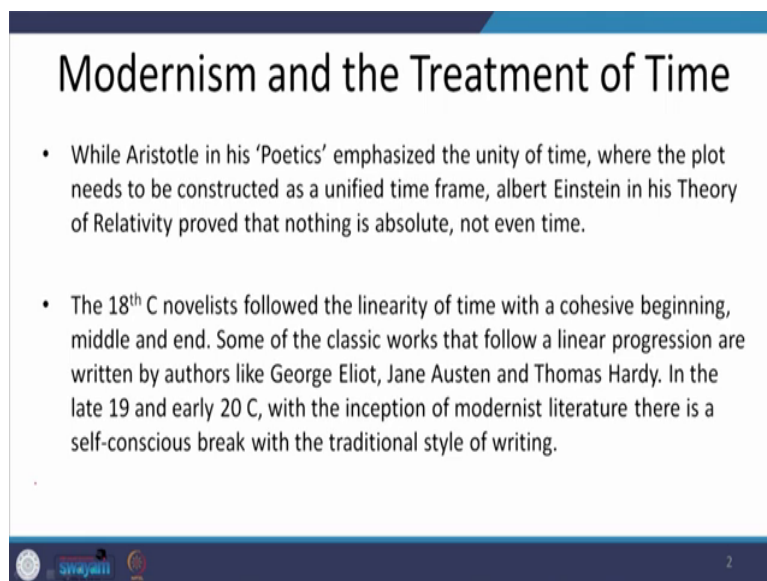


**Narrative Mode and Fiction**  
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**Indian Institute of Technology – Roorkee**

**Lecture – 33**  
**The Modern Novel-II**

Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on Narrative Mood and Fiction. We are discussing modernism and the treatment of time through looking at a stream of consciousness one of the devices literary devices that have been deployed time.

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The slide is titled "Modernism and the Treatment of Time" and contains two bullet points. The first bullet point discusses Aristotle's 'Poetics' and Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The second bullet point discusses the linearity of time in 18th-century novels and the self-conscious break in modernist literature. The slide also features a logo for 'swayam' and a small number '2' in the bottom right corner.

- While Aristotle in his 'Poetics' emphasized the unity of time, where the plot needs to be constructed as a unified time frame, Albert Einstein in his Theory of Relativity proved that nothing is absolute, not even time.
- The 18<sup>th</sup> C novelists followed the linearity of time with a cohesive beginning, middle and end. Some of the classic works that follow a linear progression are written by authors like George Eliot, Jane Austen and Thomas Hardy. In the late 19 and early 20 C, with the inception of modernist literature there is a self-conscious break with the traditional style of writing.

And again by different modernist writers such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. So, we will also have some textual discussions in our lecture today. While, Aristotle; in his poetics emphasizes the unity of time where the plot needs to be constructed as a unified time frame. Albert Einstein, in his theory of relativity proved that nothing is absolute, not even how time functions?

The 18th century novelists followed the linearity of time with the cohesive, beginning middle and end. So, some of the classic works that follow a linear progression are written by authors such as George Eliot we have Jane Austen, then Thomas Hardy. And so, this is how writings always lead to a closure and the reader's expectations are likewise here. Towards the late 19th and early 20th century with the inception of a modernist literature. There is a self-conscious breakaway from this traditional style of writing and narration.

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## Modernism and the Treatment of Time

- In the 20 C, there was a shift towards science and psychology, with the influence of works by Sigmund Freud, whose basic premises of argument was that subjective reality was based on the play of basic drives and instincts, which enable us to interpret the activities in the physical world.
- The focus of the novelists had moved from the social realities of the characters to the character's psyche , in an attempt to grasp the multitudinous thoughts and feelings that pass through the characters' minds.
- This led to the discovery of terms, such as **internal monologue** and **streams of consciousness**.

In the 20th century there is a shift towards science and psychology, something that we have already mentioned in our previous lecture. And there is a influence of works by Sigmund Freud, whose basic premises of argument was that subjective reality was based on the play of basic drives and instincts. Which enable us to interpret the activities happening in the physical world in the outside world.

So, the focus of the novelists had moved away from the social realities of the characters to the characters psyche. So, the inner journey starts from here on. There is an attempt to grasp the multitudinous thoughts and feelings that pass through characters mind. So, the complex universe and the mind itself is started interesting the modernist tradition, the modernist writers. This leads to the discovery of terms such as internal monologue and streams of consciousness.

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## Stream of Consciousness and Interior Monologue

- Both interior monologue and stream of consciousness involve the presentation of a character's thoughts to the reader. However, there are differences between the two.
- In **interior monologue**, unlike in stream of consciousness, the character's thoughts are often presented using traditional grammar and syntax, and usually have a clear logical progression from one sentence to the next and one idea to the next.
- Interior monologue relates a character's thoughts as coherent, fully formed sentences, as if the character is talking to him or herself.
- **Stream of consciousness**, in contrast, seeks to portray the actual experience of thinking, in all its chaos and distraction. Stream of consciousness is not just an attempt to relay a character's thoughts, but to make the reader experience those thoughts in the same way that the character is thinking them.

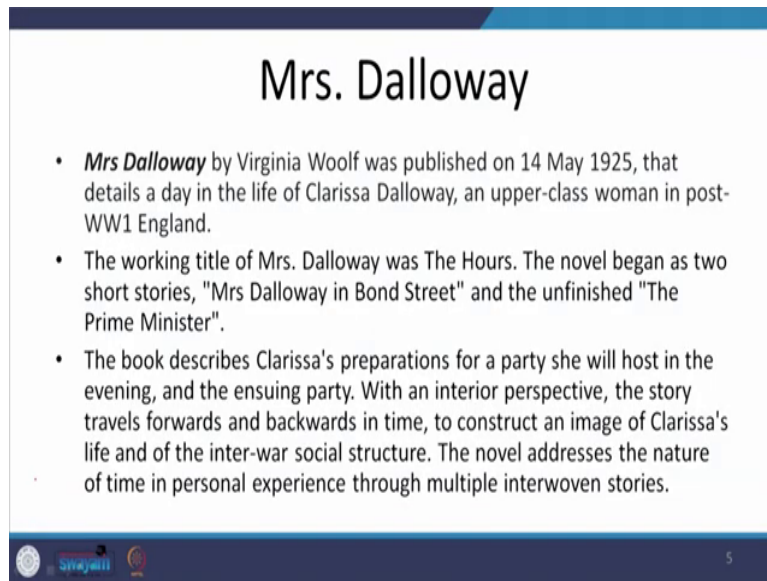
Both interior monologue or internal monologue and stream of consciousness involve the presentation of a character's thoughts to the reader. However, there are certain differences between the two. In interior monologue or internal monologue, unlike in stream of consciousness the character's thoughts are often presented using traditional grammar and syntax. And they usually have some clarity.

Some logical progression from one sentence to the other and the ideas are still more coherent. One idea continues and leads to the next. Interior monologue relates a character's thoughts as coherent, fully formed sentences are present as if the character is talking to himself. So, although it is talking within oneself, the thought process is still coherent, it is unified. It is not fragmented.

On the other hand, in stream of consciousness, we see that there is a portrayal of the actual experience of thinking that goes on inside of a human psyche. Where I mean it is all chaos and distraction. So it is not a closed space it the mind, does not function as a closed space. It is constantly being interrupted by the happenings outside. So, the fragmentation happens as a result of too many thoughts coming and overwriting one another.

And external happening punctuating the thought somewhere in the middle and so on. So, it makes the reader experience those thoughts in the same way as the characters are thinking them. So, for hopping navigating from one thought to the other. The reading experience becomes more challenging in the case of the stream of consciousness and a lot more skills are expected out of the reader.

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**Mrs. Dalloway**

- **Mrs Dalloway** by Virginia Woolf was published on 14 May 1925, that details a day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway, an upper-class woman in post-WW1 England.
- The working title of Mrs. Dalloway was The Hours. The novel began as two short stories, "Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street" and the unfinished "The Prime Minister".
- The book describes Clarissa's preparations for a party she will host in the evening, and the ensuing party. With an interior perspective, the story travels forwards and backwards in time, to construct an image of Clarissa's life and of the inter-war social structure. The novel addresses the nature of time in personal experience through multiple interwoven stories.

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So, Mrs Dalloway, by Virginia Woolf is a work. It is a classic and it deploys stream of consciousness remarkably through the protagonist Clarissa Dalloway. Mrs Dalloway, by Virginia Woolf, was published on 14th of May 1925 and it details one day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway who is an upper class woman in post World War I, England. The working title of Mrs Dalloway was the hours and the novel began as two short stories.

Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street and the unfinished one which is the Prime Minister. The book describes Clarissa's preparations for party she will host in the evening and the party that follows. With an interior perspective the story travels backwards and forwards in time to construct an image of Clarissa's life and of the inter-war social structure, social scenario. The novel addresses the nature of time in personal experience through multiple interwoven stories.

So, several stories are interwoven and they come and they have played inside Clarissa's psyche.

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## Mrs. Dalloway

- The overwhelming presence of the passing of time and the impending fate of death for each of the characters is felt throughout the novel.
- As Big Ben towers over the city of London and rings for each half-hour, characters cannot help but stop and notice the loss of life to time in regular intervals, throughout the story.
- For Septimus, who has experienced the vicious war, the notion of death constantly floats in his mind as he continues to see his friend Evans talking about such things.
- The constant 'stream of consciousness' perspective of the characters, especially Clarissa, serves as a distraction from this passing of physical time and the ultimate march towards death, but each character is intermittently reminded of the inevitability of these facts.
- Like Joyce's *Ulysses*, the novel emphasizes the passage of time within the frame of the novel, which takes place in the course of a single day.

The overwhelming presence of the passing of time and the impending fate of death for each of the characters is felt throughout the novel. As the Big Ben towers over the city of London rings for half an hour. Characters cannot help but stop to notice this loss of life to time how we lose certain levels of our life to time in regular intervals. And this feeling this realization keeps coming back throughout the story.

Whenever Big Ben comes to punctuate a thought a personal thought in the middle. For a character like Septimus who has experienced the vicious war the notion of death constantly flutes in his mind, as he continues to see his friend Evans talking about the war. The constant stream of consciousness perspective of the characters especially that of Clarissa, serves as a distraction from the passing of physical time.

How much time has elapsed outside is? Sometimes not noticed until we look at the beginning and listen to the clock tower. So, it is telling us how individuals are ultimately marching towards their death? But each character is intermittently reminded of this the inevitability of death, the fact that death is which some people have to reach in the end. So, like Joyce's *Ulysses*, the novel emphasizes the passage of time within the frame of the novel which takes place in the course of a single day.

I would like to read briefly from Mrs Dalloway to understand how stream of consciousness happens?

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## Mrs. Dalloway

She had a perpetual sense, as she watched the taxi cabs, of being out, out, far out to sea and alone; she always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day. Not that she thought herself clever, or much out of the ordinary. How she had got through life on the few twigs of knowledge Fraulein Daniels gave them she could not think. She knew nothing; no language, no history; she scarcely read a book now, except memoirs in bed; and yet to her it was absolutely absorbing; all this; the cabs passing; and she would not say of Peter, she would not say of herself, I am this, I am that (Mrs. Dalloway, 15).

She had a perpetual sense as she watched the taxi cabs of being out, out far out to sea and alone. She always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day. Not that she thought herself clever or much out of the ordinary. How she had got through life on the few twigs of knowledge Fraulein Daniels gave them she could not think. She knew nothing, no language, no history. She scarcely read a book now, except memoirs in bed.

And yet to her it was absolutely absorbing all this, the cabs passing and she would not see of Peter she would not say of herself, I am this, I am that. So, we see that the thoughts are happening too many things I mean she is thinking of people's she knows. And then she has impressions from her images surrounding that also go on to influence the way. Her thoughts are processed the way the psyche functions.

So, it is a mingling of past present future. It is a mingling of the inner and the outer. This is how stream of consciousness happens as a layered thought process.

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# Ulysses

- Published in 1922. Key year in the history of literary modernism. Publication of *Ulysses* by James Joyce and *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot.
- The story takes place on 16 June 1904, and is about a man named Leopold Bloom, who walks around Dublin. The book also tells the story of Molly Bloom, his wife, and of Stephen Dedalus, a school teacher.
- Joyce made use of Henry Fielding's epic novel, which is modelled on Homer's *Odyssey*.

From here, we will move to James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* which was published in 1922. A 1922 is a key year in the history of literary modernism, publication of *Ulysses* by James Joyce alongside seminal work by TS Eliot the waste land. So these are some of the signposts of a modernist literature as we know. The story, *Ulysses* takes place on 16 June 1904 and is about a man named Leopold Bloom who walks around Dublin.

The book tells the story of a Molly Bloom as well who is Leopold Bloom's wife and Stephen Dedalus who is a school teacher? Joyce made a use of Henry Fielding's epic novel which is modelled on Homer's *Odyssey*. We see intertextuality in this work where he is drawing on characters from other author's works. So, characters those are already present in the works written before *Ulysses*.

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# Ulysses

- Draws on the psychological and subjective narration of Dorothy Richardson
- Lawrence Stern's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* inspire Joyce's conception of time
- Focuses on the process of artistic transformation and exploration
- He appropriates the mythical structure of Homer's *Odyssey* and uses it in the everyday context
- The book consists of 18 chapters, in which each covers one hour of the day
- Every chapter parodies a specific chapter of Homer's *Odyssey*
- Every chapter is associated with a specific colour, art or bodily organ



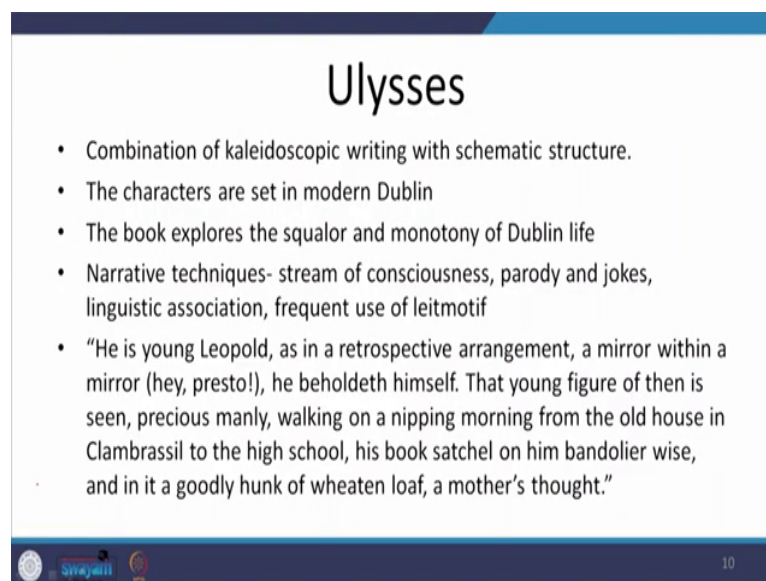
Ulysses draws on the psychological and subjective narration of Dorothy Richardson, Lawrence Sterns the life and opinions of a Tristram Shandy inspired Joyce's conception of time. There is a focus on the process of artistic transformation and exploration. A Joyce appropriates the mythical structure of Homer's Odyssey which is the original and constant reference in this work Homer's Odyssey.

And Joyce is using it in a shifted context in a modern context in an everyday context. How Odyssey can be re-read rewritten in the modern context in the Vis-a-Vis, the urban life, the diminished urban life set in Dublin and the course of one day in a modern man's life. He appropriates a mythical structure of Homer's Odyssey. The book consists of 18 chapters in which each covers one hour of the day and each chapter parodies a specific chapter of Homer's Odyssey.

So, we understand that in the modern times, in other words, the epic cannot be relieved. The conception of time has contracted to a great extent. Lives are not larger than life's. Lives are not as colossal as that of the epic characters. So, in the diminished modern man's life which is crushed by the urban reality. How do we live Odyssey again? If we have to live it, we have to live it like Leopold bloom.

So, each chapter is also associated like we will see with a specific colour or art or even a bodily organ.

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## Ulysses

- Combination of kaleidoscopic writing with schematic structure.
- The characters are set in modern Dublin
- The book explores the squalor and monotony of Dublin life
- Narrative techniques- stream of consciousness, parody and jokes, linguistic association, frequent use of leitmotif
- "He is young Leopold, as in a retrospective arrangement, a mirror within a mirror (hey, presto!), he beholdeth himself. That young figure of then is seen, precious manly, walking on a nipping morning from the old house in Clambrassil to the high school, his book satchel on him bandolier wise, and in it a goodly hunk of wheaten loaf, a mother's thought."

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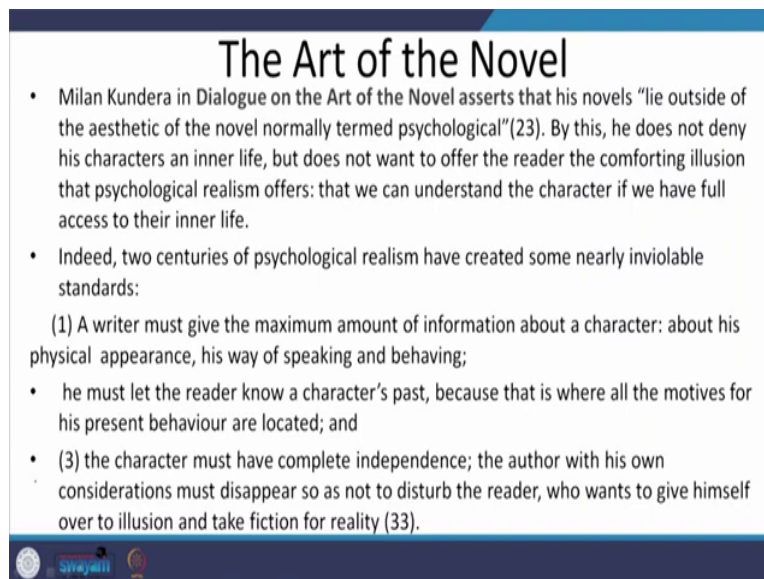


So, there is a combination of kaleidoscopic writing with a schematic structure in *Ulysses*. The characters are set in modern Dublin and the book explores the squalor, the monotony of Dublin life. This is in contra distinction with the elevated lofty ideals that inform epic writing. Here, life is limited human agency is also carved down by several determinants. There is monotony and the narrative technique deployed here is stream of consciousness, parody and jokes, as well as linguistic association.

And a frequent use of leitmotif. Motives that keep traveling through our course of reading the work. So, here is an excerpt from *Ulysses* I quote he is young Leopold and as in a retrospective arrangement, a mirror within a mirror. He pressed too he beholdeth himself that young figure of then is seen a precious manly walking on a nipping morning from the old house in Clambrassil to the high school.

His book Satchel on him bandolier wise and a goodly hunk of wheaton loaf, a mother's thought unquote.

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**The Art of the Novel**

- Milan Kundera in *Dialogue on the Art of the Novel* asserts that his novels “lie outside of the aesthetic of the novel normally termed psychological” (23). By this, he does not deny his characters an inner life, but does not want to offer the reader the comforting illusion that psychological realism offers: that we can understand the character if we have full access to their inner life.
- Indeed, two centuries of psychological realism have created some nearly inviolable standards:
  - (1) A writer must give the maximum amount of information about a character: about his physical appearance, his way of speaking and behaving;
- he must let the reader know a character’s past, because that is where all the motives for his present behaviour are located; and
- (3) the character must have complete independence; the author with his own considerations must disappear so as not to disturb the reader, who wants to give himself over to illusion and take fiction for reality (33).

So, coming back to the art of the novel by Milan Kundera in *dialogue on the art of the novel* Kundera asserts that his own novels. So, Kundera talks about the form of the novel from there on he goes into discussing how he writes his novels? What goes into making his own novels? Kundera says that his novels, I quote lie outside of the aesthetic of the novel, normally termed psychological unquote.

By this Kundera does not deny his characters of an inner life but just that he does not want to offer the reader some kind of a comforting illusion that a psychological realism has offered to the readers. The access to the characters in her life is in a way denied. The character has to be understood without having access fully to that in a life. One can have very bare very paired of a minimal in information about a given character from Kundera's novel.

So, two centuries of psychological realism, according to Kundera has created some nearly inviolable standards regarding creating the characters in the novel. So, for example, the writer it is one of the expectations from on the part of the reader that the writer must give the maximum amount of information about the character's physical appearance, his or her way of speaking and behaving.

And then, who must let the reader know about the characters past because that is where all the motives of the characters present behaviour are located. So, this is in a way, drawing a straight line between past and present and then the characters must have complete independence. The author with his own considerations has to disappear so that he or she does not disturb the reader. The authors, absence will make the fiction turn into a reality.

So, the readers are given into very similitude. They start taking the fiction as reality the modern writing is a complete breakaway from this. We have already discussed the meta-fictional qualities in authors such as Margaret Atwood in, Thomas King. We have discussed several short stories by Julio Cortazar and by Jorge Luis has all of them create a kind of a rough experience for the reader.

The process of reading is fraught with difficulties which expect a reader to be more sophisticated more skilled in the act of reading.

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## Novel as a Sequence of Discoveries

- He states his novels are outside the novel of psychology. There is psychology in them but that is not their primary interest or mainstay.
- Being a central European, Kundera sees the 1914-18 war as a catastrophe that plunged art and literature into the grips of a merciless History. The essential dreaminess of a Proust or Joyce became impossible. Kafka opened the door to a new way of being, as prostrate victim of an all-powerful bureaucracy.
- His key concern is the instability of the self: which is why characters often play games, pose and dramatise themselves; it is to test their own limits.

So, Kundera states that his novels are outside the novel of psychology. There is, psychology in them but that is not the primary interest or mainstay. So, Kundera being a central European from the central Europe sees the First World War as a catastrophe that plunged art and literature into the grips of a history merciless history. When Kundera was writing himself, we know that he faced a lot of censorship from the government.

The communist government he had to flee and he had to save his writing drafts. So, the essential dreaminess of muscle, Proust or James Joyce became impossible in the post-world war one scenario. Kafka opened the door to a new way of being as a prostrate victim of an all powerful of a an overpowering bureaucracy. So, recourse to dream recourse to surrealism to fantasy mingling reality with fantastic elements.

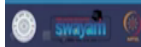
Became survival tactic for novel writing for a form an experimental form such as novel to exist. As a way of escaping from the intolerable from the impossible world the real had to incorporate elements of fantasy and dreams. There seem to be no respite in reality. So, one had to seek respite in dream. So, Kundera key concern is the instability of the self and which is why characters often play games.

They are posing and they are dramatizing themselves through such comic, erratic, odd behaviour. The characters are testing their own limits and it would not be wrong to say, as Kundera himself says that the novelist is testing the character's limits. And thereby the novelist is also testing his own limits within the parameters of modernity modern times.

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## Novel as a Sequence of Discoveries

- Unlike Joyce, there is no internal monologue in Kundera. The reader realizes that the monologue is the author's, as the author tries different approaches in order to *analyse* his own characters.
- His books are philosophical analyses of fictional characters. And the characters are conceived as 'experimental selves' (p.31), fully in line with his core idea that the history of the novel is a sequence of *discoveries*.



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So, unlike James Joyce there is no internal monologue in Kundera. The writings the reader realizes that the monologue is that of the author. If at all, there is a monologue, it is that of the author. As the author tries different approaches in order to analyse his own characters, the author is trying to pursue chase his characters, down their own actions. So, his books are philosophical analysis of fiction and characters.

And so, the characters are conceived as experimental cells through their experimentations an aspect of the author's own self is eventually, revealed. So, that is how the form of novel the genre of novel, is addressing the question of human existence and self-estrangement in the modern times.

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## Imagination

- If the novel is a method for grasping the self, first there was grasping through adventure and action (from Cervantes to Tolstoy). Then grasping the self through the interior life (Joyce, Proust).
- Kundera talks about grasping the self though *examining existential situations*. He begins with existential plights. A woman who has vertigo. A man who suffers because he feels his existence is too light, and so on. Then he creates characters around these fundamentals and puts them into situations which he, as an author, can analyse repeatedly and from different angles, in order to *investigate the mystery of the self*.
- Thus a character is "not a simulation of a living being. It is an imaginary being. An experimental self." (p.34) Making a character 'alive' means getting to the bottom of their existential problem' (p.35).



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So, these characters, the novel characters created by Kundera, are fully in line with his is a core idea that the history of the novel is a sequence of discoveries. So, if the novel is a method of grasping the self first at the outset, when Cervantes conceives, this genre for the first time, through Don Quixote. It is trying to grasp the self at the inception through adventure and action.

We see adventure in action in Cervantes, as well as in Tolstoy. Following that the grasping of the self happens through trying to understand the interior life, as in the case of Joyce and Proust. Kundera talks about the grasping of the self through examining existential situations. So, when the characters go through certain existential situations, certain parts of their self are revealed.

He begins with existential plights through his own characters. He is experimenting, he introduces a woman who has vertigo then a man who suffers because he feels his existence is too light. There is a character who is defined by the series of love affairs and betrayals that she experiences and so on. So, he creates characters around these fundamental situations. There are certain cases in hand that make up their identity.

And so, Kundera puts them into situations which he, as an author is constantly and repeatedly analysing. And he's analysing their cases, their situations from different angles as a way of investigating the question that is at the art of the novelist form which is the mystery of the self. He's trying to unravel that self and it is infinite possibilities. So, the character is not a simulation of a living being.

It is an imaginary being an experimental self in the words of Kundera. Making a character alive means getting to the bottom of the existential problem or claiming to get to the bottom of their existential problem. Kundera would also posit that this is virtually impossible to get to the bottom of a problem and as though after that there is no problem exists. That is not a possibility.

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## Imagination

- A novel examines not reality but existence. And existence is not what has occurred, existence is the realm of human possibilities, everything that man can become, everything he's capable of (p.42).
- The novelist is neither historian nor prophet: he is an explorer of existence (p.44). Rather than giving a clear statement of thought, a novelist involves in games of paradoxes and contradictions. Dogmatic reflection is exchanged with suggestions, propositions – the story or art overrides any thesis.
- The novel is a meditation on existence as seen through the medium of imaginary characters (p.83).
- A theme is an existential enquiry (p.84).

So, a novel examines not reality but various ways of existence. Existence is not what has occurred already out there frozen. Existence is the realm of variegated human possibilities, everything that human can become everything that he or she is capable of. Then Kundera says that the novelist is neither a historian or a prophet. He is an explorer of these different ways possibilities of existence.

Rather than giving a clear statement of thought a novelist involves in games of paradoxes and contradictions. That is why that is how the novel is basically different from a thesis which seeks to raise a few questions and then tries to answer them. So, dogmatic reflection is necessarily exchanged with suggestions. The author is not, forwarding or pushing any kind of Dogma or indoctrination it.

The author can only suggest. The author the moment a novelist tries to take a position, the entire cause or the entire meaning of writing a novel. The purpose is defeated. So, the story or the art of writing the novel has to override any form of any sort of thesis or direct suggestion proposition. So, the novel is a meditation on existence the question of existence, as seen through the eyes of through the lens of through the medium of different imaginary characters.

So, the theme of novel at the art of novel we have the existential inquiry. I am going to stop our discussion here today. And we will meet again with another lecture and another round of discussions. Thank you.