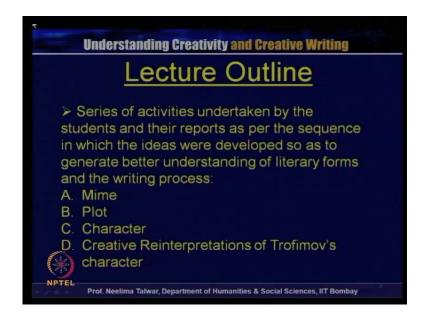
Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing Prof. Neelima Talwar Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Lecture - 36 Student Responses (II)

(Refer Slide Time: 00:39)



This lecture is titled student responses part two. If you recollect in part one, we had examined mime and plot. Let me read out the lecture outline for you. Series of activities have been undertaken by the students and their reports as per the sequence in which the ideas were developed is presented before you so as to generate better understanding of literary forms and the writing process. Remember we are constantly trying to maintain a balance between reading and understanding of possibilities in terms of various literary forms. Whether you want to be short story writer, a novelist, a play write or you want to write about nature, you want to write about science, technology, we really are thinking of few in a border framework, but at the same time we wish to constantly bring back the focus on the writing process.

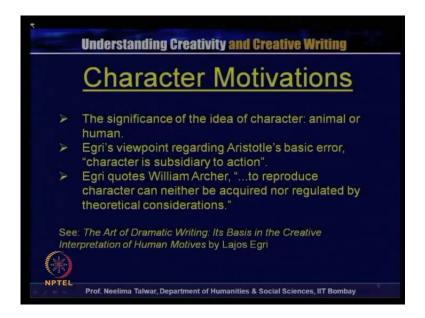
In this lecture, we will look at character, you know the notion of character in general and we will also share student responses to the interpretation of Trofimov's character. In terms of the notion of character, a lot has been said about many many writers who in particular have created writing manuals, the discussion and dispute between the notion of

plot and character has already been presented before you, but I want to add one more idea for your consideration. Remember Pamuk had mentioned that imposter and he aspects of the novel really needs to be examine all over again for very very fertile set of ideas that he had presented in that book and actually extrapolating just a little bit from the chapter title people. In which he says since the actors in a story are usually human and so he is talking about the fact that whether it is a short story or a novel the focus is on character and since the actors in a story are usually human it seemed convenient to entitled this aspect people. Other animals have been introduced, but with limited success for we know too little so far about their psychology they may be probably will be an alteration here in the future comparable to the alteration in the novelist renderings of savages in the past.

The gulf that separates man Friday from may be parallel by the gulf that will separate Kipling's bowls from their literary decadence 200 years hence and we shall have animals who are neither symbolic nor little Men disguised nor as four legged tables moving nor as painted scraps of paper that fly. And this is the idea that I like you like you to reflect on he says it is one of the ways where science may enlarge the novel by giving it fresh subject matter, but the help has not been given yet and until it comes we may say that the actors in a story are or pretend to be human beings. This is to suggest that when we talk about the notion of character, we can also have this kind of enlarge awareness of looking at the world from various angles that helps us understand the totality of our experience or also the crucial issues that we wish to highlight much better. So therefore, now in terms of the notion of character, I would like you to consider writing not only from the vantage point of human consciousness, but an imagined animal consciousness also as foster said based on scientific understanding our and you know we may be able to understand the animal point of view much better.

One way of starting is to you know read check from the viewpoint of the white puppy. So, hear is the white puppy for you, and you can also try and imagine and recreate the story from the perspective of the white puppy. In terms of the character motivations agree in the earlier reference that we made to his fairly well known study had talked about the greater significance that he attributed to the notion of character as opposed to the notion of plot. The title of agrees book itself is very eloquent he says you know that his point of view is based on creative interpretation of human motives.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:40)



So, again character and human motives or motivations this is what the focus of this whole exercise is all about, and also the fact that agree considers character much more important is related to the historical changes that have occurred gradually were the complexity of understanding our own selves has become even more demanding. And therefore, in terms of the plot structure which is event base of where ideas get crystallize through actions and events that really does not have the same charge that existed in Greek period or in the age of Shakespeare also. Egri quoted William Archer in this frame of reference and let me read that part of the quotation where he said that in order to create character it is really not possible to depend on any pre given theoretical considerations. Thereby what agree and what William Archer also was emphasizing is our own experiential commitment or own strengths as people who watch our you know the world around and we develop and understanding of that world we want to you know engaged with the world in our own terms or on our own terms. So, this is the idea that we place before the students also, and they decided to discover character motivations of Trofimov's.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:57)



And this is of course, textually based exercise, but we ask them to create a monologue from the writer, narrator's point of view. So, instead of becoming imaginary Chekhov's, they were independent writers who were trying to explore Trofimov as a character and write a monologue. We were also aware of the resonances of bildungsroman; in this exercise, although we did not really stretched too much nor did we give any pre given frame work. But we were aware of these resonances, we were also aware that the you know character of Trofimov immediately would enable this students to dip into self and society conflux in a fairly important way. So here are now the varied interpretations offered by the students based on their own understanding their own sense of Trofimov as a character and their own sense of their desire to be writers of a certain kind.

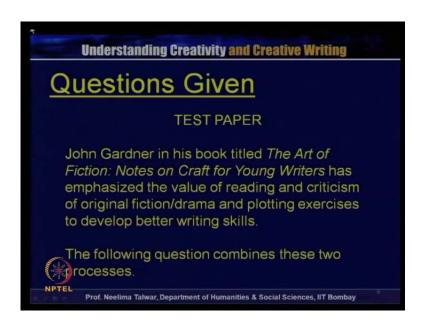
(Refer Slide Time: 10:20)



The first piece that we would present before you is actually again the perfomative piece we had shared earlier this is Aravind Singh performing Trofimov and although you know this particular moment that we have chosen it is the kind of a peak moment in terms of Trofimov's self expression. But at the same time, it should be emphasized that the student's interpretation has taken into account every bit of Trofimov's interactions with other characters in the play. This is very important because we really have not encouraged reduction is approach while reading the play or interpreting the characters.

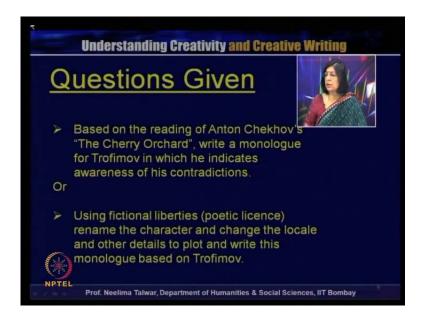
So, it was very important to understand Chekhovian sense of those small even trial moments that Chekhov was looking at in a very sharp critical manner. So, apart from this speech all though interactions were also taken into consideration and I think this will be evident when you see some of the answers, but before you understand the answers. I think it is important for me to place the test paper remember whatever we have discussed so far. Whenever it has been discussed in a class, we also have try to deal with those ideas while testing the students. There is very close connection between teaching, learning and testing. So, we have to try to be as close to the discussion as possible.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:15)



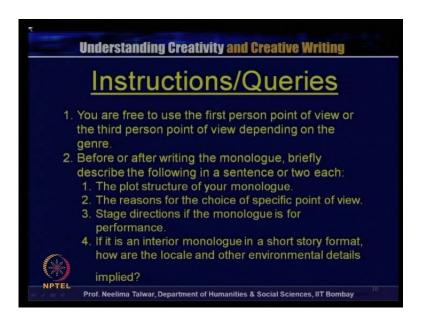
So, here is the test paper that was given to the students and the answers are also before you John Gardner. In his book titled The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers has emphasized the value of reading and criticism of original fiction, drama and plotting exercises to develop better writing skills. The following question combines these two processes.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:39)



Based on the reading of Anton Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard, write a monologue for Trofimov in which he indicates awareness of his contradictions. Remember we have talked about Chekhovian irony the gap between what the character say what they do or the external view of the character and the internal view of the character. The other option was using fictional liberties or poetic license, rename the character and change the locale and other details to plot and write this monologue based on Trofimov's character.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:27)



I had also given a few instructions. You are free to use the first person point of view or the third person point of view depending on the genre. Before or after writing the monologue, briefly describe the following in a sentence or two each: The plot structure of your monologue. So, again remember the plot structure are really also seeks to emphasize the highs or lows of the characters or of narration, so the plot structure of your monologue. The reasons for the choice of specific point of view stage directions; if the monologue is for performance if it is an interior monologue in a short story format how are the locale and other environmental details implied. So, these were the set of questions that were given to the students for two hour test and they took their own time to undertake this activity.

And I thought we would start with Kishor Nayars interpretation and that is really very very interesting, very I would say now typical of Kishor it is very meticulous. So, what he did is to finally come up with the write up which can be place in the realm of speculative fiction. Where he you know sort of presented Trofimov as a political figure. His preparatory methodology I found that to be really fascinating, because he noted

down every aspect of Trofimov's interaction with other characters. He will explain that methodology him self I requested him to share it, so that you can see how carefully he has worked on the plot and also how carefully it has led to an interpretation that takes into consideration various aspects of Trofimov's complex rounded character. So, then he would after sharing his preparatory methodology, Kishor will also then read his answer and you will notice that when the students read their answers, they bring in the kind obsessed and the dramatic qualities that they experienced while creating that monologue. So, here is Kishor.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:11)



So, before I begin with the analysis and the reading, I just give a small intro on how I answer the questions. I been doing on a lot of research work for the past two years and whatever observed is before you start working, you should really spend time to thinking an analyzing how you go about doing your work, so that is what I did in the paper in the two hour examination. I had devoted almost one hour one or fifteen minutes to understanding how I am going to write the whole process; understanding each idea and be before actually writing the piece. So, here is my analysis here. So, I in the question the question was about how Trofimov bring out dial bring out a monologue were Trofimov is aware of his contradictions.

Now firstly, I analyze what he said in the whole play, for example, in act two his key line his key speeches with Anya; the aim of life, the aim of according to him his prospective

on the Cherry Orchard, the symbol of slavery about himself, what he said in act three act four. Then when I went on to highlight his main attributes. What are the important contradictions are regarding love, regarding freedom, money, and regarding him self as a thinker how people should work etcetera. His main attributes optimism, morality, equality, among man his confusion about love logic poverty. And then finally, I went about actually constructing the monolog. Deciding how I should portrait, so I have I wanted three four essential key ideas to come about that is love, the fact that his thinking freemen and women. So, I structured it in the form of a speech and this is the work that is devoted to that section.

And so finally, I start with the actual monolog, I created a small modification. So, here is the modified version. So, I will start. So, the actual reading. So, the background of the monologue - three years have passed since the incidence of the cherry orchard, Trofimov has gone on to become a prominent leader and thinker in Moscow. Spreading his ideology and inspiring the people of Russia - the locale. A town hall on the out skirts of Moscow a large throng of people both workers and peasantry has assembled to listen to Trofimov. The speech - brothers and sisters of Russia, we became a free race in 1861 with the emancipation, but are we truly free. Without that it would bring a great happiness, but has it? Look at how sorry a great country has become the vast majority of Russia today is distracted fighting among them for nothing. There are also those who called themselves intellectuals in Russia, who treat the poor and the workers with disgust.

They think for us discuss and debate, but do nothing and the end of it. The intellectuals and noblemen dark of fancy things crushes and reading rooms. Have you seen any? You may ask or me why sir are you not intellectual yourself, to you my reply is that yes I am a thinker. Most of my youth was spend in learning and understanding; time spent in preparation for the moment to inspire you I too work day and night spending all the time I have pending my thoughts and spreading it, working tirelessly to better my country and my countrymen. The emancipation has come and gone, but our Russia is still divided, but worry not my friend sort of our human race is progressing lives and bounds. All that we feel we cannot reach for shall soon, we within a reach provided we work towards it.

The emancipation has made us free and it is now time to let go of our pasts. We must redeem our past and look onward to the happiness that is coming. The time has come to

raise above a pretty quarrels and lives happy and fulfilling lives. And the only way to get there is through tireless labor. We must toil hard towards the great future that awaits us. Let us loose ourselves in a work and look onward to the highest truths of life. Let us cut ourselves loose from the shackles of love and money raise above it and become free men and women. When I say raise above love what I mean is not to let love distract you. My wife Anya and I are above love. We work towards making Russia a greater and better place. Our purpose towards the Russia makes what we have for each other above love.

Brothers and sisters let not love reduce you to petty thoughts. Raise above it to together serve our great and beloved country, become freemen and women. Let not money and love affect you, will you not be freemen and women, if you do not let this petty things influence you. I was once a very very poor man, but in my mind I was a freeman, living a free life unaffected by anything. You may ask did not poverty influence you, to that I answered, yes, it did sometimes that I went hungry; felt cold in the winter and was tortured by fate; however, I did not let poverty affect my mind and my thoughts. I was poor, free and happy. I lived life with the optimism of a freeman and happiness came to me. Men and women of Russia being unaffected by the distraction in our lives, the time has come to toil heart for a better Russia and live happy and fulfilling lives. Let us embrace our great future.

Let us now shift to Abhishek's interpretation. Abhishek emphasize Trofimov's recognition of the complexity of the notion of love and life this is what gripped. Abhishek attention and in that sense this gives another understanding or another view or vision of Trofimov's character what I found very interesting apart from the write up is the manner in which Abhishek presented his write up. This is almost now an inimitable irrepressible style that I have began to associate with Abhishek. So, here is Abhishek's view of Trofimov.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:17)



This is my interpretation of Trofimov as we were ask to do as an exercise. I have titled it the thinkers term while. The stage is set for a grand monolog, as in the previous act we seen Ranavanskaya admonish Trofimov for his empty loveliest life style and this represents Trofimov's attempt to transcend the language in some way. And we see him conflicting some antagonistic internal forces that come about because of his self view conflicting with everyone else's view of him. Trofimov enters from left to the stage, the room is empty except for the table with the glass water on it and a chair. The room that we see here is Ranavanskaya bath house were Trofimov taken up residence. Trofimov enters looking confused depressed, emotionally stared. Oh, I am never quite felt so tired why I am so tired, exhaustion and weakness are fealties of common man. I am a philosopher great thinker perhaps the most rational mind is part of Russia has ever seen, how can I feel so tired, and I said not physical.

Some great emotional Burden envies me down. Like the weight of the world is placed on my shoulders, how could she say that? Surely, she must have been perturbed emotionally we worried about his silly orchard just like all the others, confined it to that simplistic and imaginative view of our world. Emotions got the better for yes, it was emotion. She did not mean it she could not she was weak. He stops drink some water, sits on the chair and breaths heavily, but that which she said that which she said cannot be taken lightly, cannot be forgotten she said I had never loved, she said I had never suffered, she said I was blind to the real world, and needed to open my eyes to see the truth. I already know

the truth, I know what will love brings it, brings hurt pain emotions distress and I am above petty emotions, I have not suffered, because I choose not a suffer I choose to conquer that weakness that vulnerability.

I choose live life in a way that gives me all I desired to know truths higher truths. He gets up and begins to walk around. To understand science and art and politics and social affairs, to understand implications and methodology is a various acts and mark our history, to seek the truth the purpose of our being the eternal question plaguing all are minds that of our existence. Shadowed I shall not be in this dark mystifying web of emotion, I shall not be sawed, his first shakes firstly. As he says the last line then withdraw his hand slowly, but why would she say that he drinks more water sinks back into his chair. She said I had never loved, I had never suffered, I have love though I have suffered I have experience all there is to experience and it brought me no joy, no piece.

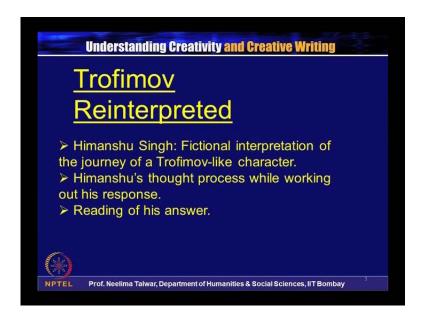
Have I really love though, what is love surely agreed philosopher such as myself should be explain such a child like interjection all its profundity. What is love? Love is an emotion and I am above the emotion, emotion is for the weak, but by denying the existence of love, I am not blinding myself to knowledge blocking out truth in a way. Truth which so cleanly abundantly exists per ways of every fiber of a being. Truth is a supreme power the at most being; attending the truth should be mans primary objective attending in a understanding in a completely, but can I say that I have completely understood love or suffering. Am I not just fooling myself in a way? Am I not just wearing a mask of intellectualism when in actuality I am in nervous, a child?

Being of no emotional truth, brings the last of the water suddenly gets up through the glass, it breaks. He kicks the chair and frustration, but emotion is the weakness I am not weak seems into a heap, begins to weep holds his head in his hand and shakes it side to side. I am nothing, nobody, a child. Ranavanskaya was right she was love is not a burden it is truth which I fail to acknowledge; truth which I have ignored unscrupulously ignored. My life is a joint ignominious futility; my search for knowledge is been far. I am finished the light slowly starts to go out until it spotlight is on Trofimov he is still on the ground weeping like a child.

Next shift to Himanshu singh who actually took the second option of using creative liberties in order to create his take on a Trofimov live character. So, he presented a

motive of a journey an while I was talking to Himanshu about his interpretation and I do have to tell you that you know some these presentations that our before you that have involved the lot of work after the write up. Also once I examine the write up of the students, I gave critical remarks and then we discussed those critical remarks on one and one bases, and sometime some interesting you know ideas developed out of that. So, while talking to Himanshu I realize that his thought process itself is really very very interesting while he was writing this particular response or creating this particular monologue. So, I requested him to share his thought process while working out this response and now here is his response and the reading of his answer.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:25)



When you have given the opportunity, it to use creative license while writing Trofimov's monologue; my first immediate thought was how it could be adopted in Indian setting. Having recently read the hungry tide by Amitabhghosh and also been deeply influenced by, I was entreat could it be using a certain that was based in Bengal. In seeing in few Satjeet ray movies, I found a certain similarities between madam Ranavanskaya's character and that of in a in a traditional Bengali [FL] family. Hence I decided go for Bengali biography. The name Rukmavatidevi incidentally is inspired from the title of the Govindnehlani movie, [FL] which is itself an adaptation of the play the house of Barnada alba by a famous Spanish play write.

So, here is the reading of my Trofimov's monologue which I titled above love. The scene is it is around mid-night on the cold winter day at the Varanasi railway station. Sometime in the mid-night in seventies, it was just been announce at the Howrah especially Delhi already running late, had been further delayed and would not to arrive till half pass four on the deserted platform. Vikram is sitting on a bench with his suit briefcase between his legs. As soon as he hears the announcement, he tap the suitcase and then start speaking as if talking to him. Well, dear friend, looks like a predicament has just been lengthened just you and me then in hours before any other human contact. Is it times like these are wonder would the explore must feel like trading and chart a territory in a search of new world. He lives by and everything he knows, everything he loves and hedge to what almost certainly would be his (()) grief. Has he wall to higher state of been, is if free from maya a elusion of the world, the world is back. Is he beyond compassion beyond emotion beyond love, just yesterday I took leave Poornima and Rukmavatidevi after helping them settle down at the new home at Kolkata?

I used to consider myself above love when the time came for taking leave saying good bye to I just could not knowing that I was not going to meet her for a very long time. Sudden feeling of sorrow came me; girl like her probably when I met her the next time, she would be with another man, a man deserving of her, far more than I have I could ever be. I may have let to go study the ideologies marks, but I fell in love just like any other common human being. Did I know this now that I am able to be trotted myself, yes I have know now along, I remember what [FL] has said to me back at the party at (()), there I was a elusion freak a man who hide the short comings by borrowing in the coon of his life. Do I not realize the that life is never ideal and never would be that it cannot simply disconnect leave behind and erase everything that you have experienced over the years. I am appol now that I suggested to [FL] that her that (()) it that her attachment to the Haveli and a or chord was foolish anguish that I faced.

Just I thought of living Pooru, I love to without as much as living note to her, I am judging her. There is so much loved and lost in that place; change is hard for everyone and just be to someone to accept it. Am I been too hard on myself? Probably no, but to, but to erse human is not it. And to forgive is the divine indeed [FL] is the bigger person here, even though she was the gentle lover in this case. She still willing to help Shubhashbabu in this trouble times after all that his did. This is something that should

have commanded respect and admiration, not ridicule which I gave. As far as I am concerned, my aim is still to help mankind achieve the highest truth in the highest happiness, but perhaps a bit of empathy would do some good.

In the same way now in terms of poetic license and creative liberties that that for taken by many of students. We shift to a response by Kaveesh, in this response what struck be really is the way in which Kaveesh try to understand the struggle of Trofimov in a very different way. So, this is a Trofimov inspired character who struggles to maintain his pristine sense of self resulting in awkward connections with the world. I would not say more about this because I think once you here Kaveesh, you will understand that this is again a very different kind of take on Troffimov.

(Refer Slide Time: 34:04)



Krishna Kabeera a young man of age 22 years is living in Mumbai with his parents. Mumbai were feverishness is in the air Krishna Kabeera in his isolated world has lots of dreams and promises safely kept. He whenever gets time nurtures them as ideas in his value pressure in a isolated dark space in absence of someone else's site on him. And in absence of any kind of judgment, he listens to his inner voice calmly. When his home made studio were entry to his parents was also not allowed takes bases divined soul full work with at most care and love. He keeps his work in a studio. He hates word work as people associate boredom mechanistic life routine and a dull life to sub consciously. His extremely sensitive to his work and knows that judgment of his work few tire; as the

critics would never feel is dreams thoughts of feeling which he had tried to put his creation which is incomplete though.

His parents complaint to him about his aloofness to this world and urged him to start earning by getting a job. At one point of time, they even threaten him to leave alone only to be face by aggressive disclose on live by him, and the failures of the parents by him. He so confident about his dreams and ideas that he has no doubt on the fact that when these ideas would down upon the usual population, they would change the lies and his dreams be fulfilled. He would; obviously, get everything money fame love which he claims that he does not want. He loves the time when he spend it creating some art work. He though is in no hurry to releases work or put them at more sale, as he feel that there is something missing or incomplete in his work. His creative space get disturbed because of the pressure put on him, as he goes to this studio and tries to listen to his inner voice fighting with it at the same time to help him finishes his work sooner. In this struggle, he not able to create anything, but make him self suffer more. As he gets tired with the struggling this studio his inner voice speaks to him, and what he creates reflects the feelings of the struggle and the futility of this world not the once which you require to complete this art work.

Finally we will shift to Alapparik's presentation and as I was reading his answer, I felt as if this interior monologue that Alap has created. It almost shows this process of Trofimov in which he was building an his identity, he was building his sense of the self and at the same time he was stunning out an viewing that sense of the self I hope you get the same you know feeling when you here Alap.

(Refer Slide Time: 37:12)



The following is my response to the question on Trofimov. Trofimov entrance spacing about his room shuffling a few things around apparently searching for something. The room pre dominantly has wooden furniture and he fell in it – Trofimov. Just is every of the morning, even today is not where I kept it; every night I make sure my books are in place if not anything else and yet some dull shifts around things on my table with the suppose it purpose of cleaning up. As if it would not enough that I cannot find my clothes razor and comb on a frighteningly regular bases. And today it seems as of my book of accounts has gone missing, oh what will happen with the little money I have to receive.

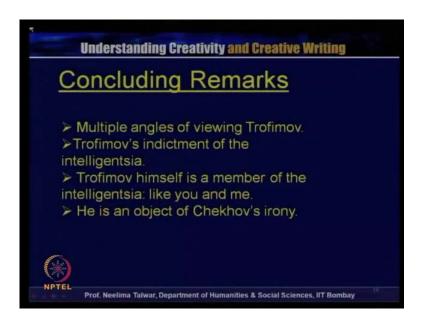
And yet there is nothing I can do about it presently, he sits down in a huff and holds his head in his hands. I should be calmer, if life's purpose want to make every moment count is something valuable, it is seem to waste thousands of them with anger and frustration. A bird jumps distinctly, how beautiful the day really is and I have spent near on five minutes babbling about a book I will find by the time its noon. Yes I was may actually be a minuscule part of this enormous and mind goggling creation, we call the universe, but as a every a laborer in a orchard needs to put in his the at most for the full benefit of the orchard to be reaped. So, to should we take up the struggle to find some meaningful purpose in our life's. Yet what is it that I see around me blind greed for money, status and other unnecessary trifles. He starts spacing the room again talking loudly and worst still in difference laziness.

I see people around me; I see the new generation lapping up the same garbage that the stupidly blind elders did from theirs and so forth. Who will Ankh in the rains stops this aimless civilization, for I see this serious path leading over the cliff and we may already be too fast to stop our self. He find himself in front of his mirror and holds. Yet here I stand thinking all this aloud, judging the world when many could point of finger at me. Yes I talk about learning and knowledge as a higher purpose. And I am still a student, I talk about laziness and I am still core to hard workers in drown write such is lopper keen. I talk about been above love and yet I look at Anya, I wonder what I am feeling.

Why this very morning I was upset about my account book, when money was suppose to be a petty and trivial matter, but how does want truly follow that part. I believe and yet I do not know, I am confused by this incessant torrent of emotion both pleasant and unwelcome that washes over me every day. I struggle to be ideal, but is there such a thing and how will I ever know when I am in the right path for certain, oh this morning is cursed. He slowly exists the stage.

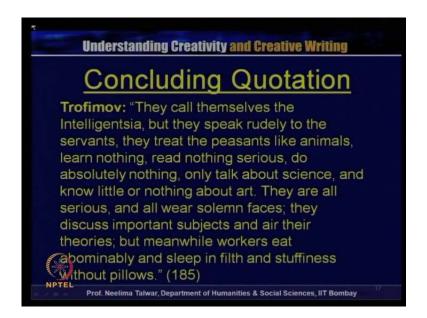
So, I hope you enjoyed this student presentations. We have not undertaken you know very close analysis of their answers, because we are the student are at the stage where they are exploring they creative potential, their voice you know for the first time in a systematic manner. Even if they have written earlier, I think this is their first systematic attempt to try an engage with the writing process and many of the issues that I thrown up while writing. I would at the same time like to conclude by saying that in literary readings or while writing also, one has to be aware of the multiple angles that automatically generates. Sometimes writer does not intend those multiple levels, but while reading it we reading a particular piece we ascribe certain meaning. A lot of complex issues develop in reading and writing, and I think this notion of multiplicity of interpretations, I think that is at the heart of democratic sentiment of writing process.

(Refer Slide Time: 42:15)



While we were looking at these multiple angles of viewing Trofimov one idea that stands out very strongly for me as a reader is Trofimov's indictment of the intelligentsia. Indeed many many critics have also commented on this close connection between may be with Chekhov's own world view on many of the articulations that Trofimov presence. In the play although, I do want to point out that Trofimov remains a fully developed character an independent creative character. And therefore, it is really not possible to see him as Chekhov's mouth piece in a very very rigid sense. Trofimov himself is a member of the intelligentsia like you and me, he is an object of Chekhov's irony. And therefore, I would like to end this concluding part of the lecture by quoting from Trofimov these lines that hunt me.

(Refer Slide Time: 42:57)



Trofimov says, they call themselves the intelligentsia, but they speak rudely to the servants. They treat the peasants like animals, learn nothing, read nothing serious, do absolutely nothing, only talk about science, and know little or about arts. They are all serious and all wear solemn faces; they discuss important subjects and air their theories; but meanwhile workers eat abominably and sleep in filth and stuffiness without pillows.