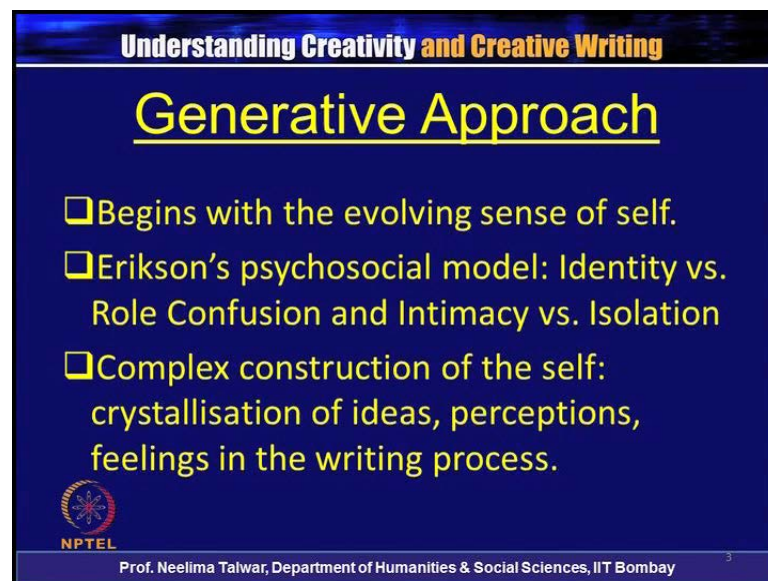


Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing
Prof. Neelima Talwar
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Lecture - 3
Multilingual Plurality: Our Environment Part-1

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The slide is titled "Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing" at the top. Below that, the main title "Generative Approach" is underlined in yellow. There are three bullet points, each preceded by a yellow square icon:

- Begins with the evolving sense of self.
- Erikson's psychosocial model: Identity vs. Role Confusion and Intimacy vs. Isolation
- Complex construction of the self: crystallisation of ideas, perceptions, feelings in the writing process.

At the bottom left is the NPTEL logo. At the bottom center, it says "Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay". A small number "3" is in the bottom right corner.

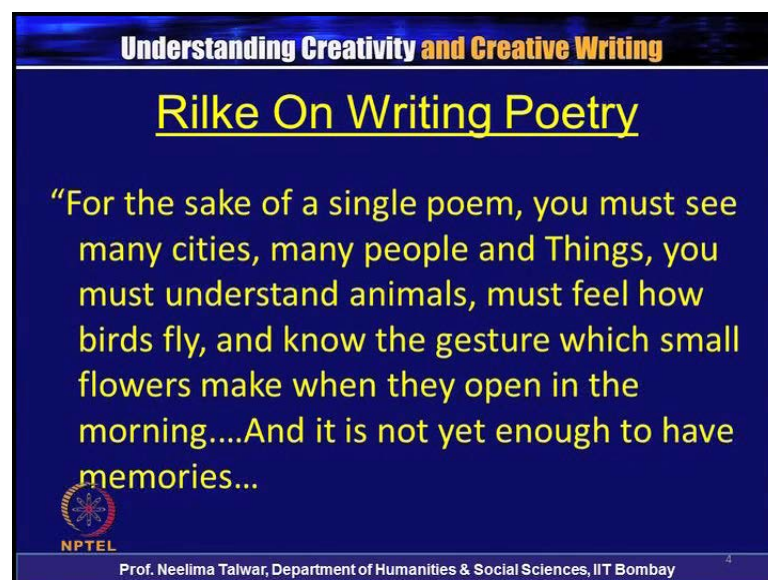
This lecture is titled multilingual plurality and it actually deals with our environment. We have already talked about the fact that we would adopt a generative approach; that means, we would have to constantly depend to our own inner resources and also our environmental resources in order to develop more and more creative, attitudes and work. So, our approach it begins with the evolving sense of the self. We talked about it in the previous lecture also by placing it within the accelerated phase of change that we notice all around us.

This particular you know rapid phase of change is not really an exclusive characteristic of this historical period alone. If you look at more universal models of growth and youth and change, you would find similar tendencies that effect young people, that is the phase of change external change may be rapid in some historical periods and relatively less in some others. But the fact is that young people are really very receptive to all the changes and the possibilities that is around them.

So, we can if you want dip into Erikson's childhood and society where he has offered a psycho-social model of development. And in his kind of framework each stage of our growth is marked by crisis and growth. And I would say that when we look at the Ericksonian model and we place it within the rapid phase of change within (()) to youth. He has pointed out that identity versus role confusion marks this phase and also concerns for newer areas of intimacy and also impending isolation. So, there are these binaries he has offered, these mainly suggest the fact that this is a phase where one is affected by search for identity and identity in that sense is an evolving process.

So, this is where we place our generative approach, I would say firmly within the fluidity of all these processes. In this complex construction of the self, the crystallization of ideas, perceptions, feelings that writing process offers I think cannot be replaced by any other activity. So, whether you are doing science in order to find your sense of self you are doing technology, you are doing writing, painting, designing, law, because I actually spoke too students of law recently on creativity concerned they wanted interaction from that point of view. So, whatever your area of concern, finally all of this comes together very beautifully and powerfully in writing. So, doing science, but writing about it; doing technology writing about it.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Rilke On Writing Poetry

"For the sake of a single poem, you must see many cities, many people and Things, you must understand animals, must feel how birds fly, and know the gesture which small flowers make when they open in the morning....And it is not yet enough to have memories..."

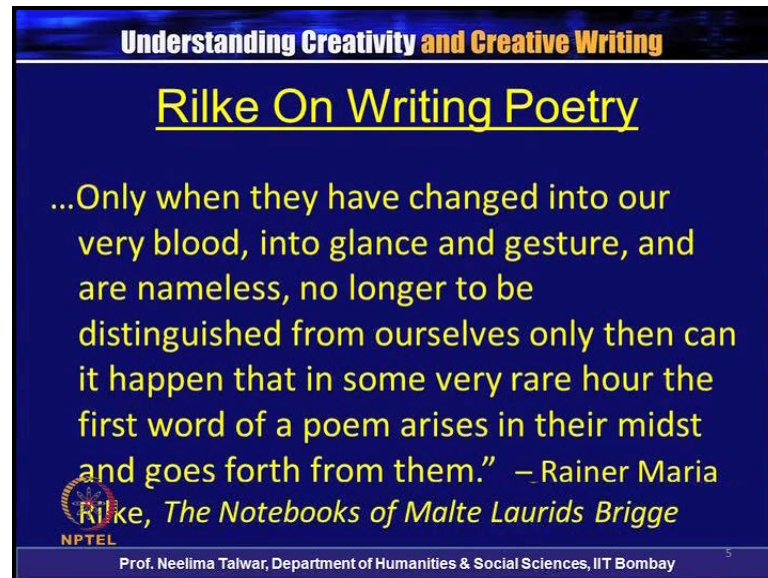
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And the writing process and its beauty in some ways is captured most eloquently by Rilke in this court or he says for the sake of a single poem, you must see many cities,

many people, and things, you must understand animals, must feel how birds fly, and know the gesture which small flowers make when they open in the morning. And it is not yet enough to have memories.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Rilke On Writing Poetry

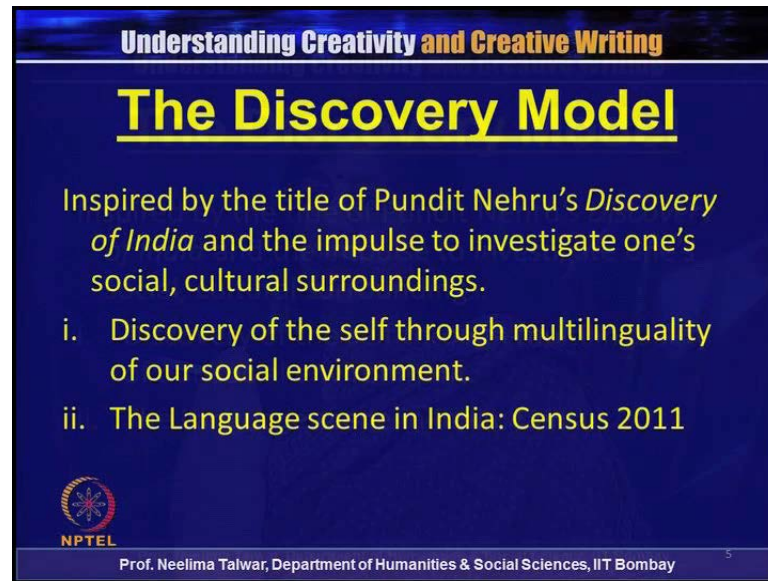
...Only when they have changed into our very blood, into glance and gesture, and are nameless, no longer to be distinguished from ourselves only then can it happen that in some very rare hour the first word of a poem arises in their midst and goes forth from them.” – Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*

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Only when they have changed into our very blood, into glance and gesture, and are nameless, no longer to be distinguished from ourselves only then can it happen that in some very rare hour the first word of a poem arises in their midst and goes forth from them. Think about this quotation, think about the ideas that we have shared and we will then from that point on develop further activities, because the challenge before us is to find ways through which our creativity is spurred.

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The slide has a dark blue background with yellow and white text. At the top, it says 'Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing' in white. Below that, the title 'The Discovery Model' is written in large, bold, yellow letters. The main text is in yellow and describes the inspiration for the model, followed by two numbered points. At the bottom left is the NPTEL logo, and at the bottom right is the professor's name and affiliation.

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

The Discovery Model

Inspired by the title of Pundit Nehru's *Discovery of India* and the impulse to investigate one's social, cultural surroundings.

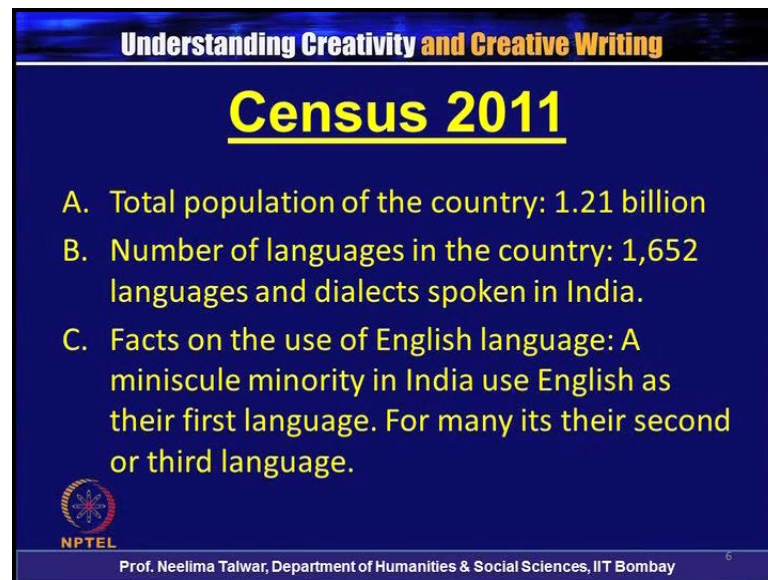
- Discovery of the self through multilinguality of our social environment.
- The Language scene in India: Census 2011

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We have decided to adopt what we describe as the discovery model which is highly inspired by Pundit Nehru's discovery of India and also therefore, the impulse to investigate one's social, cultural surroundings like the book, but also more than the book it is that impulse that we feel is endorsed by this title and this notion. This discovery actually has to start with the self and the sense that one has about this is related to the self in relationship to multilinguality of our social environment. That sense that this would healed very rich results, because language is very, very important part of who we are. And it is also an important part of our you know freedom, our sense of freedom or the ability to articulate our sense of freedom not only feel it, but articulate it. And also there are so many other things associated with the intimate relationship that we have with languages. The language seen; however, is not simple it is to say the least.


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Census 2011

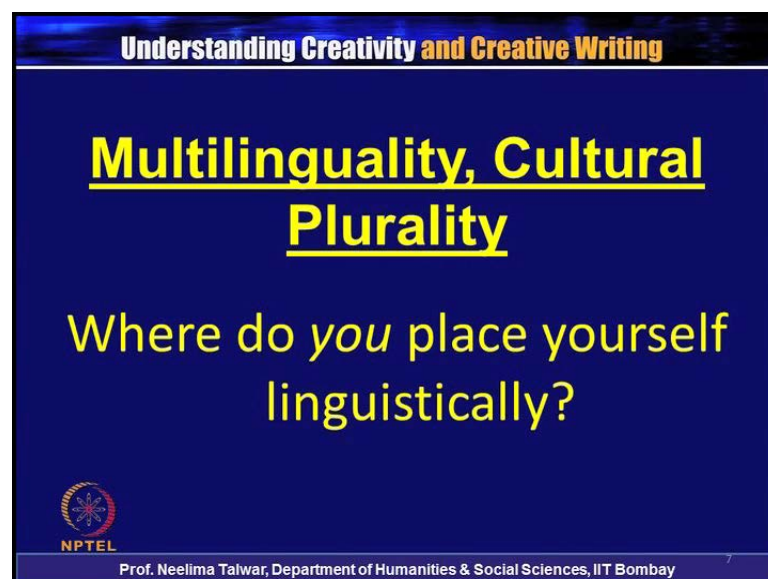
- A. Total population of the country: 1.21 billion
- B. Number of languages in the country: 1,652 languages and dialects spoken in India.
- C. Facts on the use of English language: A miniscule minority in India use English as their first language. For many its their second or third language.

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We would like you to depend to some of the figures that are offered by the census 2011 just to have sort of feel for where we stand today as a nation. So, the cost that total population of the country is 1.21 billion people the number of languages that are spoken that also includes dialects is 1652. So far as English is concerned a miniscule minority uses it as a first language, for most educated people they are also part of miniscule minority in the country considering where 1.21 billion people. For the educated minority this continues to be a second or third language.


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Multilinguality, Cultural Plurality

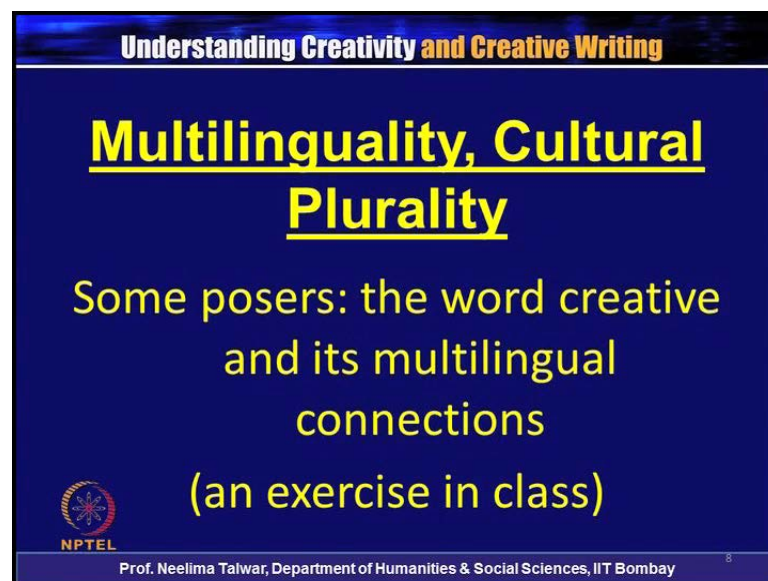
Where do *you* place yourself linguistically?

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So, then when we talk about multilinguality, it is definitely a concern that we would like you to actively explore because along with multilinguality of our environment, there are associated cultural elements that we would like you to think about. So, this is really not to suggest that a language and a culture are tightly in it. I think the boundaries and relationships are very fluid, and it is precisely this fluidity that we would like you to explore with very specific kind of exercises that we would recommend.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Multilinguality, Cultural Plurality

Some posers: the word creative and its multilingual connections

(an exercise in class)

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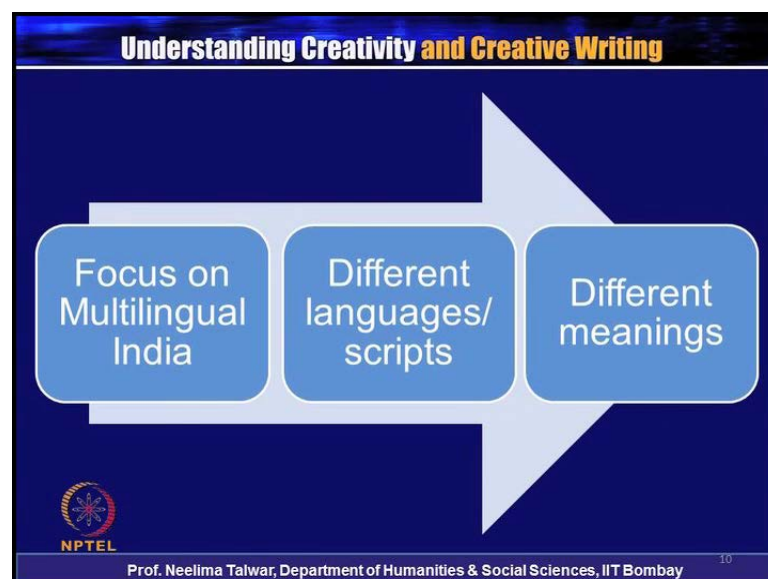
And in fact, we have some of these posers that we would share with you right now. And these posers also many of the students have responded to we will show that soon. Those exercises also and the students in action that we would show you soon. So, then one of the posers relates to the word creative itself. So now, when we talk about multilinguality, plurality, how about starting with this keyword, and why this word of course, evidently because we are interested in understanding creative processes. But I think, the process is one thing that the word itself what does it connote, what does it mean to us.

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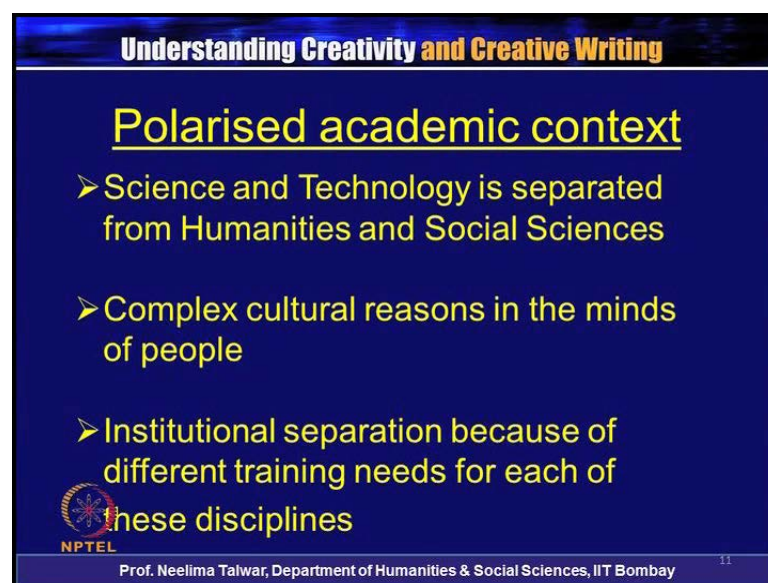
According to Raymond Williams, this is one of the few words in the English language with only positive connotations. This is an idea that we will again discuss later, when we talk about institutionalization of creativity and creative writings specially Dawson and Rap pope and what they have to say about this institutionalization. But to begin with what does the word creative mean? It is just a word we have acquired and we just go around thoughtlessly applying it wherever we want or we want to become self aware and self-conscious in a productive way.

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So, then let us see what these relationships lead us to. So, we would try to focus on multilingual India, we would also like you to look at two or three languages that you use see where English stands within that frame of reference. But also explore your relationship to languages, their script, their content, their emotive appeal for you. And therefore, in that sense what are the different meanings that these words hold for you. So, again you would have to come back to yourself. So, there is no general pattern, so you know that we would like you to follow, but these are leans that we feel will bring you back to yourself in a much more investigative and richer manner.


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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Polarised academic context

- Science and Technology is separated from Humanities and Social Sciences
- Complex cultural reasons in the minds of people
- Institutional separation because of different training needs for each of these disciplines

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The reason this needs to be done much more carefully is, because everything said in done we do belong to a very polarized academic context in which languages and their value has not been appreciated fully. I think that is a kind of loss for all the disciplines, because it is not a question of territorial interest sorry to say, but it is a question of how crucial languages are to our thought processes. So, therefore, the science and technology separation from humanities and social sciences, I think we may just briefly mention the fact that there are fairly complex cultural reasons, because of which it has entered the mindset of the people.

Institutions actually do have to polarize areas of specialization because the training required is different. But I think in all of these processes, languages should not be neglected and their power and you know also languages are resource for thought

processes. So, because we are in this kind of complex polarized atmosphere, we need to talk about multilinguality also. Because we tend to polarize, we tend to limit ourselves, we tend to reduce everything to simpler formulations and therefore, I think it is very important to not only talk about the issue of languages, but also multilinguality.

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The question for you and I think that is a very, very important question that you have to ask yourself whether multilinguality offers greater doors of perception to you, that is a question you have to answer. And this is not a simple question although actually it is a question that may be much more accessible than you realize. Examples of some Indian language scripts and words in Indian language we want you to dip into for the exercise the words chosen are creative and creativity.

So, now we will share some of the exercises that were undertaken by other students in order to see, if their mother tongue evokes deeper associations about the creative process for them. This exercise I (()) tend to feel when I look at the results of this exercise which I will share with you. I tend to feel that the students actually you know looked at this exercise more as a given exercise rather than an exercise that emerge from their own queries. Now sometimes, you know you have to take those kind of chances that you feel that there is great deal of potential that will surface or great deal of energy that will surface when you help students dip into their own inner resources, because you know

many times when they say that they are not able to articulate their thoughts and feelings properly. I feel that may be there is also a language issues somewhere at the back of it.

But in any case, I feel that this was undertaken as more of if I may say so mechanical exercise which actually they were intelligent enough to turn into an exercise in calligraphy, which is beautiful writing. Then an attempt to look inwards except in one case and I will introduce that case towards the fag end of this presentation. So, I actually do have some observations about this also, but let me first share what the students had undertaken by way of multilingual exercise or a bilingual exercise. The reason I use the word mother tongue I was really to refer to any language that they use more often.

As I said there is this feeling in me that there is a deep disjunction and this is time again surfaced in the last few years where they speak certain languages, but they do not write them. And that languages they use for writing and not languages in which they emote and they do not think about this critically very often. So, in any case let us see what this bilingual exercise it turned out to be bilingual it was meant to be multilingual, but it turned out to be bilingual somewhat limited exercise, but in terms of their intelligent take I was quite impressed.

So, now the first person who responded to this Bharat Prabhakar and his mother tongue is Punjab, (()) he said well he is not very comfortable and he made this a part of this exercise and instead use calligraphy as a title and I think by that he was making the best of a limited situation, but he also added a very beautiful sentence that he created on the spur of the moment and he says my creative energy flows through these beautiful letters.

The next student who also expressed certain amount of discomfort with his mother tongue is Swapnil whose mother tongue is Gujarati and this is what he says I am not very comfortable with writing it Gujarati. So, I prefer to write in English and for him the word creative meant original and new also creativity he defined as creative activity wherein you are in flow that is you are not aware consciously of your actions - very beautifully expressed. So, of course, English has become the language of mental activity for lot of educated people like us and so far as the flow of ideas moves in the right direction. Well I suppose you know we have a role models which help us make sure that we remain vibrant and critical and also continue to demand more and more from ourselves in terms

of creative outputs, but definitely he had a language problem in terms of the mother tongue.

The next person who attempted this exercise; all of them attempted this exercise, I chosen only a few examples, because it is not to cover the ground completely. This is Shivashis Bhutia whose mother tongue is Oriya. Now I was not really trying to suggest that they should dip into their mother tongue necessarily, but I also found that a lot of them constantly harp on the fact that they are not able to write in English with a kind of ease that they really want. So, there is some stumbling block somewhere. So, can dipping into one's mother tongue remove that block, can one look at strategies offered by great writers like Salman Rushdie or Vikram Seth and see if there are some strategies of creativity that they can develop.

I love the way the letters look; I love the way they have been drawn lovingly by the students, that they enjoy the process, they enjoyed the beauty of the process that was very evident. And I think Bharat set the tone for it by calling it calligraphy. So, as a calligraphic exercise, this is very beautiful, but I really wanted it to go beyond that I want to mention this new phenomenon that has unfolded. I think Renal somewhere has talked about it when she says when I write her my diary and am quoting her she says I switch over to Hindi words, but I spell them in roman and that is the way I communicate with friends on the internet also.

I was actually amazed to see that the performing her at festival in IIT Bombay where the most of his plays are written in Hindi, they are written in Hindi, but actually they use roman script to write the plays. The first, I saw it; I was astounded, I could not believe it because to me this link between the script and the spoken languages such a vital vibrant one and I could not quite (()) to how they could just give up that beautiful link. And they were so comfortable doing it, they were so comfortable writing the whole script in you know using the roman script for writing. And I remember we would be at that time thinking of nineteen, I think twenty eight when Kamaalah (()) turkey, he changed he sort of enforce the use of roman script as a process of modernization that was seen in a very radical step that he undertook. (()) tried it in china and he had very limited success it was resisted strongly because people loved the script so much.

And here is this phenomenon that has unfolded I do not know how extensive this is and I do not know what is happening to our relationship with the language as young people I think you need to think about it. I have no personal model stand that I am taking, but I am was shock that I felt when I saw Hindi being written as if it is English, I cannot quite describe it, but I think you need to think about all these things while undertaking the process of writing, the materiality of it is also an important thing.