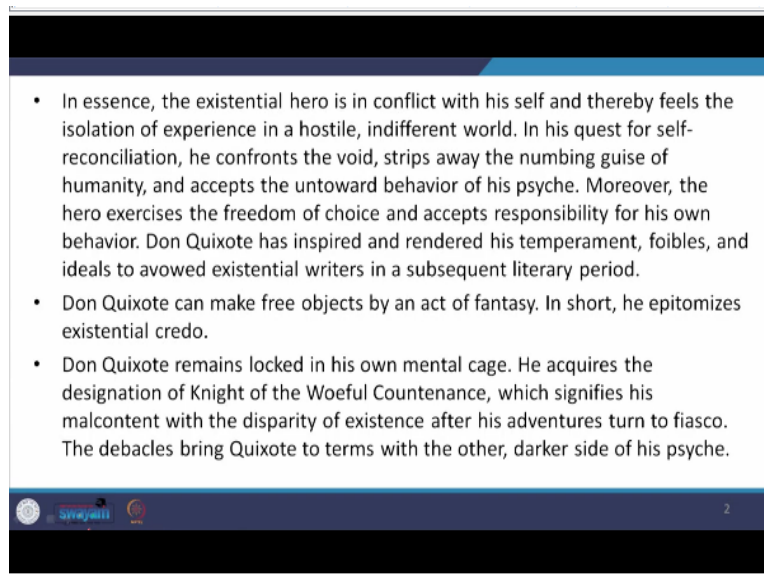


Narrative Mode and Fiction
Prof. Sarbani Banerjee
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology-Roorkee

Lecture-12
Commentary on the Genre of Novel III

Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on narrative mode and fiction. We are discussing commentary on the genre of novel in the light of Miguel Cervantes Don Quixote.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:37)



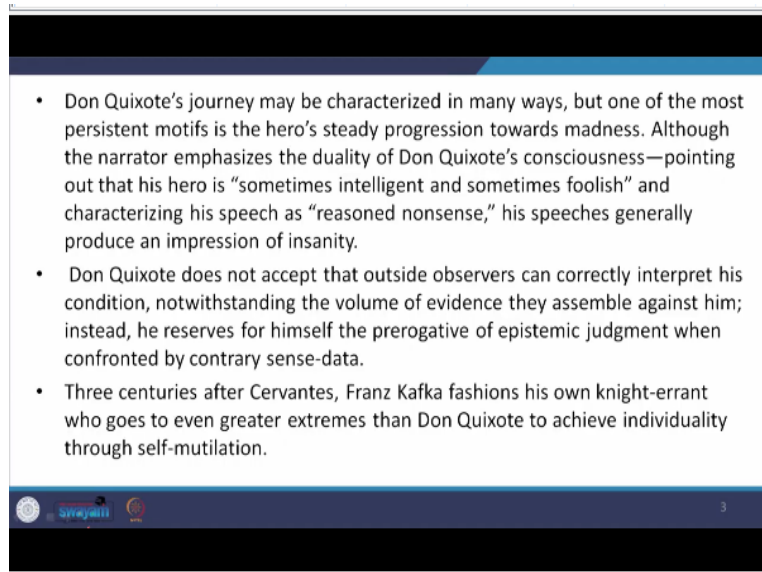
- In essence, the existential hero is in conflict with his self and thereby feels the isolation of experience in a hostile, indifferent world. In his quest for self-reconciliation, he confronts the void, strips away the numbing guise of humanity, and accepts the untoward behavior of his psyche. Moreover, the hero exercises the freedom of choice and accepts responsibility for his own behavior. Don Quixote has inspired and rendered his temperament, foibles, and ideals to avowed existential writers in a subsequent literary period.
- Don Quixote can make free objects by an act of fantasy. In short, he epitomizes existential credo.
- Don Quixote remains locked in his own mental cage. He acquires the designation of Knight of the Woeful Countenance, which signifies his malcontent with the disparity of existence after his adventures turn to fiasco. The debacles bring Quixote to terms with the other, darker side of his psyche.

So, in essence the existential hero is in conflict with his self and therefore feels the isolation of experience in a hostile, in different world. In his quest for self reconciliation, the existential hero confronts the void and strips away the numbing guise of humanity, thereby accepting the untoward the irrational behaviour of his psyche. Moreover the existential hero exercises the freedom of choice and responsibility accepts the consequences for his own behaviour.

In much the same way Don Quixote has inspired and rendered his temperament, his follies and foibles and his ideals to avowed existential writers in a subsequent literary period. Don Quixote can make free objects through an act of fantasy. In short he epitomizes the existential credo. Don Quixote remains locked in his own mental cage, it would not be it might be wrong to call it a cage because his mind imagines something so vast something that cannot be actually contained by his contemporary reality.

His imagination outgrows and flows out of all time and space, it does not have any boundaries, any kind of any external parameters that determine and delimit it. So, he acquires the designation of knight of the woeful countenance which signifies his malcontent, his dissatisfaction with the disparity of existence after his adventures turn to multiple fiasco, multiple disasters. These difficult bring Quixote to in terms with the other unknown side of his own psyche.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:18)



- Don Quixote's journey may be characterized in many ways, but one of the most persistent motifs is the hero's steady progression towards madness. Although the narrator emphasizes the duality of Don Quixote's consciousness—pointing out that his hero is "sometimes intelligent and sometimes foolish" and characterizing his speech as "reasoned nonsense," his speeches generally produce an impression of insanity.
- Don Quixote does not accept that outside observers can correctly interpret his condition, notwithstanding the volume of evidence they assemble against him; instead, he reserves for himself the prerogative of epistemic judgment when confronted by contrary sense-data.
- Three centuries after Cervantes, Franz Kafka fashions his own knight-errant who goes to even greater extremes than Don Quixote to achieve individuality through self-mutilation.

So, Don Quixote's journey may be characterized in many ways, but one of the most persistent motifs is the hero's steady progression towards madness, a better word would be irrationality or a takeoff from social signification, socially understood and agreed upon significations. Although the narrator emphasizes the duality of Don Quixote's consciousness pointing out that his hero is sometimes intelligent and sometimes foolish.

And characterizing his speech as reasoned nonsense, his speech is generally produces an impression of insanity. So, Don Quixote does not accept that outside observers can correctly interpret his condition or his experience notwithstanding the volume of evidence that they produce and assemble against him. Instead he reserves for himself the prerogative of epistemic judgment when confronted with contrary data, contrary experiences.

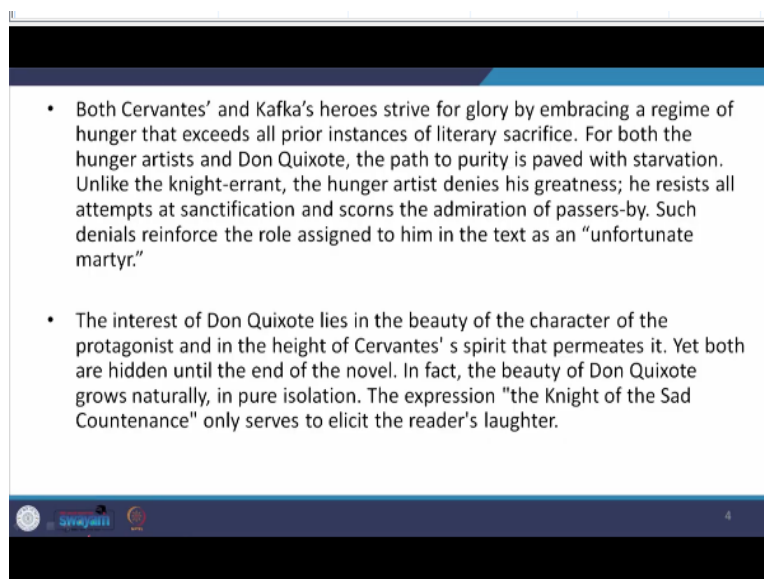
Three centuries after Cervantes we also see another author Franz Kafka who's fashioning his own knight errant that goes to even greater extremes than Don Quixote to achieve individuality through self-mutilation. However, I would also like to add that Don Quixote's

society was still far more forgiving; they would batter him or at the most throw him into prison, but in France Kafka's world the kind of survivalist, the kind of panopticon.

That one cannot escape from which pervades one's dreams and private space too even one's bedroom is much uglier, much more morbid and perverse. So, the world has changed the historical realities have changed the Kafka's situation is completely incomparable with that of Don Quixote's conditions. Don Quixote was still a free man, by history not claimed by the state, the nation which is certainly not the case of the diminished man who experiences the Kafka's situation.

In a way that is also a very no exit situation where one like we see in the case of Joseph key or in other characters of Kafka either have to kill themselves or just metamorphose and fly out of the window, just take off move away from the unbearable real conditions of life.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:48)



- Both Cervantes' and Kafka's heroes strive for glory by embracing a regime of hunger that exceeds all prior instances of literary sacrifice. For both the hunger artists and Don Quixote, the path to purity is paved with starvation. Unlike the knight-errant, the hunger artist denies his greatness; he resists all attempts at sanctification and scorns the admiration of passers-by. Such denials reinforce the role assigned to him in the text as an "unfortunate martyr."
- The interest of Don Quixote lies in the beauty of the character of the protagonist and in the height of Cervantes' s spirit that permeates it. Yet both are hidden until the end of the novel. In fact, the beauty of Don Quixote grows naturally, in pure isolation. The expression "the Knight of the Sad Countenance" only serves to elicit the reader's laughter.

So, both Cervantes and Kafka's heroes strive for glory through embracing a regime of hunger which exceeds all prior instances of literary sacrifice. For both the hunger artists and for this character Don Quixote the path to purity is paved with starvation, they are constantly striving to achieve something fantastic, achieve something away from apart from their real conditions through a kind of penance that they subject their body to, they are perpetually perennially famished.

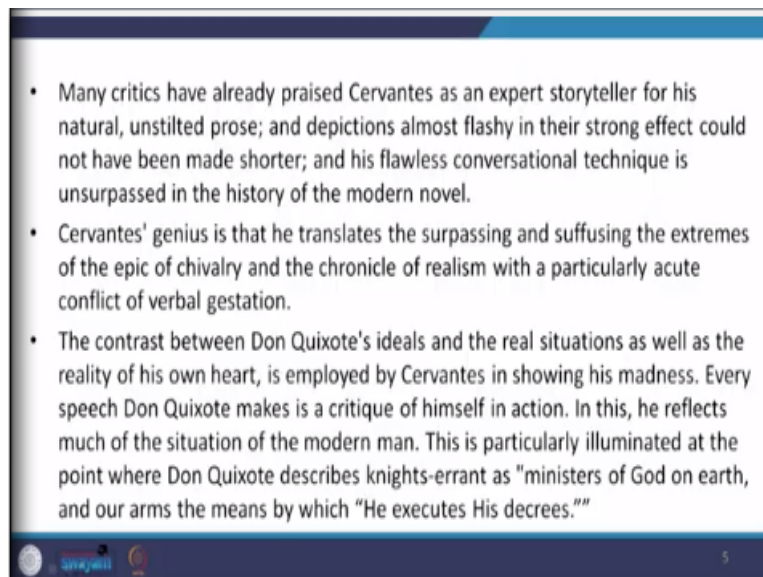
So, unlike the Knight errant the hunger artist denies his greatness; he resists all attempts at sanctification and scorns the admirations that are thrown to them by passes by. Such denials

reinforce the rule assigned to these characters in the text as unfortunate materials. So, there is the quality of a material that is very much visible in Cervantes's protagonist Don Quixote. The interest of Don Quixote lies in the beauty of the character of this protagonist and in the height of Cervantes's spirit, that permeates it.

And this kind of gets accentuated, this amplifies with the progression of the novel this becomes all the more visible at the end of the novel. In fact the beauty of Don Quixote grows naturally and in pure isolation, in dissociation from the real world, the contemporary renaissance world. The expression, the knight of the sad countenance only serves to elicit the reader's laughter.

So, we have already discussed in our previous lecture the kind of journey from pure buffoonery and foolishness to sane cleaners and the reflection of the pure soul that Don Quixote emerges as that Don Quixote becomes as the work journeys through the century.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:36)



So, many critics have already praised Cervantes as an expert storyteller for his natural unstilted prose; and for depictions that he makes in his work that are almost flashy in their strong effect. And yet they could not have been curtailed with all their descriptions they are gaudy, they are flashy but we would not have it the other way, they are perfect we they have been projected in the novel.

And we also see Cervantes's flawless conversational technique which is unsurpassed in the history of the modern novel, it in fact sets the ground for the modern novel Cervantes's

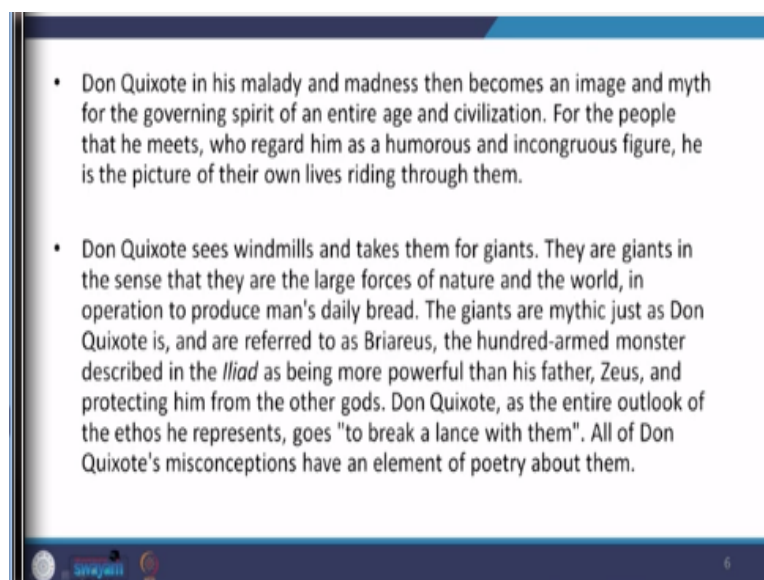
genius is that he translates the surpassing and he suffuses the extremes of the epic of chivalry and the chronicle of realism. He kind of mishmashes intermingles the 2 and something hilarious gestates at this crossing point, at this point of acute conflict.

So, the contrast between a Don Quixote's ideals in the real situations as well as the reality of his own hurt is deployed by Cervantes in reflecting, in explaining his madness. Every speech Don Quixote makes is a critic of himself in action. So, this contrast, this parody we have already mentioned this before this contrast, this parody is intrinsic to the character of Don Quixote.

It does not need to actually have the real world in just opposition with itself to accentuate this kind of upside downness. So, this kind of contradiction, this kind of parody that Don Quixote the man is reflects much of the situation of the modern man, this is particularly illuminated at the point where he describes Knight's as a ministers of god on earth and our arms the means by which he executes his decrease

So, this is also the Knight is being represented as the messenger of god as the tool through which the god operates. But then the godly platform is distanced from that of the knights. So, we see kind of a prefiguration of the modern thinking man in this kind of a statement.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:52)



So, Don Quixote in his malady and madness then becomes an image and myth for the governing spirit of an entire age and civilization. He is not quite and only a contrast to the renaissance period, he also bears some semblance, some essence of that period as he is the

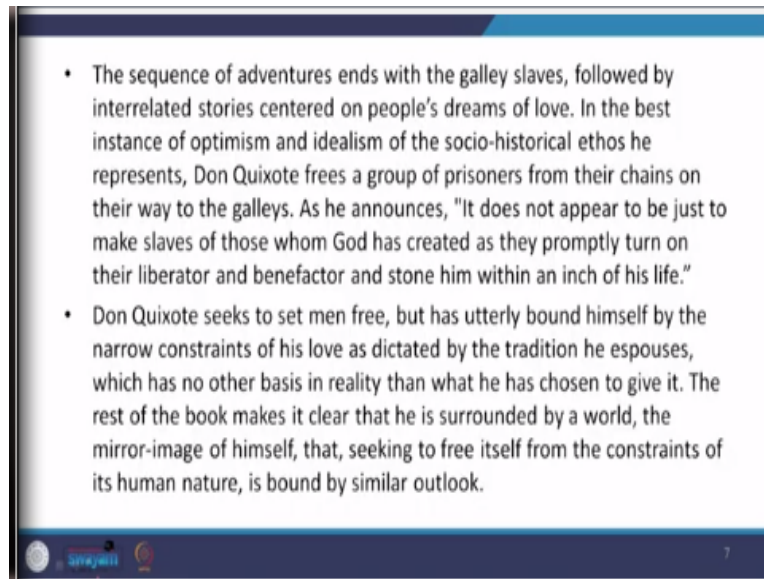
case of the first thinking man in a work. This work is not a chivalric romance anything but that he is the thinking man, who can think differently.

And the thinking man is at the heart of the renaissance spirit, so Don Quixote is not in opposition to this spirit, in some way it bears the spirit too. For the people that Don Quixote needs who regard him as humorous and incongruous figure, he is the picture of their own lives riding through them. So, this incongruity, this disharmony that Don Quixote undergoes or experiences with the rest of the society also comments on the disharmony, the people in general experience with their own lives.

The expectations that we have and the way life is are never coincidental, novel emerges from this kind of a problematic. So, Don Quixote sees windmills and takes them for giants, the giants in the sense that they are the large forces of nature in the world, in operation to produce man's daily bread. So, the giants are mythic just as Don Quixote himself is and they are referred to as prior use the 100 armed monsters mentioned in the Iliad as being more powerful even than his father's use and protecting Zeus from other gods.

So, we get this mention of a character from Iliad prairies while describing the windmill. Don Quixote as the entire outlook of the ethos that he represents goes to break a lance with them. All of Don Quixote's misconceptions have an element of poetry thereby, so it is very poetic, very creative the way he sees the society. We could also in a way extrapolate and say that this is the starting point of the fantastic genre, the magical realism where we see the world afresh through defamiliarization, through the eye the wondrous eyes of the child, the marveling eyes of the child.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:06)

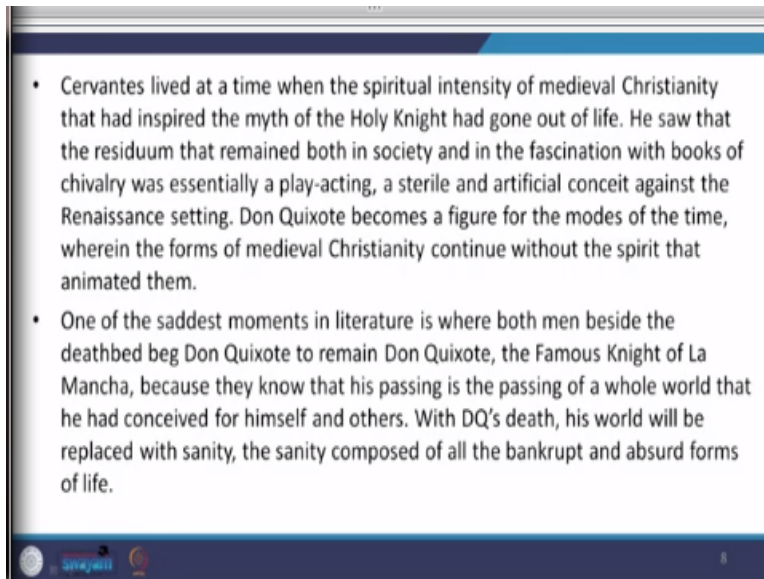


So, the sequence of adventures ends with the galley slaves and they are followed by interrelated stories centered on people's dreams of love. In the best instance of optimism and idealism of the social historical ethos that Don Quixote represents. He frees a group of prisoners from their chains on their way to the galleys and as he frees the prisoners he has to say the following.

It does not appear to be just to make slaves of those whom god has created as they promptly turn on the liberator and manufacture and stone him with an inch of his life. So, Don Quixote seeks to set men free but has utterly bound himself by the narrow constraints of his own love as dictated by the tradition that he espouses that he represents.

And this love has no other basis in reality than what he has chosen to give it, the rest of the book makes it clear that he is surrounded by a world of his own, the mirror image of himself that seeking to free itself from the constraints of it is human nature is bound by a similar outlook.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:42)



So, Cervantes's lived at a time when the spiritual intensity of medieval Christianity that had inspired the myth of the Holy Knight had already given up it is ghost, it had gone out of life, it had become residual in tradition. So, Cervantes's saw that residuum that remained both in society and in the fascination through books of chivalry. So, chivalry existed in the current contemporary time of Cervantes essentially in the form of play acting, as a sterile and artificial conceit against the renaissance setting.

It was existing particularly not in reality, so Don Quixote becomes a figure for the most of the time wherein the forms of medieval Christianity continue without the spirit that had originally animated them. So, that is how residual traditions remain on the fringes of another time space. One of the saddest moments in literature is where both men beside the dead bed of Don Quixote or beg him to remained on the famous Knight of La Mancha.

Because with this imagination disappearing Alonso Quixano would also disappear, he would cease to be, in his ordinariness there is no story, there is no incentive for him to survive. So, the extraordinary that he has conjured also inspires him to live, that is precisely why they want him to believe in Don Quixote, to go on to remain the Don Quixote that he always wanted to be the famous knight of La Mancha.

Because they know that his passing is the passing of a whole world that Alonso Quixano had conceived for himself and for others. With Don Quixote's death his world will be replaced with sanity. And this sanity is composed of all the bankrupt and absurd meanings, absurd dimensions of life.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:24)

- One eighteenth-century imitation which seconds the perception of *Don Quixote* as essentially a work of humor and satire is Charlotte Lennox' *The Female Quixote* (1752). Lennox' heroine, Arabella, belongs to what we may call as the literary quixote school, that is, her folly is the result of reading foolish literature. She is the daughter of a marquis who has before her birth been forced into total retirement.
- The two live alone in a country castle with an extensive library of romances, and Arabella grows up familiarizing with Oroondates, Statira, Artaxerxes, and Clelia.

So, one 18th century imitation which seconds the perception of Don Quixote as essentially a work of humor in satire is Charlotte Lennox's the female Quixote. Lennox's heroine Arabella, belongs to what we may call as the literary Quixote school that is, her folly is the result of reading foolish literature. She is the daughter of marquis who has before her birth been forced into total retirement.

And the 2 live alone in a country castle in isolation from the mainstream with an extensive library of romances. And Arabella is growing up familiarizing with Oroondates, with Statira, Artaxerxes and Clelia. So, Arabella grows are familiarizing with a different characters of romance and until she posits, she hypothesizes herself as one of them and into that condition.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:33)

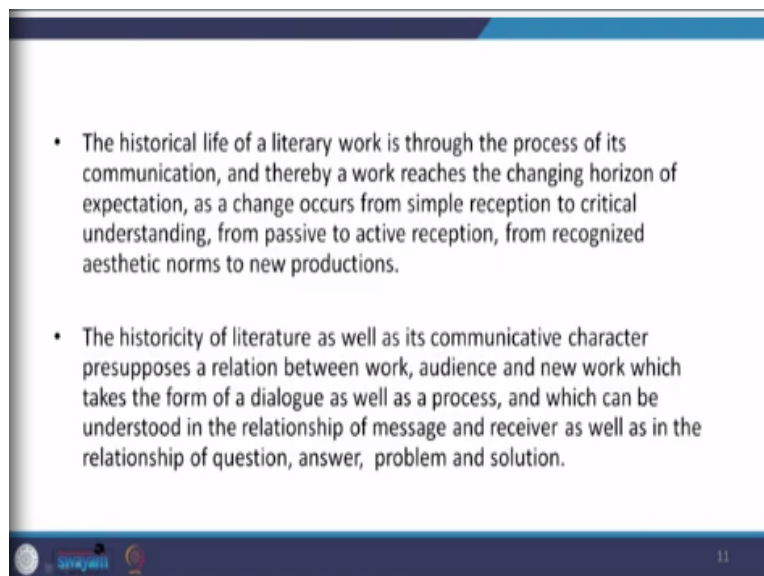
- HILARITY UNDERSTOOD THROUGH HORIZON OF EXPECTATIONS
- For a text to survive in a given society, the **correlation of author with readers** should be **conditioned by horizon of expectations**.
 - The formalist school needs the reader only as a perceiving subject who follows the directions in the text in order to perceive its form or discover its techniques of procedure. It assumes that the reader has the theoretical knowledge of a philologist who is sufficiently versed in the tools of literature to be able to reflect on them.
 - The Marxist school equates the spontaneous experience of the reader with the scholarly interest of historical materialism, which seeks to discover relationships between the economic basis of production and the literary work as a part of the intellectual superstructure.

Now we have to also understand how Don Quixote's hilarity happens in terms of or **or** in the light of horizon of expectations. For any text to survive in a given society, the correlation of author with readers should be conditioned by horizon of expectations. So, the formalist school needs the reader only as a perceiving subject who follows the directions in the text in order to perceive it is form or discover it is techniques and procedure.

So, the formalist school assumes that the reader has the theoretical knowledge of a philologist who is sufficiently versed in the tools of literature in order to be able to reflect on them. On the other hand the Marxist school is talking about historical materialism, it equates the spontaneous experience of the reader with the economic basis of production, it seeks to discover relationships between economic bases of production.

And the literary work which is a part of the intellectual superstructure in other words everything else all other expressions are pivoted on the category of the economy, the economic base.

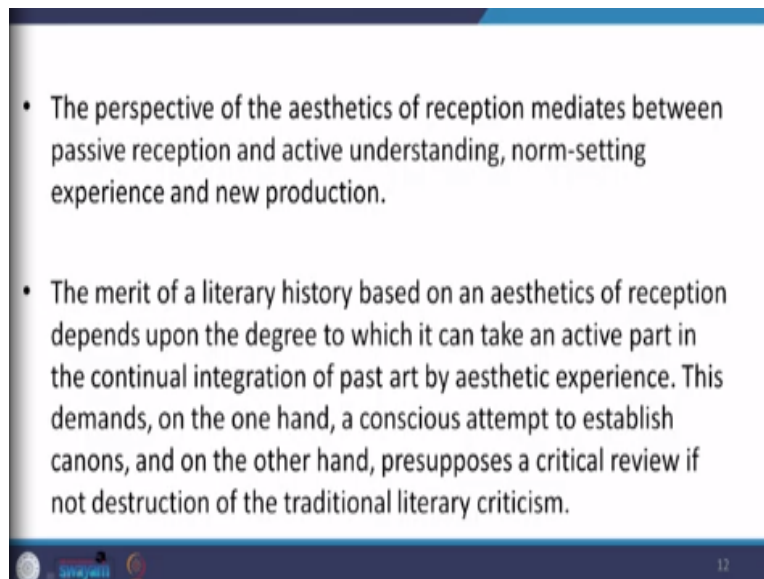
(Refer Slide Time: 23:06)



So, the historical life of a literary work is through the process of it is communication and thereby a word reaches the changing horizon of expectation as a change occurs from a simple reception to critical understanding from passive to active reception, from recognized aesthetic forms to a new experimentations, new productions. The historicity of literature as well as is communicative character presupposes a relation between any given works it is audience and new work which takes the form of a dialogue as well as a process.

And which can be understood in the relationship of message and receiver as well as in the relationship of question, answer, problem and solution.

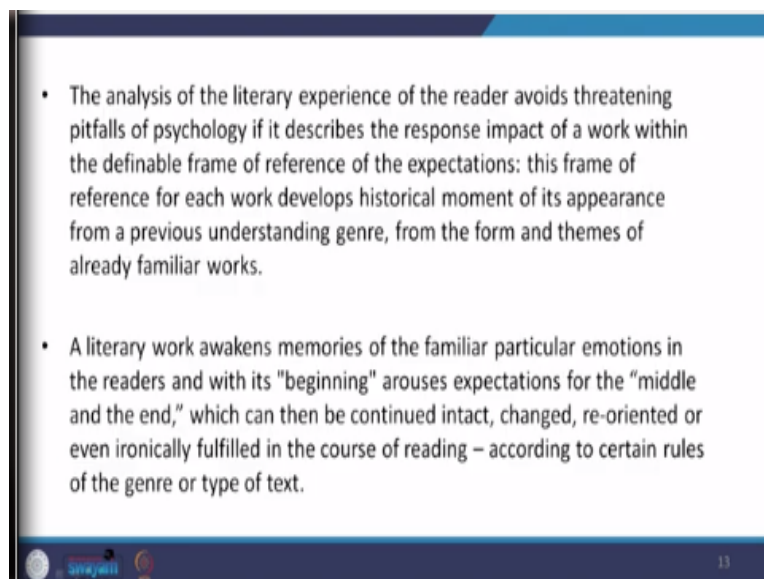
(Refer Slide Time: 24:06)

- 
- The perspective of the aesthetics of reception mediates between passive reception and active understanding, norm-setting experience and new production.
 - The merit of a literary history based on an aesthetics of reception depends upon the degree to which it can take an active part in the continual integration of past art by aesthetic experience. This demands, on the one hand, a conscious attempt to establish canons, and on the other hand, presupposes a critical review if not destruction of the traditional literary criticism.
- 12

So, the perspective of the aesthetics of reception mediates between passive reception and active understanding, norm-setting experience and in turn new production. The merit of a literary history based on aesthetics of reception depend depends upon the degree to which it can take an active part in the continual integration of past art through aesthetic experience.

This demands on the one hand a conscious attempt at establishing canons and on the other presupposes a critical review if not outright destruction of the traditional literary criticism.

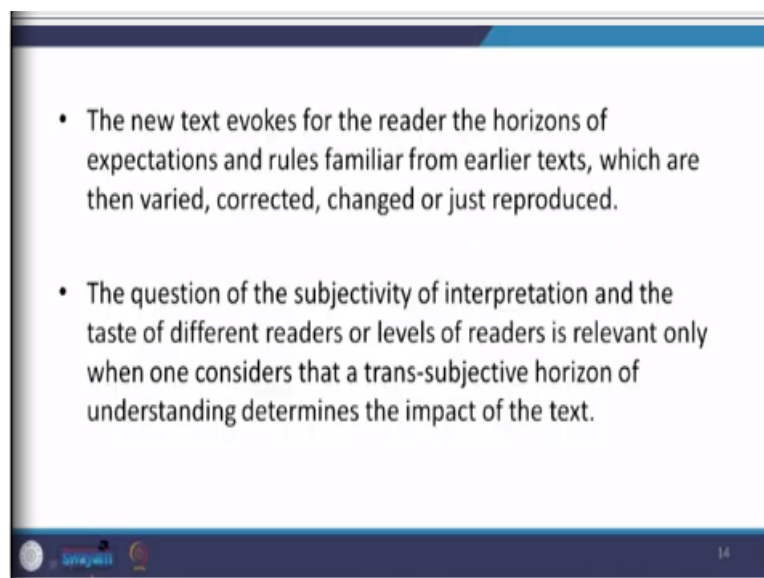
(Refer Slide Time: 24:53)

- 
- The analysis of the literary experience of the reader avoids threatening pitfalls of psychology if it describes the response impact of a work within the definable frame of reference of the expectations: this frame of reference for each work develops historical moment of its appearance from a previous understanding genre, from the form and themes of already familiar works.
 - A literary work awakens memories of the familiar particular emotions in the readers and with its "beginning" arouses expectations for the "middle and the end," which can then be continued intact, changed, re-oriented or even ironically fulfilled in the course of reading – according to certain rules of the genre or type of text.
- 13

So, the analysis of the literary experience of the reader avoids threatening pitfalls of psychology. If it describes the response impact of a work within the definable frame of reference of the expectations. This frame of reference for each work develops historical moment of its appearance from a previous understanding of genre from the form and themes that are already available in familiar works that have happened before.

A literary work awakens memories of the familiar particular emotions in the readers and with it is beginning it arouses expectations for the middle and the end which can then be continued intact all which could be changed, reoriented or even ironically fulfilled in the course of reading according to certain rules of the genre or the type of text.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:03)

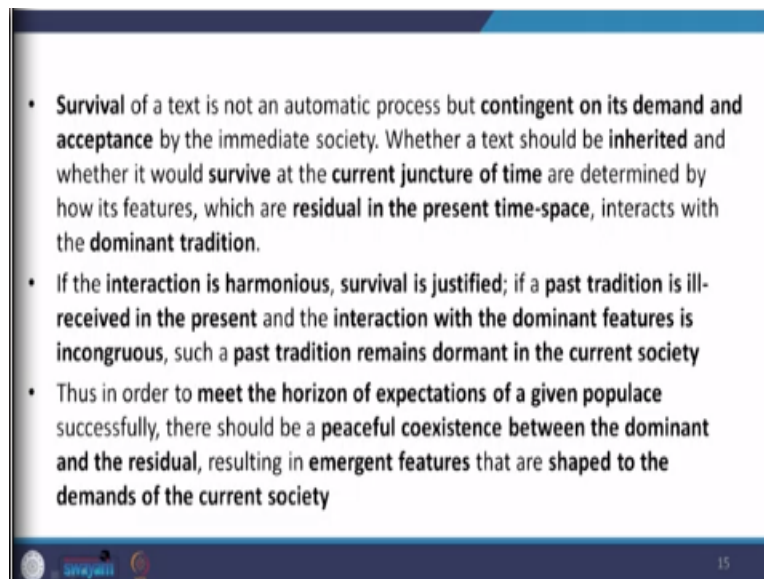


The new text evokes for the reader the horizons of expectations and rules familiar from earlier texts which are then varied corrected, changed or just reproduced. So, we have to understand how the residual tradition survives through metamorphosis in the dominant tradition, how it speaks to and lingers within the dominant tradition.

The question of the subjectivity of interpretation and the taste of different readers in the contemporary society or levels of readers is relevant only when one considers that a trans-subjective horizon of understanding determines the impact of the text. So, we are talking about the expectations and the taste of the readers in the contemporary times. The reader enables or disables, disallows the earlier tradition to exist or not exist or to exist in a modified fashion in the contemporary time.

If an older tradition is agreeable to the current taste, current sentiment it stays on otherwise it sometimes becomes dormant or altogether disappears.

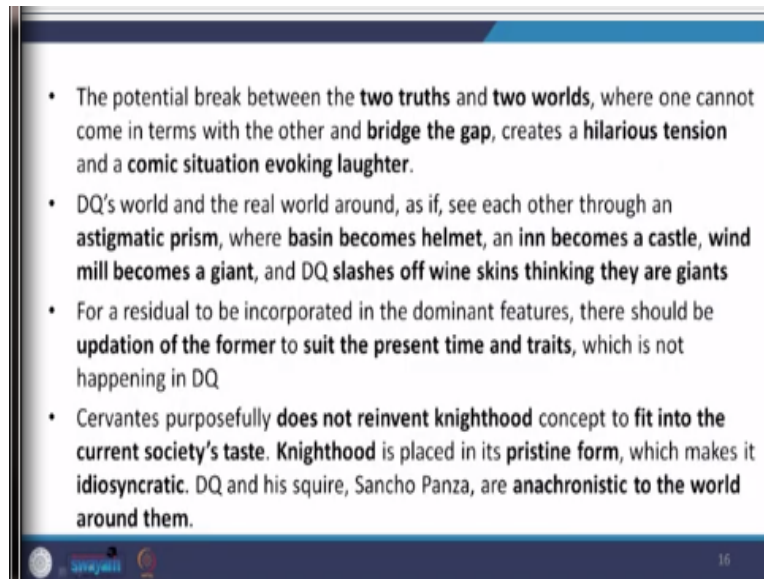
(Refer Slide Time: 27:35)



So, survival of a text is not an automatic process but contingent on it is demand and acceptance by the immediate society whether a text should be inherited it and whether it should survive in the contemporary or current juncture of time are determined by how it is features which are residual in the present time space, interacts with the dominant tradition. If this interaction is harmonious, smooth, survival of a text from earlier tradition is justified.

If the past tradition is ill received in the current time space and the interaction with the dominant features is not smooth, is incongruous, such a past tradition either remains dormant in the current society or it all together disappears in some cases. Thus, in order to meet the horizon of expectations of a given populist successfully there should be a peaceful coexistence between the dominant and the residual. Which will results in emergent features that are shaped according to the demands of the current society?

(Refer Slide Time: 28:52)



The potential break between the 2 truths and the 2 worlds, 2 different world views where one cannot come in terms with the other and bridge the gap, creates a hilarious tension and a comic situation which evokes laughter in Don Quixote. So, what happens when renaissance world, renaissance focus or rationality on homogenization on the thinking individual meets the values and the world view of chivalric romance.

It leads to laughter; it leads to someone like Don Quixote, a completely incongruous and ridiculous figure. Don Quixote's world and the real world around as if see each other through an astigmatic prism; they do not quite understand each other. So, we have these possibilities of the basin becoming a helmet and in becoming a castle, windmill being seen as a giant and Don Quixote's slashing of wine skins thinking that he is killing giants.

So, for residual to be incorporated in the dominant features there should be updatation of the residual in a way as to suit the present time and traits which is precisely not happening in Don Quixote. Chivalric romance does not enter renaissance in an ugly agreeable fashion, in a modified new Avatar, it enters the current time space in his old archaic anachronistic Avatar that it is in the present condition, this anachronism evokes laughter precisely.

So, Cervantes' purposefully does not reinvent knighthood, does not modify and make it into something else, he just keeps it in all it is crudeness, in it is purity, the concept of knighthood, so it stays as a misfit to the current society's taste. So, knighthood is brought by Cervantes in the renaissance society and screwed a pristine form which makes it idiosyncratic. The effect is absolutely odd and evokes a hilarity.

So, Don Quixote and his choir Sancho Panza are anachronistic to the world around them. I would like to stop our lecture here today and let us meet again for another round of discussions in our forthcoming lectures. Thank you.