. Camus's sense of the dialogue of the 'self with the self'
- Atwood's 'the double within'

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First we would like to explore the notion of otherness with reference to the allusions that have been made by Atwood which create the problems of reading the other. And therefore, what are the ways in which one can deal with this issue of interpretation of the other. Part two deals with student responses to Atwood's metaphor of the slippery

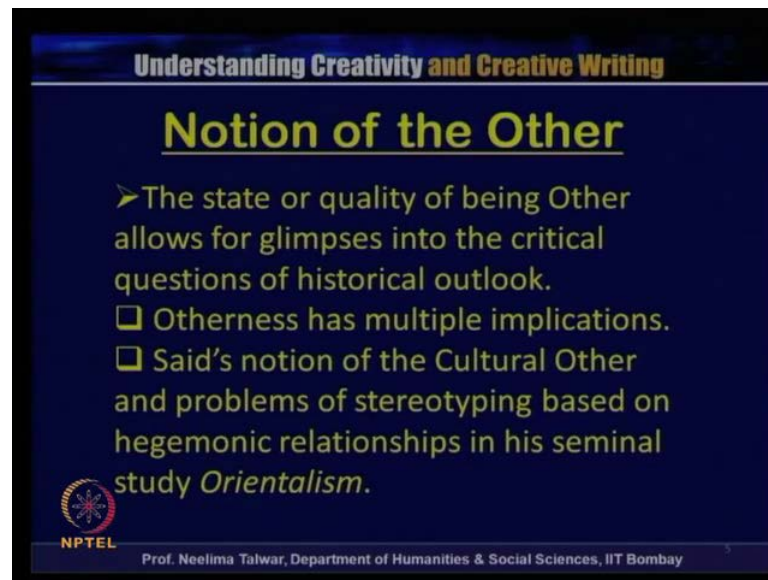
double. As I had indicated last time, this is a part of the class work that we have done. Even the lecture that I gave last time that was related to the discussions that were held in our regular elective class. So, we would be able to share the student responses to Atwood's slippery double. And finally, we conclude with problems of contrasting notions of the self for which you know we already have provided you a scheme from Maslow, from Camus and now we will look at Atwood's notion of the double within.

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First of all the notion of the other is a complicated one, but to begin with one can say that broadly when we talk about other or otherness, it is in the sense of an entity in contrast to which an identity is constructed. So, self and not self, it provides the, for the presence of an alternative view point.

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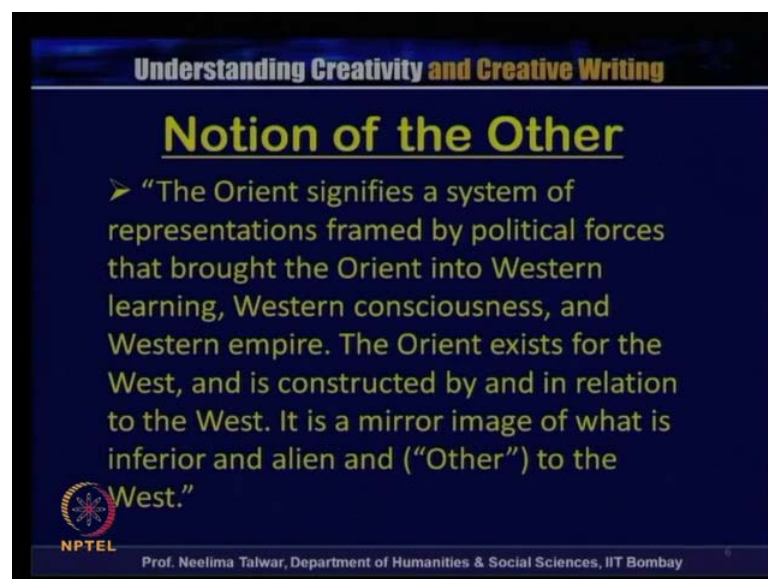
Notion of the Other

- The state or quality of being Other allows for glimpses into the critical questions of historical outlook.
- ❑ Otherness has multiple implications.
- ❑ Said's notion of the Cultural Other and problems of stereotyping based on hegemonic relationships in his seminal study *Orientalism*.

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The notion of the other or the state or or quality of being other allows from glimpses into the critical questions of historical outlook also. This otherness has multiple implications and we will touch very, very briefly on them just enough, so that we can carry forward our discussion. But I am sure you will be able to provide many other angles of vision yourself while dealing with this issue of otherness. Said's notion of the cultural other and problems of stereotyping based on hegemonic relationships has really created a very important turning point in our discourse of otherness.

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Notion of the Other

- "The Orient signifies a system of representations framed by political forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and Western empire. The Orient exists for the West, and is constructed by and in relation to the West. It is a mirror image of what is inferior and alien and ("Other") to the West."

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He had pointed out in this very, very important study that the orient signifies a system of representations framed by political forces that brought the orient into western learning, western consciousness and western empire. The orient exist for the west and it is constructed by and in relation to the west, it is a mirror image of what is inferior and alien and other to the west. We wish to provide this definition primarily because when we talk about otherness it can be an act of stereo typing the other, inferiorizing the other or it can be a very fruitful relationship of other, so as to think critically, deeply. Therefore, it may be important to remember that other branches of knowledge also provide different ways of looking at otherness.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Notion of the Other

- The complexity of the notion of the Other with reference to theories of psychoanalysis:
- Otherness as an episteme of gender: male-female principle. See Eric Fromm's *The Art of Loving*
- Notions of doubleness and the Other
Split self: the multiple and often pathological manifestations possible in an individual's psyche.

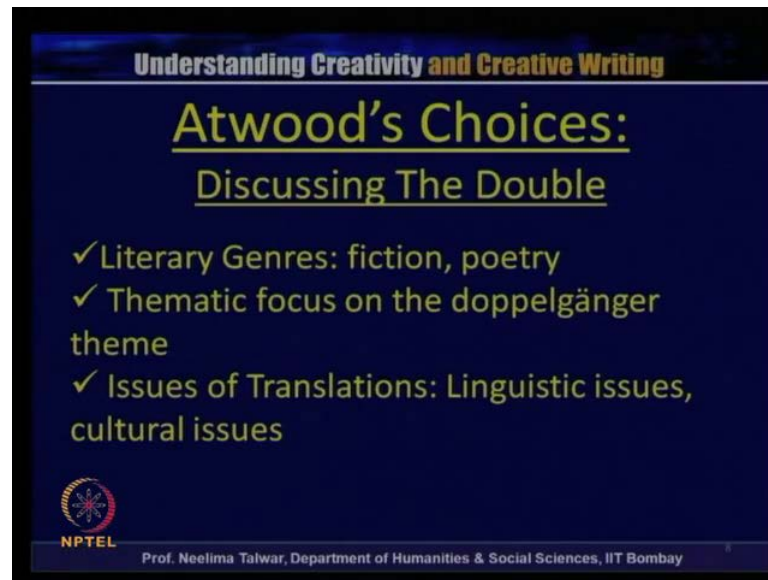
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So, the notion of the other remains very complex and this complexity is explained through the theories of psycho analysis in a entirely different ways. We would not go into the intricacies of these theories, but I think two things can be mentioned. For example, otherness can be an episteme in terms of differences or polarities such as the a difference between the gender male, female principle, but it usually in psycho analysis it evokes a sense of anxiety specially if this sense of the other is within. I think which is what I suppose Atwood would be interested in exploring because she has places this discussion within her sense of the vocation of the writer.

So, although there are these general ramifications that we do want to touch upon, but finally, we will tie it up in terms of what Atwood has has to say. So, in psycho analysis

there is that sense of anxiety when that sense of the double is within and often it is seen as pathological condition. However what we want to do is to come back to Atwood and see what her take on these issues is and in terms of the features of this essay two, three things need to be mentioned categorically.

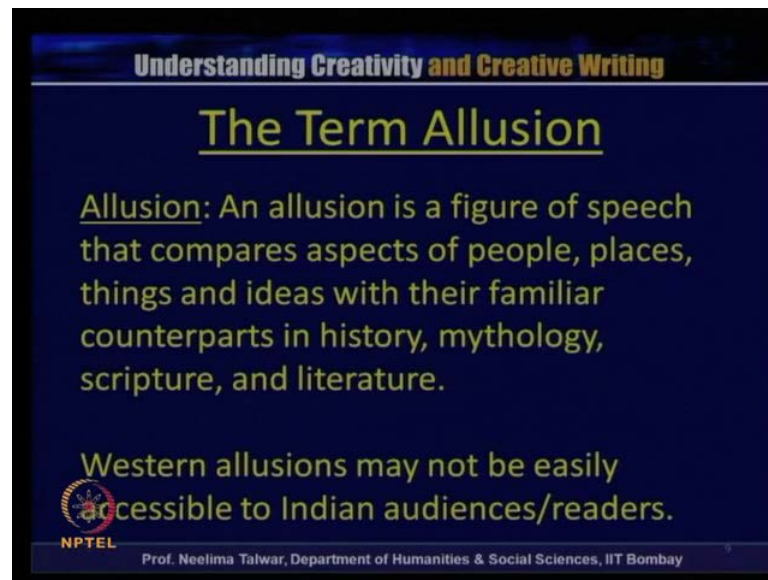
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The literary genres that she has referred to by way of her examples come from fiction and poetry. She has not mentioned any plays that I thought was worth mentioning because in her autobiographical chapter she had pointed out how she struggled with the form of drama. She wanted to write plays and she struggled with that form and then finally, that seems to have taken back seat in her own writing conciseness. They have been very important thematic focus on the doppelgänger theme in this chapter and of course, we will talk about it so that, that becomes clearer to you. All of these readings that she has selected they do impose certain you know constraints on us because they also force us to deal with

issues of translations both linguistic and cultural and in that sense when we read some of her allusions may be many of the students in fact felt that they were reading another culture, they were reading the writing of another culture. That was a very distinct feeling in the group that took Atwood's work very seriously. But let us first understand the term allusion. What does the term allusion mean?

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The Term Allusion

Allusion: An allusion is a figure of speech that compares aspects of people, places, things and ideas with their familiar counterparts in history, mythology, scripture, and literature.


Western allusions may not be easily accessible to Indian audiences/readers.

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As I said we are looking at this term more you know with the greater degree of attention, because this essay is highly allusive and allusiveness is a quality of literary writing. Allusion is a figure of speech that compares aspects of people, places, things and ideas with their familiar counterparts in history, mythology, scripture and literature. Now these allusions as I said if they happen to be allusions from another culture they may not be that easily accessible to let us say person who does not belong to that frame work or whose not been exposed to that frame work in great detail and therefore, what we will do is to identify different kinds of allusions that have been made by Atwood.

The kind of issues that it raised for our class and the manner in which we try to circumvent it not purely to understand analytically, but also increase our own sense of taking on materiel that is unfamiliar and making something out of it. That kind of estrangement that this materiel or any other allusion posed before the students, we turned it into a creative composition exercise and I think that is a very important to sort of not just give up on something that seems unfamiliar, but to also try and fathom what it can do for your own writing. This of course, is being placed within the frame work of learning and also learning to read a particular writer. So, we did not give up on Atwood at all and we decided that we will find a way of dealing with the highly allusive essay. So, let us first of all separate out the categories of allusive materiel and then also in the process show how the students responded to it. I have wonderful memories of these sessions and I hope this will work for you.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Mythic Allusion

"We are, in a sense, made of stories: every culture in every age has told them, and our stories form our understanding of ourselves and of the world." (19)

Edmund Cusick

Chapter 3 Working with Myth from *The Writer's Workbook*

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So, far as mythic allusions are concerned, it is important to remember that we are and I am reading from Edmund Cusick, we are in a sense made of stories, every culture in every age has told them and our stories form our understanding of ourselves and of the world. The mythic trails belong to this kind of very universal instinctive need to narrate stories, to comprehend the world by narrating stories and in a sense the myths of every country and every culture, they actually display the deepest and the most instinctive relationships of human kind.

So, they actually form a powerful than the statement really displays, but definitely every culture is quite you know defined by the myths that have been circulating, they define the consciousness, the vocabulary of that culture. Now, the myths that was selected by Atwood again they constantly are the ones that we have to deal within vary with very, very kind of specific frame of reference within which she had placed them.

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The slide is titled "Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing" at the top. Below that, the main title "Mythic Allusion" is displayed in a large, bold, yellow font. Underneath the title, the text "Reading and responding to myths" is written in a smaller yellow font. A numbered list follows, containing three points in yellow text: 1. Myths. Mythic dimension. Archetypes (recurring symbols); 2. Imagine the narrator: infuse the reading with the presence of the narrator/writer.; 3. Myths offer a gateway into the world of symbols and in reading them, they become charged with our inner meaning. In the bottom left corner, there is a circular NPTEL logo. At the bottom center, the text "Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay" is written in a small white font. A small number "11" is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Mythic Allusion

Reading and responding to myths

1. Myths. Mythic dimension. Archetypes (recurring symbols)
2. Imagine the narrator: infuse the reading with the presence of the narrator/writer.
3. Myths offer a gateway into the world of symbols and in reading them, they become charged with our inner meaning.

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But we were aware of the fact we began to talk about myths and the mythic dimension that they evoke when they are mentioned. The, some of them become archetypes that is they keep recurring. What I ask the students to do is to overcome their estrangement from this material by trying to you know imagine the narrator of the specific myth's that we were dealing with. And I will come to that example, but let me also point out how I tried to deal with this.

So, I tried to ask them to imagine the narrator of that particular trail because often those myth's are part of narrations within primitive ancient primordial levels of a human civilization. So, to try and imagine a narrator, you could imagine any kind of narrator within that frame work, the multiple possibilities there. It was also sort of fell that myths do offer a gateway into the world of symbols and in reading them they become charged with our inner meaning. So, the idea was to you know overcome this estrangement and at the same time see what kind of meaning they evoke in the person, in the individual reader by way of exploring the myths.

So, I would say that the students were not really resistant readers, but there were not exactly enthused by all the allusions that were being made. Now, the myths within this slippery double syndrome that Atwood had referred to was the myth of narcissus apart from many other references, this is what she had dealt with and that particular group of 20 students decided to pick up narcissus for further exercise. And so all of them actually

choose the version that they liked, they sort of looked at print material, they went to the internet and they also researched the version that they liked and so since there are no copyright restrictions I think I may be able to read excerpts from that version, but the idea was to read it in class. So, one of the students read the version in the class, the selected version.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Mythic Allusion

- Reading and responding to the myth of Narcissus. Rewrite it from the point of view of Narcissus or Echo.
- Consider transforming the myth to show your own inner connection to it.
- Suggestions based on the inability of the students to feel any connection with the myths and tales discussed in Atwood's essay.
- Each allusion was therefore separated for independent reading and composition.

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And let us see what I have listed here for them. So, we did these many things. Reading and responding to the myth of Narcissus, then rewrite it from the point of view of Narcissus or Echo, you know this to try and create the sense of the point of view. So, to re-create it from the point of view of either of the two, because the two stories always come together. Consider transforming the myth to show your own inner connection to it and then we also sort of try to discuss why they found it very difficult to connect to the myths and tales discussed in Atwood's essay. Now I will not be able to go into all of that, but I think broadly one can say that they this was really not part of their natural context culturally nor was it part of their reading experience.

So, we decided that the best thing would be to really separate out each allusion for independent reading and composition as if we were reading it for the first time. Remember the word "as if" earlier that was used with reference to Dawson's take on are a composition where you sort of pretend as if you are a particular kind of writer and then you can undertake writing exercise. But here we sort of pretended as if we were, we had

overcome our estrangement and also as if it was something that could, that we could connect to. So, as I said the reader reader's were not resistant readers, they were you know very, very keen readers who were interested in finding out why they found certain readings difficult, why it alienated them or did not enthuse them and I think that is also part of the learning and unlearning that I have talked about earlier because learning to write is also learning to unlearning many things that one you know that may block one's sensibility.

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Mythic Allusion

- Reading and responding to the myth of Narcissus.
- Ramesh's creative composition
- The ambivalence associated with one's sense of the other within oneself.

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So, now the reading and also the response to the myth of Narcissus and I am going to read the response of Ramesh Nidadavalu one of the very active students of that group, you know since I have copyright permission I would read it more carefully. Also the mythic materiel again belongs to the realm of you know nonrestrictive readings. So, therefore, let me first read the myth of Narcissus and then let me read Ramesh's response to this from the point of view of the poses that I shared with you earlier, where the student begins to rework that myth for his own sensibility, in whichever way he or she wants.

So, now the first myth and this is to give you a flavor of how the actual tales remain very, very open ended because constantly they are being reinterpreted, if they are myths and folk tales, but they also remain rooted in some basic aspect of the narration. So, that also is solidly in terms of let us say the interrelationship between Echo and Narcissus and

what Narcissus stands for and what Echo also then you know symbolizes. So, I instead of giving you a closed analytical view in this segment because it has been possible for us to deal with some of the non copyright materiel therefore, let me give you a different kind of flavor in this presentation and again I hope that will work for you. Echo and Narcissus, this is from Greek mythology.

Echo was a beautiful nymph, fond of woods and hills where she devoted herself to woodland sports. She was a favorite of Artemis and attended her in the chase, but echo had one feeling, she was fond of talking and whether in chat or argument would have the last word. One day Hera was seeking her husband who she had reason to fear was amusing himself among the nymphs. Echo by her talk contrived to detain the goddess till the nymph made their escape. When Hera discovered it she passed sentence upon Echo in these words "You shall forfeit the use of that tongue with which you have cheated me, except for that one purpose you are so fond of reply, you shall still have the last word, but no power to speak first."

So, the this is part of the story of Echo who then falls in love with Narcissus and let us see how Narcissus is described. This nymph saw Narcissus a beautiful youth as he persuade the chase upon the mountains. She loved him and followed his footsteps of how she long to address him in the softest actions and win him to converse, but it was not in her power, she waited within patience for him to speak first and had her answers, answer ready. One day the use being separated from his companion shouted aloud "Who is here?" Echo replied "Here" Narcissus looked around, but seeing no one called out "come" Echo answered "come" as no one came Narcissus called again "why do you shun me" Echo asked the same question. Let us join one another said the youth, the maid answered with all her heart in the same words and hastened to the spot ready to throw her arms about his neck.

So, then the fact is that Narcissus did not respond to the love of Echo just as Narcissus did not respond to the love of many others because he was very self absorbed and then one day Narcissus faces his you know reflection in the water and this is how it is described here. There was a clear fountain with water like silver to wish the shepherds never drove their flocks nor the mountain goats resorted nor any of the beasts of the forest neither was it defaced with fallen leaves or branches, but the grass grew fresh around it and the rock sheltered it from the Sun. Hither came one day the youth fatigued

with hunting, heated and thirsty. He stooped down to drink and saw his own image in the water. He thought it was some beautiful water spirit living in the fountain, he stood gazing with the admiration at those bright eyes, those locks curl like the locks of Dionysus or Apollo, the rounded cheeks, the ivory neck, the parted lips and the glow of health and exercise overall. He fell in love with himself, he brought his lips near to take a kiss, he plunged his arms into embrace the beloved object, it fled at the touch, but returned again after a moment and renewed the fascination.

He could not tare himself away, he lost is all thought of food or rest while he hovered over the brink of the fountain gazing upon his own image, he talked with the suppose spirit why beautiful being do you shun me, surely my face is not one to repel you, the nymphs love me and you yourself look not indifferent upon me, when I stretch forth my arms you do the same and you smile upon me and answer my beckoning with a like. His tears fell into the water and disturbed the image and he saw it depart, he exclaimed stay I entreat you, let me at least gaze upon you if I may not touch you. And finally, with this and much more of the same kind he cherished the flame that consumed him, so that by degrees he lost his color, his vigor and the beauty which formerly has so charm the nymph Echo, she kept near him however and when he exclaimed “Alas, Alas” she answered him with the same words.

He pined away and died and but his shape passed the river. It leaned over the boat to catch a look of itself in the waters, the nymph moaned for him especially the water nymphs and when they smote their breasts, Echo smote hers also. They prepared a funeral pile and would have burned the body, but it was nowhere to be found, but in its place a flower purple within and surrounded with white leaves which pairs the name and preserves the memory of Narcissus.

So, this was the tale and I can assure you that it was read with much more passion by the students who presented it and Ramesh worked on this and in addition to other people he submitted the write up and the write up is I described this as creative composition and definitely Ramesh had his own take and with due permission from Ramesh I wish to present it before you. So, this is called Narcissus by Ramesh and this is how he sort of responded to it. “Ah, I have been hunting for quite some time now, I can feel my heart thumping, the heart that has displayed benevolence many a times. I can feel my body slowly melting off, giving out those sparkling droplets that shine like pearls, they slither

of my cheek avoiding those ivory bony contours to eventually fall off into the ground staining the untouched ground thus marking it for eternity. As I walk on these slowly tracks I am reminded of all those times I scornfully rejected all inter personal relations from Gods and humans. I prefer the original floral sexlessness over the stereotype and benevolent human sexuality. I am work of art, an autotelic work of art, an end in itself not to satiate anything or anybody.

I have no ideas to why these thoughts hunt me at this very moment, it feels like conflict before a resolution. Maybe it is the fountain I see there with water like silver that holds promise to quench my thirst, with fresh green grass around it, safely tugged in the wombs of the laburance that surround it, that give me a sense of free assurance. I stoop down to drink and.” So, that was Ramesh’s take I think it is all there for you to respond to and definitely what we were doing is to also keep in mind all our discussions as you can see from the response and also Atwood’s sort of concern with the kind of sense of the self that exist in many of the ancient narratives also. And her take is that writing or creating a narrative many a times the narrators have placed their own sense of the other within that text and she definitely starts with Narcissus there.

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Reading Folktales

Folktales are ancient stories which continue to circulate; are told and retold, their meanings anchored in the different contexts of telling.

Features of folktales:

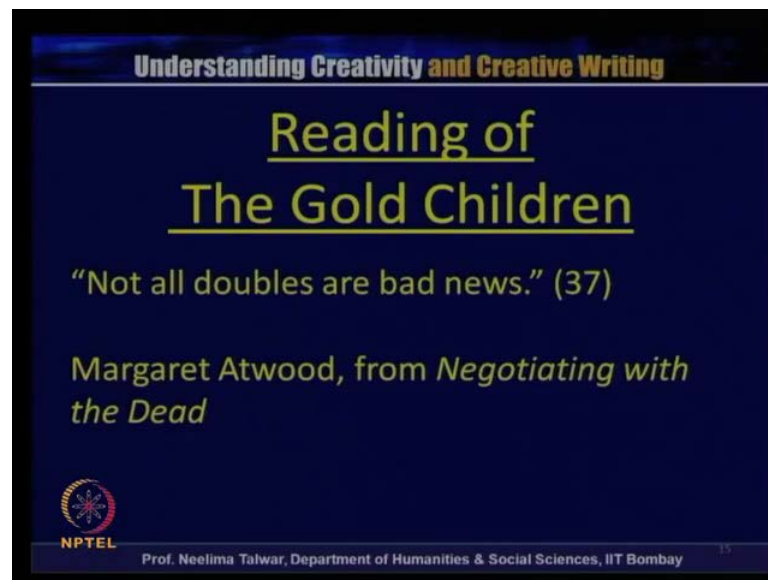
1. Deep roots in oral tradition and folklore
2. Steeped in the life of a community and often performed in front of/presented to an audience
3. Their revival in print culture: compilation of folktales by Brothers Grimm and circulation of different versions. See works cited.

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The other kind of materiel that we have to deal with was related to folk tales which are very different from the myths in some ways and I think they and I shouldn't build a hierarchy, but certainly there also ancient stories, they also continue to circulate, they are

also told and retold and their meanings are anchored in the context of telling. They have deep roots in oral tradition and folklore, they are steeped in the life of a community and often are performed in front of or presented to an audience. Their revival in print culture has really changed their sort of I think flavor in some ways because in the print culture the work becomes available permanently and in that sense the materiel that she referred to was a sort of take on certain pre-existing folktales and the take is by Brother's Grimm and also the Brother Grimm tales also have a many versions, there are some sanitize versions for children and there are some complex versions that are also available, you can have a look at the national geographic resource that we have mentioned towards the end in our work sited list, if you to get interested in this.

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So, the story that Atwood referred to was the story of the gold child and this the gold children and this is to point out again I am quoting from Atwood "Not all doubles are bad news" So, the sense of the double within, then the sense of the double and its variations this is what she was trying to deal with by pointing out the presence of this theme right from the ancient times to now although in contemporary period it really takes on a different color specially when it is placed within the print culture because then the world becomes permanent and therefore, it has a different effect also on the narrator or the writer.

So, now this is the second story and as I said in this lecture I am dealing with textual material which creative difficulties for my way active students. They were very interested and at the same time they did not take to the everything that they were reading, that is quite inevitable, natural and necessary, but still the difficulties were also very interesting.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

The Gold-Children

Independent Reading

- Inability of the students to feel any connection to these folktales.
- Folktales are normally narrated to the listener.
- These tales were not part of the students' childhood reading/listening experience.

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They just did not feel any connection to the gold children for example, it was referred to. It did not evoke any memory or any connection of any kind, I partly that may be related to the fact that you know either you share some of these folktales, you are a child even if you do not belong to the same culture, but you know different kinds of stories are read out to you or then you know you really are an avid reader of folktales and most of the young people in my class were not avid readers of folktales I can tell you. They were now are they really interested in mythic material, you know it seemed out there very different.

So, both these resources really did not have any sense of connection and therefore, we decided that there are certain issues that we will try to discuss by first reading the tale even if we initially do not feel any connection to it and try and identify the different feel that it generates. Now, here is the gold children and I am going to read it only in bits and parts. Primarily to show what we did in the class and the also to indicate how unless the allusiveness is accessible, those ideas some time just do not work. So, the gold children

was selected again by Atwood while talking about the other who can be a positive influence. So, just in bits and parts let me place it before you, the gold children. “There was once a poor man and an a poor women who had nothing but, a little cottage and who earn their bread by fishing and always live from hand to mouth.

But it came to pass one day when the man was sitting by the water side and casting his net that he drew out of fish entirely of gold. As he was looking at the fish full of astonishment it began to speak and said hi to you a fisher man if you will throw me back again into the water I will change your little hut into a splendid castle. So of course, the fisherman did that, but of course, she also extracted a promise from him that she he would not reveal this contract between them, this transaction between them to anybody what so ever and of course, you can quite imagine that the transformation to place, the hut became a castle and the wife was terribly you concerned as to how this had happened and very curious too quite naturally.”

So, then of course, finally, he blurted out secret and again the transaction was over and it was back to the hut. So, then the same thing happened again and the fish this time again extracted the same promise from the fisher man and indeed the same problem occurred and let me read this part here. “However she this wife who said okay, do not tell me anything she was not in earnest, she goaded her husband until in his impatience he revealed that all was owing to a wonderful golden fish which had, which he had caught and to which it returned he had given its liberty and as soon as the secret was out the splendid castle with the covered immediately disappeared. So, all the food, all the goodies disappeared, but what this women said to him is that she much rather know where this riches come from, had come from rather than live in luxury, but lack of knowledge of all the sources of that you know luxury and opportunity.

So, then of course, the second time also they lost out on that sudden riches and the third time the fish said something different. So, this is what happen third time. She said well I see very well the fish said I am fated to fall into your hands, take me home and cut me into 6 pieces give, give your wife 2 of them to eat, 2 to your horse and bury 2 of them in the ground, then they will bring you a blessing and it came to pass however that from the 2 pieces that were buried in the ground 2 golden lilies sprang, 2 horses 2 golden falls and and the fisherman’s wife bore 2 children who were made entirely of gold. And the children of course, in due time became handsome young and then they wanted to see the

world. Then when they went out to see the world people saw them and felt bewildered by these gold children because they were all made of gold and then there was advised to go back and not face the world because people would be tempted to kill them off for the gold.

So, one of the siblings went back, but the other one went ahead in in order to explore the world and during the course of that adventure many things happened to him and he is turned into a stone at one point and when this happens the golden lily, one of them it wilts and so they know that something had happen to this young man and so the brother rushes to help him out and indeed he is able to save him and finally, this is how the story ends. The father then said I knew well that you had rescued your brother for the golden lily suddenly rose up and blossomed out again, then they lived happily and all prospered with them until their death.”

So, this is the folktale and so we decided to also then pose a few questions. This is based on our collective effort, we said all right fine let us see what is this element of fantasy in the tale? What is this fantasy? Where does it come from? Why the gold fish that talks? So, of course, you know it is related partly to anthropomorphism that as we try to give life to natural objects I mean they are neutral to us, but we give them this kind of human life.

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The slide is titled "Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing" and "The Gold-Children". It lists several points for independent reading: "Some posers for them:", "The element of fantasy in the tale", "The gold-fish that talks: anthropomorphism", "The recurrence of gold: gold-fish, gold-lilies, gold-horses and the gold-children", "Split-self: doubleness", and "The secret to be kept; the burdens of keeping". It includes the NPTEL logo and the name of the professor, Neelima Talwar, from IIT Bombay.

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

The Gold-Children

Independent Reading

- Some posers for them:
- The element of fantasy in the tale
- The gold-fish that talks: anthropomorphism
- The recurrence of gold: gold-fish, gold-lilies, gold-horses and the gold-children
- Split-self: doubleness
- The secret to be kept; the burdens of keeping

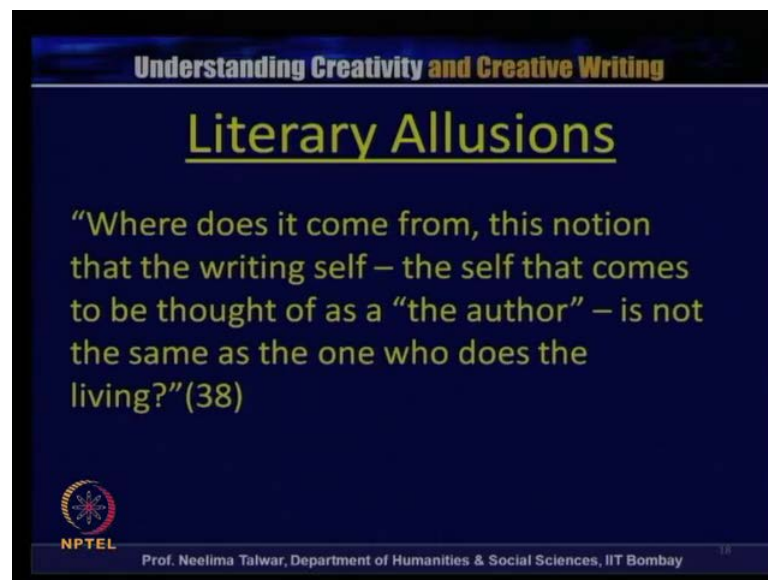
 secret

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Why the recurrence of gold? And again is it meant literally or is it meant as a metaphor? The gold fish is it made of gold or it is a golden fish in the you know because there is gold fish which is gold in color, gold lily is the same thing, gold horses, but yes the gold children were literally made of gold, then also why is there is this these two's everywhere in the third part of the story.


So, there is this different kind of doubleness there, but it is only, it is not restricted to the gold children, it also runs through the interconnection between all these other creatures and also it comes from the fish and in some ways what is this connection, is it ecological connection that is being discussed or is it some kind of social cum ecological connection that is being discussed and so on and so forth. But the sense that this evokes a sense of you know, you know one could sense of surprise and also that one could speculate about it from one's own vantage point, that is something we sort of try to the hilt and I think this you can also do the same thing and we will move on however with Atwood's point of view. What she was trying also do is to actually bring this whole trajectory back to the print culture and she was trying to understand this question that she is articulated in these words.

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She says "Where does it come from, this notion that the writing self- the self that comes to be thought of as the author is not the same as the one who does the living." That is one question, one way of placing this question.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Literary Allusions

Wide ranging references to classics
pertaining to the notion of doubleness in
order to foreground the writing process.

“What is the nature of the crucial moment
– the moment in which the writing takes
place.” (55)

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And the other question she tried to answer with reference to the moment of writing she says “What is the nature of the crucial movement- the movement in which the writing takes place.” So, this is another thing she was trying to not necessarily locate in a reductionist manner, but I think she was trying to capture the mysterious qualities and somewhat estranging qualities of writing as a vocation. But in order to do this she was really not using excessively analytical material, what she was trying to do in this essay is to bring examples after example. So, from mythic examples from folktales and from poems that I have not listed here, she shifted her attention to some of the great writers of our time, who have handled this question directly.

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Literary Allusions

Classics, for example, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by R L Stevenson: associated with old were-wolf stories but also the old doppelgänger tales.

The tale of an earnest physician leading a double life partly as himself and partly as “fanged madcap”.

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One of this was of course, doctor Jekyll and mister Hyde and I have not really gone into this in great detail, but this refers to the doppelganger tales and also where there is always the double, the double is not necessarily good news according to her in terms of the traditional way of looking at this theme.

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Other Examples of Doubleness referred to by Atwood

- Edgar Allan Poe's *William Wilson* (1839)
- Jorge Luis Borges's *Borges and I*: Metatext (writing that reflects on writing)

Our favourite: *Everything and Nothing*

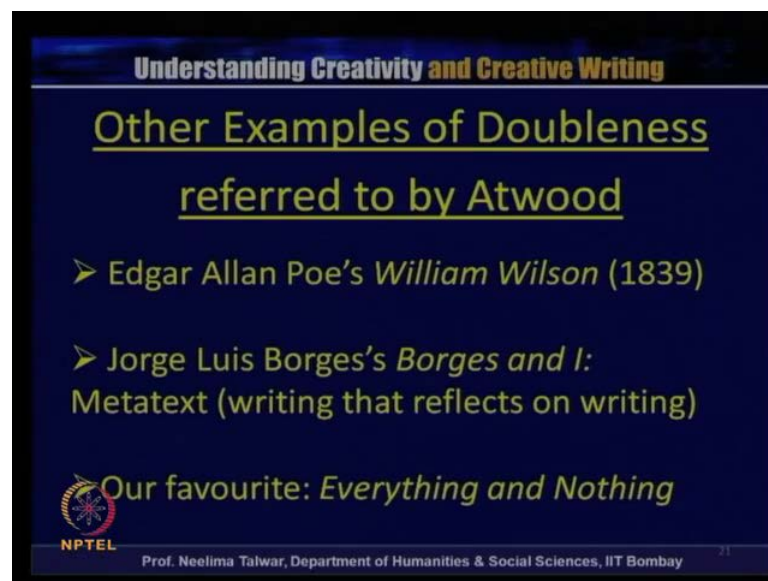
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I was trying to figure out the status of doppelganger and I think it is more of a fictional construct that then really either sort of that the folk element and the mythic element are not so pronounced in this, that seems to be the direction and therefore, in order to talk

about the double she has discussed doppelganger tales from other sources like Edgar Allan Poe's *William Wilson* and Borges's *Borges and I* specially *Borges and I* seems to be a favorite of hers, a great favorite, it is quite understandable, but in order to understand the weight of this literary material apart from Jekyll and Hyde theme where the same person becomes somebody else at night.

So, there are two sides to that personality. One that is hidden from view and the other surfaces at night in the liminality of the night and that is one kind of tale and it is I think you are more familiar with it, but I think Edgar Allan Poe's *William Wilson* is a very intriguing tale and if you are interested in understanding it a bit better there are these famous film makers who got together to interpret the tale and there is film by Louis Malle and others which you can also see yourself by accessing YouTube.

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So, *William Wilson* is an older tale which Atwood refers to and let us see what is the flavor of that tale. It's a tale that Poe himself discussed in a very interesting book called *The Philosophy of Composition*. He was a very very you know refined craftsman also and he was interested in talking about the craft of writing, but let me just read very very briefly from the Edgar Allan Poe's story. It starts with these words "What say of it, what say of conscience grim that specter in my path" and the story is about this young boy called *William Wilson*, but it starts with *William Wilson* whose dying and in those moments of dying he recollects his childhood, youth and also his relationship to another

person called William Wilson who seems to hunt him as a kind of you know presence that always questioned him, always stopped him from doing evil because this narrator or Mister William Wilson seems to have a propensity for doing all kinds of objectionable you know activities like cheating and trying to play by and hook and crook and to win and things like that.

So, let us see what he has to say. I will be as brief as possible, he says "Let me call myself for the present William Wilson, the fair page now lying before me need not be solid with my real appellation" and then he goes on to say "Have I not indeed been living in a dream and am I not now dying a victim to the horror and the mystery of the wildest of all sublunary visions." So, this is in that those moments he goes on to describe his childhood in a particular way, Elizabethan gothic kind of school and then as his describing it he describes this other William Wilson.

In truth he says the order, the enthusiasm in the imperiousness of my disposition soon rendered me a mark character among my school mates and by slow but natural relations gave me an ascendancy over all not greatly older than myself and then if there is on earth supreme and unqualified despotism, it is the despotism of a master mind in boyhood, over the less energetic spirits of its companions. He goes on to say it may seem strange that in spite of the continual anxiety vocation me by the rivalry of Wilson, this other Wilson and his intolerable spirit of contradiction. I could not bring myself to hate him all together.


So, now this relationship continues till it begins to bother him enough so that this is what he has to say "The feeling of vexation thus engendered grew stronger with every circumstance tending to show resemblance, moral or physical between my rival and myself, his queue which was to perfect an imitation of myself lay both in words and in actions and most admirably did he play his part, my dress it was an easy matter to copy, my gait and general manner were without difficulty appropriated in spite of his constitutional defect, even my voice did not escape him, my louder tones were of course, unattempted, but then the key it was identical and his singular whisper, it grew the very echo of my own, the very echo of my own."

So, except the voice which was like a hoarse whisper the rest of it was exactly like William Wilson and so he decides to sort of do something about it, you know. He begins

to get extremely you know destructive thoughts and so one day this, this is what happens. “Gasping for breath I lowered the lamp in still near nearer proximity to the face, were these the, were these, these the lineaments of William Wilson? I saw indeed that they were his, but I shook as if with the fit of the og, in fancying they were not. What was there about them to confound me in this manner, I gazed while my brain reeled with the multitude of incoherent thoughts. Awe stricken and with the 3 pink shudder I extinguish the lamp, passed silently from the chamber and left at once the halls of that old academy, never to enter them again.”

So, this is only part of the story and then finally, his youth is described and his final confrontation with this William Wilson, in that final confrontation he kills a William Wilson and this is what he has to say. “It was Wilson, but he spoke no longer in whisper and I could have fancied that I myself was speaking while he said you have conquered and I yield, yet hence forward are thou also dead, dead to the world to heaven and to hope. In me this dove exist and in my death see by his image, by this image which is thy own how utterly thou hast murdered thyself. So, this a very, very haunting, intriguing tale about the sense of the double, it is been analyzed at length by lots of credits, but this is the story that Atwood was referring to in order to evoke this really inextricable sense of the other, that the story also contains.

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Other Examples of Doubleness
referred to by Atwood

- Edgar Allan Poe's *William Wilson* (1839)
- Jorge Luis Borges's *Borges and I*: Metatext (writing that reflects on writing)


Our favourite: *Everything and Nothing*

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The other material that she has dipped into is by the very, very important contemporary writer Jorge Luis Borges who actually you know this is from a particular collection, the second one is from the labyrinth but the first one is from an collection of short stories that were translated from the original Spanish and in this again she points out, how Borges in Borges and I has, has mentioned the complexity of this relationship of the writer to his social self.

He says the other one, the one called Borges is the one things happen to. “I know Borges from the male and see his name on a list of professors or in a biographical dictionary I like our glasses, maps, eighteen century typography, the taste of coffee and the prose of Stevenson. He shares these preferences, but in a vain way that turns them into the attributes of an actor, it would be an exaggeration to say that ours is a hostile relationship, I live, let myself go on living so that Borges may contrive his literature and this literature justifies me and finally I do not know which of us has written this page. Now, our favorite is of course, everything and nothing but I do not have time to go into that a particular text in detail. I would recommend that you read this yourself and I will also quickly show the work that the students did around these ideas. I will have to be quick as I am running out of time.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Questions

Posed for examination based on critical reading

1. Based on your critical reading of Borges' "Everything and Nothing" respond to the following questions:
 - a. Indicate the point-of-view used by Borges.
 - b. How will you label this piece? A riddle, a parable, an essay-cum-story (hybrid)?
 - c. What does Shakespeare symbolize in this narrative?
 - d. How are the genre features confirmed in the concluding paragraph?

Is the title paradoxical or oxymoronic?

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So, basically we looked at the genre of everything and nothing and also the content and also the allusions, without the allusions we could not have reached any of those decisions.


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Questions

Questions posed for class test based on critical reading of Atwood.

1. According to Atwood twins and doubles are old motifs in mythologies. Give the example of the double that she has alluded to from mythic sources and point out the content of this allusion.
2. What reason does she provide for saying that the double is more than a twin or sibling?

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And again we during the tests people posed smaller questions. So, this whole idea is that you know as one is teaching during the semester there are ideas that opposed around the reading you are tested and then the momentum of understanding is built up, it is also tied to the testing, it is not, testing is not seen as a burden in hopefully in that sense. Some of my students did not see it as a burden.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Questions


Questions posed for class test based on critical reading of Atwood.

3. In using the term “species of duplicity” which of the meanings of the word duplicity are relevant:

- a. Contradictory doubleness of thought, speech or action; especially belying of one’s true intentions by deceptive words or actions.

OR

The quality or state of being double or twofold.

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So, then there lots of these questions related to species of duplicity and that I want to read out because that directly goes into the discussion of the slippery double. So, the question that I posed is in using the term species of duplicity which of the other which of the meanings of the word duplicity are relevant, contradictory doubleness of thought, speech or action especially belying of one’s true intentions by deceptive words or actions or the quality or state of being double or two fold.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Questions

Questions posed for class test based on critical reading of Atwood.

4. What according to Atwood are the reasons for the modern writer’s equivocal self-view?

5. In what way can a printed book change in Atwood’s opinion?

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So, similarly, there are other questions that were unfolded and the students had very very interesting answers. I could show them if I had time but I don't.


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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Questions

Questions posed for the end-semester examination based on critical reading of Atwood.

1. Write an essay about the challenges of creative writing as a vocation. The essay should reflect your point-of-view by referring to analytical and creative writing you have studied for this course. All references should be mentioned clearly.

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Then end semester question paper was posed before them and one of the questions I will read out to you. Write an essay about the challenges of creative writing as a vocation. The essay should reflect your point of view by referring to analytical and creative writing you have studied for this course. All references should be mentioned clearly. I am not reading the other questions because I think we do not have time.


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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Questions

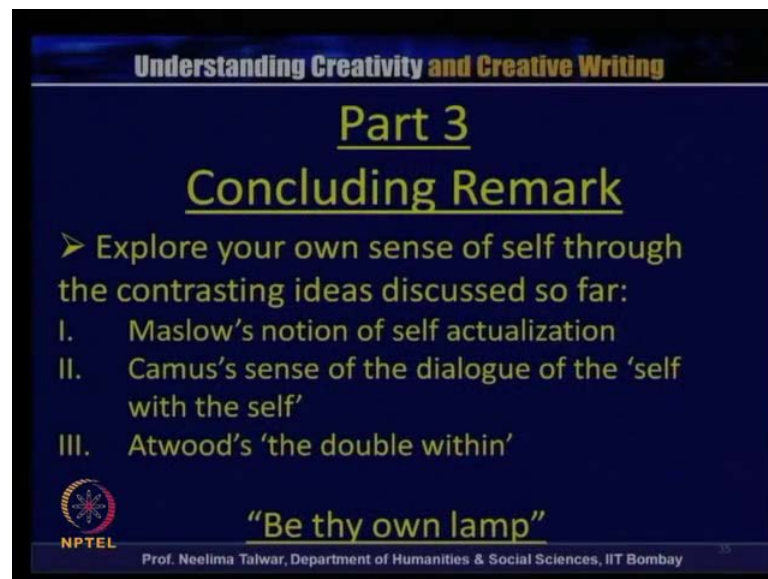
Questions posed for the end-semester examination based on critical reading of Atwood.

2. Explain the significance of Atwood's reference to the modern writer's "equivocal view" of himself/herself in her essay on the art of writing.

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But I posed all the questions and all of these were answered competently by the students.

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Part 3

Concluding Remark

➤ Explore your own sense of self through the contrasting ideas discussed so far:

- I. Maslow's notion of self actualization
- II. Camus's sense of the dialogue of the 'self with the self'
- III. Atwood's 'the double within'

"Be thy own lamp"

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Finally, we have posed this idea of sense of self through contrasting possibilities or we would end the session by saying be thy own lamp.

Thank you very much.