

Understanding Creative and Creative Writing
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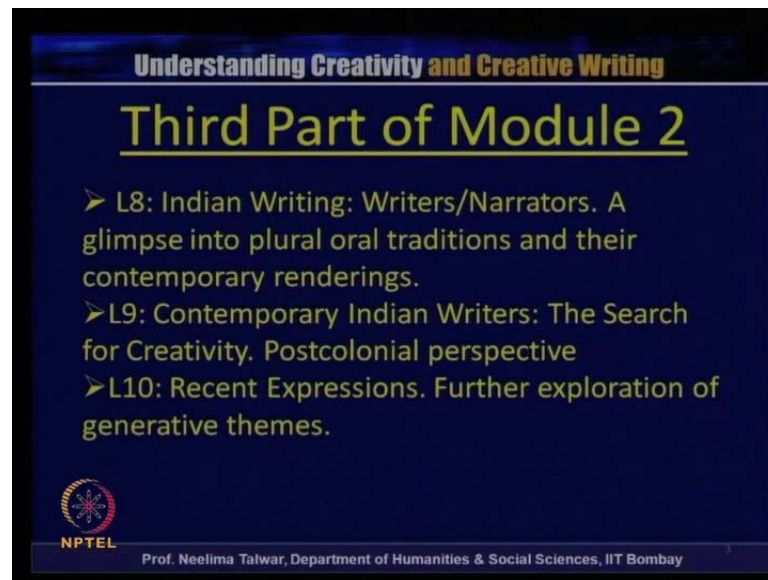
Lecture - 21
Indian Writing: Writers Narrators

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This lecture is titled Indian writing, writers and narrators; it is the third part of module 2, which is exclusively devoted to Indian writing and contemporary Indian generative possibilities.


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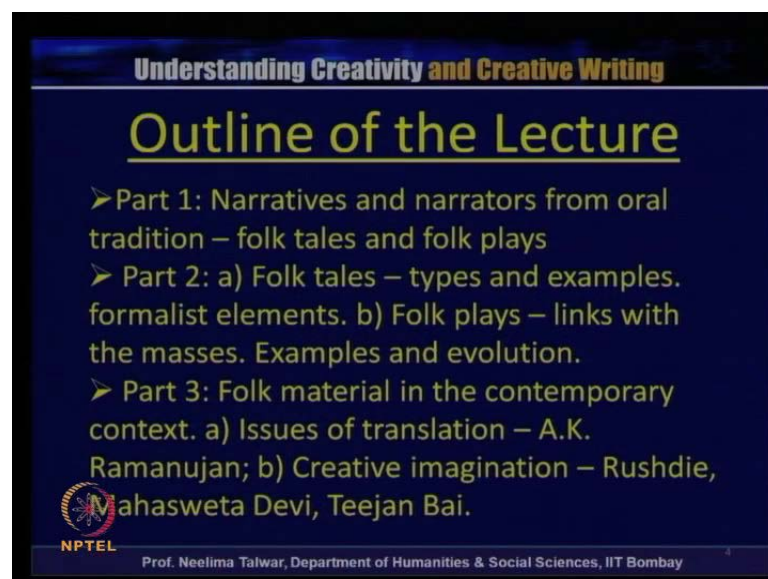
Third Part of Module 2

- L8: Indian Writing: Writers/Narrators. A glimpse into plural oral traditions and their contemporary renderings.
- L9: Contemporary Indian Writers: The Search for Creativity. Postcolonial perspective
- L10: Recent Expressions. Further exploration of generative themes.

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In this lecture, we have focused our attention on narrators. So, that we can give you a glimpse in to plural oral traditions and their contemporary renderings, this will help us understand our own background and our own cultural context in a renewed fashion. Because the kind of self reflexivity that you saw in at wood or Camus or in any of the other writers that we have mentioned, so far you would find that similar kind of self reflexivity are also the concern about the form of narration. The kind of a cultural space that it creates this exists in great abundance in the oral tradition as well.


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Outline of the Lecture

- Part 1: Narratives and narrators from oral tradition – folk tales and folk plays
- Part 2: a) Folk tales – types and examples. formalist elements. b) Folk plays – links with the masses. Examples and evolution.
- Part 3: Folk material in the contemporary context. a) Issues of translation – A.K. Ramanujan; b) Creative imagination – Rushdie, Mahasweta Devi, Teejan Bai.


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So, it is really indeed quite exciting to be able to share this rich material with you the outline of the lecture is provided for your clarity. The lecture is divided into 3 parts in part 1; we will look at narratives and narrators from oral tradition. You remember, we talked about oral traditions while talking about at wood's elusiveness she herself had single out many examples from the western oral tradition. And she had also pointed out how in the transition from the oral to the print culture. There are major changes that occur in the relationship of the narrator and the audience the writer and the audience.

So, here also what you would find is the focus on the orality of these folktales. And therefore, we have used the word narrators for those who narrate the tales, because the narration imposes a very flexible relationship with the audience. So, therefore, the first part is titled narratives and narrators from oral tradition folktales and folk plays in the second part in terms of folktales. We look at their types and examples and the formalist elements, because after all we are interested in the process of writing and certain unique ways of looking at the world that mythic and folk material evokes in us in the folk plays.

We will look at their relationship with the masses and we look at some examples and with a sense that they have also been evolving over a very long period of time. Part 3 is devoted to the folk material in contemporary context, we look at issues of translation, which A K Ramanujan has highlighted while translating folktales from India. We look at the creative imagination of writers like Rushdie, Mahasweta Devi and performers and different kind of contemporary narrators like Teejan Bai in order to understand the, you now prolific nature of this relationship.

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Critical Awareness

- Problems of reading the Other invoked through Said's *Orientalism* in the last lecture.
- Our reading of non-Indian writers undertaken with critical alertness about the writer, the text and the context.
- Similar alertness necessary for reading Indian writers, texts and contexts.
- Though an immediate sense of connection can be felt inwardly.

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So, then let us first of all look at some of the critical positions that we had identified by looking at the writing processes. We had looked at the notion of the other with reference to what said had to say about the othering process, and the problems that are involved in the process of othering looking at someone not like you or someone different. So, in that sense, one would like to point out that our reading of Indian material also requires the same level of alertness. We cannot assume that all our definitions, all our perceptions, all our influences are problem free. They may be very, very immediate our sense of connection to many of the thing that we are talking about they may it may be in immediate. But at the same time we would like critical acumen to play an important part in understanding these readings.

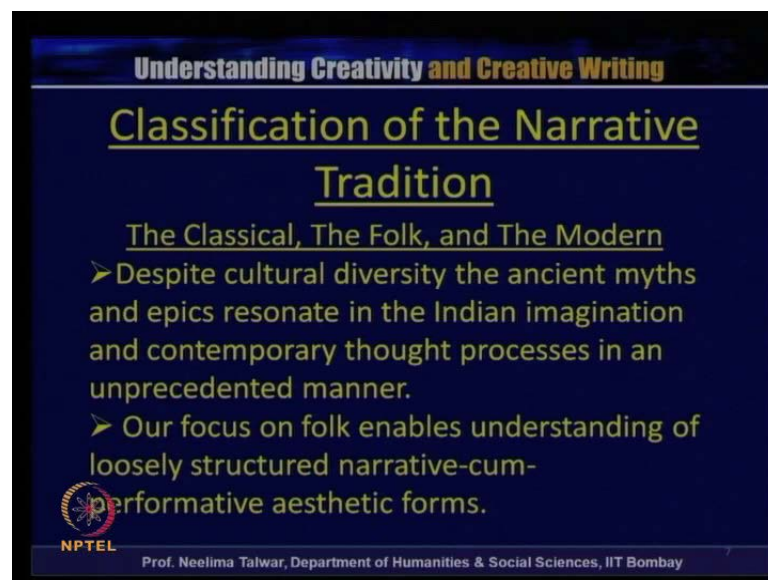
So, that is why I have listed a few points here for your consideration that our, you know reading of non-Indian writers was taken with critical awareness about the writers. The text and the context a similar alertness is necessary for reading Indian writers their texts and contexts though of course, an immediate sense of connection can be felt inwardly. And therefore, it would have a very, very different relationship can we will show though examples, how that also can be seen in terms of productive ways of developing your own writing work.

Now, so far as our own scene is concerned our own country is concerned, it is you know it is brought with issues that a billion plus people pose with their own sense of cultural

new nuances. No two people see the world in the same way and array to that are issues of diversity. So, on both this counts I think one has to realize that there are you know (()) billion voices speaking at the same time.

I think Rushdie captured that very well and you can read Rushdie to understand that sense. But certainly the issue of multiple voices the cultural nuances the question of many languages an also the fact that we are conducting this discussion of diversity trough English language. All of this puts pressure of an unprecedented kind, it is also can be turned it can also be turned in to a creative process, but I think the difficulties should not be undermine. So, that you can examine this process critically. So, we will keep this richness and this diversity this you know complexity in mind.

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Classification of the Narrative Tradition

The Classical, The Folk, and The Modern

- Despite cultural diversity the ancient myths and epics resonate in the Indian imagination and contemporary thought processes in an unprecedented manner.
- Our focus on folk enables understanding of loosely structured narrative-cum-performative aesthetic forms.

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And then with all these ideas in our mind, we begin to look at the folk material I have labeled this classification in terms of the term narrative tradition. But of course, I have employed here is the transition of material from orality to its narration that is it is movement from orality to print culture. Because some of the material that we are looking at it begins to make the stores, the ideas about the stores available in print culture. So, therefore, I have use the word narrative tradition which is a larger term not necessarily applicable to the oral tradition. But please keep that in mind in terms of how I have contextualize the discussion.

So, with in this there are 3 classifications that scholars in the field make the classifications are described as the classical the folk and the modern. So, despite cultural diversity that we talked about the ancient myths and epics they resonate in the Indian imagination and also contemporary thought processes in an absolutely unprecedented manner. So, our focus on folk enables understanding of loosely structured narrative come performative aesthetic forms.

In other words what I am trying to suggest is the fact that the folk forms are not really an exclusive train, which has no connection to either the classical and the now modern. The folk forms have very deep ties with mythic and with all the epics that we know a very deeply and you know their sort of part of our cultural averment. But definitely what the folk stand for its quality of retaining a very loosely defined narrative structure, it is not bound by rules regulations prescriptions and regimentation. So, it is this element of freedom and flexibility that I think speaks to lot of us in different ways as it did to the audience for which stories were you know narrated.

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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

Their revival in print culture

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Folktales are in that sense ancient stories which as I said they continue to the circulate and I told and retold, their meanings anchored in the different contexts of telling. They have deep roots in oral tradition and folklore. And an steeped in the life of a community often they have performed in front of or presented to an audience. And of course, their revival in print culture is anther phenomenon it gives it different kind of flavor.

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Folktales

- A. Oral tales are narrated and performed in wide variety of innovative forms.
- B. The teller of the tale is not described as a writer although there are professional narrators/tellers/performers.
- C. Other contexts of narration: Domestic tellers (male centred tales, women centred tales) including ritual tales/Vratakathas.

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So, now when we begin to look at more features of this form, what is visible is the ability of the oral tales to be narrated and performed in wide variety of innovative forms. So, not only does the text change even the manner of telling changes the esthetic form within which they are performed that also changes. So, there are lots of innovations there and the teller of the tale though is not described as a writer although there are professional narrators, tellers and performers. And often you would hear of certain such narrator who is better than anybody else, but they never get the status of a writer with all the modern associations.

That we have with a writer as a person who stands out in the social framework with his or her unique presence and voice. So, there is a great degree of anonymity that is associated with these narrations, one can also say that there is also a great degree of democratic element involved in sharing these stories, it is as if they belong to everybody. And in that sense even if we know about a great narrator or teller or performer, we always think of that person with reference to a specific form a specific way of doing things. And the person is not given that much of individualized attention the element of writing and copy write all these are also modern issues. So, the other contexts of narration of course, there are not only in public places these are also narrated within the domestic framework. And they have their own tradition there are male centered tales and there are women centered tales specially within the domestic framework. These two kinds of forms have proliferated and there are also ritual tales

which of course, I think is an absolutely amazing phenomenon and. So, the Vratakathas are also something that one can look at.

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Folk Plays

- Spheres of performance genre
- The classical, the folk and the modern:
 - I. Sanskrit theatre and drama, ritual, devotional traditions.
 - II. The folk-popular traditions. Their intermediary forms.
 - III. Modern Theatre.

 **Indian Theatre: Traditions of Performance**

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So, we have all these folktales that are part of our culture cultural environment. And then we can also look at another kind folk phenomenon where the element of performance is more dominant in the stories the element of narration is important. And these are narrated and therefore, performed, but in folk plays the focus is on performance. And again within this there are categories is a classical folk modern that be found in the narrative framework also. So, in terms of classical you have Sanskrit theater and drama ritual and devotional traditions in terms of the folk popular traditions. There are also forms that have evolved and during the process of decolonization they became highly politicized. And in that sense they are also described as inter Marjory forms.

So, they have feature of the classical they also have features of the modern and the modern is in terms of the political engagement with the contemporary issue. So, we will a look at the examples briefly. So, that you can also expose yourself to more possibilities in terms of the riches that you already have the third category is that of modern theater which a is placed around 1800 in terms of the influence of the western forms froze plays. So, now, the folk plays therefore our plays within this trajectory they are inter majority form with some features of the classical and some features of the modern. The other aspect of the folk a forms is related to these ideas that Farley Richmond and others they


pointed out in a book devoted to Indian theater traditions of performance that this is what they have to say. The focus on folk forms according to Richmond and others whatever their origins they depend on patronage on the masses now that is a very, very important feature.

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Folk Plays

- Focus on Folk forms: "1) Whatever their origins, they depend on patronage on the masses, and 2) they are given more to entertainment and profane rather than sacred purposes. 3) Folk-popular forms focus their concern on the mundane life of human beings rather than on Gods." (239)

 **Indian Theatre: Traditions of Performance**


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The patronage comes from people masses not the very powerful who also sometimes mold the content. So, this is really a peoples form they are given more to entertainment and profane rather than sacred purposes. That is instead of trying to re enforce the world view of a power group or any existing powerful hegemonic situation what they do is to tweak it a little bit. So, the third attribute that Farley Richmond and others have pointed out is related to folk popular forms. And there concern a regarding the mundane life of human beings rather than gods. And this is rather interesting, because what it does therefore, is to give a sense of intimacy to the form while you read it there is kind of sense of intimacy with the content. Because it is really about the audience or it is about this framework where we lead in which we lead our lives the domestic framework, the intimate framework of day to day existence.

So, this is where they are located. So, these are very interesting aspects that you can reflect on as you look at examples. The other observation that we wish to place before you that Richmond then others have made is related to the fact that in these folk plays what they do is to the performer integrate in varying proportions vocal and instrumental

music dance and mimetic action. And although the forms may vary in their position in the sacred profane continuum all are set within the sacred context as indicated by some form of religious preliminary. That is why I pointed out to you earlier that they are sort of inter major forms, because they have some feature of the classical. And at the same time they go into another kind of territory of certain amount of trekking of these traditions.

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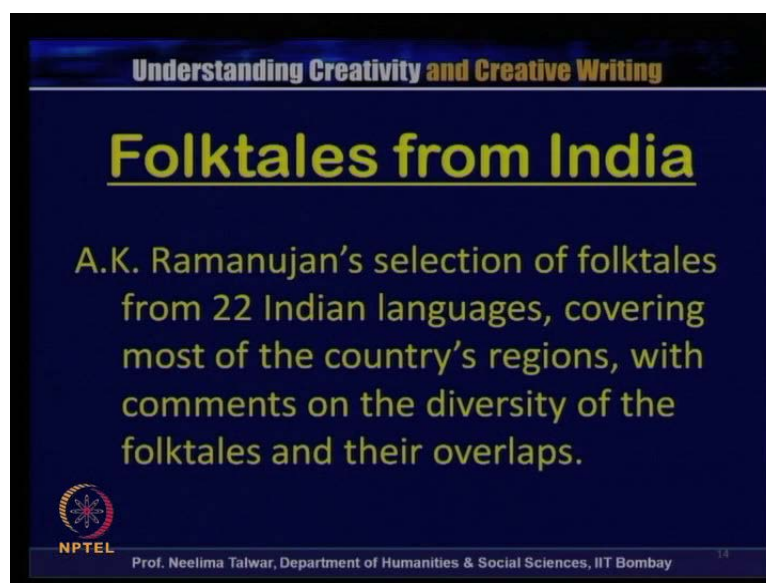
Part 2

- a) Folk tales – types and examples. formalist elements.
- b) Folk plays – links with the masses. Examples and evolution.

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What perhaps will be useful for us is to look at some of the folktales in terms of types and examples specially tales that show their concern with formalist elements, how are these tales constructed? What are the spaces that they create this? It would be useful to have a look at those and we will also look at some examples of folk plays and their links with the masses. And also the fact that within each one of those examples there has been tremendous amount of evolution within each form.


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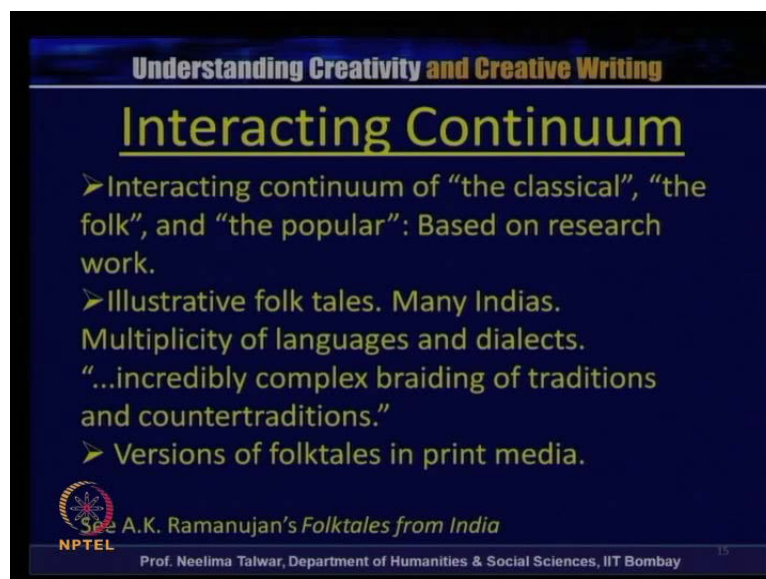
Folktales from India

A.K. Ramanujan's selection of folktales from 22 Indian languages, covering most of the country's regions, with comments on the diversity of the folktales and their overlaps.

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We have selected A K Ramanujna's selection of folktales and he himself actually examine 22 Indian languages, which cover most of the counties regions. And he went on to comment on diversity of the folktales and their overlap. So, this resource, we have placed before you in order to strengthen our understanding of folk forms.


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Interacting Continuum

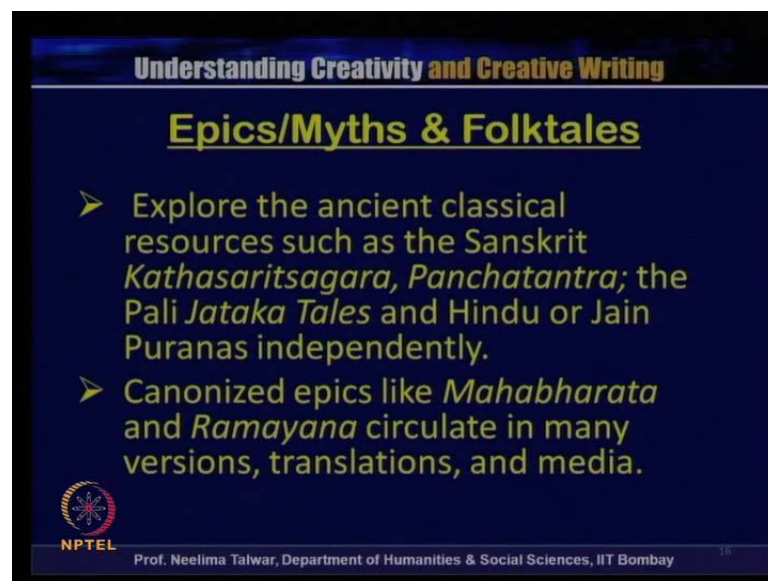
- Interacting continuum of "the classical", "the folk", and "the popular": Based on research work.
- Illustrative folk tales. Many Indias. Multiplicity of languages and dialects. "...incredibly complex braiding of traditions and countertraditions."
- Versions of folktales in print media.

 See A.K. Ramanujan's *Folktales from India* NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay 15

And their flexibility and their historical lesson, one can learn from them. According to Ramanujan there is an interacting continuum of the classical, the folk and the popular all of his work is based on intensive research. And therefore, the illustrative a folktales

actually do give us the multiplicity of our cultural background. At the same time there are certain types that are repeated across the, varies regions of the country as he himself put it what it has shown to him is not only the multiplicity of language and dialogs, but also the incredibly complex braiding of traditions and counter traditions. Now, of course, the version that we will place before you will be the version that has be worked out in the print media which makes it a very different cultural artifact.


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Epics/Myths & Folktales

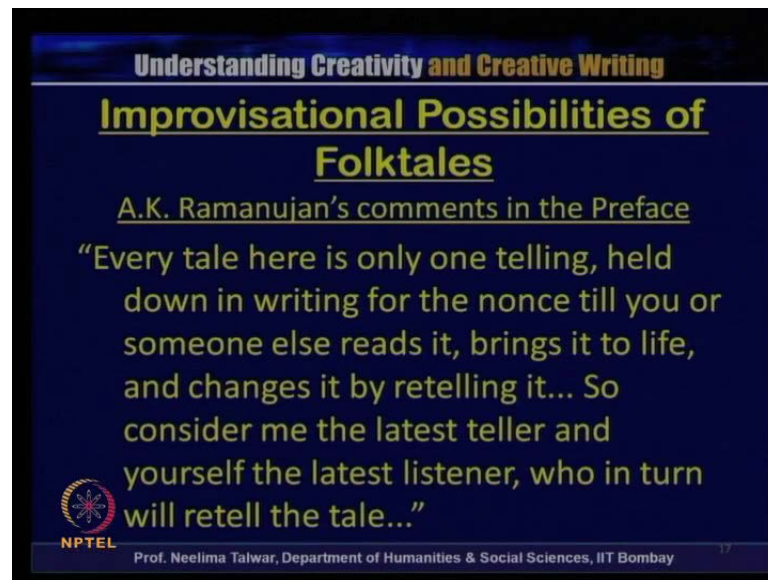
- Explore the ancient classical resources such as the Sanskrit *Kathasaritsagara*, *Panchatantra*; the Pali *Jataka Tales* and Hindu or Jain Puranas independently.
- Canonized epics like *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* circulate in many versions, translations, and media.

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What Ramanujan has said in the prepress to his folktales from India is related to the fact that other resources such as the Sanskrit Kathasaritsagara Panchtantra; the Palijataka tales and Hindu or Jainpuranas can also be explored by you independently. These are great recourses, but he has been trying to concentrate on forms that are not easily accessible to people. And therefore, the transitions work around the, more of the domestic framework or the intimate framework within which many of the folktales work out the canonized epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana often are sources for some of the tales. But these you are already familiar with in their many versions translations and media.

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Improvisational Possibilities of Folktales

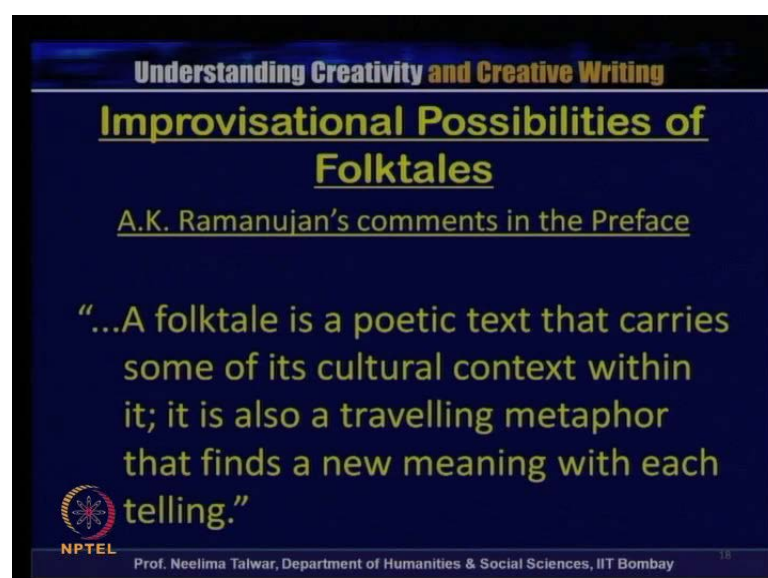
A.K. Ramanujan's comments in the Preface

"Every tale here is only one telling, held down in writing for the nonce till you or someone else reads it, brings it to life, and changes it by retelling it... So consider me the latest teller and yourself the latest listener, who in turn will retell the tale..."

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So, you know you will be able to immediately connect to the tales according to Ramanujan although his is the print version, but he still thinks that there is a quality of improvisation that one can cherish and enjoy as he puts it every tale here is only one telling held down in writing for the nuance till you or someone else reads it brings it to life and changes it by retelling it. So, consider me the latest teller and yourself the latest listener who in turn will retell the tale, but of course, a. So, far as I am concerned I do have to think about the copy writing in that sense his tale becomes the fix entity, but still the spirit is very close to the spirit of folktales.

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Improvisational Possibilities of Folktales

A.K. Ramanujan's comments in the Preface

"...A folktale is a poetic text that carries some of its cultural context within it; it is also a travelling metaphor that finds a new meaning with each telling."

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Ramanujan goes on to say that a folk tale is a poetic text that carries some of the cultural context within it is also a travelling metaphor that finds a new meaning with each telling.

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Folktales: Types and Examples

Based on Ramanujan's Notes with reference to International Indexes of Folktales

1. A story in search of an audience.

Motif M311, Prophecy: Future Greatness of Unborn Child. Also collected in Gondi, Hindi, Kannada, and Punjabi. Vratakathas like these are yet to be classified and indexed.(327)

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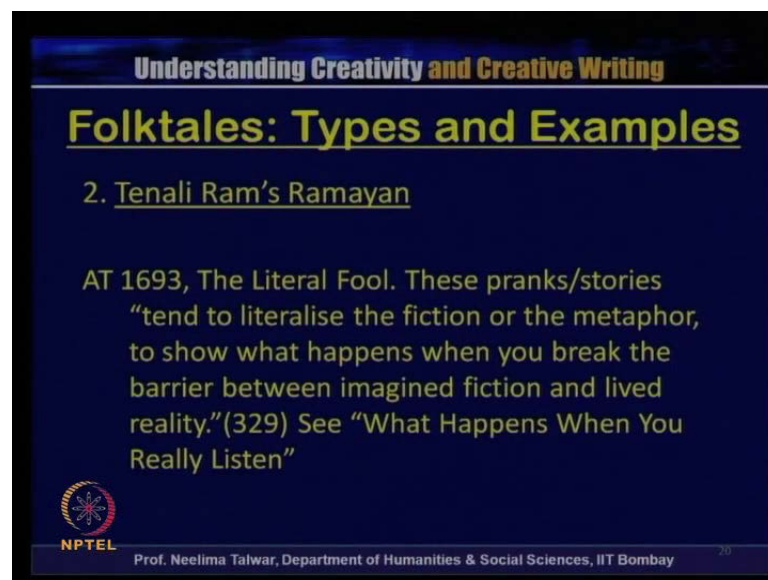
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Based on Ramanujan's notes with reference to international indexes of folktales, we have selected 3 or 4 types to place them before you the first one is a story in search of an audience, which according to his notes is the motive, which has a number is called prophecy; the future greatness of unborn child. And this particular form is available in Gondi, Hindi, Kannada, Punjabi Vratakathas like these are yet to be classified and indexed. The example that we have in mind which you know again out of many examples that he has provided, we have chosen this is a related to the, you know Vrata in which the person in this case of women has to Narrate story to someone.

And only then they she can break that Vrata I would not go into all the details of this story right now. But certainly you can read the Vratakatha that is included here where this women, she goes around looking for an audience. And she is not able to really convince anyone to listen to her. And therefore, then finally, in great despair she is sort of chances on a pregnant women whose poor and very hungry. So, this pregnant women agrees to listen to the tale provided the narrator would provide her with food. So, that she can sort of satiate her hunger which is actually doubled, because she is carrying the baby within her. So, the women, the women who has to break her fast, she goes back and gets her something to eat the women eats and goes off to sleep.

She is been so tired and now again the all women is an affix till she hears a voice from the womb saying tell me the story and. So, she narrates the story of the sun god. And you know thereby after that she breaks the fast and blesses the unborn child who later on finds these boon to be a boon the transforms her life. So, this is the kind of a tale here where again as I said you know that sense of the urgency of a story. That is captured through this ritual now can speak to us in many different ways, we not part of the culture where we necessarily going to fast and narrate a story. But it really speaks very eloquently of certain; you know cultural habits and thoughts and also this preoccupation with narration the other form.

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Folktales: Types and Examples

2. Tenali Ram's Ramayan

AT 1693, The Literal Fool. These pranks/stories "tend to literalise the fiction or the metaphor, to show what happens when you break the barrier between imagined fiction and lived reality." (329) See "What Happens When You Really Listen"


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That we thought of placing before you is a very interesting form of which is typified by this label that Ramanujan he is given it the literal fool. And these are Tenali Rama stories, specially the stories surrounding Ramayan these franks of stories according to Ramanujan then tend to literalize the friction or the metaphor to show what happens when you break the barrier between imagine friction and lived reality. So, again it sort of deals with the kind of transformation that occurs when you tell a tale.

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Mythic Themes: Folk Perspectives


For example, Tenali Rama's *Ramayana*: "A courtesan once invited Tenali Rama to recite the story of the Ramayana. He began the story by saying, "Rama and Sita went to the forest," and stopped there. He said nothing more. The courtesan waited and waited and finally asked, "Then what happened?" "Don't be impatient," said Tenali Rama, "They're still walking in the forest." (57)

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One of these I have placed before you where you know once a courtesan invited to Tenali Rama to recite the story of the Ramayana. And he began the story by saying Rama and Sita went to the forest and stopped there. He said nothing more, the courtesan waited and waited and finally asked, then what happened? Do not be Impatient at Tenali Rama, they are still walking in the forest.

Another story in this sort of framework is the story that I would just briefly paraphrase. So, therefore, the other story is related to this gentleman, who is a very crude and not given to finer a thought processes. And his wife organize is a lot about this a absence of you know involvement with cultural phenomenon and conversations with him. So, she sort of forces him to go and a listen to Ramayana tales being you know narrated in her neighborhood.

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Mythic Themes

What Happens When You Really Listen (55)

"On the fourth day, his wife went with him. She sat him down in the very first row and told him sternly that he should keep awake no matter what happened. So he sat dutifully...and began to listen. Very soon, he was caught up in the adventures and the characters of the great epic story. On that day, the reciter was enchanting the audience with the story of Hanuman, the monkey"...who was to take Rama's signet ring to Sita in Lanka.

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And he sort of finally, you know a grace to keep away to go and fall asleep. So, on the fourth day; however, his wife she went with him. And she was able to keep him awake he got very absorbed in that narration, because he suddenly found that the narration was truly enchanting and gripping. And as he began enjoy that narration came the part of hanuman who actually you know Sita; Sita' ring is dropped by him by mistake in the ocean and then hanuman agonises about this mishap and he gets it. So, absorbed in this narration that he gets up and says wait Hanuman I will go retrieve the ring. And he jumps in to the ocean he retrieves the ring and brings it back to Hanuman.

The audience is enchanted also by this other event that has surfaced. And from that day onwards this particular gentleman, you know gains new kind of respect if community. And he becomes a very transformer person and the story ends with this pronouncement that this is what happens when you here Ramayan be you know. So, these are sort of tales which are slightly within the secured. And at the same time they also deal with this imaginary space; the space of vivid imagination that you engage with when you listen to the stories or when you narrate these stories also the other kind of story.

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Metafiction:
Stories about Stories


- Tales have to be told. Stories and narrations create a different cultural space.
- They have power to break the barrier between reality and fiction resulting in deepening of experience. For example, the Tenali Rama stories.

Stories, like truth/s, cannot be repressed.
Like "The Barber's Secret".

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That we found fascinating was stories about stories, you there is sense in the collection of Ramanujan's that tales have to be told there is that sense of urgency he has captured through multiple examples these stories and narrations. They also take you to another level of your existence they have the power to break the barrier between reality and fiction resulting in deepening of experience. There are also stories that show that stories should not be repressed or stories like truth cannot be repress. So, there are stories like the barbers secrete where the barber, you know while he attains to the king he suddenly discovers that the king has the ears of donkey. And at the same time he is not able to revile this truth, because the king for bits him from reviling this secrete to anybody else for obvious reason. Because people would lose all their respect for his power and position. And therefore, now this whole story is about what happens to the barber.

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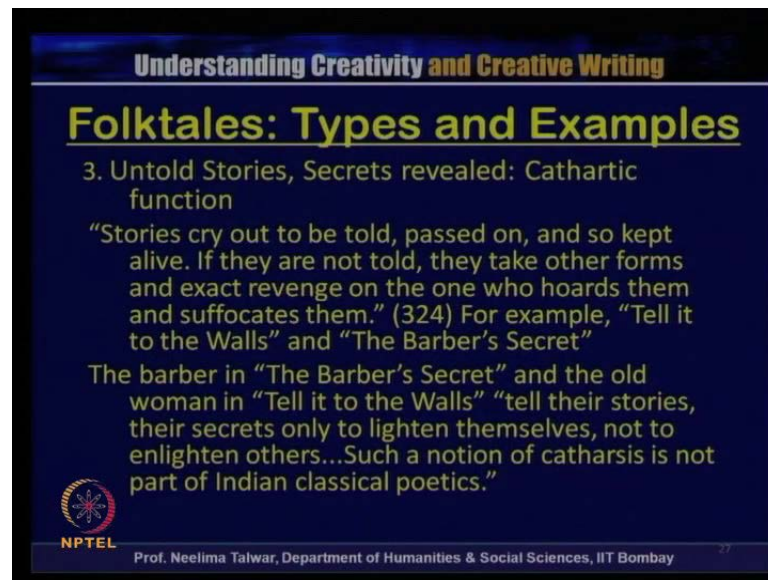
- In “The Barber’s Secret” the barber is unable to contain himself and speaks the king’s secret to the tree which the tree cannot keep either.
- King’s secret that he had donkey’s ears is revealed.

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And how is tries to sort of deal with this situation till he literally falls ill. And finally, he is cannot able to contain himself and speaks the secret to the tree hoping that at least the tree would not reveal the secret. But even that does not happen and when a drum is made out this tree and then drum is played in the king’s curt that secrete comes out loud and clear. So, there is again that sense of urgency that sense of intimacy in this stories the sense of certain amount of subversive quality also that you begin to notice. And again there lots and lots of stories that Ramanujan has collected, in order to show this desire to tell the story as if you know if the stories are not told then some they would be loss to the community. So, the notion of the story has a very, very interesting standing within the folk imagination there are 2 3 things.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Folktales: Types and Examples

3. Untold Stories, Secrets revealed: Cathartic function

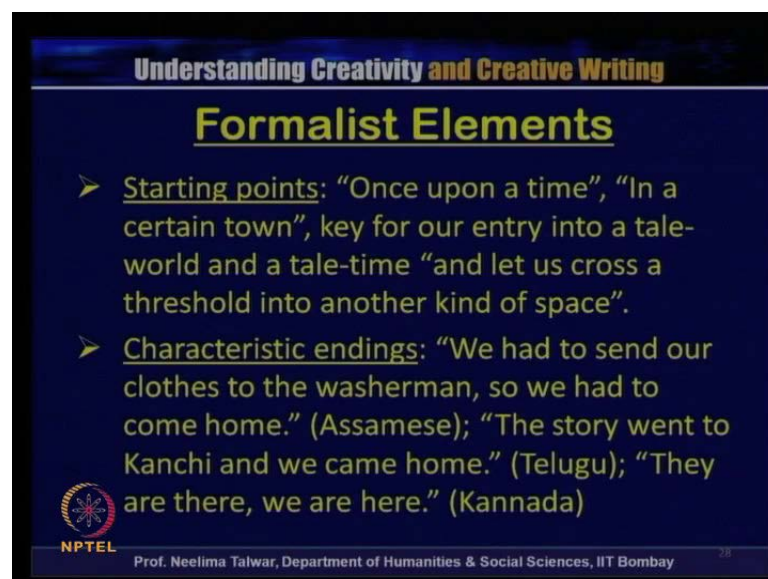
"Stories cry out to be told, passed on, and so kept alive. If they are not told, they take other forms and exact revenge on the one who hoards them and suffocates them." (324) For example, "Tell it to the Walls" and "The Barber's Secret"

The barber in "The Barber's Secret" and the old woman in "Tell it to the Walls" "tell their stories, their secrets only to lighten themselves, not to enlighten others...Such a notion of catharsis is not part of Indian classical poetics."

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That Ramanujan has pointed out he says that in the untold stories where the secrets are revealed finally, like barbers tale and many other stories there is a cathartic function that they play. So, let me read out what he has to say stories cry out to be told passed on and. So, kept alive if they are not told they take other forms and exact revenge on the one who holds them and suffocated them. So, for example, the other story, which have not shared with you tell it to the walls or the barber secret.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Formalist Elements


- Starting points: "Once upon a time", "In a certain town", key for our entry into a tale-world and a tale-time "and let us cross a threshold into another kind of space".
- Characteristic endings: "We had to send our clothes to the washerman, so we had to come home." (Assamese); "The story went to Kanchi and we came home." (Telugu); "They are there, we are here." (Kannada)

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And therefore, again as I said this is a, you know there are lots of interesting formalities elements in these tales that you know really immediately evoke an interesting connection to content form. And the context also there are other elements in terms of the starting point of the story a where their starting point usually you know goes like this. Once upon a time in certain town and this, these kinds of starting points these are keys for our entry in to a tales world and tale time. And they let us cross a threshold in to another kind of space there are also characteristics endings that I am sure you will be able to also pull out of your own context to or your own experience of these narrative traditions.

But he has pointed out these interesting endings like whether tale ends the narrator says, we have to send our clothes to the, was Herman. So, we have to come home. So, end of story there the story went to Kanchi, and we came home end of story again they are there we are here that is the third type. So, what they do here you know these starting points are those end points and also the transformations that occur in the middle. There are these elements of identification and disidentification of the listeners with their characters and these have triggers in the tales.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Formalist Elements

- “Identification and disidentification (of the listeners with their characters) have their triggers in the tales and happen at different stages of a tale or a performance.” (xxxix-xxxii)
- For example, “At the end of a romantic king-and-queen story, the Oriya teller says, “I saw the prince the other day in the market, but he wouldn’t talk to me.” (xxxii)

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And they happen at different stages of a tale or a performance. So, you became the other and then.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Folk Plays

- Folk Plays: from narratives to performance in theatre spaces.
- Varieties and their internal changes:
 1. Jatra of Bengal
 2. Bhavai of Gujarat
 3. Nautanki of North India
 4. Tamasha of Maharashtra
 5. Burrakatha of Andhra Pradesh
- Pandavani, specially Teejan Bai's rendering

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So, you come back to yourself those are the kind of trajectories that are being referred to here. For example, a Ramanujan says that the end of a romantic king and queen's story the Oriya teller says I saw the prince other day in the market, but he wouldn't talk to me. So, you come back to earth again folk plays are very different though from these narrations which are internet and here and the folk plays there is an element of self-conscious performativity there are lots of verities within these.

But let me just quickly point out some of the examples of folk forms, let really you may be familiar with already Jatra our Bengalis extremely well known there is Bhavai of Gujarat, Nautanki of North India, Tamasha of Maharashtra, Burrakatha of and Andhra Pradesh, Pandavani, specially Teejan Bai's rendering which we will show you towards the end of this lecture. So, these forms, we have described as narratives you know from narratives they have gone to performance in theater spaces. So, they have they have more of a public presence and therefore, there the nature of these folk forms although it is still very flexible very fluent.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Folk Plays

- Folk Plays as intermediary forms
- Their political role in decolonization.
- Mahasweta Devi's political theatre for the oppressed.
- The concluding Teejan Bai clip: the first woman to perform Pandavani

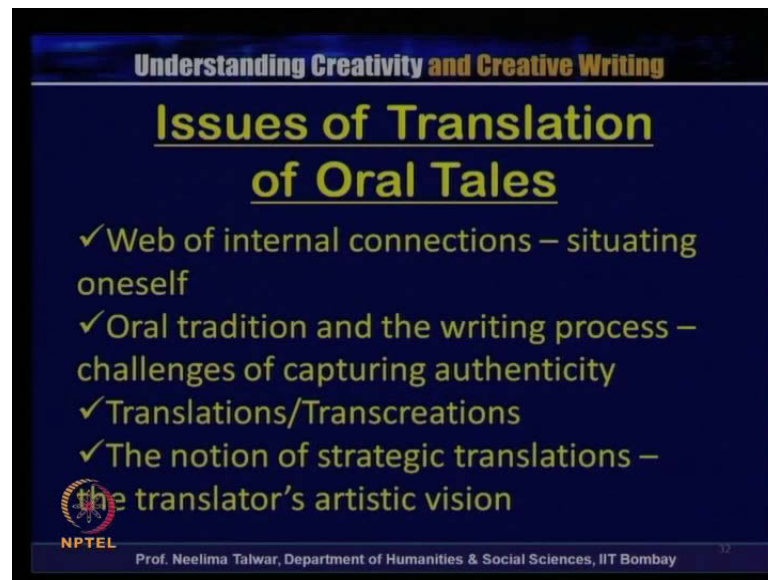
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But at the same time I think we need to look at some of the features quickly. So, folk forms they had a kind of political role in the decolonization process. And one of the example is that highlights those a traditions its related to Mahasweta Devi's own political theater for the oppressed in which she has used folk a imagination folktales. And also the close bond between people and these tales because those tales almost defined certain communities. The concluding Teejan Bai clip, we definitely want to draw your attention to that even within the form, you know even if let us say it is very community oriented form and even within those community oriented forms within a strong tradition.

The changes that have occurred in contemporary period are really worth looking at for example, Teejan Bai is the first women to really perform the Pandavani form. And play whole lot of roles herself a similarly when we talk about Mahasweta Devi, we are really actually not talking about the sense of community in the way let us say Teejan Bai feels that sense of community, because she belongs to the folk tradition from within whereas, modernist interpretation of folk forms is slightly different relmal though we are equally interested in both.

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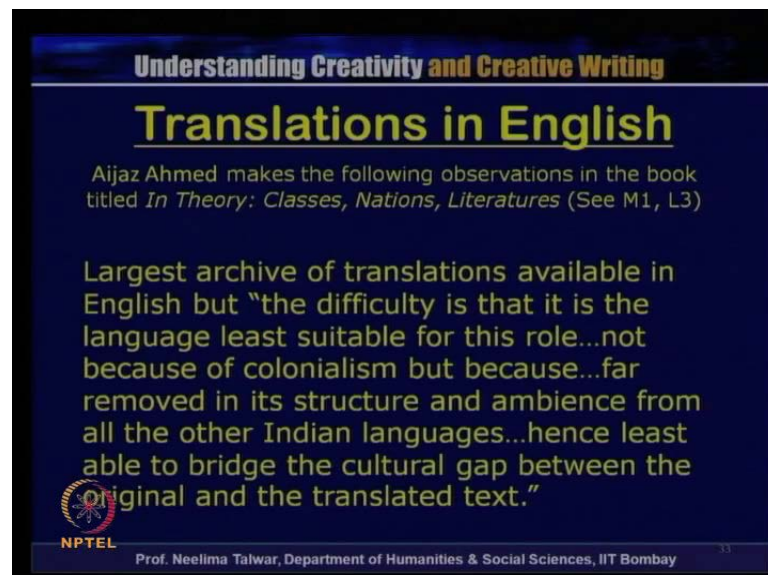
Issues of Translation of Oral Tales

- ✓ Web of internal connections – situating oneself
- ✓ Oral tradition and the writing process – challenges of capturing authenticity
- ✓ Translations/Transcreations
- ✓ The notion of strategic translations – the translator's artistic vision

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But the second one I think has greater impact on our imagination, but let me just quickly also point out that the issues of translation they Lomb large in our connection to whatever is available to us in terms of print culture. But perhaps less of that is a problem can be look at it as a per formative form.

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Translations in English

Aijaz Ahmed makes the following observations in the book titled *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (See M1, L3)

Largest archive of translations available in English but "the difficulty is that it is the language least suitable for this role...not because of colonialism but because...far removed in its structure and ambience from all the other Indian languages...hence least able to bridge the cultural gap between the original and the translated text."

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While we talk about translation, Aijaz Ahmed had already talked about it in theory classes nations and literatures where he had pointed out that English translations create a very very a big problem because they are. So, different from our cultural context, but at

the same time the largest archives of translations in India are available in English. Ramanujan also was sharply aware of this problem although he himself is a bilingual poet, he did not take the translation process very lightly; he pointed out that nothing can reproduce the original telling of tale these were all translated.

The tales that translated these were all translated by different hands at different times and places and I have retold them making slight changes in some and more than slight in others whether language was full some cumbersome are simply out dated. So, it becomes a different version from the original. But there is nothing like fixed original, because the stories are constantly circulating. And they are being improvise they are be recreate and as I said they become a part of the collective you know resource of community in terms of translations and trans creations I therefore, now want to draw your attention to contemporary writers who have also been greatly influence by you the. You now the kind of freedom the kind of a celebration that the folk forms really a love us they have exposed us to those possibilities.

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Translations, Transcreations

- Salman Rushdie: Internalisation of the oral narrative tradition
- An exuberant blend of the interacting continuum of “the classical”, “the folk”, and “the popular” in the mix of fantasy and reality in *Midnight's Children*.
- Tales within tales including Saleem Sinai's life story recounted orally to Padma.

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In Salman Rushdie to you would find an internalization of the oral narrative tradition. Then these, this exuberant blend of the interacting continue of the classical the folk and the popular in the mix of fantasy and reality in midnight's children. He has the, he has use the of form tales within tales like katha sarita sagara including Saleem Sinai life story which is recounted orally to Padma. And I would like to read what he says about Padma

in the chapter; call my tenth birth day, because that immediately give you some sense of what I am referring to that is this sense of our cultural context it's surfaces quite surprisingly. And quite suddenly in many unexpected ways and this is what that writer or that part of the novel captures where already Saleem and Shiva there they have this intermixed identity the children have been exchange at birth. And now of course, Saleem Sinai talks about Padma to whom he is narrating his tale.

I find myself over whelmed all of a sudden by older learning while here beside me is my Padma whose written I had. So, earnestly desired my Padma the lotus Goddess, the one who possess dong whose honey like and made of gold who suns moisture and mud. And he can really stop once; he starts up this tale; he just cannot stop and as he says that suddenly is over whelm by this older learning and this what I am trying to suggest we. So, unexpectedly over whelm by many of these stories the symbols the travelling metaphors that we really sometimes begin to speak in a way that we did not anticipate this very famous story of Girish Karnada who wanted to write in English actual when he started office career as a writer. But Kannada his mother tongue that surfaced in this conciseness did not quite expect that not only that the Yayathi myth surfaced as a sort of unifying element of his conciseness.

But to come back to Rushdie says again within that same segment Padma who along with the yakshajeni who represent the, a secret treasure of the earth and sacred rivers Ganga, Yamuna, Sarswati. And the 3 goddesses is one of the guardians of life beguiling and comorting mortal mente while they pass through the dream web of maya Padma, the lotus Galax etcetera, etcetera it goes on. And you can read the book yourself in order to enjoy the sudden surfacing of Saleem's, you know connection to these ancient narrations metaphors etcetera, what they seem to do is to sort in some ways dazzlers with their possibilities. I think of as Hishmehal as a sort of metaphor that comes to my mind where suddenly the same person you begin to see in ten different ways or hundred different ways.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Translations, Transcreations

Mahasweta Devi

Use of the folk imagination:
"legends, mythical figures
and mythical happenings in a
contemporary setting"

For example, in *Water*, the
protagonist, Maghai Dome is
a traditional water diviner.

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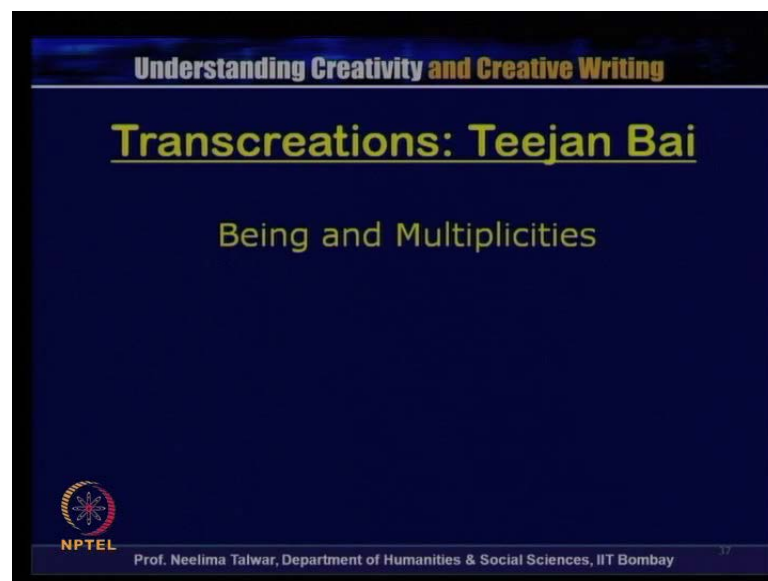
Now, moving from Saleem Sanai to Mahasweta Devi in Mahasweta Devi's world view where the issue of the oppressed with the marginalized is an extremely important issue, she in *Water* has Maghai Dome protagonist and not only just the protagonist. But the dome community, which is completely define by their belief in certain tales and the narrate these tales about their origin and about their you now community all the time. Now, during the play at one point there is a strong struggle between hoorah the son of maghai dome who feels that his father who is water diviner he divines water. But at the same time that water is denied to him because of the cost system. But Maghai is passionately devoted to this idea of divining water which has been actually given as a blessing to the dome community. And this is what he has to say this is again I am reading this in order to show how intensely these stories define many communities. The folktales are not only tales for entertainment, but these are also tales that seems to also define the identity of certain groups.

So, Maghai Dome here he says to his son Ganga told Basumati hold the nether Ganga in your Borvils and his son Doora say's then. And he says rising to his feet to Anag the dram of how it all happened. So, the nether Ganga flowed in to the secrete depths of the mother earth, my earliest ancestor had come all prepare to offer pooja to the holy river at her advent, but by the time he arrived bhagirath had already left with gang. So, he stuffed himself up with boos gathered all that he had brought with him to offer the holy river. And offer Pooja to the nether Ganga once he closed his eyes to do obeisance the drunken

stuporto covar and he fell asleep when he opened his eyes there was no sign any longer of Ganga, it was emptiness all round. He was just a dome after all and nive and so easily fooled.

So, he thought I must have dreamt it all then from the Bovril's of the earth the nether Ganga herself. And then he rises his folded palms his head and Maghai goes on to say the mother DET of all the hidden water spoke, you are my chosen freest I am the goddess, the nether Ganga whenever man dig for a well or a pond you will gather the offering spray for water and go around looking for where the water lies hidden till I tell you where to dig. Such intimate contacts and relationships and also talents are defined in this way because I am sure Maghai dome had some scientific bases for his ability to find where the water exists water bodies are. But at the same time it is this myth come folktale that almost defines his sensibility and that office community, the concluding a clip that we would like to place.

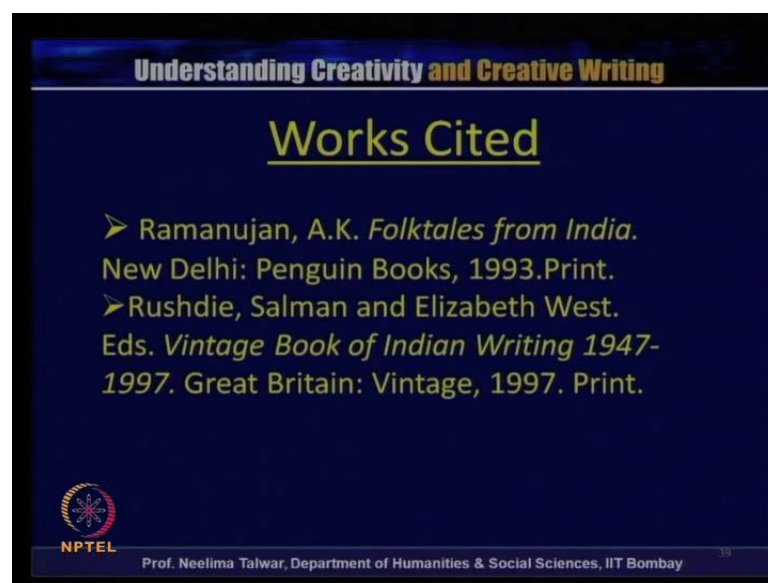
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Before you in order to help you think about the many formalist elements of folk forms and what they can do to your own imagination and also how you can allow many of these tales to surface in our conciseness. Because I am sure you may have uroni collectic blend of stories at he clip pertains to Teejan Bai and I have titled it transcreations being and multiplicities. And the reason I have called it being and multiplicities is related to the fact that Teejan Bai plays the part of many characters in her narrator and she has musical

instrument in her hand and you will be able to see directly how through this form she is able to transform herself constantly become many others. And at the same time come back to herself as Teejan Bai the very bold and innovative performer. In a sense that offers other kinds of lessons about otherness, which we also perhaps can leave to your own imagination you can see what you can do about it. This is of course, a performative form, but what happens if we bring it to that discussion of writing and writing with a sense of multiplicities we will see what we can do with that, our reading less of course, is provided here.

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Some of which we have shared earlier in another context. But Ramanujan's folktales, I hope you will read and enjoy them. A Similarly Salman Rushdie's a book, we had refer to earlier. And I think his introduction where he talks about India being a honor plenty. I think that something that again evokes our own sense of how despite the English translations and despite our own relationship to English as a language of thought and creation, one can see that we still remain very, very Indian. And with that I would conclude this session and you know place Teejan Bai per formative piece before you.

Thank you