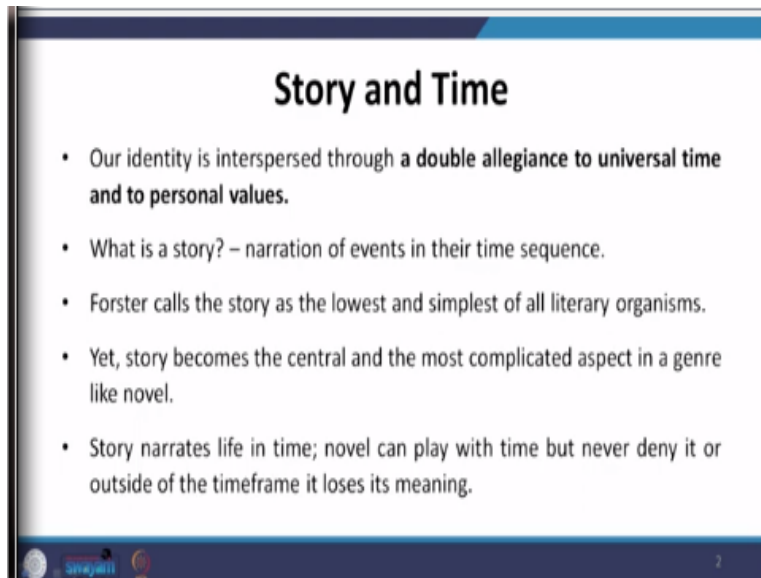


Narrative Mode and Fiction
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Lecture-23
Features of the Novel-II

Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on narrative mode and fiction. We are discussing features of the novel in the light of E. M. Forster's aspects of the novel. So, Forster would note that our identity is interspersed through double allegiances to universal time and to personalized time or personal values.

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Story and Time

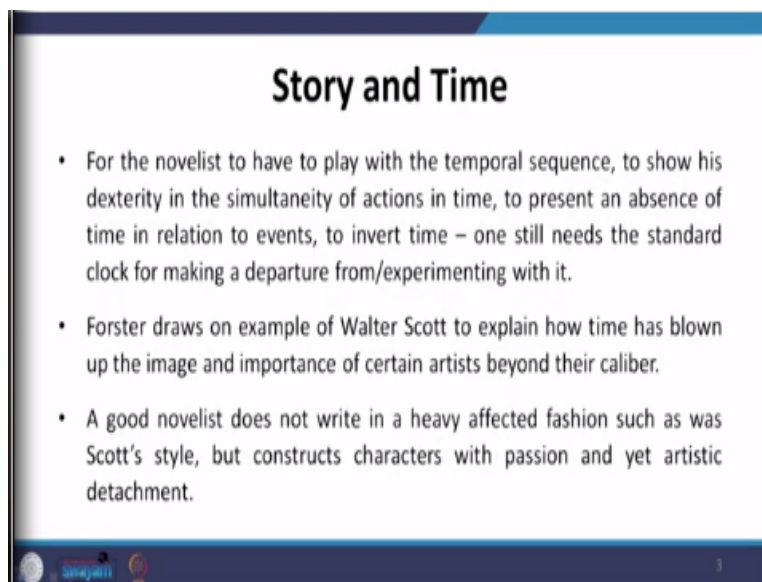
- Our identity is interspersed through a **double allegiance to universal time and to personal values.**
- What is a story? – narration of events in their time sequence.
- Forster calls the story as the lowest and simplest of all literary organisms.
- Yet, story becomes the central and the most complicated aspect in a genre like novel.
- Story narrates life in time; novel can play with time but never deny it or outside of the timeframe it loses its meaning.

In the previous lecture I was talking about how our social self, our universal self in a way emerges or when we act according to the calendrical time the standard clock time and then the intensity of time remains with us, remain in our memory when there is a personal intervention when time becomes very personalized. So, in other words very long duration of time which is not of much significance which is only about repetitive mundane work would not be registered in our memory versus a very short one-off incident which is very intense for which we have not been prepared remains in our memory for a long time.

So, what is a story? Story is narration of events in their time sequence. E. M. Forster calls the story as the lowest and the simplest of all literary organisms. The story is to repeat what I said earlier in the previous lecture, it is the bare skeleton. Yet, story becomes the central and the most complicated aspect in a genre like the novel, it would be wrong to say that the story becomes complicated.

The treatment of the story in time which constitutes, which makes up the plot is experimented with, is complex in the novel. So, story narrates life in time, novel plays with time, however we see that novel never denies time otherwise outside of the time frame it could lose its meaning. This kind of jeopardy, this kind of precarity one can see in Madame Bovary which is not referring to external time at all or hardly doing so.

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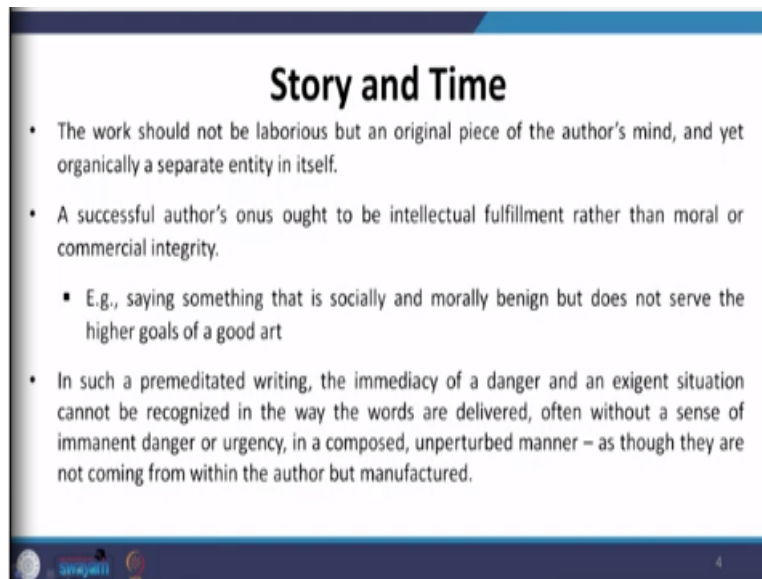
Story and Time

- For the novelist to have to play with the temporal sequence, to show his dexterity in the simultaneity of actions in time, to present an absence of time in relation to events, to invert time – one still needs the standard clock for making a departure from/experimenting with it.
- Forster draws on example of Walter Scott to explain how time has blown up the image and importance of certain artists beyond their caliber.
- A good novelist does not write in a heavy affected fashion such as was Scott's style, but constructs characters with passion and yet artistic detachment.

So, for the novelist to have to play with the temporal sequence, to show his dexterity expertise in the simultaneity of actions in time to present an absence of time in relation to events or even to invert time altogether. One still needs a reference to the standard clock as a way of saying how the novel is a departure from or experimentation with such a standard time. We still need standard time as a reference, we cannot really make a novel totally outside of time, to play with time we still need it.

So, E. M. Forster draws an example of Walter Scott in order to explain how time has blown up the image and importance of an artist such as Walter Scott which he feels is the image the repetition that he enjoys is beyond the artist's caliber. This is because according to Forster a good novelist does not write in a heavy affected fashion, such as is Scott's style. Rather a good novelist constructs characters with passion and yet a certain artistic detachment.

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Story and Time

- The work should not be laborious but an original piece of the author's mind, and yet organically a separate entity in itself.
- A successful author's onus ought to be intellectual fulfillment rather than moral or commercial integrity.
 - E.g., saying something that is socially and morally benign but does not serve the higher goals of a good art
- In such a premeditated writing, the immediacy of a danger and an exigent situation cannot be recognized in the way the words are delivered, often without a sense of immanent danger or urgency, in a composed, unperturbed manner – as though they are not coming from within the author but manufactured.

A good work should not be laborious but there has to be some kind of in order for it to be original, there has to be an organic connection between what the author thinks, what the author writes and yet it should be organically a separate entity in itself. Once the art is produced that should be able to function outside of the author's personal life. And yet what Forster is trying to say here is that the author should believe in what he is producing in order for the work to be called as good.

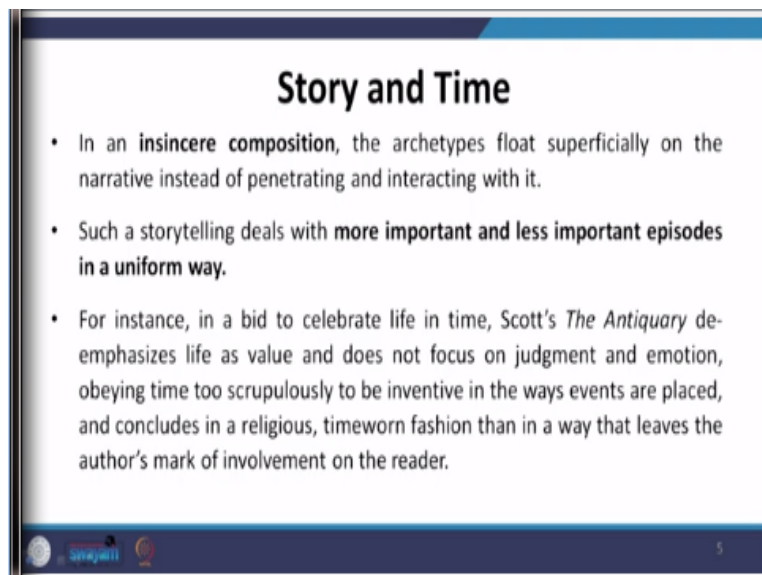
A successful author's onus ought to be intellectual fulfillment, he should be at one with his writing and the intellectual fulfillment is a factor that should be emphasized more than any other factors, any other considerations, beat moral factors or even commercial factors how the work is going to function in the market. For example, saying something that is socially and morally benign is something that many artists choose to do because that way the work would be accepted better by the audience and it will become a hit, it will be well received.

But then such an artwork could be considered as mediocre that does not serve the higher goals of a good art. In such a premeditated writing which is as Forster points out mediocre in terms of its ambitions, in terms of what it wants to achieve, it has too many moral and commercial considerations. The immediacy of a danger and an exigent situation cannot be recognized, in the same way the words are delivered.

Because it is not coming from within the author, the other does not feel an organic attachment, a kind of spontaneous feeling for the writing. The writing is not happen only to fulfill his intellectual faculty. So, what we are trying to say here is that the language is very flattened. In a mediocre art work language is flattened, the imminent danger, the exigent situation, the urgency would be composed by a mediocre novelist with the same unperturbed language as though they are coming.

They have already been calculated from beforehand, they are manufactured, they are fake, they are not really emergencies that the characters face within the frame of the work. So, the author is not really involved in it, even the emergency situations, the urgent situations are written with the same language as the mundane situations because that is the kind of lack of passion which gives birth to a mediocre work.

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Story and Time

- In an **insincere composition**, the archetypes float superficially on the narrative instead of penetrating and interacting with it.
- Such a storytelling deals with **more important and less important episodes in a uniform way**.
- For instance, in a bid to celebrate life in time, Scott's *The Antiquary* de-emphasizes life as value and does not focus on judgment and emotion, obeying time too scrupulously to be inventive in the ways events are placed, and concludes in a religious, timeworn fashion than in a way that leaves the author's mark of involvement on the reader.

So, in an insincere composition, this is the language that Forster uses and insincere composition the archetypes float superficially on the narrative instead of penetrating and interacting with it. So, we see that many of the structuralist like A.J Rhymer's for example and even Todorov they say that artworks have certain archetypes, there are certain meta narratives that any artwork speaks to.

So, there are certain progressions that are bound to happen in all folklores, in all fairy tales across all times and ages. Now the characters speak to these archetypes but if the work, the composition is insincere the archetypes would simply float superficially and not make much connection with the individuals. We have been able to incorporate the timeless symbols without making them speak to the individual case that we make in our novel.

That is an insincere composition, we cannot see our case, the case that we have an author has made as created in the novel, the problem that the author has created in the novel, he cannot see it through, he cannot drive it till the end probably with the same smoothness, the alacrity and the poise that is required of a superior author. So, such a storytelling deals with the more important and the less important episodes in much a uniform and flattened manner.

So, for example in a bid to celebrate life in time E. M. Forster looks at the case of Scott's and the antiquary, where in antiquary Scott de-emphasizes life as value and does not focus on judgment and emotion rather he obeys time too scrupulously to be original or inventive enough in the way he places the events, it is more unimaginative, more prosaic. And so his conclusion also happens in a very religious manner. The conclusion is just ritual because any work has to conclude.

It happens in a very time worn fashion without much of the author's thinking or passion going into it. So, the antiquary ends like a ritual because every work has to conclude rather than leaving a mark of involvement of the author on the reader. So, such a work could become great because some of the works try to appease the maximum audience of the maximum readers in that way also they can become canons, they can become great because they are appealing to the values of the mainstream but not a strong or full of impact.

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Story and Time

- Forster calls such writing as **great, but not strong or full of impact**.
- Further, when travelling through an **epic time is not coupled with a panoramic vision of space**, the narrative misses one important dimension and can tend to become depressing.
- Forster gives the example of how in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, time-travel has been successfully complemented with intricate descriptions of the nature of Russia, which bears a sonority and melody to the reader.
- So, characters in time are important, but their emotions should also resonate with the space.

6

Further E. M. Forster notes that when traveling through an epic time one should also couple the passage of time in the narrative with panoramic vision or participation of space and specialty. So, the special aspect should also be taken into consideration. So, otherwise the narrative misses one very important dimension and can tend to become lame and depressing. So, he gives the example of Leo Tolstoy's war.

And peace where time travel has been very successfully complemented with intersperse with intricate descriptions of the nature of Russia which bears a almost melodious quality, it bears a sonority and melody to the reader. So, characters positioned in time are important, but their emotions should also resonate with the space.

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Story – Voices and Plot

- A good story is a repository of voices.
- The texture of the story gains value through its connection with voices – the voice of the characters.
- The finest part of a work needs to be read aloud and has an oratory characteristic, hence appeals best to ears.
- Ultimately, the presence of **voice connects the mind of the author with that of the reader, so the story weaves from both ends.**

And so a good story ought to be a repository of different voices. The texture of the story gains value through its connection with the voices of the characters, voices that sometimes reveal the psyche, sometimes play to his concealing what the characters are thinking. So, the finest part of a work according to E. M. Forster is the one that needs to be read that ought to be read aloud and so it has an oratory characteristic and hence appeals best to the ears.

So, it is the pre-documentation tradition we are looking, at the tradition where documentation of work had not started, morality was there and if you hearken back epic, it is a poem that was meant to be read aloud, that was meant to be, not even read aloud meant to be narrated impromptu and listened and memorized and reproduced down the generations. So, oratory characteristic ought to be present in the novel that is in fact the finest part.

Because ultimately the presence of voice connects the mind of the author with that of the reader such that the story is in the end being built from both sides through the engagement of the writer as well as the reader who is constantly trying to understand and unravel and interpret it.

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Story – Voices and Plot

- Although the author's agency is better celebrated through his plot, characterization or his philosophical ruminations, **the oratory quality transforms the reader-author relation into that of orator-listener, which has a primal appeal of storytelling to it.**
- While the story alone serves the function of progression in time and fulfilling of a primitive interest, when the story is induced by the life of values, a **frictionless simple progression is intercepted by multiple plots, a number of views of the universe, and fantasies** – all of which render a complexity to the narrative.

Although the author's agency is better celebrated through his plot, characterization or his philosophical rumination, the oratory quality transforms the reader-author relation into that of orator-listener relation. And this like I said has a primal appeal, a pre document an appeal that Harkins back the oral tradition, the pre-literary tradition, so the primal appeal of storytelling to it. So, the oratory quality transforms the reader-author relation into that of orator-listener, it has a an appeal to orality, a primal appeal of storytelling to it which precedes the literary tradition.

While the story alone serves the function of progression in time and fulfilling of a primitive interest when the story is induced by the life of values, by the personalized time. A frictionless, a simple progression that only the story could make is intercepted is bulked by multiple plots, multiple perspectives, different views of the universe, different personal universes and fantasy plays a role in it. All of which render a complexity, a richness to the texture of the narrative.

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Story – Voices and Plot

- Such sophisticated style of narration that not only moves ahead but plays with movement itself, entails sophisticated reader who can enjoy this layered and difficult journey.
- Forster calls life in time as a base and inferior design of storytelling that only emphasizes sequence in chronology.
- However, to completely narrate a life of values that has decoupled from time and completely withdrawn from chronology might be a fiasco.
- Such a writing wants to become a narration without a story.

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So, such sophisticated style of narration that not only moves ahead but plays with progression with movement itself, entails sophisticated reader who can enjoy a layered and difficult journey. E. M. Forster calls life in time as a base and inferior design of storytelling just what happened, like we were talking earlier just wanting to know what happens in a story that is life in time, without any other descriptions.

And it emphasizes only sequence in chronology, art in such a case takes a back seat when we are only riveted to what happens next. However to completely narrate a life of values that has decoupled from time and that has completely withdrawn from chronology could also be a fiasco, a failure of narrative like we say that in order to play with time, we still need a reference to the standard time.

So, such a writing that wants to escape from the coordinates of time altogether that wants to become a narration without a story could face jeopardy a lot of postmodern works faces jeopardy. Where they are about non-stories, they are just narrating mundane even there is no problem that makes a plot work.

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Story – Voices and Plot

- When the story is taken out, just like a backbone from a body, the rest of the work loses coherence.
- Although a modern writing has higher goals to fulfill, they cannot be met outside time and temporality.
- So, the question is not 'story or not story,' but rather **how the story is told**.
- With the evolution of the genre of novel, the writer appeals to the **reader's imagination and creativity**, not merely serving the latter's **curiosity**.
- Through the different characters, their gestures and speech, the novelist is describing himself, rather seeking his own Self.

10

So, when the story is taken out and there is a lot of word expressions, artistic devices used towards amounting to nothing. Then the backbone of a body is actually taken out and the rest of the work is very likely to lose its coherence, it tends to fall apart. Although modern writing has higher goals to fulfill, Forster notes that such a writing cannot be met outside of the category of time and temporality.

So, the question is not story or non-story but about how the story is told in time, how the story does not only move in time but plays with time basically sometimes defies time too. But even for defying time, time has to be there. With the evolution of the genre of the novel the writer appeals to the reader's imagination and creativity, the finer qualities that are expected of a reader not only merely serving the reader's primal curiosity.

Through the different characters, through the gestures of the characters and their speech the novelist tries to describe also his own self, the possibilities of his own self and in fact the novelists through the characters is trying to explore and seek his own self.

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Novel, History and Story

- Each character and situation are built through word-masses, through which the author's own persona peeps.
- The words that give birth to characters may be created in a state of composure, delirium, or emotions that are in between.
- They are a **glimpse into the author's mind and his perspectives of the people and world around him.**
- Forster explains how the authorial intervention is crucial in separating the **history or memoir from the novel that necessarily feeds on imagination.**

11

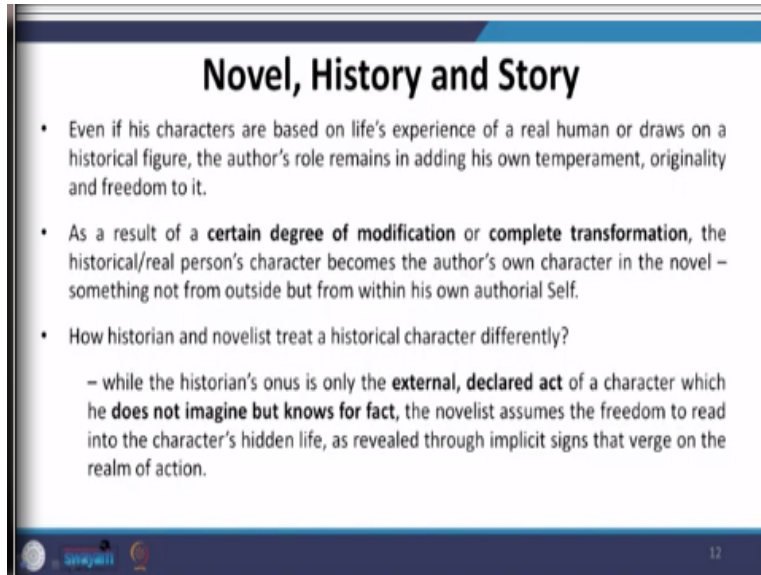
Each character and situation are built through word-masses, through which the author's own persona also peeps. The author is discovering himself through the characters he has created, the words that give birth to characters may be created in a state of composure or conversely in a state of delirium or too many emotions that are in between the state of composer and the state of delirium.

There could be so many different shades of emotions that the author might be experiencing while creating an event or a character. So, these characters and events are a glimpse into the author's psyche and his perspectives of the people and the world around him. E. M. Forster explains how the authorial intervention is crucial in separating the history or memoir from the novel which is a fictional piece and which therefore necessarily feeds on imagination.

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Novel, History and Story

- Even if his characters are based on life's experience of a real human or draws on a historical figure, the author's role remains in adding his own temperament, originality and freedom to it.
- As a result of a **certain degree of modification** or **complete transformation**, the historical/real person's character becomes the author's own character in the novel – something not from outside but from within his own authorial Self.
- How historian and novelist treat a historical character differently?
 - while the historian's onus is only the **external, declared act** of a character which he **does not imagine but knows for fact**, the novelist assumes the freedom to read into the character's hidden life, as revealed through implicit signs that verge on the realm of action.



Even if his characters, a novelist's characters are based on life's experience of a real human or draws on a historical figure. The literary author's role unlike that of the historian remains in adding his own temperament, his own originality and freedom to it. That is to say even if we are treating historical facts or historical figures in a fictional work the role of the fiction writer comes in adding some imaginary dimensions to these fact-based events and characters.

So, as a result of a certain degree of creative freedom that the literary fictional author is enjoying, the artist is enjoying there could be modifications rendered to these historical events or characters or in fact complete transformation whereby the historical or real person's character becomes the author's own character in the novel. So, if I am writing a novel on Akbar or on Tipu Sultan or on Queen Elizabeth but he or she is a character in my novel and not the historical figure.

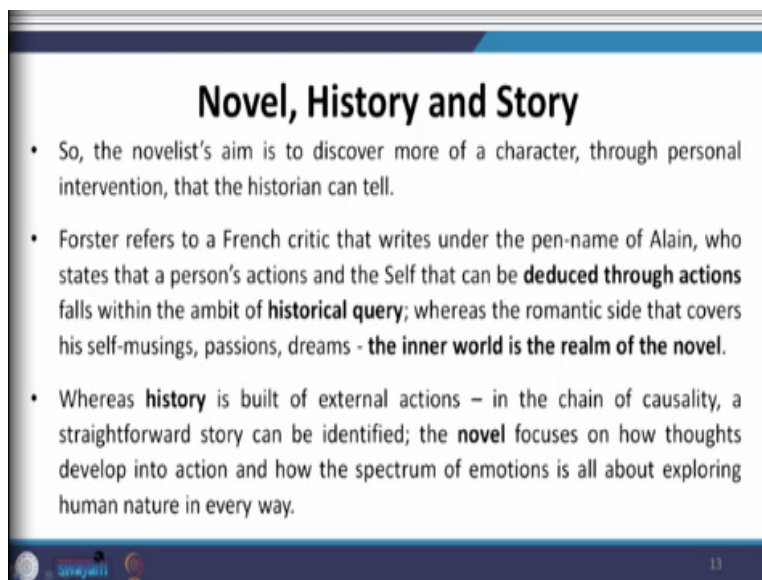
Then I have the creative freedom I assume the creative freedom to experiment extrapolate and speculate certain dimensions at certain dimensions that we do not see in documented history. So, these new traits that the fiction writer introduces that, the artist introduces are not something from outside but from within the position of the authorial self, it is the author's authority in a way or the author's kind of freedom to further experiment with these characters and make them his own.

So, let us see if I rewrite Shakespeare's Macbeth to Makbul it will become the Indian Bollywood director's rendition of Macbeth, his understanding of Macbeth or Hamlet, it is not going to be Shakespeare's Macbeth anymore. If I make a film on M.K Gandhi is still going to be my Gandhi in my film, so my authorial freedom, my fictional premises stay in the entire process. So, how does the historian and the novelist treats the same historical character differently?

E. M. Forster would say that while the historian's onus is only on the external declared act of a character which everyone can see about which there is a universal agreement and so which he does not really imagine but knows for fact. The novelist, the creative writer assumes the freedom to read into the character's hidden life, the character's possibilities, extrapolate the characters psyche which are revealed through implicit signs, not something direct that verges on the realm of action.

So, history put more plainly would be interested in what Elizabeth is doing in front of the world as a public figure. Fiction would extrapolate what she might be thinking at that point, probably she was crying shut in her bedroom and so forth, that is the author's version of Elizabeth, the author's rendition of Elizabeth.

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Novel, History and Story

- So, the novelist's aim is to discover more of a character, through personal intervention, that the historian can tell.
- Forster refers to a French critic that writes under the pen-name of Alain, who states that a person's actions and the Self that can be **deduced through actions** falls within the ambit of **historical query**; whereas the romantic side that covers his self-musings, passions, dreams - **the inner world is the realm of the novel**.
- Whereas **history** is built of external actions – in the chain of causality, a straightforward story can be identified; the **novel** focuses on how thoughts develop into action and how the spectrum of emotions is all about exploring human nature in every way.

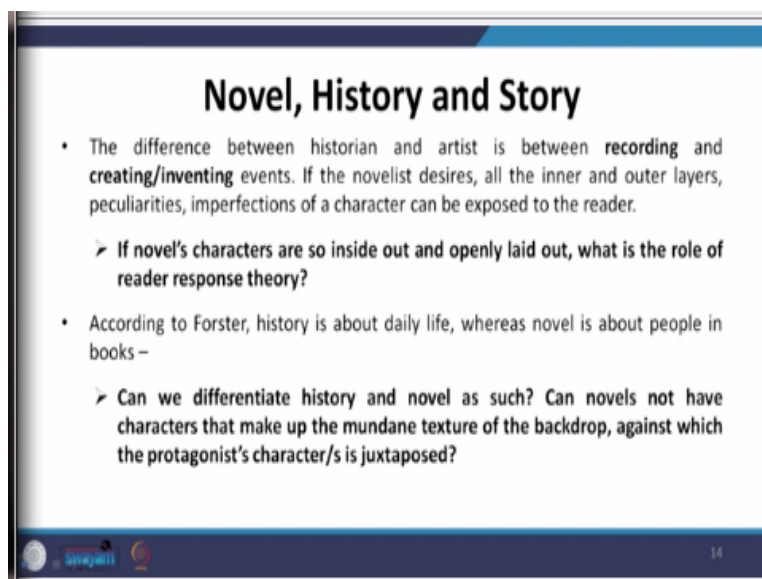
So, the novelist's aim is to discover more of a character, be it the historical character that existed for real through personal intervention, through creative intervention therefore that the novelist is

able to say where a historian's narrative is limited where a historian cannot say any further because a historian completely relies on fact. So, Forster refers to a French critic that writes under the pen-name of Alain who states that a person's actions and the self can be deduced through actions.

So, Forster refers to a French critic whose pen-name is Alain and he states that a person's actions in the self can be deduced through actions that fall within the ambit of historical query. On the other hand the romantic side of any character which covers for example the person's self musings, passions, dreams all these goings on in the inner world of the character is something that interests the artist, the inner psyche, the inner possibilities of any historical figure would appeal to and become the realm of art, it would become the realm of the novel.

So, whereas history is built of external actions in the chain of causality, a straightforward story can be identified out of history. On the other hand the novel focuses on how thoughts develop into action and how the spectrum or the range of emotions is all about exploring human nature in everyday life.

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Novel, History and Story

- The difference between historian and artist is between **recording** and **creating/inventing** events. If the novelist desires, all the inner and outer layers, peculiarities, imperfections of a character can be exposed to the reader.
 - If novel's characters are so inside out and openly laid out, what is the role of reader response theory?
- According to Forster, history is about daily life, whereas novel is about people in books –
 - Can we differentiate history and novel as such? Can novels not have characters that make up the mundane texture of the backdrop, against which the protagonist's character/s is juxtaposed?

14

So, the essential difference between historian art and artist is between that of recording and creating or inventing events. So, if the novelist desires all the inner and outer layers peculiarities, oddities, imperfections of historical character could be presented in front of the reader. So, the

novelist is using creative power to expose the historical character in a certain way, show the historical character in a certain light to the reader.

So, if novel's characters are so inside out and openly laid out one might want to question what is the role of the real response theory then. Are the novels characters even that open and that kind of given to the reader in clear and simple terms? Sometimes novel's characters could be very difficult to crack and that is where comes in reader response theory, 5 readers could have 5 very legitimate and very valid readings, very valid interpretations of the same characters.

So, the characters are also not a very easy to decode or very easy to unpack at all times. According to E. M. Forster history is about daily life, whereas novel is about people's who belong to books and later he talks more about the difference between real people and people that they look very real but within the space of art. We might want to end our lecture today by asking whether we can differentiate history and novel as such.

Are they not a lot of conversions or overlap between the 2? Can novels not have characters that make up the mundane texture of the backdrop, the very same backdrop against which the protagonist's characters is juxtaposed? So, novels also have characters, that are quite mundane, that are resemble the real people that historians talk about and then something dramatic happens. Wherein comes the propelling force, the incentive of art of artistic endeavor.

So, while the ambitions of the novelist and the historian are quite different to begin with, there are also certain overlaps which cannot be ignored. With this I am going to stop our lecture here today and let us meet with another round of discussions in another lecture. Thank you.