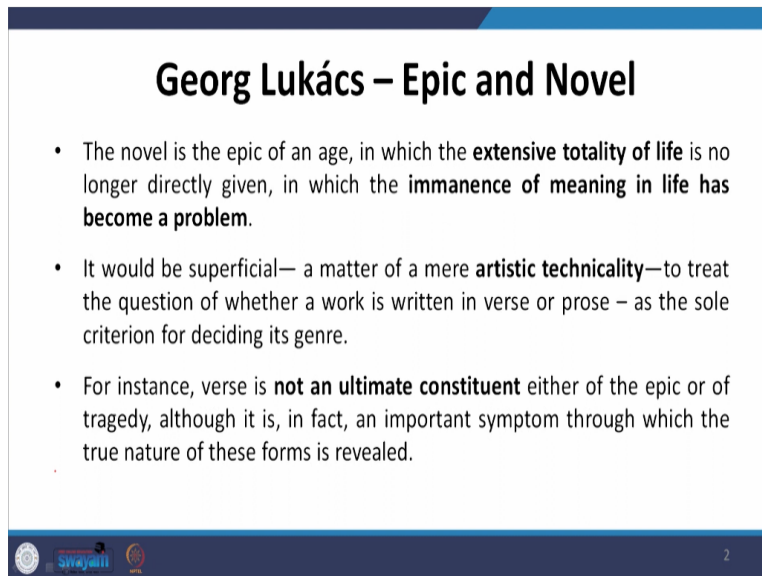


Narrative Mode and Fiction
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Lecture - 07
Fiction and Different Modes of Narrative - II

Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series narrative mode and fiction. We are discussing fiction and different modes of narrative. So, talking about the two genres that we are discussing, epic and novel we need to understand the theorization of these two genres, George Lukacs has attempted a comparative study of the genres epic and novel.

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Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel

- The novel is the epic of an age, in which the **extensive totality of life** is no longer directly given, in which the **immanence of meaning in life has become a problem**.
- It would be superficial— a matter of a mere **artistic technicality**—to treat the question of whether a work is written in verse or prose – as the sole criterion for deciding its genre.
- For instance, verse is **not an ultimate constituent** either of the epic or of tragedy, although it is, in fact, an important symptom through which the true nature of these forms is revealed.

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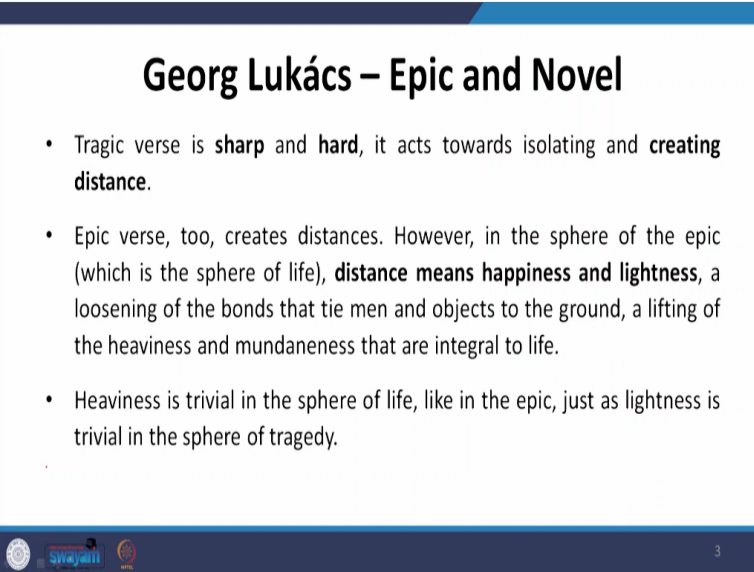
So, according to Georg Lukacs the novel is the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given. So, the imminence of meaning in life has become a problem there is no pre-given meaning to human existence. There has to be a constative discovery a constant looking within oneself, a constant seeking for one's existence identity, I remember I was talking about. So, the scene is a concept that I am going to discuss in my answering lectures where the human at every instance.

The existence at every instance becomes an important question as well as a problem. The lack thereof the lack of existence the seeking for existence, the existential problem all these you know all these factors all these questions are being proved in a genre such as novel. So, it would be

superficial and even a matter of a mere artistic technicality to treat the question of whether a work is written in verse or prose as the sole criteria that decides the genre whether a work is a prose or a verse, does this question entirely decide the genre of a work? The answer is no.

To take an example verse is not an ultimate constituent either of the epic or of tragedy. Although we see that verse is in fact an important symptom through which the true nature of both the epic and the tragedy are revealed through which the true nature of the forms epic and tragedy is revealed.

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The slide features a title 'Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel' in bold black text. Below the title are three bullet points. The first bullet point states that tragic verse is sharp and hard, leading to isolation and distance. The second bullet point explains that epic verse also creates distance but in a positive way, meaning happiness and lightness, as it loosens the bonds of the mundane. The third bullet point notes that heaviness is trivial in the sphere of life, just as lightness is trivial in the sphere of tragedy. At the bottom of the slide, there are logos for 'Sreyani' and 'www' on the left, and the number '3' on the right.

Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel

- Tragic verse is **sharp** and **hard**, it acts towards isolating and **creating distance**.
- Epic verse, too, creates distances. However, in the sphere of the epic (which is the sphere of life), **distance means happiness and lightness**, a loosening of the bonds that tie men and objects to the ground, a lifting of the heaviness and mundaneness that are integral to life.
- Heaviness is trivial in the sphere of life, like in the epic, just as lightness is trivial in the sphere of tragedy.

Now, tragic verse is sharp and hard it acts towards isolating and creating distance. On the other hand, epic verse, we see it too creates distances however in the sphere of the epic distance means happiness and likeness, a kind of loosening of the mundane bond that we are familiar with between the man and the object or man's bond, you know the happiness and lightness that emerges through the loosening of bonds the time in and objects to the ground or the mundane connection of human and objects to the earthly realities.

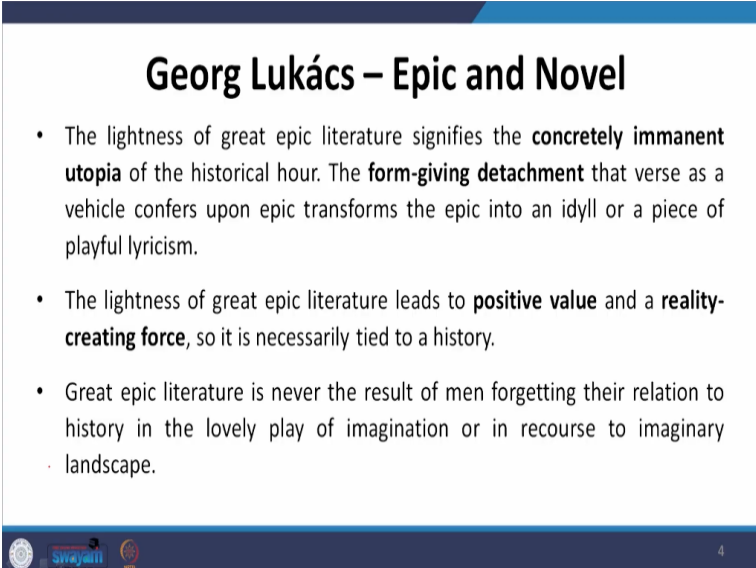
So, epic is a lifting of this kind of mundane heaviness and this heaviness pertains to life; it is integral to life. So, in other words what I am trying to say is that epic maintains this incommensurable distance it is about a past that is hard to visit, that is far, far away it is about the

forefathers it is about the golden era. And being in the flawed existence that we are, we cannot become or we cannot even imagine the epic way of being the epic existence.

We can only fathom, we can only wonder the kinds of humans and their activities the kinds of you know chapters, episodes that go on in an epic it is larger than life. So, heaviness is trivial in the sphere of life like in the epic just as lightness is trivial in the sphere of tragedy. Epic is constantly wanting to move away from heaviness give us something that is anything but mundane anything but identifiable.

So, epic is trying to give us characters and events that are anything but immediately identifiable. Epic has a distance from our contemporary reality from our contemporary reality. That is a necessary characteristic of epic on the other hand tragedy does not sit well with lightness tragedy is constantly journey towards some kind of heaviness.

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Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel

- The lightness of great epic literature signifies the **concretely immanent utopia** of the historical hour. The **form-giving detachment** that verse as a vehicle confers upon epic transforms the epic into an idyll or a piece of playful lyricism.
- The lightness of great epic literature leads to **positive value** and a **reality-creating force**, so it is necessarily tied to a history.
- Great epic literature is never the result of men forgetting their relation to history in the lovely play of imagination or in recourse to imaginary landscape.

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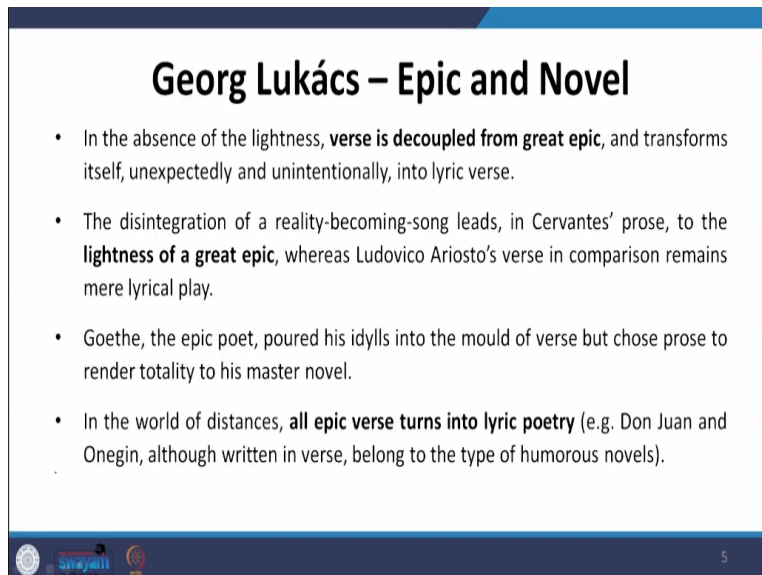
So, the lightness of great epic literature signifies the concretely imminent utopia of the historical hour. So, epic is a documenting history it is recording history but it is also a piece of art. So, an artistic intervention of history, it is a way of life that existed in the past a past that cannot be revisited in any other way. So, there is a kind of utopia there is a kind of ideal that we find in epic humans, in epic moral values.

The word epic is something that refers to larger than the diminished modern or postmodern frame in which we today exist. So, the form giving detachment that verse as a vehicle confers upon epic transforms the epic into an ideal versification you know enables this ideal in a way the rhyme and rhythm that we associate with epic with the orality the oral tradition of epic renders this utopia further accentuates this utopia there is a kind of playful lyricism.

We do not read an epic in isolation epic is not meant to be read in isolation, it is about a community, it is a history, it is the tradition, the heritage of a community. So, it is meant to be read and listened, it is meant to be read in company of people and recited memorized and told and retold. So, the likeness of any great epic literature leads to some positive value and a reality creating force. so, it is necessarily tied to a history.

So, it would not be wrong to say that epic lies at the crossroads at the intersections of history and utopia in other words a utopian history, an ideal aspect of a faraway past. Now great epic literature is never the result of men forgetting their relation to history. Epic is commemoration and celebration of forefathers of ancestors of traditions and values and so we see this lovely play of imagination being an integral part of epic and also recourse to imaginary landscape.

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Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel

- In the absence of the lightness, **verse is decoupled from great epic**, and transforms itself, unexpectedly and unintentionally, into lyric verse.
- The disintegration of a reality-becoming-song leads, in Cervantes' prose, to the **lightness of a great epic**, whereas Ludovico Ariosto's verse in comparison remains mere lyrical play.
- Goethe, the epic poet, poured his idylls into the mould of verse but chose prose to render totality to his master novel.
- In the world of distances, **all epic verse turns into lyric poetry** (e.g. Don Juan and Onegin, although written in verse, belong to the type of humorous novels).

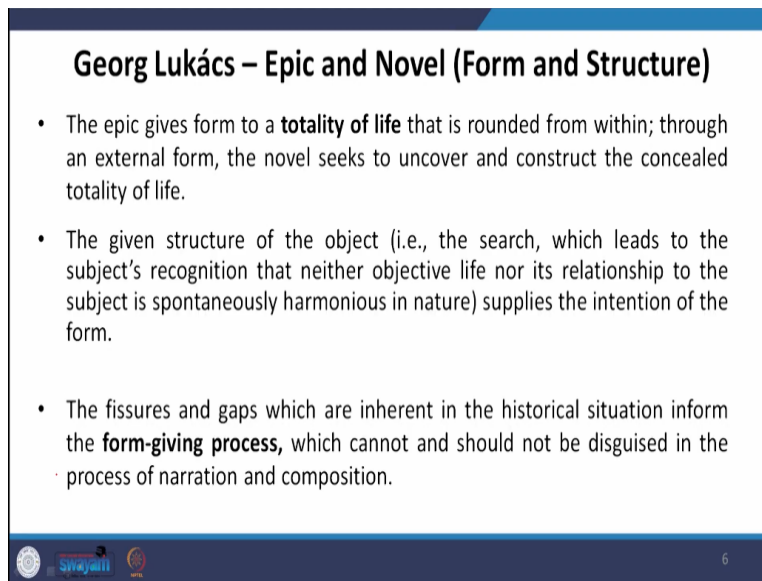
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So, in the absence of the lightness, verse is decoupled from great epic. So, if we have the verse but we do not have the lightness we do not have lyricism leading us to utopia. In that case where

stress forms itself into lyric first unexpectedly and unintentionally verse becomes a lyric verse it is no longer epic. So, the disintegration of a reality becoming a song leads for example in Cervantes' prose to the lightness of a great epic.

On the other hand, as we see Ludovico Ariosto's first in comparison remains mere lyrical play. Now Goethe who was an epic poet poured his idols into the mould of words but he chose prose to render totality to his masterpiece which was essentially novel. In the world of distances all epic verse turns into lyric poetry, here we are thinking of Don Juan we are thinking of Onegin and this verse all the written inverse belong to the type of humorous novels.

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Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel (Form and Structure)

- The epic gives form to a **totality of life** that is rounded from within; through an external form, the novel seeks to uncover and construct the concealed totality of life.
- The given structure of the object (i.e., the search, which leads to the subject's recognition that neither objective life nor its relationship to the subject is spontaneously harmonious in nature) supplies the intention of the form.
- The fissures and gaps which are inherent in the historical situation inform the **form-giving process**, which cannot and should not be disguised in the process of narration and composition.

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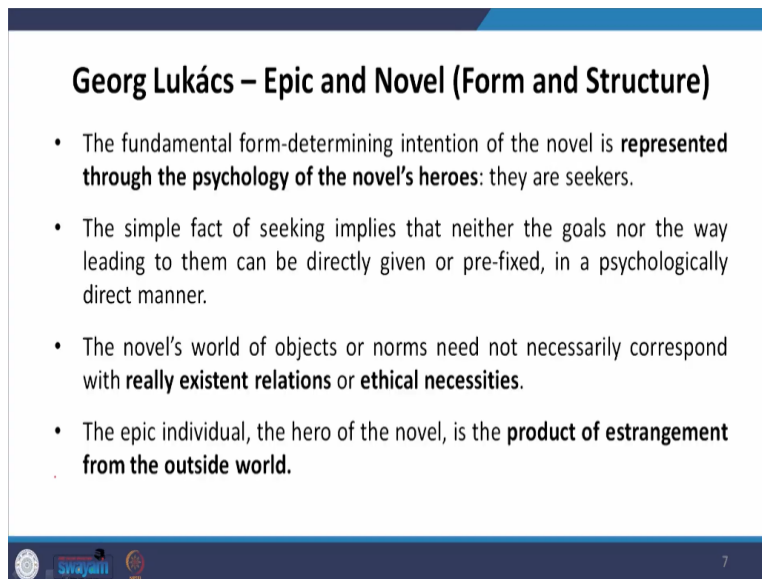
So, the epic gives form to a totality of life. So, this is something I have been sitting in my earlier lectures too, through an external form through an external form the novel seeks to uncover and construct this totality but in the novelistic tradition this totality cannot be found really. It is a fragmented world it is a fragment itself novel is constantly trying to unravel the self and constantly struggling with the question of existence like I said, so the given structure of the object.

For example, the search which leads to the subject's recognition that neither objective life nor its relationship to the subject is not something that is harmonious and pre-given supplies the actual intention of the form of the novel. The fact that the relationship between the self and the

world is no more harmonious, no more congruous and an organic pre-given there is a struggle there is a kind of rift and fissure between the two.

That is something that supplies the core intention of the form of the novel. The fixes and gaps which are inherent in the historical situation in form giving process which cannot and should not be disguised in the process of narration and composition.

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Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel (Form and Structure)

- The fundamental form-determining intention of the novel is **represented through the psychology of the novel's heroes**: they are seekers.
- The simple fact of seeking implies that neither the goals nor the way leading to them can be directly given or pre-fixed, in a psychologically direct manner.
- The novel's world of objects or norms need not necessarily correspond with **really existent relations** or **ethical necessities**.
- The epic individual, the hero of the novel, is the **product of estrangement from the outside world**.

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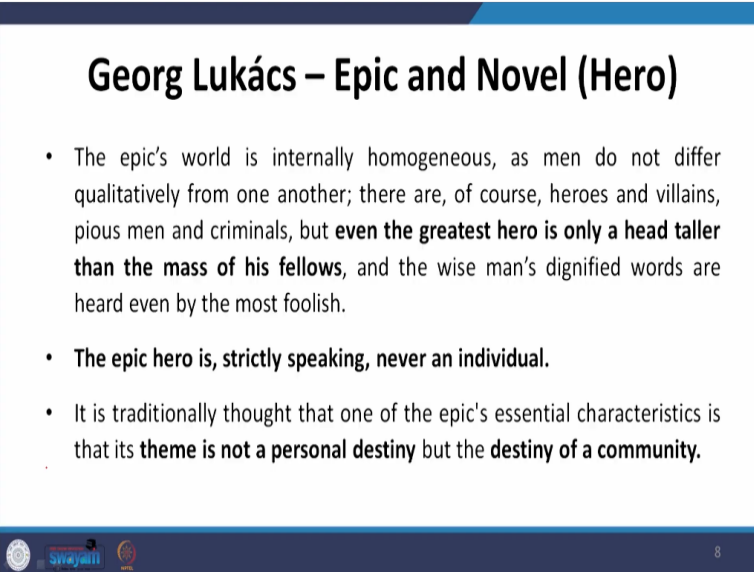
The fundamental form determining intention of the novel is therefore represented through the psychology of the novel's heroes. What is novels form trying to get at? This is something the intention of the novel is concentrated around the novel's hero and they are necessarily seekers, they are seeking something. It could be more than a journey outward it could it is usually a journey on the inner.

So, the psyche becomes the layered psyche the complex psyche the possibilities within human psyche become very important. So, the simple fact of seeking implies that neither the goals nor the way leading to these goals can be directly given nor can they be predetermined or prefixed, in a psychologically direct manner. So, the novel's world of objects or norms need not necessarily correspond with really existent relations or even ethical necessities.

So, the world of novel the characters that we find in a novel do not have, you know they talk about worldly matters they are identifiable but they do not abide by ethical necessities always or even correspond with any existent relations. So, the novels world of objects or norms do not unnecessarily correspond with any real existent relations or ethical necessities. So, the novel is not a thesis it is not it does not have the burden of you know representing reality per se.

Or even carrying the moral burden or the moral message being didactic at all times. That is not something that novel is tied to or the novel must follow.

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Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel (Hero)

- The epic's world is internally homogeneous, as men do not differ qualitatively from one another; there are, of course, heroes and villains, pious men and criminals, but **even the greatest hero is only a head taller than the mass of his fellows**, and the wise man's dignified words are heard even by the most foolish.
- **The epic hero is, strictly speaking, never an individual.**
- It is traditionally thought that one of the epic's essential characteristics is that its **theme is not a personal destiny** but the **destiny of a community.**

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The epic individual, the hero of the novel, is the product of estrangement from the outside world. So, the epic's world is internally homogeneous because the men do not differ qualitatively from one another. I was talking I was giving you an example where stories of you know the trojan war or even the character of Rama, it appears they were known to the society to the contemporary society of Homer and Valmiki respectively.

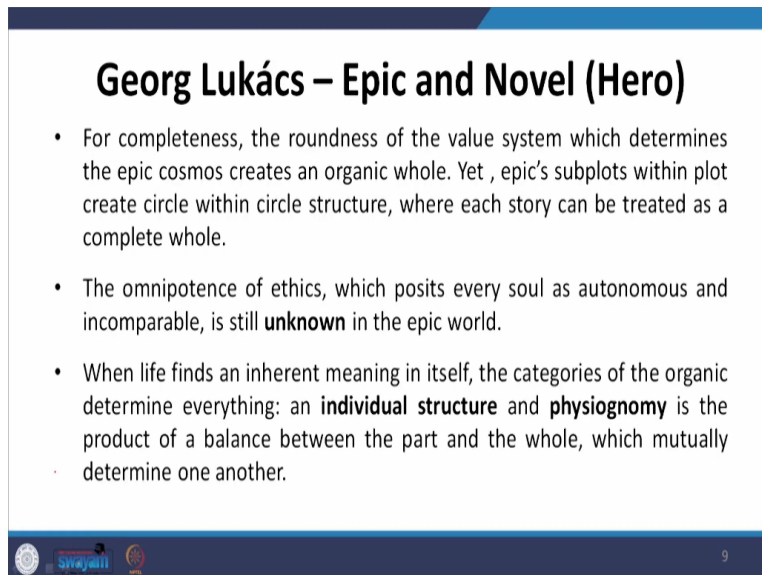
Even as they are writing about these incidents events were known there is nothing unpredictable about the epic. It is already an organic hole within which the characters operate and we have a category which one cannot surpass it is called destiny even the gods and goddesses cannot really challenge fate, fate is above all. So, there is a factor of predetermination in epic, I mean so the men the characters in epic do not really vary too much from one another.

There are of course heroes and villains Pious men and not Pious men, the Vicious. Ones but even the greatest hero is only a bit taller than the mass of his fellows and the wise man's dignified words are heard even by the most foolish. So, we are seeing that in in epic world I was also talking about how the gods have anthropomorphic treats the gods have their jealousies they have their biases they have their shortcomings.

They are very human-like they have their follies contrarily humans through penance through certain you know trainings can become God-like. So, humans and superhumans are on you know on the same platform they can exchange qualities they can they can dialogize. The epic hero strictly speaking can never be an individual. It is traditionally thought that one of the epic essential characteristics is that it is theme is not a personal destiny's thought.

The personal destiny or goal that the epic hero is trying to attain but that of the community, if the epic hero fights a war, it is for the community if the epic hero is glorified or you know mourned at his death it is because of a certain community goals that the hero wanted to achieve or could not achieve.

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Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel (Hero)

- For completeness, the roundness of the value system which determines the epic cosmos creates an organic whole. Yet , epic's subplots within plot create circle within circle structure, where each story can be treated as a complete whole.
- The omnipotence of ethics, which posits every soul as autonomous and incomparable, is still **unknown** in the epic world.
- When life finds an inherent meaning in itself, the categories of the organic determine everything: an **individual structure** and **physiognomy** is the product of a balance between the part and the whole, which mutually determine one another.

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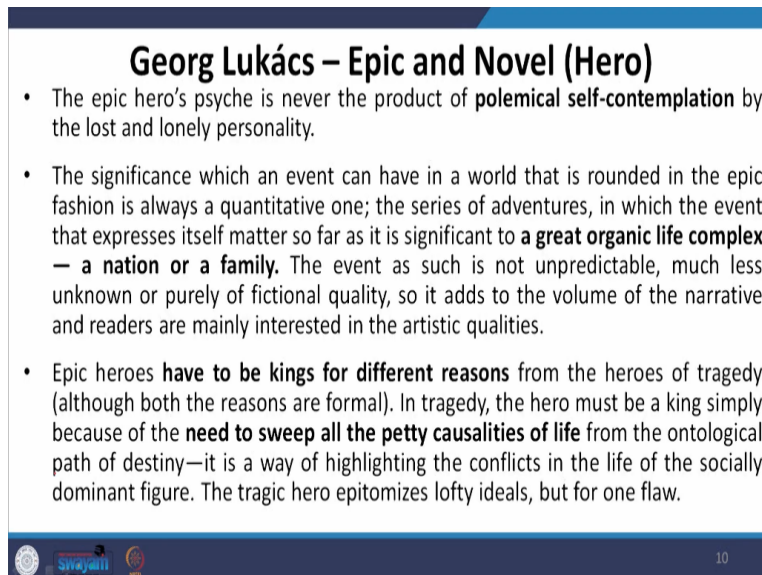
Now for completeness the roundedness of the value system which determines the epic cosmos creates an organic whole and yet epic subplots within the law generation can be treated in

individual capacity. So, the way the epic moves could be seen as you know creating a circle within circle structure where each story can be treated as a complete whole. So, in on Rama's way to the forest meets different characters he meets Ahalya and that becomes such a subplot that is a deviation from the main plot.

So, and that can be treated as a separate story, that episode can be treated as a separate chapter on its own right. So, loose end that is being created only to once again come back to the mainstream narrative. So, smaller holes within a larger hole that is necessarily the structure of the epic. The omnipotence of ethics which poses a every soul as autonomous and incomparable is you know unknown in the epic world.

There is no question of autonomy of individuality as dissociated from the society in the case of the epic world. The epic world the epic way of being or existing is for and with through the community. So, when life finds an inherent meaning in itself the categories of the organic determine everything and individual structure and physiognomy is the product of a balance. That one sees between the part and the whole and the mutually defined or determine one another the part determines the whole and vice versa.

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Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel (Hero)

- The epic hero's psyche is never the product of **polemical self-contemplation** by the lost and lonely personality.
- The significance which an event can have in a world that is rounded in the epic fashion is always a quantitative one; the series of adventures, in which the event that expresses itself matter so far as it is significant to **a great organic life complex – a nation or a family**. The event as such is not unpredictable, much less unknown or purely of fictional quality, so it adds to the volume of the narrative and readers are mainly interested in the artistic qualities.
- Epic heroes **have to be kings for different reasons** from the heroes of tragedy (although both the reasons are formal). In tragedy, the hero must be a king simply because of the **need to sweep all the petty causalities of life** from the ontological path of destiny—it is a way of highlighting the conflicts in the life of the socially dominant figure. The tragic hero epitomizes lofty ideals, but for one flaw.

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The epic hero's psyche is never the product of polemical self-contemplation by the lost and lonely personality. So, epic characters are really or never lost or lonely. The significance which

an event can have in a world that is surrounded in the epic fashion is therefore always a quantitative one. In other words, the series of adventures in which the event that expresses itself matters. So, the series of adventures in which they even expresses itself matters only so far as it is a significant to this great organic life complex.

So, we for example we do not get to know too much about the love life of the hero, do we know too much about the love life of Rama and Sita or even in the case of Iliad we do not get to know a lot of personal life from Paris or Helen's perspective, not even from the perspective of Hector and Andromache. So, we just know that Hector who has not even committed a sin is going to sacrifice his life as or in the capacity of Paris's elder brother.

And he is being separated from his wife (()) (22:54) Pious devoted wife. And the new born baby Astylar the baby that he is never going to see again he is going away to the trojan war for no fault of his and he will ultimately be defeated and killed by Achilles. So, the death of a Hector has nothing has got nothing to do with his personal life he is sacrificing his own life because of the flaw or the mistake the act committed by his brother.

The entire trojan side has to the entire you know trojan troop has to pay for Paris's decision, if he could call it a flaw or act or decision. So, we are not looking at humans in their personal domain only that facet of human life is important which contributes to the greater organic life complex the nation or even once role in a family. The event as such is not unpredictable, so anything in epic is not unpredictable and much less unknown or even purely of fictional quality.

We cannot say that these people never existed they are all Mito-historical figures and it is said by the epic poets that they did exist. So, the fictional quality cannot be entirely seen in an epic. So, these different episodes in an epic actually add to the volume of the narrative and the readers are reading something that they already know. If someone has run away with another person's wife in the end the person's venture will be frustrated the person is going to be defeated.

So, why are we even reading epic if Ravana has taken away someone's wife Rama's wife he ought he has to be killed in the end he has violated dharma same with the quorums. So, what are

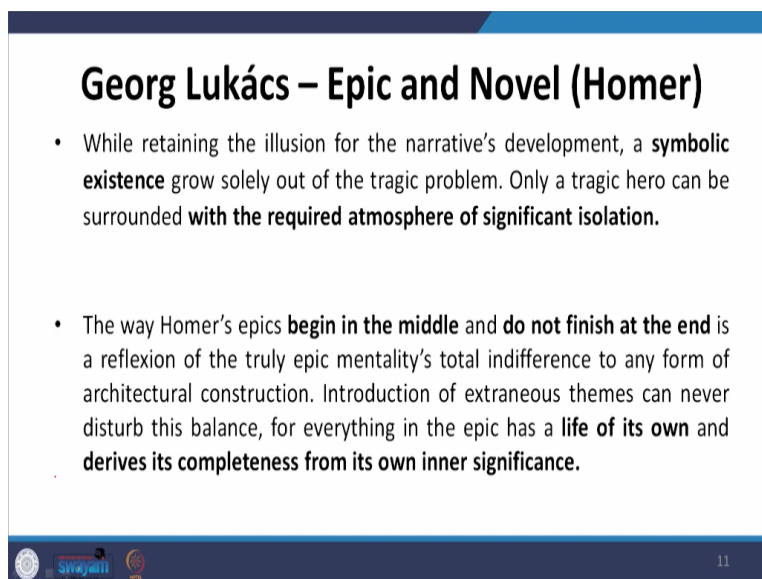
we reading epic is a huge piece of work we are reading, the readers are mainly interested in the artistic politics the versification the rhyme the rhythm because the story is known from beforehand, this man is going to be killed.

Because of his pride because of his flaws because of his wrong acts and misdeeds, So, epic heroes have to be kings for different reasons from that of the heroes of tragedy although, both these reasons they being different from one another are both formal. Now, in tragedy the hero must be a king simply because of the need to sweep all the petty causalities of life from the ontological path of destiny and it is a way of highlighting the conflicts in the life of the socially dominant figure.

In other words, we see that a tragic hero is characteristically someone that epitomizes loftiness, lofty ideals and but for one flaw he could have been an epic hero. So, that this one factor that the epic hero cannot transcend is the tragic flaw. He is defeated by the destiny, otherwise the tragic hero is also a king he belongs to royalty to aristocratic background has lofty ideals epitomizes perfection in many ways we immediately have a Oedipus in our mind we also have king Lear.


But for the tragic flow the no exit situation he could have very well fitted into the frame of the epic hero.

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Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel (Homer)

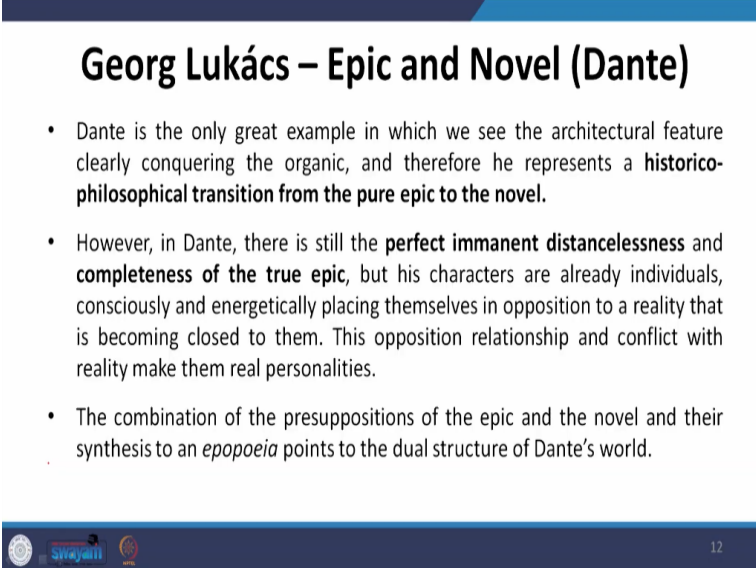
- While retaining the illusion for the narrative's development, a **symbolic existence** grow solely out of the tragic problem. Only a tragic hero can be surrounded **with the required atmosphere of significant isolation**.
- The way Homer's epics **begin in the middle** and **do not finish at the end** is a reflexion of the truly epic mentality's total indifference to any form of architectural construction. Introduction of extraneous themes can never disturb this balance, for everything in the epic has a **life of its own** and **derives its completeness from its own inner significance**.

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So, while retaining the illusion for the narrative's development a symbolic existence grows solely out of the tragic problem. So, only a tragic hero can be surrounded with the required atmosphere of significant isolation. A man that will that taught to be surrounded by subjects by followers is put into an atmosphere of isolation owing to the no exit situation the tragic flaw. So, the way Homer's epics begin in the middle and do not finish at the end shows us reflects the truly epic mentality's indifference to any form of architectural construction.

Such that introduction of extraneous themes can never disturb this balance. Everything in the epic has a life of its own and derives a completeness from its own inner significance just hearken back what I said a while back the circle within circle pattern that very much informs epic form of narration.

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Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel (Dante)

- Dante is the only great example in which we see the architectural feature clearly conquering the organic, and therefore he represents a **historico-philosophical transition from the pure epic to the novel**.
- However, in Dante, there is still the **perfect immanent distancelessness** and **completeness of the true epic**, but his characters are already individuals, consciously and energetically placing themselves in opposition to a reality that is becoming closed to them. This opposition relationship and conflict with reality make them real personalities.
- The combination of the presuppositions of the epic and the novel and their synthesis to an *epopoeia* points to the dual structure of Dante's world.

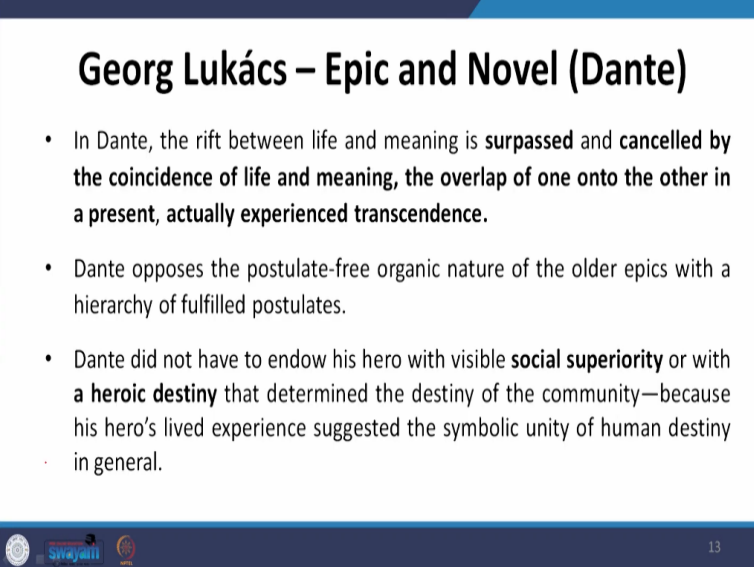
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So, Dante is the only great example in which one sees the architectural feature clearly conquering the organic, and therefore Dante represents a historical philosophical transition from the pure epic to the novel. However, in Dante, there is still the perfect imminent distance lessness and a completeness of the true epic. However, his characters are already individuals, the individuation has emerged in Dante's characters.

They are consciously and energetically placing themselves in opposition to a reality. That is hemming them in that is closing around them. This opposition relationship and conflict with

reality make them real identifiable personalities, something that in our modern condition we can immediately relate to. Now the combination of the presuppositions of the epic and the novel and their synthesis to an utopia points to the dual structure that necessarily forms the basis of Dante's world.

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Georg Lukács – Epic and Novel (Dante)

- In Dante, the rift between life and meaning is **surpassed** and **cancelled by the coincidence of life and meaning, the overlap of one onto the other in a present, actually experienced transcendence.**
- Dante opposes the postulate-free organic nature of the older epics with a hierarchy of fulfilled postulates.
- Dante did not have to endow his hero with visible **social superiority** or with **a heroic destiny** that determined the destiny of the community—because his hero's lived experience suggested the symbolic unity of human destiny in general.

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In Dante, the rift between life and meaning is surpassed and you know we cancelled through the coincidence of life and meaning, through the overlap of life on to the meaning in a present actually experienced transcendence. So, Dante opposes a postulate free organic nature of the older epic form and he is introducing a hierarchy of fulfilled postulates. Dante did not have to endow his hero with a visible social superiority or with a heroic destiny Percy which determined the destiny of the community.

This is only because his hero's lived experience would suggest nothing but a symbolic unity of human destiny in general. So, hero's individual experience lived experience speaks to human destiny in general. With this I am going to stop our lecture today and we will discuss further in our on-swing lectures, thank you.