Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing
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Lecture - 4
Multilingual Plurality: Our Environment Part-2

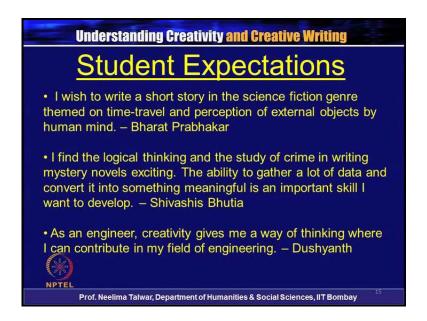
Now, we will shift our attention to what the students wanted from this course. The course has been taught for more than a (()) now. The student quotations that I am going to share with you these, a really have been chosen from various years to highlight diversity of these expectations. I think this will help you also see where you belong in terms of your own questions. Instead of any external course model, although we have been reviewing a lot of these course models that that are offered in different countries, but instead of depending on any external course model are the expectations and needs of the students has defined this video course.

The first time I remember, when I offer this course, I had this great desire to move away from traditional reading base courses although I value them you know enormously, but I wanted to touch this creative cord within myself and within the students. And I was uncertainness to how this would work out and what direction it would take, and so I have been very very keen on responding to their own unique expectations and their background and the way they position them self in terms of the creative and creative, creativity oriented courses.

So, in some ways one can point out that the processes are really not shared with you, because this is a video course. But, we will try and show you as we move along that each time the course is offered regular interaction, regular and very intensive interaction has shaped the destiny of each course, you know every year it becomes slightly different. So, we have really combined all these elements to give you a sense of what the student expectations are. Because all our discourse our is really not in a vacuum, the this courses are within the contacts of what the young people are asking. And I said earlier that I feel that the time is right for more and more of creativity oriented questions to surface within the academic framework, and the traditional hostility between creativity and academic word, I think it will be sort of overcome. Because we are in a historical period where

there is need for more ideas, innovation in every sphere, social, political, cultural, technological, scientific.

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So, now let us see what the students have said in terms of their expectation. I will start in a random order and also with this sense that each one of them typifies a certain point of view let me read out what he said in his own words. I wish to write a short story in the science fiction genre themed on time-travel and perception of external objects by human mind. This certainly poses a very interesting possibility considering that in India, there is very little science fiction there is so much of fiction being written by very innovative people in India, but there is very little science fiction. So, it is very wonderful that these expectations come from within the student's conciseness and we are able to really respond to this in a very real sense.

The next point of view here is from Shivashis Bhutia. So, now, he says I find the logical thinking and the study of crime in writing mystery novels exciting. The ability to gather a lot of data and convert it into something meaningful is an important skill, I want to develop. So, in some ways here also you can see an overlap between science and real life. The next idea very important one he says as an engineer creativity gives me a way of thinking where I can contribute in my field of engineering. So, it is very very focused on engineering and this is not a first time that I heard this kind of point of view. So, we have very fertile ground you can see to conduct the discussion in discourse.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing Student Expectations I would like a dissection of the creative process from a standpoint of a layman and discussion on how to form a creative vision; how to give form to it. I'm interested in the generation of creative content in dramatics and contemporary dance. Architectural creativity is also something I want to discuss, if possible. – Kanishk Dutt I want to explore various fields regarding creativity and understanding it. I want to use these qualities in essay writing on various topics to gain a wider perspective. I am not able to express my inner feelings in words. I want to be able to do that through the course. – Pitamber Kumar NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay

The next student Kanishk Dutt, he pointed out what he wanted very, very clearly. It is a very demanding expectation from the course; I will read that out to you. I would like a dissection of the creative process from a standpoint of a layman and discussion on how to form a creative vision. At all order I have discussed it elsewhere, how to give form to it. I am interested in the generation of creative content in dramatics and contemporary dance. Architectural creativity is also something I want to discuss, if possible. Those of you who have read Arundithi Roy's great interesting novel, you would remember that she herself talks about fact that she shaped it the way an architecture shapes of building.

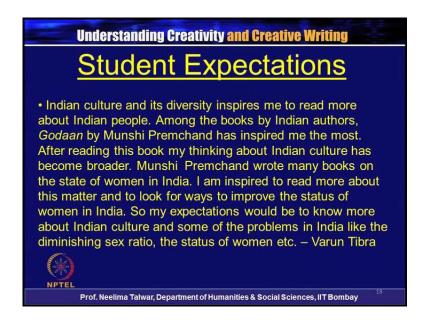
The next person Pitamber Kumar said I want to explore various fields regarding creativity, regarding creativity. So, what is it? How do we understand it and understanding it. I want to use these qualities in essay writing on various topics to gain a wider perspective. I am not able to express my inner feelings in words. I want to be able to do that through the course. This again is a sentiment that is expressed time and again by students.

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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing Student Expectations • I read because I love reading and I search for answers to my questions in books I read. I find maths and music interesting as well. — Ashwath Kirthyvasan • I would like to read more classical and well known literature, both in prose and poetry. A few of the creative activities I would like to do are photography, personal writing — like a diary, writing nonfiction and office of the creative activities. — Rushil Goel NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay

The next point of view comes from Ashwath and this is what he has to say, I read because I love reading and I can (()). So, that because I have been interacting with Ashwath, I read because I love reading and search for answers to my questions in books I read. I find maths and music interesting as well. So, again here is a kind of a blend that is potentially very interesting with the person is well equip to understand maths, music in terms of its interfuses both mathematical and musical and also someone who reads extensively to search for answers to his questions. This is again a point of view which is shared by number of students. So, they read to find space to reflect to modify their opinion, to find other resources within them that are not matched with the external demands of the environment, this very rich situation.

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The other viewpoint you just see how entirely different this point of view is, this is from Varun Tibra. I have been really very lucky to have really wonderfully sensitive students in most of my batches, and even if they are not we do not sort of they are not able to understand each other the sincerity is unquestioned. Now here is what Varun has to say Indian culture and its diversity inspires me to read more about Indian people among the books by Indian authors Godaan by Munshi Premchand has inspired me the most. After reading this book my thinking about Indian culture has become broader. Munshi Premchand wrote many books on the state of women in India. I am inspired to read more about this matter and to look for ways to improve the statues of women in India. So, my expectations would be to know more about India culture and some of the problems in India like the diminishing sex ratio, the statues of women etcetera.

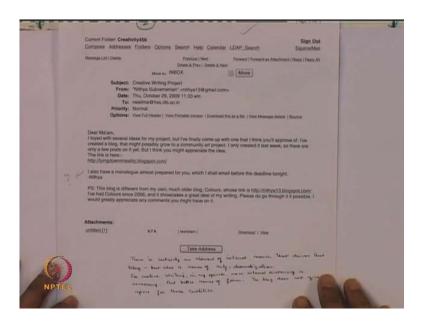
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Understanding Creativity and Creative Writing Student Expectations • I toyed with several ideas for my class project, but I've finally come up with one. I've created a blog that might possibly grow into a community art project. I created it last week, so there are only a few posts on it as yet, but I think you might appreciate the idea. This blog is different from my own, much older blog, Colours. I have had Colours since 2006 and it showcases a great deal of my writing. -- Nithya Subramanian • Blogs fascinate me. For my class project, I want to share in a presentation my views on blogging. — Gautam Salhotra NPTEL Prof. Neelima Talwar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay

Another kind of expectation has started entering our discourses, which is at actually not so surprising and this is related to blogs. Some of the students not too many them, some of the student want to meet me to consider blogs as creative excises and this is what Nithya had to say, Nitya and Gautam two of the student wanted to share blog entries and I did not deny that, but I was a bit you know (()) of critical an apprehensive, because I really do belong to the print culture. And I have not made the switch over to the internet culture through the extent that the students have made.

So, anyway let us see what Gautam had to say and what Nithya had to say. She said, I toyed the several ideas for my class project. Each semester the students have done a class project and so, she said I toyed with several ideas, but I have finally, come up with one. I have created a blog that might possibly grow into a community art project. I created it last week, so,there are only a few posts on it, but I think you might appreciate the idea. This blog is different from my own, much older blog, Colours. I had Colours since 2006 and it showcases a great deal of my writing. Now, of course, you know I am reading out this except from her e-mail to me, and you know constantly have gone back and forth and talk to each other.

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So let me show you this page just to give you flavor how we talk to each other all the time.

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From this exercise, we want to shift to something related, but where you know different in the sense that this ongoing investigative spirit that we recommended earlier. This in some ways does exist in the minds of students not as if we are in we function in a vacuum. When we look at the expectations that students have from courses which are slightly different, and therefore, they draw attention to creativity and creative processes,

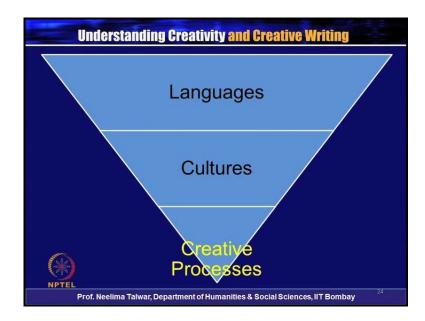
one of the questions that was articulated by student was related to creative vision how do we develop creative vision. I think he wanted a sense of integration out of the all multitude of activities one, you know, undertakes while pursuing complicated ideas related to the self and the environment. This relationship between the self and the world at large can be explored in number of different ways. All I can do is to articulate this as cogently as possible, and I am really not suggesting that there will be no blurring of boundaries. I have already recommended blurring of boundaries when I talked about the significance of language and other disciplines.

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But in any case in terms of creative vision one of the possible directions starting with multilinguality is of course, discovering India/s. I would not go into this notion very deeply, but I have already talked about the spectrum of subaltern to globalized India and you know the kind of range it covers. Now one can always say it is too vast a world and how do you go about it.

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What we can do is to summarize it in certain ways. So, let us say language cultures and creative processes, we see an interlink between these, which you will have to explore identify for your own self and for who you are, how you have been raised what are the connection you already made, it is as I said it is not in a vacuum that this process can be undertaken.

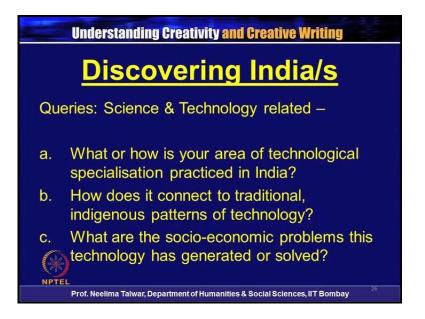
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The other way of looking at this whole activity is to explore the practice of any field of interest that you have already identified by watching its absence or presence in different

classes, and regions. In other words, develop a sense of its historical evolution. To me this path seems very important and I would say very interesting also.

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So, for example, if you have decided to be an expert in the field of science and technology, you can raise some questions like these. What or how is your area of technological specialization practiced in India? How does it connect to traditional indigenous patterns of technology? What are the socio-economic problems this technology has generated or solved?

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Similarly if let us say you are completely involved or deeply involved in performances related studies such as theater, dance, music, writing, painting where you already do things yourself, you know generate new ideas yourself, what you can do is to look at the general ramifications of the queries that are actually pose for science and technology. You can raise those kinds of queries for your own discipline. So, if it is theater, what kind of theater? What is the presence or absence of different kinds of theater activities?

So, there may be many more theater activities then are accessible to people. So, in other words, exploring the presence and absence of public space for different sections of Indian population from ancient times to the contemporary period, for the special occasion that you are interested in and these kinds of studies are already available. There is lot of critical work that has gone on in each specialized area. So, you can pick those up, but I think more than that you can also begin to see what you have missed out in watching your surroundings. So, this is where these available studies can help you.

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So, can we come back to the writing process and our belief is that it is the process of search and articulation. And also because multiliguality and cultural plurality shape our world, we would have to explore both these factors in order to activate our writing process.

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Coming back to the question of English, because English is the language through which right now we are operating. The question is what kind of English do we speak, what kind of English can we write; obviously, our use of English would be culturally inflected and therefore, it would innovatively have constraints and freedoms.

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Aijaz Ahmed, for example, has stopped about some of the constraints by way of the language seen in India by saying that actually even across various regions and languages there is very little awareness of what is being written and thought about and that he

attributes to lack of public institutions for overlapping translations despite multilinguality and polyglot fluidity. So, he feels there is a kind of absence there we are talking about absences.

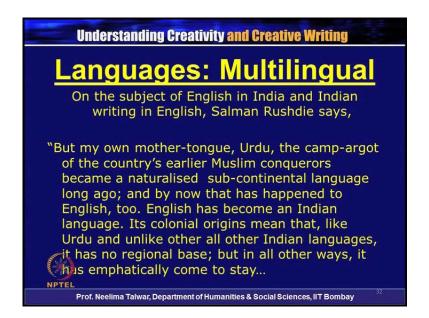
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And he also feels that although the largest archive of translations is available in English, but the difficulty is that it is the language least suitable for this role... not because of colonialism but because it is far removed in its structure and ambience from all the other Indian languages. Therefore, it is least suitable to bridge the cultural gap between the original and translated text. Although this seems like where an sort of evident idea, and evident difficulty, I do not want to point out that these very fissile's between the original language or languages, or our own languages, where there roots in the culture, in complex, roots in complex cultural scenario - the fact is the creative writers have use this fissile's to create something new.

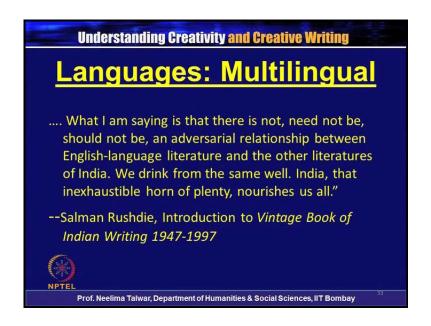
So, that is really not something that one should feel dismayed by this situation one should not feel dismayed by although one can also hope that there will be more translation activity across Indian languages. So, then while using English, I think it is equally important, it is important to accept the kind of basic position that Aijaz Ahmed has articulated. You cannot simplify it, but at the same time the creative tension that is generated out of that difficulty.

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I think that is articulated rather well by Salman Rushdie of course, you may say he does not have the kind of roots that you have in the country because he is also well travelled person and he is is lived is youth in the Diaspora. But at the same time, I think is connection to India is so strong and one one can learn such a lot from is creative endeavors that I would really like you to think about this point of view. Where he points out that English has almost become an Indian language, and its colonial origins means like Urdu and unlike all other Indian languages it has no regional base; but in all other ways it has emphatically come to stay.

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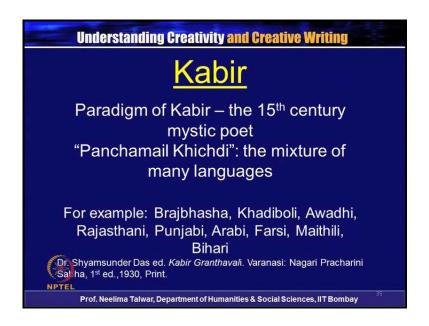
And he also goes on to say that they need not be, should not be, an adversarial relationship between English language literature and the other literatures of India. This of course, remark was made in the context of his own rather negative remark above the polity of translations that he has read translations from Indian languages into English. I think the scene has changed, and also I think his position may not be a so strongly appealed, but I think what he was also trying to do is to offer a critical point of view and more than that he was trying to establish his own position by saying in the last two lines. We drink from the same well. India that inexhaustible horn of plenty, nourishes us all.

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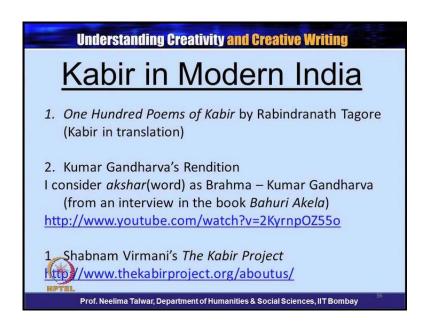
And I think these debates and these discussions will animate our own effort to see what kind of hybridities or what kind of hybridization process, what kind of creative tension we are willing to undertake in order to come up with something fresh and not something crusades. Something that is true to our own sense of self, our own sense of growing self because even writing then becomes a process of discovery. Now, amongst the examples of hybridization, we have fantastic examples within our own country. I have pointed out to you earlier that my position innovatively would be eclectic like your own reading list would be eclectic.

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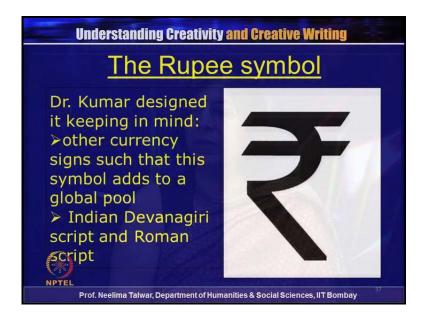
I sort of dip into the Kabir paradigm, because of childhood exposure to Kabir, and it is an exposure that has continued to provide critical vocabulary to me. As a child when I was not even aware of critical discourses the way I am aware of them now, the fact of the matter is that could be reading to be here it provided critical vocabulary to look at the social scene look at the self look at many, many other issues. So, this paradigm of hybridity that kabir offered were he mixed many, many languages in is poetry. His poetry consists of many languages because he had a pluralistic, humanistic view of issues, people and this dialogic sense is really visible in the Panchamail Khichdi which is the way his the mixture of many languages is described for kabir. So, this paradigm is available paradigm of hybridity, plurality which not only is seen has something outside ourselves, but as something which is an integral part of who we are in terms of our dialogic relationship with the world. So, this Kabir module, you can dip into on your own.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:27)



We have provided you this references we would have love to share them we would have love to decided Kabir for you, but there is not that kind of time. The translation of Kabir offered by Rabindranath Tagore, we can dip into it. You can I mean create your own translations. Kumar Gandharva's rendition and Shabnam Virmani's Kabir project.

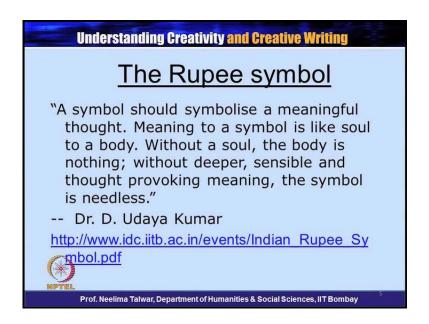
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The other example of hybridity that we really are very happy to share with you is a from another kind of endeavored, the design seen and one of our designed student whose now a faculty member in our IIT Guhawti. He created this symbol and very garishly agreed to

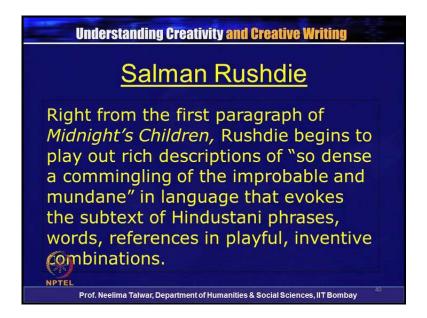
share it with us, in which she combined Devanagri script with the roman script in order to create this memorable new rupee symbol where you like it or not, you cannot forget it anymore. So, dip into that and dip into the logic behind this very elaborate, very sophisticated logic and basically it is a multi dimensional symbol.

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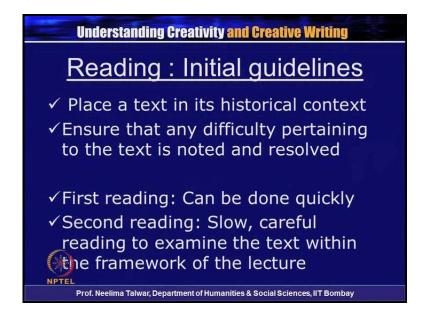
And what Udayakumar has to say about the significance of symbols is worth narrating. He says a symbol should symbolize a meaningful thought. Meaning to a symbol is like soul to a body. Without a soul the body is nothing; without deeper sensible and thought provoking meaning, the symbol is needless. Beyond to you know examples and also the fact that we can derive our inspiration from different areas of expertise, it may be music, it may be poetry, it may be dance, it may be science, it may be technology, design, you know the you need not restrict your resources to only one type of activity and I thought process, but of course, we come back to writing and we have already talked about the the fact that writing is important.

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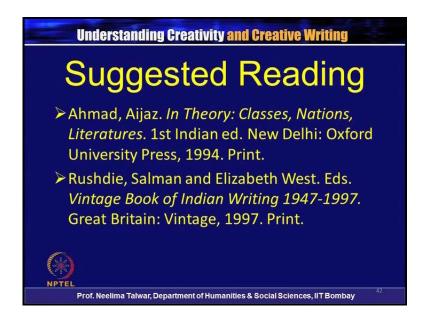
And I think the kind of experimentation that Salman Rushdie offers in Midnight's Children combines and I am reading form this famous quotations there is in midnight's Children, so dense a commingling of the improbable and mundane in language that evokes the subtext of Hindustani phrases, words, references in playful, inventive combinations. I think this is a very very exiting paradigm of hybridity or code mixing that we will discuss later on.

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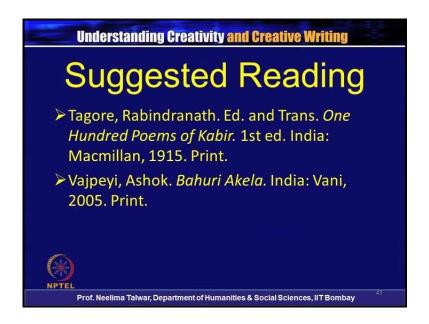
So, this was our take on multilinguality and cultural plurality does think about it deeply, but as you begin to read new material, we come back to initial guidelines. Tou must place a text in its historical context, we feel like heals richer meaning. In that sense you must note down your difficulties with words of meanings carefully and resolve them for this purpose you need a lot of interaction with people, who had better expertise's in the area that you are perceiving. Your reading should be careful; first reading can be quick, but the second reading has to be slow, careful, and reflective.

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And for this segment, these three books we have identified for greater reading one is Salman Rushdie's Vintage book from which some of the quotation have been taken.

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Tagores, poems of kabir, Ashok Vajpeyi, Bahuri Akela and Kumar Gandharv and his take on Kabir. Two very rich you know minds coming together in extraordinary act of creativity, you must listen to the music of Kumar Gandharv and you know begin to in shoot what; that means, when he sings near gunibajans. So, that is all for this session.