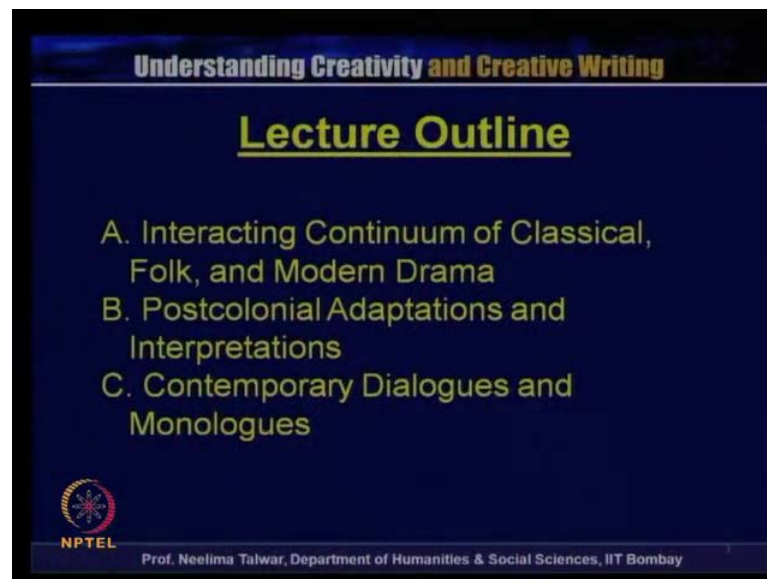


**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**  
**Prof. Neelima Talwar**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay**

**Lecture - 30**  
**Interacting Continuum: Classical, Folk and Modern Drama**

This lecture is titled interacting continuum of classical folk and modern drama. This of course, requires close reading and understanding of the previous lectures, but I think we do want to move forward with these ideas, primarily from the point of view of playwriting. And therefore, we will also maintain a balance between Natak and Bhan or plays with many characters and monologues with the single character. So, let me share the outline of this lecture, so that you are able to see the point of view that I am trying to share with you.

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The first part is devoted to this idea of interacting continuum of classical folk and modern drama, where we will explain these terms clearly to you and we will also point out how this process has been a very complex set of exchanges between various countries and also within the countries, between different languages and esthetic practices. We will then move on to show the outcome of these encounters by way of textual details. We are trying now to develop momentum in terms of textuality, so that you can also have some sense of how full script works out. Due to copyright reasons we have not been

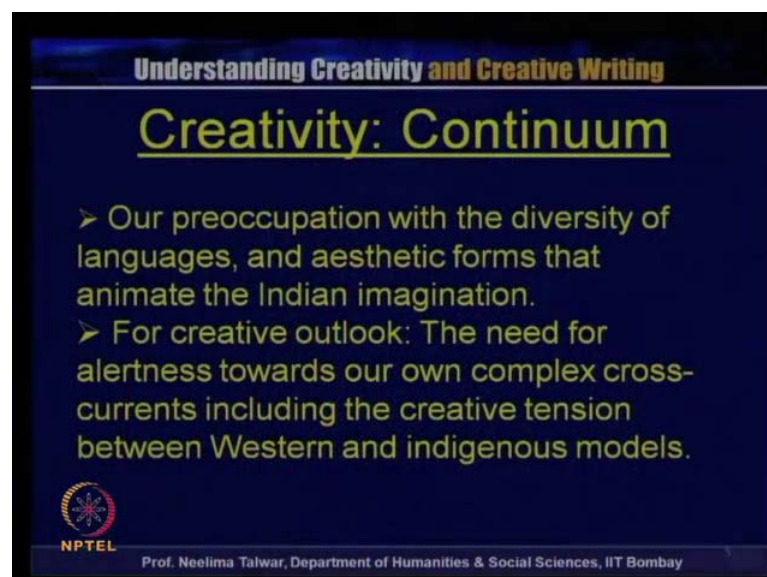
able to that to our satisfaction, but I think in the next two lectures we would have taken care of some of this difficulty.

So, the second part we will deal with postcolonial adaptations and interpretations. And once again we would move from Natakto monolog and in the third part therefore our focus will be on monologues. At no point we want to give up the term dialogue, because I feel that theater or drama is inherently a dialogic form in the sense of trying to develop a dialogue between the performers or a performer and the audience. So, there it is always a very, very dynamic process.

We have shared these ideas with you earlier, and therefore even while talking about monologues I really do not want to give up this sense of dialogues. So, this is the way we have structured this lecture and first of all we would start with this idea of the continuum. Why is it that we have been harping it time and again? That is because often students ask us and these are of course very earnest questions, they ask us about a world viewed.

How do we develop a creative out look? How do we develop a creative world view? And that is a very difficult question to answer indeed, but it as I said a very earnest question. Therefore, you know when we talk about these encounters, these exchanges, these dynamic layerings between different kinds of traditions and historical periods because many of them have emerged in different historical conditions. But the esthetic forms have remained, the times have changed, but the esthetic forms have remained.


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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

## Creativity: Continuum

- Our preoccupation with the diversity of languages, and aesthetic forms that animate the Indian imagination.
- For creative outlook: The need for alertness towards our own complex cross-currents including the creative tension between Western and indigenous models.

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

So, I think what we are trying to suggest is, this need for a great deal of alertness in terms of locating yourself within the complex cross currents of your own location, the complex cultural cross currents and not really keep your options very, very limited. This is what we are trying to suggest. We also feel very strongly that one way of trying to understand how to develop one's own creative outlook or a very sustainable dynamic way of dealing with one zone potential in creativity, is to also read other important writers, and realize or notice that there has been tremendous creative tension specially in the Indian writers, Indian playwrights by way of the indigenous traditions, which are so rich so prolific, but they come with a particular world view. Also the impact of western forms which of course within drama we will try and locate, what exactly that means in the next line. For example, when we talk about these key terms like the classical, the folk and the modern.

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**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

### Performance Genres

- The classical, the folk and the modern: as three distinct genres and their classification.
  - I. Sanskrit theatre and drama, ritual, devotional traditions.
  - II. The folk-popular traditions. Intermediary Drama (in-between classical and modern)
  - III. Modern Theatre.

 **Indian Theatre: Traditions of Performance**

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We have also earlier mentioned to you how, so far as drama is concerned the classical was also invested in the dominant world view. Although it does seem to be inclusive when we read Kalidas, it is not as if it is a complete wiping out of different kinds of people. But the focus is definitely on dominant value systems of that time and I would not go into that in too much detail.

But, it is also linked in various other forms that developed around it, apart from written plays other forms like dance drama or by way of other theater practice. What it really continued to do is to have a vibrant relationship with ritual and devotional traditions. So,

then this is what the Sanskrit theater evokes and even in contemporary practice for example, playwrights like Badal Sarkar have often had said in the 70s, and I remember this interview that was published in an act, while he was talking to Richard Chekhov, he pointed out that his not inspired by the classical traditions because they seem to him obscurantist. That was his position at that point in time of course, later on he develop the theater of rural urban links, which actually went into folk theater and participatory forms. But I think that is a kind of predilection that many contemporary playwrights have express.

People Habib Tanveer on the other hand have taken some very vigorous elements from Sanskrit theater. In other words I think the issue of content and issue of form cannot be separated very easily, and that is why there are a lot of issues when we begin to talk about examining these forms, and when we suggest to you that you should look at multiplicity of esthetic practice that exists in country. Then it is really not in easy situation because each of these issues come with you know, as I said the world view and also the attendant political cultural problems, that may emerge out of this confrontation.

So, of course, so Sanskrit theater it does, you know in its own way exist, in practice even today and then you have the folk forms, which we have discussed earlier. I do want to if though because during the period of colonization the folk forms were actually labeled as the intermediary forms because in addition to their loose structure the folk forms have been known for their episodic loose structure. What happen to these forms, is related to the vigor of the political will of the people. So, the intuimagery forms, the folks form became intuimagery forms much more political in they intend. They were anti-British and they were powerful, they were robust and the British was shaken by them. Because wherever they applied censorship in other domains or they curve people in other domain, theater had at that time become a vigorous mode of you know, critiquing the British system, protesting against it very, very stridently.

So, I think it is very interesting to note that this element also of constant change within each form because it reflex the will of the orients, the will of the playwright, the will of that historical period, if you will. I think that is something that one should take note of and a lot of street theater that we see today is also in that sense intermediary. It is political in intent, it wishes to make a point and it also is very loosely structured. Modern theater on the other hand, really was based on the influence of prose plays that were

written in the west, before they were written in India. And these plays were often problem plays, that is they identified like in the plays of Ibsen or in the plays of Strindberg and to some extent in the plays of Chekhov; some important issues of social importance. They placed the individuals within those issues of some social magnitude.

Therefore, I think this modern theater initially was highly influenced by the Aristotelian model, which indeed Ibsen, to a great extent Strindberg, to some extent and Chekhov to a lesser degree. All of them function within the Aristotelian model of a sort of fast moving plot and also a sense of causality; that was very important in understanding the problems of the modern character. But gradually of course, this also got modified and then you had in 1940s, Bertolt Brecht the great the great German playwright, who questioned the Aristotelian pattern very vigorously and created epic theater, with its own outlook of you know, sort of provoking the audience into thinking. And he was influenced by the classical Asian model, the no theater in Japan and he also was influenced by the range and power of epics, and also some of the theater forms in India.

So, then in other words this is also not a very, very simple scene and when we talk about the continuum, I think we should also include this tension with western forms. It is a creative tension and I think in that sense, it is a very, very productive situation when you begin to write and you begin to think about the forms because the forms also in some ways will help you flesh out the content.

So, now this balance that I earlier talked about this balance between Natak and Bhan from Bharth Munis category of ten types of plays. We have singled it out primarily because it creates resonances for us in terms drama as a full fleshed, many act play with lots of characters and then Bhan with the focus on one single character. So, please do not look at it in a very literal fashion, but you now also see the wider ramifications of these two forms. And see which one appeals to you, although I think you need to understand both.

So, as I said that textually although we have a certain limitation right now, but I thought what we could also do now, is to show you how, it is because it is not a simple process of looking at just any model you pick it up and you begin to use it, it is not a simple process. So, one way of doing this is to suggest some critical reading to you based on reading of Shakuntalam. Since we have undertaken that in the last lecture, we thought we could not, we can build on this.

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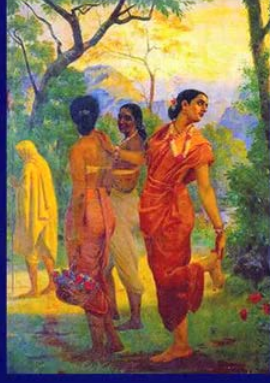
**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

### Critical Readings

Read the play and evaluate Tagore's essay:

Excerpt:

➤ "Kalidas has let his hermitage-bred youthful heroine follow the unsuspecting path of Nature; nowhere has he restrained her."



**See Sakuntala, It's Inner Meaning**

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

So, let us look at critical readings of Shakuntalam. We would like you to read the full play either in Sanskrit original, if you can read Sanskrit or in translation. We would also recommend a play, essay an essay by Rabindranath Tagore , which we have listed here and we would only be able to give the excerpts from this essay. So, you can try and build the total picture by looking, reading this essay, after reading the play forming your own opinions, reading this particular essay. Then in turn we will place Romila Thaper's reaction to Tagore 's essay on Shakuntalam.

So, that will give you some idea about the critical process that is involved, in taking a position by way of combining various elements of existing traditions because the content and esthetic form cannot be separated very sharply. Now, this is what Tagore had to say about Shakuntalam. First of all Tagore when back to Kalidas time, and again that has been well documented. So, this is what he has to say about Shakutalam the play and Shakuntala the protagonist; Kalidas has let his hermitage-bred youthful heroine follow the unsuspecting path of nature, nowhere has he restrained her. So, he is trying to sort of map his response to the play and also the transformation that occurs in Shakuntala.


Now, as you know, in drama it is very important for the playwright to show a situation of conflict, I mean conflict it as the heart of drama. And in the that sense on the one hand he shows the, you know child like nature of Shakuntala in the begging, Kalidas portraits that he also places her in the hermitage. And according to Tagore initially, this is this

unsuspecting path of nature she follows, the unsuspecting path of nature. You begin to see that he is going to say something else about the next stage, where Shakuntala is rejected by Dushyanth and also then she undergoes certain kind of change in her world view or in her outlook.

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**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

Excerpt:  
"And yet he has developed her into the model of a devoted wife, with her reserve, endurance of sorrow, and life of rigid spiritual discipline"

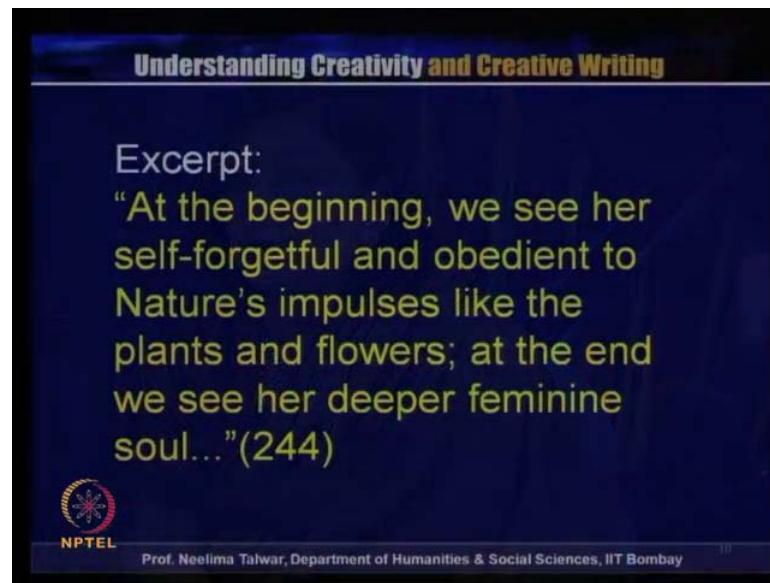


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So now this what he has to say; and yet he has developed her into the model of a devoted wife, with her reserve, endurance of sorrow, and life of rigid spiritual discipline. This is Tagore's take on this second phase of Shakuntala because you know, she is forced to reflect about her own condition as a woman spurn, and also a mother.



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That he goes on to say; at the beginning, we see her self-forgetful and obedient to nature's impulses like the plants and flowers, at the end we see her deeper feminine soul. So, at the end we see her deeper feminine soul. So of course, this is Tagore's stake and obviously, Tagore took this play seriously enough. It had a deep impact on him and he raise some of these issues in another play that he himself wrote and let us see if we can find that, we will in a minute mention that aspect of Tagore . But I think it may be useful to see how Romila Thaper response to Tagore's point of view, which of course we have constructed for you only through selected excerpts. So, what happens is that when you select these excerpts, you do it from your own point view.

So, therefore if you read the full essay, you will get many more angles to this discussion. In terms of Romila Thapers response its very visible from the title itself. Romila Thaper is a very well known, very important historian and this is I think her sort of attempt to place a literary text in a historical context. I would not go her methodology, but right now she is responding to Tagore and this is titled Shakuntala and middle class nationalism.




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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

## Tagore on *Shakuntalam*

From Romila Thapar's essay  
"Shakuntala and Middle-class Nationalism"

□ "...Tagore treats the play as an allegory, he's of course free to read it differently. What is of interest is the degree to which Tagore's reading reflects the social and moral concerns of his own time, and his response to both orientalism\* and nationalism." (252)

 the term here refers to thinkers who believed in the significance of classical Indian texts. Said uses the term in a different way.

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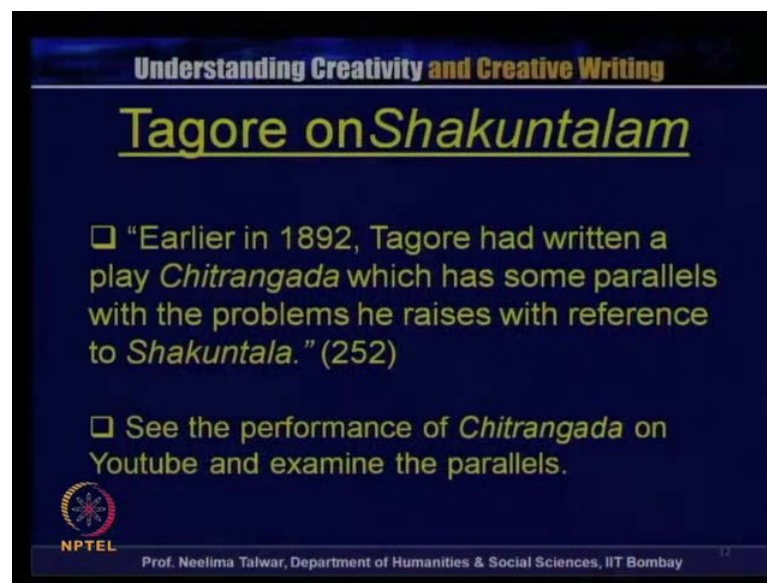
She says that Tagore treats the play as in allegory; he is of course free to read it differently. What is of interest is the degree to which Tagore's reading reflects the social and moral concerns of his own time, and his response to both orientalism and nationalism. So, two things about this; one is that I think it shows very clearly that when you begin to read any text, I think your own sense of self, your own value system is reflected in that reading. Your own concerns are reflected in that reading and that is what makes reading very enjoyable. And that is why now you will notice, that the classics have been re-read from number of positions, including the position of the marginalized people, in terms of marginalized caste groups or marginalized, you know gender issues. There are lots of rereading of classical text and of course Tagore, you now she links readings by Tagore within the framework of orientalism and nationalism debates, that were also very important issues of Tagore's time.

Here of course, the term orientalism refers to the debates between the orientalists and anglicists during the period of colonization, where the orientalists emphasize the significance of Indian classical text, as opposed to the anglicists; who emphasize the need to introduce English language and literature. So, there were these contending viewpoints and Tagore's reading of Kalidas is his response to this notion of orientalism and nationalism.

So, it is part of the national project to also discover the stems of our own roots, our own culture, but of course it is fraught with lots of difficulties, so partly this and then of course, the other aspect of this reading of Kalidas by Tagore. Tagore not only wrote this analytical essay because that is really fascinating, on the one hand he is very analytical and you know, it is sort of goals into his ideas in great detail; in terms of his motivations, his understanding.

And on the other hand the creative impulse takes his own path and in that sense, although he seems to read *Shakuntala* as someone, who actually has fallen because of this Gandharve marriage with Dushyanth. Therefore, later on when he rejects her, this period of reflection in, you know in enhances her status as a women. It gives her a gives her another philosophical realm which Tagore seems to relish. Now, that is a very, very a controversial reading and a very controversial point of view. On the other hand what he did in *Chitrangada* is to raise these very issues, in a very different framework though.

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The slide is titled "Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing" and "Tagore on *Shakuntalam*". It contains two bullet points: "Earlier in 1892, Tagore had written a play *Chitrangada* which has some parallels with the problems he raises with reference to *Shakuntala*." (252) and "See the performance of *Chitrangada* on Youtube and examine the parallels." The NPTEL logo is at the bottom left, and the footer text reads "Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay".

Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

Tagore on *Shakuntalam*


- "Earlier in 1892, Tagore had written a play *Chitrangada* which has some parallels with the problems he raises with reference to *Shakuntala*." (252)
- See the performance of *Chitrangada* on Youtube and examine the parallels.

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You can have a look at *Chitrangada* on You Tube and examine the parallels, but I think two things can be said here; one is that the problem that Tagore raised. And the reason I am we mention these examples is to show, that while writing plays and finding your own sources of inspiration, you will realize that a very sharp critical process is also a very, very active. So, in *Chitrangada* the problems that Tagore raised are problem again of Gandharve marriage.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

## Parallels

Rabindranath on *Shakuntalam*

□ Issues or problems raised in *Chitrangada*:

1. Gandharva marriage
2. Sensuous portrayals "...the sensuous in Indian art and literature was frequently justified as being symbolic of the spiritual." (253)

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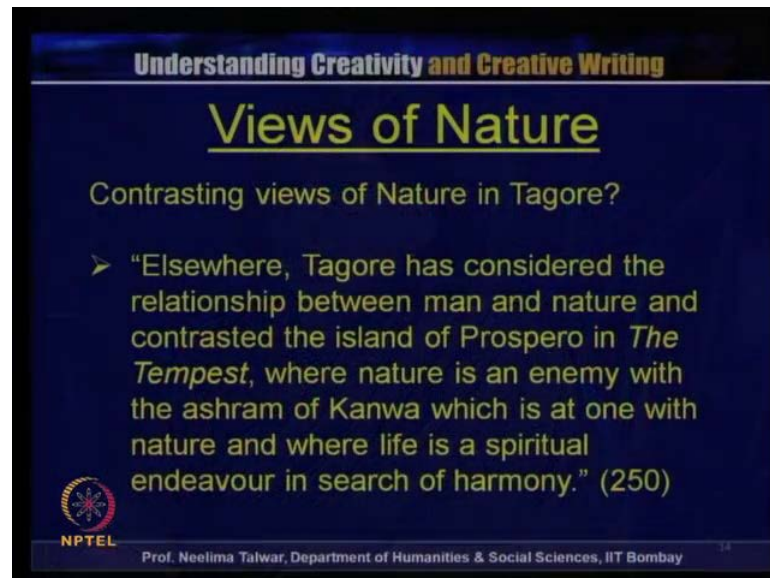
And also the portrayal of the protagonist just as in Kalidas's *Shakuntalam*, the protagonist portrayal is very sensuous. You saw that in Raja Ravi Varma's painting also and Kalidas is really, sort of one of the greatest I think poets of *Sringar Ras*. So, in that sense the sensuous portrayals also, this issue he did not really run away from. But I think what a Romila Thaper has pointed out is that; this sensuous portrayal in Indian art and therefore, in Tagore also you know, one can try and understand it in terms of its value as a symbolic value, as an a spiritual activity. Let me read this sentence; the sensuous in Indian art and literature was frequently justified as being symbolic of the spiritual.

So, Thaper is also trying to understand this creative locus of *Chitrangada*, while on the one hand Tagore is very judgmental about *Shakuntala* and her character, and he places her in a way that I suppose many of us women today would find very troublesome. This punishment that is meted out to her, I do not think we would be able to empathies with that as a source for spiritual upliftment. But certainly she is trying to understand how Tagore views it and in that sense, this play also is worth looking at.

So, this is a kind of response to the play and in that sense it is a interpretation, and adaptation of sorts also, this one more idea that we just want to quickly foreground, and not spent too much time over this. There is some kind of ambivalence in the way Tagore portraits nature because the ashram of Kanva; for example, is seen as a place where there

is you know, nature and a life. This kind of totally harmony between the individual and nature.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

## Views of Nature

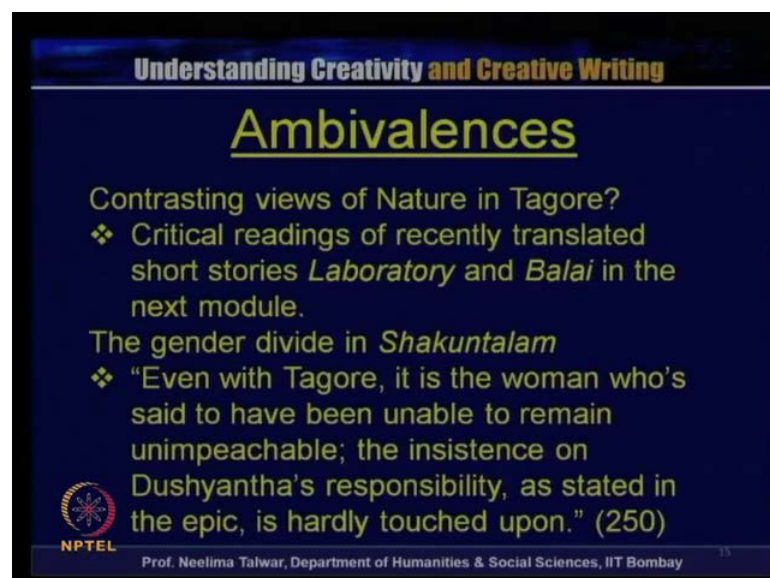
Contrasting views of Nature in Tagore?

- "Elsewhere, Tagore has considered the relationship between man and nature and contrasted the island of Prospero in *The Tempest*, where nature is an enemy with the ashram of Kanwa which is at one with nature and where life is a spiritual endeavour in search of harmony." (250)

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Elsewhere he is also talked about *The Tempest* where nature is an enemy, with the you know. So, I think this contrasting view we want to develop some discussion of it.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing

## Ambivalences

Contrasting views of Nature in Tagore?

- ❖ Critical readings of recently translated short stories *Laboratory* and *Balai* in the next module.

The gender divide in *Shakuntalam*

- ❖ "Even with Tagore, it is the woman who's said to have been unable to remain unimpeachable; the insistence on Dushyantha's responsibility, as stated in the epic, is hardly touched upon." (250)

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Not right now, but later on our discussion of his two short stories Lab and Balai because I think that really grips once attention. I think we can also place it within *Shakuntalum* and *Shakuntala* as nature's child and take the discussion forward, but I think we will wait

for that to happen later on. The other thing that I think one cannot quite ignore, is the sense of a gender divide in Shakuntalam.

As I said as contemporary women looking for a empowerment, I think it could be difficult to accept this viewpoint that the responsibility of the Gandharve marriage is totally on Shakuntala. Therefore, I think what I would like to do is, to give you not just an analytical response, but a creative response, in terms of how this whole tradition of you know, the classical sort of male gaze, how, personally I have responded to it. Because this is not just a response to Shakuntalam, although it is a response to Shakuntalam, and weight of a tradition that she feels. On the other hand also classical Sanskrit dramaturgy with a sutradhar at the center, and again the absence of either director as women or absence of the sutradhar as women, absence of a women as a playwright in that period. In that sense I like to share this creative response very briefly with you from this play, that I have written.

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**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

**Imagining The Past: Another Act of Interpretation**

- ❖ Combines the content and aesthetic structure of classical dramaturgy\*.
- ❖ Centred round the Sutradhar of Sanskrit drama and the dominant male gaze in *Shakuntalam*.
- ❖ Prologue and Epilogue of *A Dream in Three Acts* by Neelima Talwar.

Refer to the Module 2, Lecture 11 where the beginning of Act 1 was performed.

\*Dramaturgy is the art of dramatic composition and the representation of the main elements of drama on stage.

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In lecture 11 of module 2, some of the students had performed it; they have read the first act. I am reading the prologue and the epilogue. Mainly mainly to point out the attraction of Sanskrit theater because it does have a better textual elements that are fascinating, and at the same time the thematic weight and also the structural weight, which is tilted in favor of men. So, this is a response, I mean you can also view this response critically; except, reject it, that would be perfectly fine. So, here is the prologue of a dream in three

acts. Locale near a forest, the play begins with the appearance of the sutradhara, whose dressed in conventional style, in impeccable dhoti, kurtha, shining red turban a string of pearls on his neck and a formal silk shawl on his left shoulder.

A women should play this part in an agonize manner. She will reveal her actual female identity later on. The sutradhar, in a compelling an authoritarian manner; Namskar, from Kalidas to Karnad I have invoke the gods for unhindered completion of our play imitates the prologue of Shakuntala. Eight forms has Shiva, lord of all and king and these are water first created thing and fire, which speeds the sacrifice began. The priest and times divider moon and sun, the all embracing yatha, path of sound, the earth, where in all seeds of life are found. And air the breath of life may he draw near, revealed in these and bless those gathered here.

Posses and then annex the mudra of Ganapathi and resize the prayer from Karnads Hayavadan after this meditative offering I am living out that pray. After this meditative offering the sutradhars expressions change, as he hears sounds of footsteps, with a elacrity. I here footsteps, the theatre troupe has arrived. After a pause, but but where are the kingly men and there bhattacharans, the twisted vidhushaka and the dasis. Instead I see actresses only two of them, I am not trained to manage a play of this kind. I refuse to be a party to it.

Hides behind a lush tree, leaving the actresses anchorless. The epilogue that is the end of the play, the sutradhar who has been hiding all this time, watching the shifting scenes clandestinely appears on the stage again. This time dressed in the same dhothi kurtha, but the silk dupatta is worn the way dupattas are worn with salwar kameez. Instead of the turban, her hair is flowing opulently. The manner of talking is much more relaxed and communicative, the voice is mealy flows, somewhat unschooled. Sutradhar, oh I am so tired, why was I hiding all this time.

I was partly awake, partly asleep, hiding from myself to play a role as per convention, but the actresses present their, presented the reality that I know of, and dreams that grow out of them. The play is over for the time being, but the dreams flicker like a diya on a strobe night. I am affected by this freedom of expression, now on I shall not abandoned an all actors play. Let me sing a new prayer for the audience, a new prayer of my own to



celebrate this play. Sing softly almost like a lola Bai, I am leaving out that prayer and with a gesture of namaskar, the play ends.

So, this is my response to this whole sense of tradition, with also its thematic, I would say wait. I would like to move on to other examples and I said you do not have to accept whatever is being presented before you. You can critic it, you can also examine it, critiquing is possible only after examining the ideas, but you really do not have to accept them totally. Let us move on to other example. In part B, we will look at some postcolonial adaptations and interpretations, and we will mainly mention some because we will not be able to talk about them much. I think it is really very interesting to look at Habib Tanveer's adaptation of Shudraks Mrichakatikam.

The title of that adaptation is Mitti Ki Gadi because as I pointed out earlier to you, I think Tanveer and Girish Karnad both actually dealt esthetically and also in terms of the creative vision. They owe a debt to Bertolt Brecht, which they have acknowledged. They are to very, very different kinds of playwrights, I think Tanveer is highly politically charged and his plays also are really enhance your awareness of politically issues. On the other hand Karnad is much more into the cultural politics of his times, but in Hayvadan and other plays, I think again he has acknowledged that he came to the folk traditions via this notion of alienation effect, that Bertolt Brecht had develop with reference to his epic theater.

Interestingly Brecht himself came to that notion by rejecting the Aristotelian prose plays of his own framework, playwrights like Epsen for example, their work he completely rejected that model. He felt that for the age of science, it was very important to write plays where the audience, which had already began to question thinks around them, was provoked into thinking. So, the playwright and the director of any, you now such play should not take the audience for granted whereas in the modern Epsen kind of theater, the audience went to theater, identified with the middle class characters or the proletariat characters that were presented, if this was a play exclusively devoted to proletarian themes.

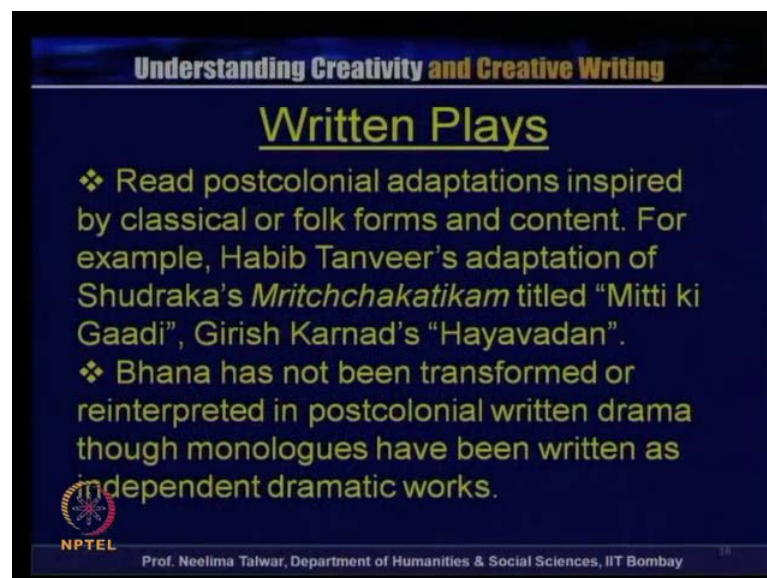
Through this identification they more or less confirmed their own way of looking at the world. Whereas, the kind of theater Brecht wanted to build was, theater which would awaken the audience into thinking. So, all the thoughts are with the audience, but he



through theater through esthetic practice, through entertainment they their own consciousness would be awakened.

So, both Karnad and Tanveer in their own very, very different ways acknowledge that they really came to the esthetic structure of folk tradition, which is as I said earlier also its loosely structured, it is also much more questioning in terms of the world around. So, they came to these forms via break then notion of certain amount of critical distancing, and also a complex seeing. So, therefore I think, I would strongly recommend that you read, especially these two plays and definitely these two playwrights.

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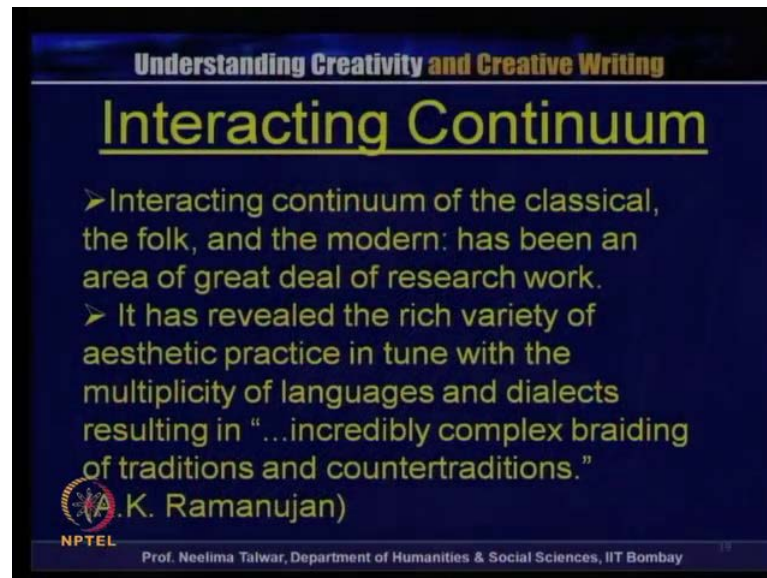
- ❖ Read postcolonial adaptations inspired by classical or folk forms and content. For example, Habib Tanveer's adaptation of Shudraka's *Mritchchakatikam* titled "Mitti ki Gaadi", Girish Karnad's "Hayavadan".
- ❖ Bhan has not been transformed or reinterpreted in postcolonial written drama though monologues have been written as independent dramatic works.

The slide also features the NPTEL logo and the text "Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay".

But, right now we would like to shift our attention to Bhan because we have already discuss Shakunthalam. So, we would like to move to Bhan because we are equally interested in monologue form. In that sense, let us try and see, why the monologue form has grown in strength in contemporary period, although in terms of a sense continuity and lease so far I am concern, I did not find any prose play written within the Bhan framework. We have talked about Bhan earlier and his transformation, but you now that is really a very different kind of part, where it got transformed into Tamasha and certain aspects of Tamasha. Whereas Bhan by way of prose plays of the kind that we are working out, these really we have not any of these examples. So, I think we will soon begin to look at monologue and one idea that we are emphasizing is the incredibly

complex breeding of traditions, and counter traditions that unfold when you begin to look at folk classical modern continuum.


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I think we will sort of move on to the monologues and before that perhaps, I can also point out to you one more idea, which is related to the fact that... I think, I have already mentioned it, but I, just in case I have missed out and you want to perceive this further. We have as Indian writers looked at western models and it is often link to the colonization process. But I think it is also important to know that the westerns have also examined Indian writing from very early stages.

You know some of this became very, very dominant post 60s; in terms of theater Brecht is the milestone, in terms of breaking away from euro centrism, in terms of search for new forms, participatory theatre, important ways of talking to the audience about contemporary issues, changing the meaning of theater space. But you now later on for example, 60s onwards another kind of theatre sort of work has grown around Grotowski, who also actually interpreted Shakuntalam to find universal themes of relevance. Then Peter Brook produce Mahabharata, this been that feeling of certain amount of critical uneasiness that has been expressed about these movements. If you are interested in following this up, I think you should look at Bharucha's politics of cultural; practice thinking through theater in an age of globalization.

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**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

## Postcolonial Adaptations & Interpretations

- Intercultural process of examining classical Indian/Asian drama and performance to break away from eurocentrism: Brecht (1940s), Grotowski (1960s), Peter Brook (1970s).
- Interculturalism and globalisation: Bharucha's critical remark in the *Politics of Cultural Practice: Thinking through Theatre in an Age of Globalisation*.
- Beyond a colonial outlook or caught in the pressures of globalisation and orientalism of a different kind?

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I think, the reason I think it may be important is because the question that you have to ask is, whether you are only imitating a particular model or it goes beyond that in terms of what you really want to say and you know. So, those are difficult strands to separate, but if you want to perceive this would be the line of action for you. I will now move very quickly to monologues that have been written in recent years and also you can talk about their significance. I have been trying to figure out, why so many monologues have appeared. Many of the monologues that we will share with you are not like monologues, in the way Daisy's monologue and vocation as a monologist has sort of unfolded. These are playwrights who in addition have also written monologues. So, that makes for interesting combination and contrast. We would not go over the definition of monologue again, but you can have a look at it, in terms of what we have said earlier, by way of a single character being at the center of this creative work.

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**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

## Dialogues & Monologues

- ❖ A long unbroken speech by a dramatic character of a play
- 1. The protagonist addresses another character (as per the bhana model) or the audience
- 2. Soliloquy: a character relates his or her thoughts and feelings to him/her self and to the audience without addressing any other character

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Therefore, now let us see what is this new idea that we want you to consider. So, in trying to figure out the reasons for this unfolding of monologues, I felt that may be this idea that Tocqueville had mentioned in democracy in America and Robert Korigun went on to foregrounded, in his excellent a reading of modern drama in the book Theater In Search Of A Fix. I think if we foreground that idea, maybe we will begin to understand something about contemporary monologues in India or the use of monologue form in felly a distinctive ways.

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**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

## Dialogues & Monologues: Ideas for further reflection

- ❖ The basic dialogic outlook of drama even when a mime or a monologue is presented to the audience.
- ❖ The focus on the sense of the self of a rounded character and drama in democracy. Alexis de Tocqueville's famous statement in *Democracy in America* (1840) that referred to the focus of drama on the individual and the deeper layers of his/her consciousness in democracy.

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Tocqueville has actually mentioned in his famous book *Democracy In America*, that in democracy drama would... And this is seen as a prophetic statement that he made, that drama would innovatively begin to focus on the individual divested of external trappings. On the individual alone and I think what he was again trying to emphasize is this unit of the individual, which is so very important for any democracy. In that sense perhaps if we place this idea with reference to the monologues and the focus on a single individual, and the ability of the playwright to sustain that monologue by way of a performative activity, which people go and see. I think we may be able to see the kind of turmoil that exists in our own democracy, you know or has existed for quite some time, then also this, the deep sense of the individual different kinds of individuals and the the conflicts that they encounter, what are the kinds of a conflict, a conflicts that they encounter.

So, I am not saying that a thesis can be build around it, a predictable pattern can be you know, worked around it, but certainly what I am suggesting is the emergence of this monologue, in terms of this growing sense of democracy and the turmoil that the individual faces. So, then I think the two monologues in this session that I will present are both written by Girish Karnad, important contemporary Indian playwright, who actually started his career with writing in Kannada, but he wrote *Yayati*. He mentioned and this is a very, very vivid description where he mentioned that he wanted to write in English and he wanted to be a poet in English, but when he sat down to write, and he, I mean he compel to write he wrote in Kannada, and also mythic themes just surfest in his consciousness.

So, that was the starting point of Girish Karnads carrier, but in 2004 he wrote these monologues for the first time in English, that is a big big surprise. Also the other big surprise, so far as I am concerned is the kind of, I think ambivalence that I notice about the characters. There this certainly a sense of a conflict, but both the plays, that monologues that we will share with you by way of just giving you some lead questions are monologues that really end up raising doubts and confusion. So, I really feel I I wonder as to what is the locus of this creative effort. The first one *flowers*, in some ways is very reminiscent of Sanskrit theater, both in terms of the ritual oriented religious theme, the protagonist at the center whose a priest and the sort of way weight of that whole tradition, that within which the conflict is located, but of course it is based on a



folklore. The folklores and the folk tradition also contains elements of the sacred. Then of course, the transition to the profane is also something that occurs within that tradition.

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**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

**Contemporary Examples**

Karnad's Monologues: written in English  
**Flowers** (2004)

Problematizations/conflicts

- Based on folklore – the legend of Veeranna of Chitradurga region. What kind of complex viewing is generated?
- Intense internal conflict in the character between the vocation as a priest and the longings as a man.
- Steeped in the ritualistic life of highly regimented religious practice.

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So, this is based on folklore and it shows the intense internal conflict in the character between his vocation as a priest and his longing longings as a man.

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**Karnad's Monologues**

**Flowers**

- Contains contrasting portrayals of women: the wife and the courtesan.
- Ends with the ambivalent power of the priest's prayers.
- Self annihilation as an intriguing resolution of dramatic conflict.

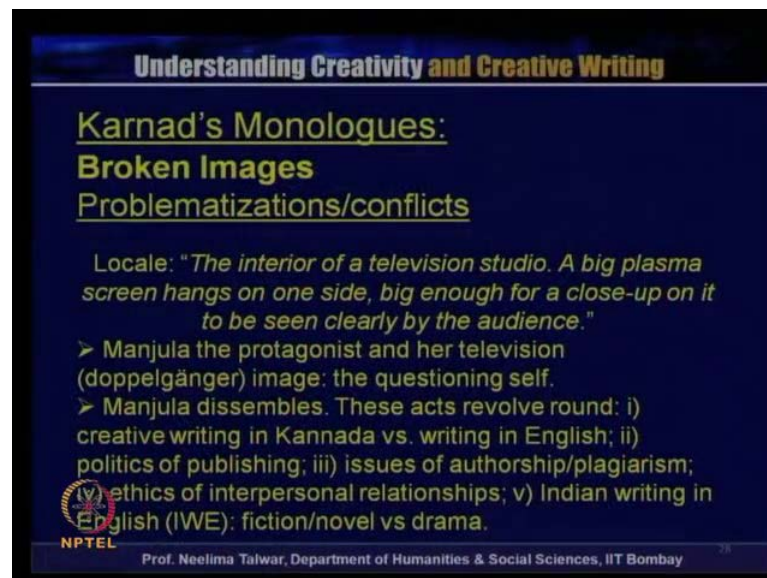
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There are also two very different kind women who are placed in the play; one is his wife and the other is the courtesan, with whom he falls in love and he takes all his pooja flowers, and offers them to her after the poojas. Finally, you know he is inedited by the

king for you know, transgressing his role as the priest and the play ends with the ambivalent power of the priest prayers. I would not go into exactly how this happens because I think a much rather that you discover it yourself. Finally, the play ends with self annihilation, as a resolution of the priest internal conflict.

All in all it in some ways if may not be Bhan, but it somehow reminds you of the trajectory of Sanskrit theatre and it lives you very, very confused, but it is in performance it really works quite strongly. I saw performance where very good actor played the part and the performance worked very well. So, it does raise questions, but as I said the answers are very difficult to come by. The second one is another big surprise. So, this written in English is been translate it in other languages also, this is called broken images. You may have heard of it because it has been staged quite frequently and some good actresses have played the part, and they have liked the play very much. It is a, it has a very high-tech feel, this play has very, very high-tech feel and I think Karnad is exploring this contemporary ethos very actively. The locale here is the interior of a television studio.

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**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

**Karnad's Monologues:**  
**Broken Images**  
**Problematizations/conflicts**

Locale: "*The interior of a television studio. A big plasma screen hangs on one side, big enough for a close-up on it to be seen clearly by the audience.*"

- Manjula the protagonist and her television (doppelgänger) image: the questioning self.
- Manjula dissembles. These acts revolve round: i) creative writing in Kannada vs. writing in English; ii) politics of publishing; iii) issues of authorship/plagiarism; iv) ethics of interpersonal relationships; v) Indian writing in English (IWE): fiction/novel vs drama.

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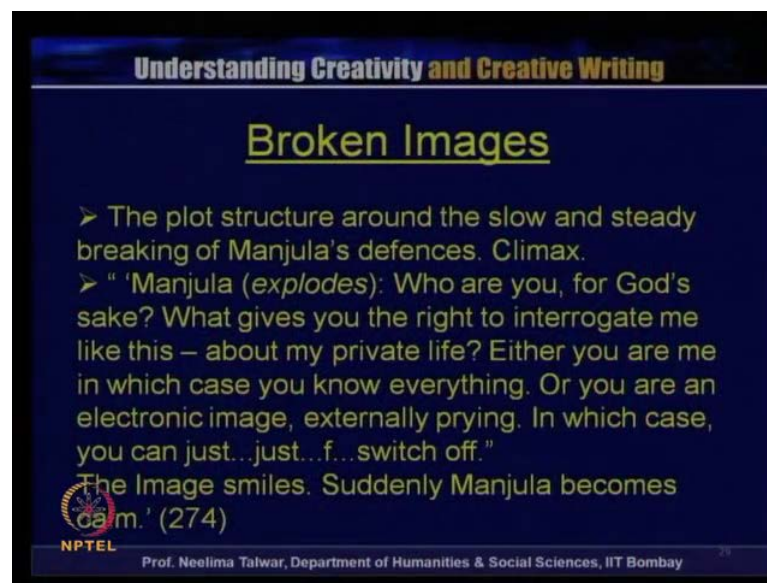
There is a big plasma screen, which hangs on one side, big enough for a close up on it to be seen clearly by the audience. The protagonist is Manjula and actually then the, she has this television image, which is her doppelgänger, that is it is her other self, and it is the questioning self. Now, in this play Manjula dissembles throughout and these axe revolve



round creative writing in Kannada, verses writing in English, politics of publishing, issues of authorship, ethics of interpersonal relationships, Indian writing in English, fiction verses drama. I think the character is loaded with too many issues of significance and I am not able to really fathom, as to what kind of central issue of magnitude Karnad is trying to raise through the character of Manjula.

Why the women protagonist, who actually use to write in Kannada, but then she steals the manuscript that her handicapped sister had written, and she passes it off as her own after the death of this sister. Then she stakes the claim to all the fame the money that comes with this and of course, loses her husband because he finds out you now, that this is an absolute fraud. So, she loses on that front. What is the locus, what is the driving energy behind creation of the this female protagonist, as a fraud. And also is this an allegory, if this is an allegory, how does this work out? I think leave these questions to you.

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**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

### Broken Images

- The plot structure around the slow and steady breaking of Manjula's defences. Climax.
- " 'Manjula (explodes): Who are you, for God's sake? What gives you the right to interrogate me like this – about my private life? Either you are me in which case you know everything. Or you are an electronic image, externally prying. In which case, you can just...just...f...switch off.'"

The Image smiles. Suddenly Manjula becomes calm.' (274)

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But, the play in a certain sense has dramatic moments, where this exchange between Manjula and her doppelganger it sort of builds up and slowly Manjula is forced to tell the truth and face truth. You know she is sort of from time to time explodes in great anger because she does not want to be questioned, she does not want to be held accountable by anybody. So, she is a very a model, a very harsh cruel protagonist, but this is the way I look at it. Some other actresses who did this part they have mentioned that, they found

the balance between Manjula and her sister Malini, as you know equal in dramatic power. I am not able to actually see that anywhere in the play.

So, I think what we would do is to leave the reading to you. The script is very good, very well written, but the content it really leaves you very confused and that is where, when I think this whole question of your own worldview, what is your driving energy? You do not have to give a message as such, but I think there should be some palpable sense of your believe in your character or if it is a satire or it is a parody or it is an act of questioning, that questioning should be anchored, so powerfully that you are able to understand what this is. It evokes that sense in you you know by way of her response.

So, I personally feel very dissatisfied with both the monologues, although in some ways you can say these are very, very democratic themes about different kinds of characters. You can wish a very different kinds of people and different kinds of issues that have unfolded, the issue of a morality may also be seen by Karnad as a issue of globalization, I do not really know. So, I think you will have to figure it out and if you get a chance to talk to mister Karnad, you can talk to him or you can have your won take. We are very happy to say that in the next two lectures, we will be able to actually have a play reading by an important playwright Ramu Ramanathan himself.

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The slide is titled "Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing" in a blue header. Below the header, the name "Ramu Ramanathan" is written in a large, bold, yellow font. Underneath the name, there are three bullet points in yellow text: "➤ Contemporary playwright and theatre practitioner based in Mumbai.", "➤ Extensive and frequent theatre productions and interactions in IIT Bombay.", and "➤ His play *Mahadeva Bhai* was staged in IIT Bombay recently." At the bottom left of the slide is the NPTEL logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a stylized 'N' and 'P' and the text "NPTEL" below it. At the bottom right, there is a small number "11" and a line of text: "Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay".

And that is also an in telling monologues in that play, he is a very familiar figure in IIT Bombay because he has come here time and again and done lots of productions,

professional productions, plus also interacted with students. His play Mahadev Bhai Desai, Mahadev Bhai was staged last year.

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**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

### 3, Sakina Manzil

A play by Ramu Ramanathan  
Research: Amrit Ganger  
Premiered at the Prithvi Theatre Festival, 2004

The next two lectures devoted to:

- The reading of the play by Ramu Ramanathan and Pooja Asher.
- Follow-up discussion with elective students.

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So, far as this particular play that is being presented to you in the next lecture and followed by discussion with students, between the playwright and the students. This play is 3 Sakina Manzil, the research for which was done by Amruth Ganger and the play premiered in Prithvi theater in 2004.

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**Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing**

### 3, Sakina Manzil

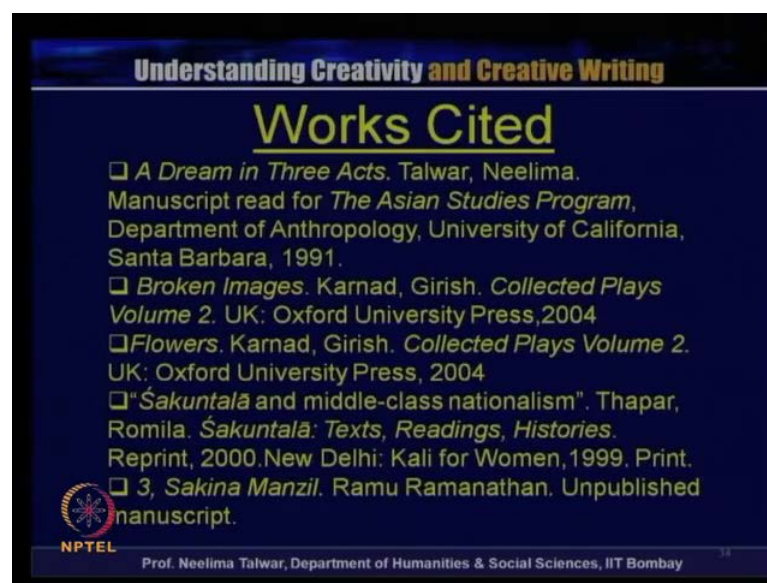
Notable features from the perspective of the course:

- Interlinked monologues/soliloquies slipping into imaginary dialogues between the two characters.
- Hybrid evocative language.
- Discover the theme and the plot structure by listening to the play reading.

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I think you will enjoy that session very much and I think, I really would like at the outset to thank Ramu for being so very generous with the script, and the reading and Pooja, Asha for participating in the reading, and all the students who participated in the discussion. I think you will enjoy that very, very much and we are so happy that we will be able to share one full play, without any copyright issues because the playwright has given us the permission and he himself is reading the play. So, I sort of look forward to that session and you will notice all the things that we have already talked about for example, hybrid language, intellect monologues.

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And the rest of course, you will discover yourself, we just place the work sited list for you and that is the end of this session.

Thank you very much.