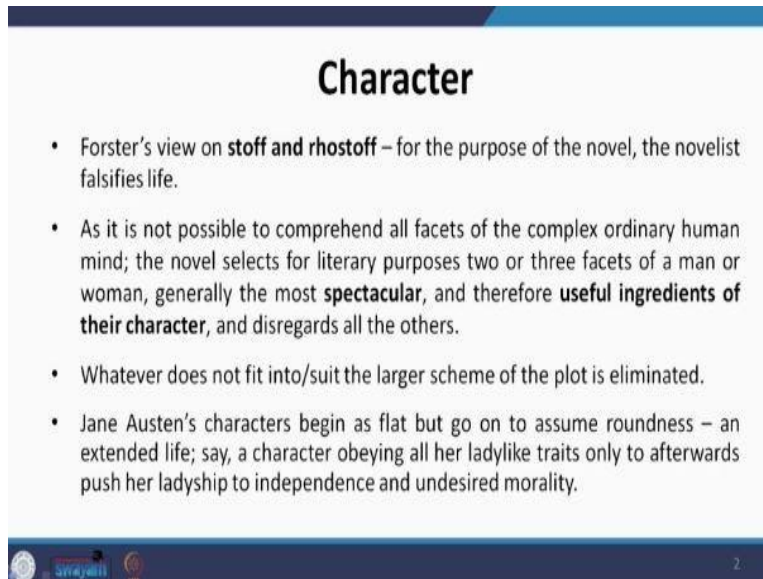


Narrative Mode and Fiction
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Lecture-25
Features of the Novel-IV

Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on narrative mode and fiction. We are discussing features of the novel in the light of E. M. Forster's aspects of the novel.

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Character

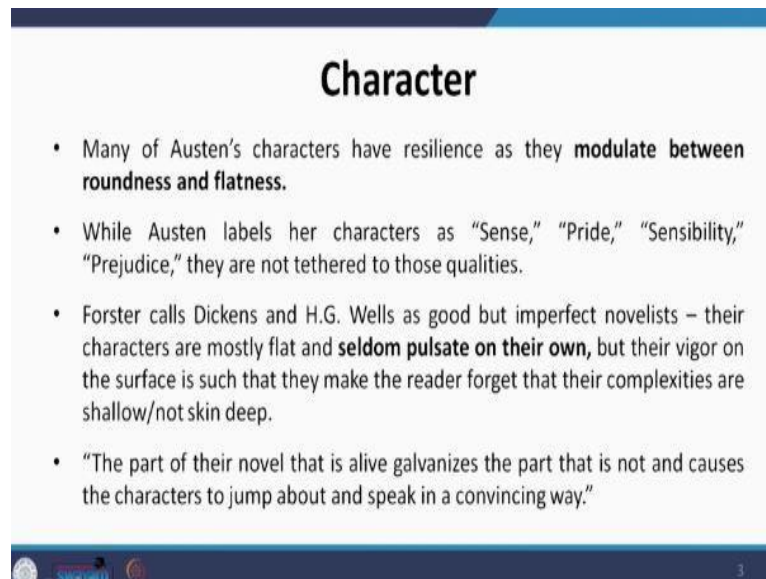
- Forster's view on **stoff and rhostoff** – for the purpose of the novel, the novelist falsifies life.
- As it is not possible to comprehend all facets of the complex ordinary human mind; the novel selects for literary purposes two or three facets of a man or woman, generally the most **spectacular**, and therefore **useful ingredients of their character**, and disregards all the others.
- Whatever does not fit into/suit the larger scheme of the plot is eliminated.
- Jane Austen's characters begin as flat but go on to assume roundness – an extended life; say, a character obeying all her ladylike traits only to afterwards push her ladyship to independence and undesired morality.

So, Forster notes that for the purpose of the novel, the novelist falsifies life and this is how from rhostoff the raw material stoff is formed. Falsifying life leads to literalization of life into fiction. So, as it is not possible to comprehend all facets of the complex ordinary human mind; the novel selects for literary purposes only two or three facets of a human character, generally the most spectacular facets and therefore the ones that would serve as useful ingredients to his characters and thereby the novelist disregards all other facets or all other aspects.

Whatever does not fit into or suit the largest scheme of the plot is eliminated. So, reality or life is streamlined when it enters the space of the text. Jane Austen's characters begin as flat but they go on to assume roundness as Forster would note, what Forster's calls as an extended life. So, for example a character obeying all her lady like treats her prudish or proper role in the society, in a moral sense.

Only to afterwards push a ladyship to fierce independence and even verging into undesired morality becoming very unladylike in the traditional sense of the term.

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Character

- Many of Austen's characters have resilience as they **modulate between roundness and flatness**.
- While Austen labels her characters as "Sense," "Pride," "Sensibility," "Prejudice," they are not tethered to those qualities.
- Forster calls Dickens and H.G. Wells as good but imperfect novelists – their characters are mostly flat and **seldom pulsate on their own**, but their vigor on the surface is such that they make the reader forget that their complexities are shallow/not skin deep.
- "The part of their novel that is alive galvanizes the part that is not and causes the characters to jump about and speak in a convincing way."

Many of Austen's characters have resilience as they modulate between roundness and flatness between archetypal existence and individuality experimentation and kind of resistance to invisibility or resistance to any kind of sameness, any kind of predictability. So, while Austen labels her characters a sense, pride, sensibility, prejudice they are not all together teachers to these qualities.

Forster calls both Charles Dickens and H.G. Wells as good novelists, who are however imperfect, because the characters are mostly flat and these characters from Wells and Dickens's novels seldom pulsate on their own. So, they are almost as if on a life support system, but then they wiggled on the surface the life that they show the way they thrive on the surface of the plot is such that they make the reader forget that their complexities are not skin deep, the fact that they are not shallow, they appear to be otherwise.

So, Forster says and the part of their novel that is alive galvanizes the part that is not and causes the characters to jump about and speak in a convincing manner.

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Character

- Forster calls Austen and Defoe as perfect novelists – such a novelist is characterized as follows: s/he “touches all his material directly, who seems to pass the creative finger down every sentence and into every word. Richardson, Defoe, and Jane Austen are perfect in this particular way.”
- Round characters, such as Madame Bovary, “has her book to herself, and can expand and secrete unchecked”: they are capable of surprising, take their own unpredictable path and after a certain stage of the journey the authorial control seems to have gone, so their existence and becoming, unfolding is in their own right.

Forster calls Jane Austen and Daniel Defoe as perfect novelists, such a novelist is characterized as follows from Forster he or she touches all his material directly, who seems to pass the creative finger down every sentence and into every word. Richardson, Defoe and Jane Austen are perfect in this particular way. So, this also takes us back to the earlier part of this discussion, where I mentioned sincerity the sincere author and the insincere author.

Since, being sincere with situations and emotions, which Forster notes as lacking in the case of Walter Scott, where the an emergency situation, an urgent situation is treated with the same poise as one would treat an ordinary and relaxed situation the alacrity, the promeness is lacking, because the involvement perhaps is lacking. That happens only when the creative finger is down in each and every sentence and each and every word the involvement of the author the passion of the creator shows through the characters and the evens.

Round characters, one such would be Madame Bovary by Flaubert Forster here has her book to herself and can expand and secrete unchecked. So, that in other words round characters are capable of surprising others as well as themselves. They take their own unpredictable path and they are after a certain stage of the journey missing or they have grown out of the authorial control on the part of the author seems to have gone all together.

So, that their existence and they are becoming their unfolding is happening in their own light. And the author has also become a reader to their own character.

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Character

- Austen and Defoe's characters are interacting with events in time, so that they are influencing events and changing through experiencing events over the time bracket of the novel.
- A spectrum of emotions exist in our secret lives that have no external evidence.
- Through the characters, the author can access their own secret lives.
- According to Aristotle, characters' qualities are evident in action.
- Contradicting him, Forster says that **such externality of emotions does not hold true for novels.**

So, Austen and Defoe's characters are interacting with events in time, so that they are influencing events and changing through experiencing events over the time bracket that we see in the novel. A spectrum of emotions exist in our secret lives in our unconscious lives, which do not find any way of vending themselves, that do not have any external evidence. Through these characters, the author can access, can discover his or her own secret lives.

According to Aristotle, characters' qualities are evident in action. So, we see that Forster contradicts Aristotle definition he has moved away from it and sees that such externalities of emotions do not hold true for novels.

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Character

- "In the drama all human happiness and misery does and must take the form of action. Otherwise, its existence remains unknown, and this is the great difference between the drama and the novel."
- In the novel, the writer can talk about as well as through characters to express his points of view.
- As the author speaks to himself, he can peep into the subconscious of the characters ("sub-conscious short-circuiting straight into action", referring to soliloquy in the case of drama).

In the genre of drama like a Forster sees all human happiness and misery does and must take the form of action. Unless it is outward, it is enacted, it is out there in front of the audience

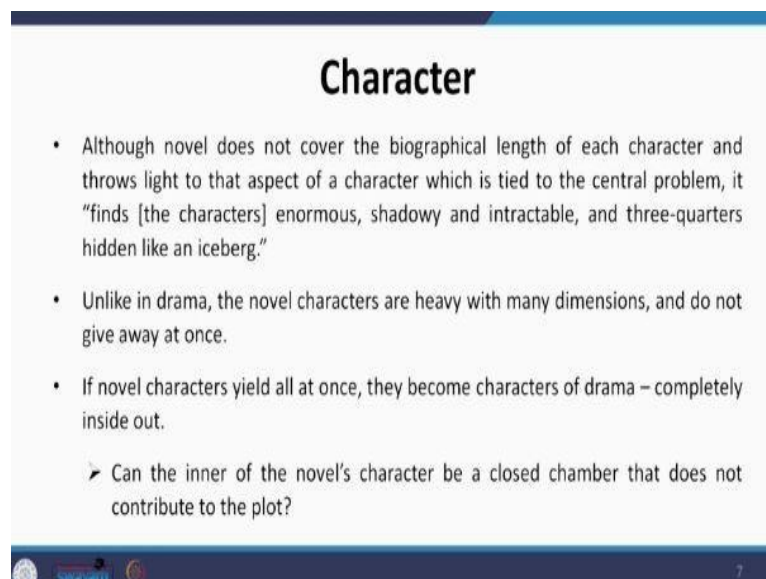
one would not know because one is play acting, one is performing, pain, misery, happiness, confusion. We have monologues, soliloquy, where one has to speak out the mind one has to think aloud in drama.

Otherwise existence of such emotions remains unknown and this is a great difference between the drama and the novel. In the novel the writer can talk about as well as through characters. So, writer or the narrator standing above everything and everyone becoming omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, the ubiquitous narrator knows it all from before, knows all perspectives to talking about characters and events.

And then we have the phenomenological experience, where one character is understood through the other. The author plays his perspective in the garb of one of the characters. So, this is the influence of phenomenology in the modern novel. So, in the novel we see that gradually progressively the narrator's eye gets subsumed or submerged among many other perspectives.

The writer can talk about as well as talk through characters to express and explain his points of view. As the author speaks to himself, he can peep into the subconscious of the characters what Forster calls as subconscious short circuiting straight into action on quote, which refers to soliloquy in the case of drama.

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Character

- Although novel does not cover the biographical length of each character and throws light to that aspect of a character which is tied to the central problem, it "finds [the characters] enormous, shadowy and intractable, and three-quarters hidden like an iceberg."
- Unlike in drama, the novel characters are heavy with many dimensions, and do not give away at once.
- If novel characters yield all at once, they become characters of drama – completely inside out.
 - Can the inner of the novel's character be a closed chamber that does not contribute to the plot?

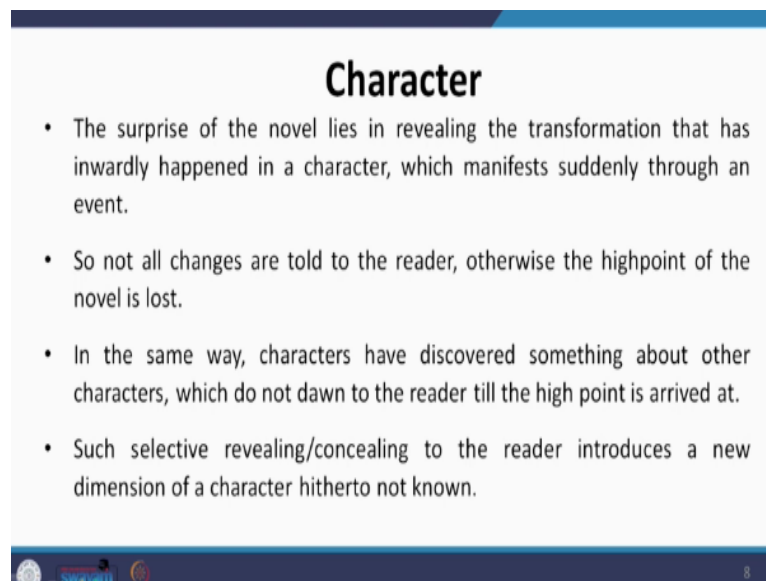
Although novel does not cover the biographical length of each character not even that of the protagonist and throws light to that aspect of a character, which is tied to the central, problem

of the plot, it Forster finds the characters, enormous, shadowy and intractable and three quarters hidden like an iceberg. So, not everything about the Homo Fictus can also be known.

This is something Forster had said earlier, but he himself says that the three quarters of the psyche would remain hidden like that of an iceberg. Unlike in drama, the normal characters are heavy with many dimensions and do not give away at once. If novel characters do yield all at once, then they become characters of drama that are completely inside out. So, one ought to ask can the inner of the novel's character be a closed chamber, which does not contribute to the plot.

An inner an aspect of the psyche a possibility of a character, which does not contribute to the problem of the plot that we would never know. So, there are so many layers, which are hinted but not quite exposed and so many layers, which are not even touched within the scope of the novel.

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Character

- The surprise of the novel lies in revealing the transformation that has inwardly happened in a character, which manifests suddenly through an event.
- So not all changes are told to the reader, otherwise the highpoint of the novel is lost.
- In the same way, characters have discovered something about other characters, which do not dawn to the reader till the high point is arrived at.
- Such selective revealing/concealing to the reader introduces a new dimension of a character hitherto not known.

The surprise of the novel lies in revealing the transformation that has inwardly happened in a character, in the quotes of the plots progression, in the quotes of the narrative movement in time and these manifests suddenly through an event. So, for example a meek character, who hardly talks in the quotes of the novel towards the end opines in a very strong manner or voices protest or does something spectacular, which would be the last thing one expects from such a reticent character.

So, a transformation has happened. A possibility has suddenly emerged and become too big for even the readers even the novelist, to note the character will not remain silent anymore. So, one part of the character becomes suddenly comes under the light, it is no longer darkened. So, not all changes are told to the reader, otherwise the high point of the novel the climax or the high point is lost.

So, a meek person or let us say an aggressive person, who is capable of a lot of violence and hurt a person who is hurting everyone a character like that. Suddenly transforms into a saintly figure. What has gone into him? We do not get to see the journey of repentance, the journey of penitence and perhaps, some penance that the character has undergone and in the end the character has suddenly become saintly.

We just see what the character was and then the, what the character has become through certain actions. The inner journey is not shown. And this sudden transformation a spark or let us say a moment of revelation becomes a high point. So, this sudden illumination becomes the high point in the novel. So, in the same way characters have discovered something about other characters too, which do not don to the reader till the high point is arrived at.

So, this renders the different layers. One character has discovered a possibility about, another character, but the author is not directly writing it down for the reader to simply understand. It might come to the reader much later than it has come to another character, a character might get to know about a villainous or a saintly possibility in another character. We as readers discover it much later in the plot.

So, such selective revealing, concealing to the reader sometimes between one character and another introduces a new dimension to the process of narration. Every time there is a new dimension of a character being known, something that was either to not known and that is the novelty that is the kind of that is what keeps the plot of the novel experimenting open-ended and still going.

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Plot and Character

- Discovery of an unknown psychic journey through an event reveals a character in a new light – it is a different aspect of the Self that the reader and even other characters get to know.
- Thomas Hardy's works have a great emphasis on fate as absolute and above everything.
- The characters remind one of tragic heroes that do not act through interacting with fate but are ruled by the fate.
- While causality binds the tragic hero's individuality hand and foot, their existence as a novel's character is realized in their act of struggling with destiny.

So, discovery of an unknown psychic journey through an event reveals a character in a new light altogether, it is a different aspect of the self that the reader had and even the other characters had not know, they simply get to know about this new possibility that a Meek person could murder that a violent person, a villainous person could forgive and help. So, there is no permanent hero. There is no permanent god or demigod.

They are all being reshuffled; the values are getting reshuffled in the quotes of the narration. So, we cannot assume anything from beforehand in a novel. Thomas Hardy's works have a great emphasis on fate as absolute and above everything. The characters in Thomas Hardy's novel or novels remind us of tragic heroes that do not act through interacting with fate, but are rather ruled by the fate. They are subsumed tied to change to the fate.

While causality binds the tragic hero's individuality hand and food their existence as an novels character still remains. They are still not tragic heroes, they are characters in a novel greatly trampled by and dominated by the fate and yet constantly struggling with destiny, fighting with destiny, being trampled and yet showing their agency in every possible manner. The tragic hero takes down the almost takes the fate as to that that is something pre-given.

And however the novels hero will constantly be trampled down by feet, but try to fight it back. That is why novels hero a thinking self, a growing self.

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Plot and Character

- Forster: At the expense of adding vitality and contributing too much to the plot, Hardy's characters fail to explore every possibility of themselves.
- In the novel, human emotions seek means of expressions other than through straight actions visible in the plot.
- The plot fights a losing battle with the characters; yet if the characters maintain vitality and keep defying the plot, there will be no winding up.
- Novelist leaves a plot midway, letting the characters grow 3-D in pursuance of their own course.

Forster notes that, at the expense of adding vitality and contributing too much to the plot, Thomas Hardy's characters however fail to explore every possibility of themselves. In the novel, human emotions seek means of expressions other than through straight actions that are visible in the plot. The plot fights a losing battle with the characters. So, this is to say that if the characters maintain vitality and keep define the plot the novel will never wind up.

The characters are all about opening new vistas, new possibilities, the plot is trying to attain some form of closure. And the progression is happening through this struggle between the plot and the characters. Given freedom to the characters there can be no closure in the traditional sense of the term. Ultimately the plot has to overtake and close the novel as a closed form of documentation, because it is a written work, it is not oral nothing more can be added after a point.

So, novelist leaves a plot midway letting the characters grow three-dimensional in pursuance of their own course. That is something a novelist can do up to a certain point.

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Plot and Character

- The enfeebling of the novel in the end is due to the plot's imperative getting prioritized over the characters' ambitions.
- A novel often ends with the impression of a vital character's deadness.
- "If it was not for death and marriage I do not know how the average novelist would conclude" – **logic takes away the blood and flesh** from a novel by imposing on it an essential standstill.
- While the characters drive the novel to its **irrational end**, the plot is the **logical, intellectual aspect** that introduces mysteries and suspense only to solve them later on.

The enfeebling of the novel or the weakening of the novel in the end is because of the plot's imperative getting prioritized over the character's ambitions. So, the plots imperative to draw closure, dominates the characters ambitions to find more and more layers in them to keep discovering layers within layers and in such an event the novel would never stop it would never end.

So, the novel often ends with the impression of a vital character's deadness. Around it character suddenly becoming flattened otherwise the novel would never end. Forster, if it was not for death and marriage I do not know how the average novelist would conclude. So, logic rationality, the desire to tie loose ends, giving a very stayed kind of causality, takes away blood and flesh from a novel by imposing on it an essential standstill, essential logicity, rationality characters are mostly rational.

Are unconscious is usually not tied down by logic, it has so many possibilities. So, while the characters drive the novel to his irrational end like, I was saying, the plot is the logical intellectual aspect, which introduces mysteries and suspense only in order to solve them later on. So, a plot in a way is more calculated. It is what gives, the novel it is documented a closed form as a book.

The characters always remain rebellious to such a definite and closed form. They want to outgrow and become something more. They want to become just three dimensional and remain like that.

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Plot and Character

- Like Kundera, Forster reads a predetermined, controlled, disciplined plot as a sign of conventionality and mediocrity, where the author wishes to keep all power in his hands:
 - “the reader may be moving about in worlds unrealized, but the novelist has no misgivings. He is competent, poised above his work, throwing a beam of light here, popping on a cap of invisibility there, and...continually negotiating with himself qua character monger as to the best effect to be produced. He plans his book beforehand: or anyhow he stands above it, his interest in cause and effect give him an air of **predetermination.**”

So, quite like Milan Kundera, so Milan Kundera says this much later Forster reads a predetermined, controlled, disciplined plot as a sign of conventionality and mediocrity, where the author wishes to keep all power in his hands. So, the author is not persuading as much as he is calculating and premeditating. Forster, the reader may be moving about in worlds unrealized, but the novelist has no misgivings.

This is the case of the mediocre writer. He is competent poised above his work throwing a beam of light here, popping on a cap of invisibility there and continually negotiating with himself qua character monger as to the best effect to be produced. He plans his book beforehand or anyhow he stands above his book, his interest in cause and effect give him an air of predetermination. The modern novel defies this sort of disciplined structuration of plot.

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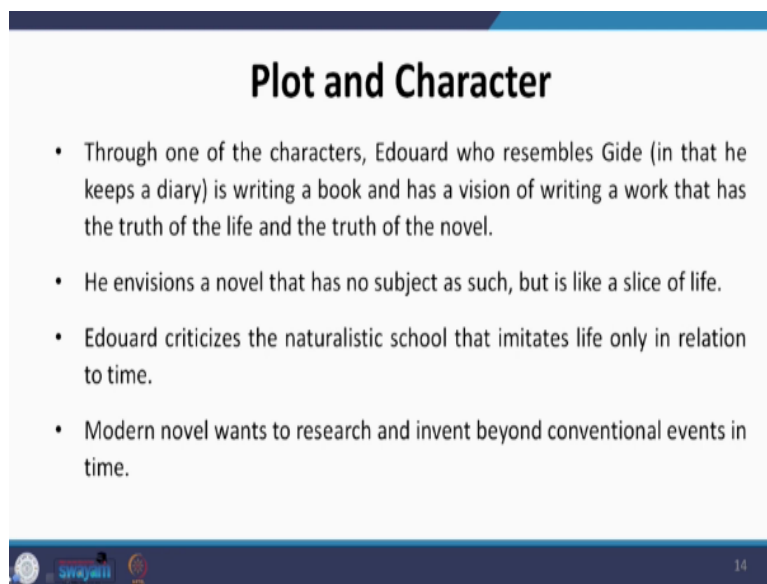
Plot and Character

- The modern novel defies this sort of disciplined structuration of plot – “After all, why has a novel to be planned? Cannot it grow? Why need it close, as a play closes? Cannot it open out? Instead of standing above his work and controlling it, cannot the novelist throw himself into it and be carried along to some goal that he does not foresee? ...Cannot fiction devise a framework that is not so logical yet more suitable to its genius?”
- He refers to *Les Faux Monnayeurs* by André Gide to suggest how a modern novel can combine personal reflections such as diary, fictional inventions as in novel and an afterthought on both, thereby getting the personal and the imaginary to interact with each other.

As Forster would say again from aspects of the novel. After all, why has a novel to be planned, cannot it grow, why did it close as a play closes, cannot it open out? Instead of standing above his work and controlling it, cannot the novelist throw himself into it and be carried along to some goal that he does not foresee, cannot fiction devise a framework that is not so logical yet more suitable to his genius.

He refers to *Les Faux Monnayeurs* by Andre Gide to suggest how a modern novel can combine personal reflections such as diary, fictional inventions as a novel and an afterthought on both and thereby get the personal and imaginary to interact with each other.

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Plot and Character

- Through one of the characters, Edouard who resembles Gide (in that he keeps a diary) is writing a book and has a vision of writing a work that has the truth of the life and the truth of the novel.
- He envisions a novel that has no subject as such, but is like a slice of life.
- Edouard criticizes the naturalistic school that imitates life only in relation to time.
- Modern novel wants to research and invent beyond conventional events in time.

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Through one of the characters called Edouard who resembles Gide, because he also keeps a diary like the Edouard also keeps a diary. He is writing a book and has a vision of writing a work that has the truth of the life as well as the truth of the novel. So, Edouard envisions a novel that has no subject as such, but is more like a slice of life. Edouard criticizes the naturalistic school which imitates life only in relation to time.

So, modern novel wants to research and invent beyond conventional scopes, beyond conventional happenings in time.

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Plot and Character

- Edouard wants his central character as a novelist,
 - "...the subject of my book will be the struggle between what reality offers him and what he tries to make of the offer...For a book of this type any plan would be unsuitable. The whole of it would go wrong if I decided any detail ahead. **I am waiting for reality to dictate to me.**"
- A novelist struggles between the facts proposed by reality, and the idea that resides in the ideal: **truth in life** and **truth in art**.

Edouard for example, once his central character as a novelist, the character Edouard who wants to write a novel and he wants his central character to be a novelist. The subject of my book will be the struggle between what reality offers him and what he tries to make of the offer. So, for a book of this type any plan would be unsuitable. The whole of it would go wrong if I decided any detail ahead. I am waiting for reality to dictate to me.

So, the novelist struggles between the facts proposed by reality and the idea that resides in the ideal. A novel is happening through the mishmash, through an interface between truth in life and truth in art. So, this also takes us back to the Don Quixote syndrome. Don Quixote, who happens as a result of this mishmash between the literary reality and the physical reality, the entry into the garb of Don Quixote the Knight by Alonso Quixano?

And his return to Alonso Quixano means death and the end of the work. So, could we say that Homo Fictus and Homo Sapiens are not really that separate from one another just like novel and history do converge. They have a lot in common they share many elements. Homo Fictus and Homo sapiens also flow into one another. With this I would like to stop our lecture here today and let us meet with another round of discussion in another lecture. Thank you.