

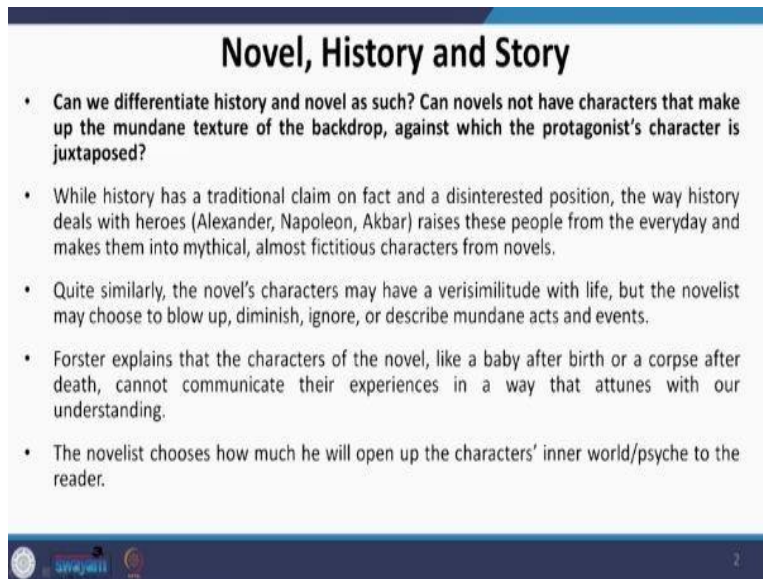
**Narrative Mode and Fiction**  
**Prof. Sarbani Banerjee**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology-Roorkee**

**Lecture-24**  
**Features of the Novel-III**

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 work aspects of the novel. So, we ended our last lecture with the question of whether at all we can separate history from a novel or history from fictional work as such. We see that there are a lot of convergences and yet a lot of many differences between a creative writing a fictional piece and a historical work.

They are created with very different aims, their premises are very different and yet there are plenty of overlaps too.

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**Novel, History and Story**

- 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 is juxtaposed?
- While history has a traditional claim on fact and a disinterested position, the way history deals with heroes (Alexander, Napoleon, Akbar) raises these people from the everyday and makes them into mythical, almost fictitious characters from novels.
- Quite similarly, the novel's characters may have a verisimilitude with life, but the novelist may choose to blow up, diminish, ignore, or describe mundane acts and events.
- Forster explains that the characters of the novel, like a baby after birth or a corpse after death, cannot communicate their experiences in a way that attunes with our understanding.
- The novelist chooses how much he will open up the characters' inner world/psyche to the reader.

For example, can novels not have characters that make up the mundane texture of the backdrop, against with the protagonist's character is juxtaposed, in other words the protagonist could be a fictional a figment of imagination. However, in many fictional works and novels we see that the backdrop is taken from a historical period and a lot of it is fact-based.

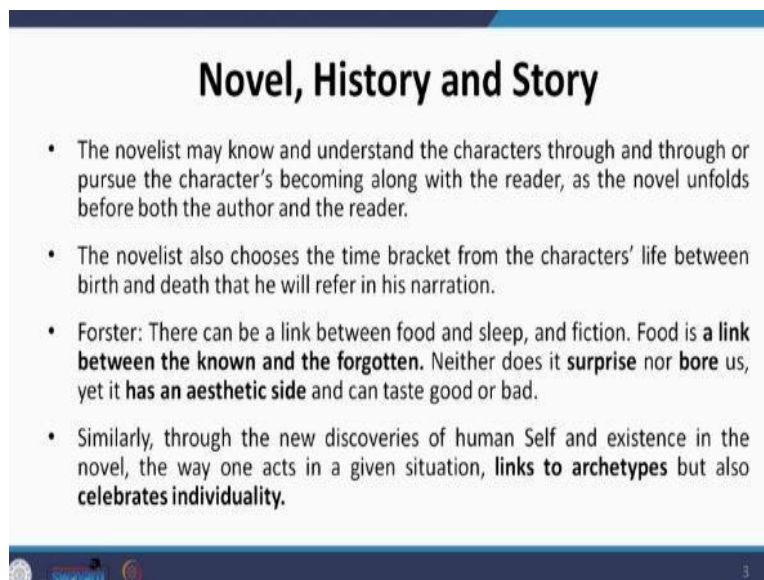
On the other hand we see that the basic premise of history, where history comes from is fact based. Its traditional claim is on fact and a disinterested distant position. However, we have also seen the way history deals with heroes such as Alexander, Napoleon, Akbar and so on raises these real people from the mundane, from the everyday dimension and makes them into mythical almost fictitious characters that have directly come out of novels that have emerged from fiction.

So, they become almost mythologist historical figures. So, similarly we see the novel characters may have a very similitude with life, however the novelist may choose to blow up, diminish, ignore or further elaborate mundane acts and events from which they draw. So, that is how a raw stock becomes stuff. The raw material, the raw ingredients that we draw from our society in the process of literalization we tend to make them a little more or less.

That is how they become part of art; an artistic intervention goes into making them characters in creative works. So, E. M. Forster explains that the characters of the novel just like a baby after birth or a corpse after death, cannot communicate their experiences in a way that attunes with our understanding. So, the novelist has to choose how much he will open up about the characters in a world, in a psyche to the reader. The character cannot do it on their own.

The novelist throws light into a psyche, which is forever elusive part of which will always remain beyond the understanding of the reader and even beyond the understanding of the novelist, who is the creator of the character.

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**Novel, History and Story**

- The novelist may know and understand the characters through and through or pursue the character's becoming along with the reader, as the novel unfolds before both the author and the reader.
- The novelist also chooses the time bracket from the characters' life between birth and death that he will refer in his narration.
- Forster: There can be a link between food and sleep, and fiction. Food is **a link between the known and the forgotten**. Neither does it **surprise** nor **bore** us, yet it **has an aesthetic side** and can taste good or bad.
- Similarly, through the new discoveries of human Self and existence in the novel, the way one acts in a given situation, **links to archetypes** but also **celebrates individuality**.

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So, the novelist may know and understand the characters through or through sometimes or what happens more commonly is that the narrator, the novelist, the creator of the character is also pursuing the characters becoming progressively understandable or progressively comprehended possibilities of the character along with the reader. So, the reader and the writer in a way undertake a similar journey trying to pursue and understand the character trying to discover different dimensions and aspects of the character as the novel unfolds before both the author and the reader.

The novelist also chooses the time bracket from the character's life between birth and death that he will refer in his narration. So, there is not always the necessity to treat the entire life of the protagonist within the purview of the novel, it could be there but it may not be in belongs Roman usually we see that we are kind of we are following the protagonists from the time of birth till he grows up his youth and then the later experiences, but not in all forms or different versions all different avatars of novel.

There could be only a part of the protagonist's life that interests the literary textual space of the novel, which is pivoted to the central problem which begets the plot. So, E. M. Forster says there can be a link between food and sleep with fiction. So, fiction has a lot in common with food and sleep according to Forster. Food is a kind of liaison, a kind of link between the known and the forgotten neither does it surprise nor does it bore us and yet it has an aesthetic side and can taste good or bad.

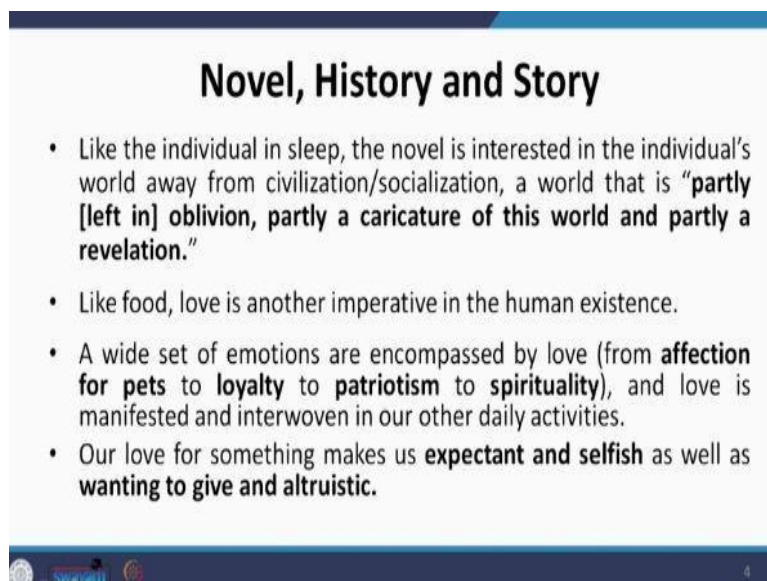
So, food is not monotonous. Every time it is a repeated act of eating, but every time it interests us or almost every time it interests us. We still judge every time whether a food is good or bad and yet it is something we are born with knowledge of, even before we know anything and yet it is almost like an archetype that we are born with it is a part of us, it is part of our innate self the idea of food is not new even to a baby.

And yet we are not taken aback by it and it does not bore us or we do not feel that we have had enough about this topic of eating; because as long as we live this is something this knowledge will sustain our existence. So, food will be there as long as we are alive. So, similarly with the question of human self and existence in the novel, we discover new aspects of human self and existence.

And yet when we realize that a character has behaved in a certain way, we also can relate to that character. In a similar situation perhaps we could have reacted in the same way, we could have responded to a situation in a similar manner. So, the way an individual acts in a given situation is very similar to the way an individual acts towards food and sleep. It links us in a way to archetypes to an already primitive knowledge that we have in us.

And yet it celebrates individuality, because each experience of eating, each experience of sleeping could be different. They could have different dreams, different tastes, different smells, different appearances and so we never get quite bored of them.

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**Novel, History and Story**

- Like the individual in sleep, the novel is interested in the individual's world away from civilization/socialization, a world that is **"partly [left in] oblivion, partly a caricature of this world and partly a revelation."**
- Like food, love is another imperative in the human existence.
- A wide set of emotions are encompassed by love (from **affection for pets to loyalty to patriotism to spirituality**), and love is manifested and interwoven in our other daily activities.
- Our love for something makes us **expectant and selfish** as well as **wanting to give and altruistic**.

Like the individual in sleep, the novel is interested in the individual's world away from civilization or socialization. So, the novel wants to know a world that is partly left in oblivion, partly a caricature of this world and partly a revelation or a discovery. So, like food, love is another imperative in the human existence. So, here we see the novelist is really interested in discovering unfurling and playing with all sorts of loves a wide set of emotions that are encompassed by love.

So, love could be of so many different kinds. Right from affection, it could be an affection for pets, then loyalty or patriotism to us once a community or country and then spirituality, which is love for god. And love is manifested and interwoven in our daily activities. So, love for something makes us expectant and selfish as well as altruistic and self-negating wanting to give.

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## Novel, History and Story

- The novelist is similarly in love with the human nature and the human existence. He puts his story, plot, form, and aesthetics at stake in order to get a better insight into human characters.
- How do characters in fiction differ from real life?
- Forster explains that while in **real situation** even a baby's presence is felt all the time when events of greater import are happening around it, in a **novel** the characters are presented on the centre-stage and then relegated to the background and kept frozen there, depending on how the actions take place. This helps to take forward the fundamental problem of the plot.

So, the novelist is similarly in love with the human nature and the human existence. The novelist almost thrives the existence of an author the novelist lives the life of a writer through pursuing through trying to constantly discover and rediscover human existence. He puts his story, plot, form and aesthetics at stake. He puts all of this to test in order to get a better insight into human characters.

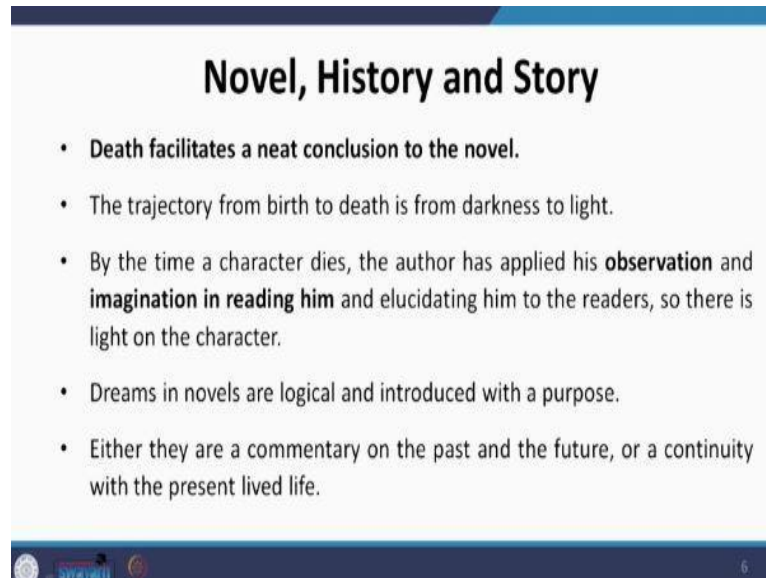
Meaning that in a bid to pursue a character's possibility the plot many times might be take part is the form might tend to fall apart, the aesthetics might get desired, but still the novelist's main aim remains that I am trying to understand what the character could do next, what the character to become next. So, how do characters in fiction differ from real life? E. M. Forster explains that while in real situation even baby's presence is felt at all time.

Because, it is even as very important things are going on around the babies are cognizant of the same and let us say it keeps crying or continuing with it is prattle in the background. When events of greater importance are happening in a novel the characters are always presented on the center stages who engage with the problem. And once their role or their contribution or their engagement with the problem ends they are relegated to the background and kept frozen there.

For example we do not get to see the crying baby constantly when an urgent situation is being described by the novelist. So, depending on how the actions take place characters in an artwork come to the fore and then they are relegated to the background. This helps to take forward the fundamental problem of the plot, not all characters are given equal emphasis.

What we are constantly journeying with are not all the characters, at all times, across all chapters, in all pages, but what stays with us from end to end in a novel is the problem of the plot and the characters that are relevant at different stages of that problem or development of that problem.

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**Novel, History and Story**

- Death facilitates a neat conclusion to the novel.
- The trajectory from birth to death is from darkness to light.
- By the time a character dies, the author has applied his **observation** and **imagination in reading him** and elucidating him to the readers, so there is light on the character.
- Dreams in novels are logical and introduced with a purpose.
- Either they are a commentary on the past and the future, or a continuity with the present lived life.

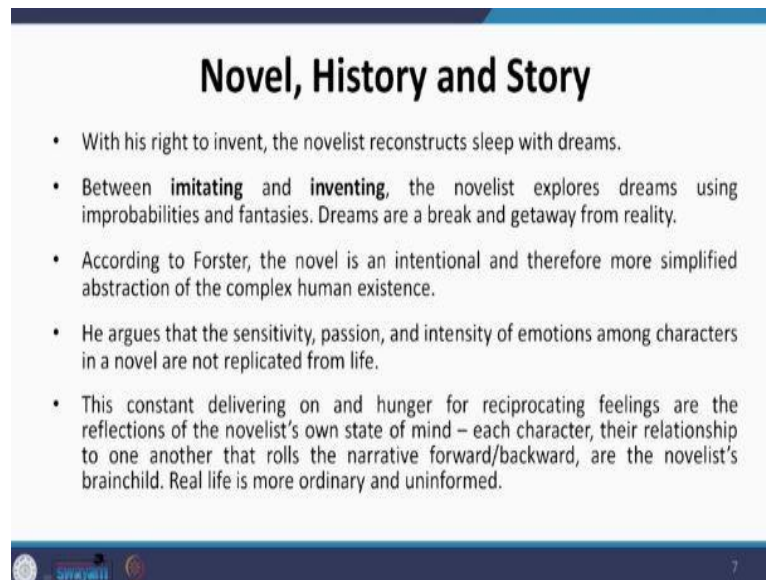
So, death facilitates a neat conclusion to the novel. The trajectory from birth to death as Foster would note is from darkness to light. Why? Because, by the time a character dies the author has applied his observation and his authorial skills, his imagination in reading the character and elucidating or presenting the character to the readers. So, there is a light on the character.

We know the character more in the end than we would know the character at any other stage. So, from darkness to light death bestows light. Dreams in novels are most of the times logical as even forced to reads dreams and they are introduced with a purpose. Either they are a commentary on the past and the future or a continuity with a present lived life and it is experiences.

Having said that we have to understand that Ian Foster is writing at a period of time which is still it is the beginning of modernist movement by the time we come to a Kafka or even the postmodern writers this may not hold true the situations change, where recouring to dream and fantasy recouring to absurd becomes also a political choice as a way of moving away from the terrible from the unbearable reality, which keeps crushing human existence, human individuality in a certain way.

In order to kind of move out of the suffocating experience one feels in reality, in real society one could recourse to dream and so reality is in dispersed with fantasy like we see in the case of Kafka and letter writers.

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### Novel, History and Story

- With his right to invent, the novelist reconstructs sleep with dreams.
- Between **imitating** and **inventing**, the novelist explores dreams using improbabilities and fantasies. Dreams are a break and getaway from reality.
- According to Forster, the novel is an intentional and therefore more simplified abstraction of the complex human existence.
- He argues that the sensitivity, passion, and intensity of emotions among characters in a novel are not replicated from life.
- This constant delivering on and hunger for reciprocating feelings are the reflections of the novelist's own state of mind – each character, their relationship to one another that rolls the narrative forward/backward, are the novelist's brainchild. Real life is more ordinary and uninformed.

So, with the right to invent, the novelist reconstructs sleep with dreams. Between imitating and inventing, the novelist explores dreams using improbabilities and fantasies. Dreams are therefore a break and a getaway from reality. According to Forster, the novel is an intentional and therefore a more simplified abstraction of the complex human existence. Forster would argue that the sensitivity, passion and intensity of emotions among the different characters in a novel are not really replicated from life.

So, novel tends to capture or probably is closest in terms of the different genres that we have novel is probably the closest to life. It tries to show the arbitrariness of life. However, there is novels in traditional novel forms there is this constant delivering on and hunger for reciprocating feelings, which as Forster notes reflects the novelist's own state of mind. So, each character their relationship to one another that rules the narrative forward or backward are the novelist's brain child, real life could be more ordinary and more uninformed.

So, in the later novels the novels being written in late modern or postmodern era. We see the absolutely, the arbitrariness, the randomness of a real human existence becomes more and more prominent in a novel. However, the set patterns of the inter-illumination are observable more in the earlier avatars of novel that are written in the realist and nationalist traditions that



still tend to simplify human existence that cannot really grasp the very many layers that are involved in human thinking and acting.

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## Novel, History and Story

- While history and life teach us that human relationships are only liable to change whereas **social habits like marriage, based on a contract stays**; the **novel seeks an idealized permanency** which the reader may find as agreeable.
  - While sharing the dream of the reader, don't novels (especially its modern avatar) also show fragmentation and a fall from the permanence/consummation? Don't plots find this imperfection as a motivation to carry on?
- While **Homo Fictus** is constantly hungering for and occupied with human relationships as the author would want him to, **Homo Sapiens** finds significant time to carry out ordinary acts like eating and sleeping, focusing which will not contribute to the moot problem in the novel.

So, while history and life teach us that human relationships are only liable to change whereas, social habits such as marriage which is based on a social contract can stay. The novel seeks and idealized permanency, this reader may find as agreeable. However, here I would like to add a comment to what Forster is saying this is one of the earlier avatars of novel. Novel can be much more rebellious, much more experimental than this. And this is also a version of a mediocre novel we have to understand.

This is a kind of novel written for bread and butter basically trying to appease the largest number of audience possible. So, morality commercial success everything comes to **you** gets to play a role rather than the intellectual satisfaction of the writer. So, **so** it is a very safe way of writing, where the novel is trying to idealize some kind of permanence, because as many other critics have theorized no including bhaktin and so as many critics have theorized novels such as Lucas and bhakti and then later Milan Kundera notes.

They would all agree that novel is all about instability and incoherence; later goes on to become a non-narrative, a non-story, where the plot does not really move it flounders its struggles. While sharing the dream of the readers, the novels especially it is modern avatar also show the possibilities of falling apart, the possibilities of fragmentation and a fall from this sort of idyllic idealized permanence or contamination.



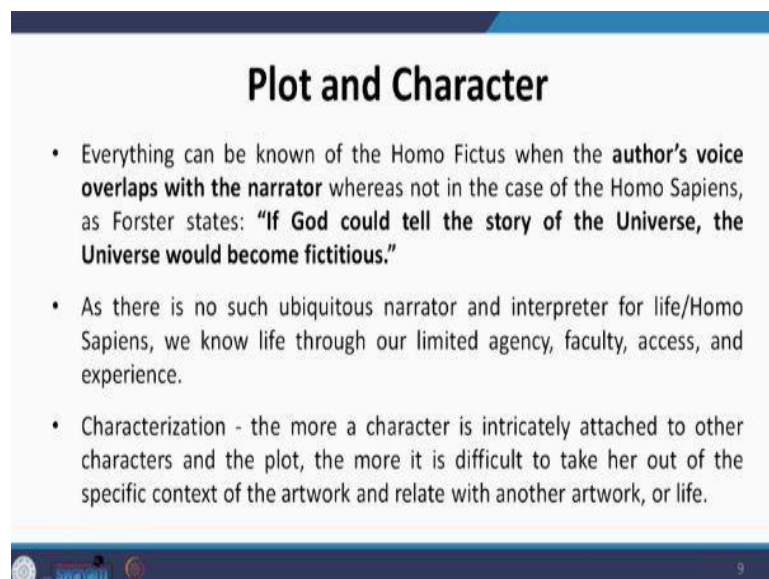
This is one question we need to ask; the trajectory of novel, the history of novel we see is moving towards this incoherence, it is not very happy with a whole meaning as such. So, do not plots find this imperfection as the very motivation that keeps it to carry on that enables it to carry on? So, Forster is talking about a two types of human existence one is Homo Fictus, the other is Homo Sapiens.

While, Homo Fictus is constantly hungering for and occupied with human relationships as the author would precisely want him to. Homo sapiens find a significant time to carry out ordinary acts such as eating and sleeping, focusing such mundane behaviour or activities will not contribute to the most important problem in the novel. So, like I was saying a while back eating, sleeping, a crying baby they are all relegated to the background.

It is understood that the characters are while passing through a difficulties, it could be a love related problem, a problem related to profession or it could be a problem that the person is facing with the state, with the government, with some organization, with the community the person is still eating and sleeping. It is just that it does not get portrayed amply in the writing. That is Homo Fictus.

Homo Fictus is only those aspects of the human's activities that contribute to the problem. Homo sapiens is all of it the both the problem and the mundane existence the repeated acts.

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**Plot and Character**

- Everything can be known of the Homo Fictus when the **author's voice overlaps with the narrator** whereas not in the case of the Homo Sapiens, as Forster states: **"If God could tell the story of the Universe, the Universe would become fictitious."**
- As there is no such ubiquitous narrator and interpreter for life/Homo Sapiens, we know life through our limited agency, faculty, access, and experience.
- Characterization - the more a character is intricately attached to other characters and the plot, the more it is difficult to take her out of the specific context of the artwork and relate with another artwork, or life.

So, everything can be known of the Homo Fictus when the author's voice overlaps that of the narrator. However, this is not true in the case of Homo Sapiens. As Forster would state if God

could tell the story of the universe; the universe would become fictitious. So, precisely because, God is not telling the story of the universe, some of it is still unknown and it is still not a fiction. Real is not everything known, but once again we have to remember, this has been written keeping in mind.

The earlier movements when a novel still is growing as is akin to the genre, but later on it was a close of 20th century for example; several decades later we see that novel has gone on to become something completely different, more complicated and the kind of the avatar of Homo Sapiens that Forster is talking about can also be felt, can also be observed in later versions of novels, where experimentation is heightened.

So, there is no such ubiquitous narrator and interpreter for life or Homo Sapiens and so we know life only through our limited agency, limited faculty, limited access and experience. So, basically later novels talk about this limitation, about this flawed state of human existence, where not everything thing can be known not all expectations can be met. And hence, it in a way puts to the center, puts at the heart of the work the diminished human.

Now, characterization: Regarding characterization we can see that the more a character is intricately attached to other characters and to the plot, Forster would state that the more it is difficult to take her or him out of the specific context of an artwork and graft him or relate him or her with another artwork or identify immediately with life. So, when a character is being created is depicted in an artwork if it is very closely tied to the plot.

It is very difficult to adapt, receive and kind of rewrite that character, remake that character in another artistic endeavor, in another artwork, because the character very strongly, very powerfully, very deeply belongs to one literary piece, one artistic piece. So, it becomes a greater challenge to say that this character also belongs to another plot to another work.

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## Plot and Character

- While story is a narrative of events in their time sequence, plot emphasizes causality over time sequence when narrating events.
- Rather than only moving in time, plot answers the question 'why,' thus linking events with each other as an incentive to move forward.
- While story demands only a primal curiosity, plot demands intelligence and memory of the reader.
- Through half-explained gestures and conversations, the plot retains a part of the reader's mind in a state of suspense, hence suspending time sequence, while the other part of the reader's mind moves ahead to attend further events in the narrative.

So, such a plot is usually a plot, where the characters are very tightly bound to the narrative, very tightly bound to each other such a plot is also more complicated and interdependent. So, the entire thing is growing in tandem the development of the plot is happening in tandem where the plot grows along with the characters and the events. So, like I said the plot and the characters are interdependent and they do not comprise isolated existences or isolated experiences.

And so, this is precisely why in such a complicated plot the characters simply belong there, very strongly belong there and it is very difficult to transplant to kind of borrow a character from such a work and make it a part of another. So, while story obeys progression in time sequence the plot makes narration in harmonious and complex with creation, within creation for example and other authorial maneuvers, which play with time.

So, in other words plot is something that makes an artwork a piece of art, the plot is all about literariness, literariness which makes a piece of work, a work of literature not something that is apart from the ordinary, something that is apart from the mundane as Roman Jakobson would say. So, the plot is complicated because of characters that enter the textual frame.

According to author's will but then we also see that they start imitating life and the can in the process start acting arbitrarily sometimes define the neat larger scheme. So, characters make it difficult for a work to tie, tie a polish, loose ends and just converge and conclude. Characters make it difficult.

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## Plot and Character

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So, while story is a narrative of events in their time sequence, plot emphasizes causality over time sequence when narrating events. So, rather than only moving in time, plot answers the question why. So, plot is not about this happen, because of this why did not happen? So, thus linking events with each other as an incentive to move forward; we are not only showing what but we are also delving into the reason.

So, while story demands only a primal curiosity, but next it only excites us and the suspense factor is central to the story. Plot also demands intelligence and memory of the reader. So, the other faculties of human mind are also involved. Through half explained gestures and conversations in complete chapters, open-ended chapters the plot remains a part of the reader's mind in a state of suspense in a suspended state.

Hence suspending time sequence, while the other part of the reader's mind also has to move on move ahead in order to attend further events in the narrative not all answers are immediately given. There are many questions whose answers will be probably given in the last in the end or in many a times some of the questions remain unanswered. So, the creative participation on the part of the reader becomes very important.

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## Plot and Character

- The plot-maker expects a sophisticated reader to remember the loose ends that will be tied afterwards, so **memory becomes important**.
- For the **genre of drama**, the playwright's random taking sides with characters and the plot leads to formation of men, women and situations that are vulnerable – more **obvious in enactment than in words**.
- **Flat or unidimensional characters** – characters that do not have many layers and do not show different dimensions of thinking and being.
- Assigned with a **definite quality** and a **single idea**, in their purest form they can be called **stock 'types' or caricatures**.

So, the plot maker expects a sophisticated reader to remember all these loose ends that will perhaps be tied afterwards perhaps not all of them, so memory gets to play a very important role, memory becomes very important here. For the genre of drama, we see that the playwright's random taking sides with characters and the plot leads to formation of men, women and situations that are vulnerable.

So, in a drama that is to say the playwright randomly takes sides very obviously takes sides with or against characters. So, a drama is more obvious in enactment than in words. Then Forster goes on to talk about flat or uni-dimensional characters and rounded characters. Characters that do not have many layers to them and that do not show much development or during the movement of the narrative, during the progression of the plot.

The characters that do not show different dimensions of thinking and being could be seen as flat or unidimensional characters. Now, assigned with a definite quality and a single idea, in the purest form these unidimensional or flat characters could be called as stock types or even caricatures.

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## Character

- A flat character does not mutate or develop but remain loyal to the plot.
- They move **unaltered by circumstances**.
- **Round characters**, on the other hand, **cannot be summed up in one phrase**.
- They pass **modified through the major events of the plot**.
- They represent real life in showing different facets of their characters.
- E.g. Dickens' characters like Pip and David Copperfield are round but in a diffident manner.

So, a flat character does not mutate or develop but remains loyal to the plot. They do as a plot wants them to do. They emerge or appear at a point, where the plot, where it serves the largest schema and disappear quite in agreement to the development, they never disrupt the development. They are the non-experimental kind. They move on our unaltered by circumstances.

Because, they are the archetypes or the stock figures the symbols that do not have much individuality. They do not rebel or they do not disrupt any happening. They are quite at peace with the traditional presence once they are relegated to the background, they do not make noise from there basically. So, on the other hand we have the round characters, who cannot be summed up in one phrase.

They are the ones that cause the difficulty; they are the ones that add torque moving force to the plot also. So, they keep modifying themselves and the surroundings the past modified through the major events of the plot. They represent real life much more than the flattened characters. In showing the different facets, the different possibilities that could be present in them.

Now, Forster says the Charles Dicken's characters such as pip and David Copperfield are very rounded but in a diffident manner. They are stock or stereotypical characters, they are archetypes; they are symbols, but not quite directly.

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## Character

- Dickens' genius lies in the fact that although his characters are 'types', they do not lack the human depth. So not exactly mechanical and have their own path to follow.
- The **flat character** fulfills the unsophisticated desire for permanence of the reader.
- **Round** characters are not the refuge to such desires.
- Flat characters act mechanically following a **shallow vision of humanity**.
- Flat figures are best as comic, on whom the author does not invest much.

Dickens' genius lies in the fact that although his characters ascribe to certain types; they do not lack the human depth. So, they are not exactly mechanical, but also have a path to follow. Although, they are white representative of certain symbols, they stand for certain symbols. The flat character fulfills the unsophisticated desire for permanence of the reader, remain unaltered.

The human possibilities are not explored at all; there is no emotional, intellectual, sensual, sensuous, physical, psychic, excesses in them. They can be contained in any container, any plot. So, round characters are not the refuge to or do not satisfy such desires of the reader as happily ever after, happy forever. Round characters would never serve to such unreal and unsophisticated desire on the part of the reader. Flat characters act mechanically like I said and they are a shallow vision of humanity.

So, flat characters as Forster would say are best as comic as part of a comic relief in the middle of a serious intense situation they come and go they relieve the reader, they are kind of let us say a Lal face in the novel, in the narration, where we can relax a little bit in their presence. So, these are the characters flat figures or flat characters on whom the author would never invest too much; they come and go, they are like a comic relief. I would like to stop our lecture here today and let us meet with another round of discussions in our following lecture. Thank you.