

Narrative Mode and Fiction
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Lecture - 30
Tragedy and Comic Absurdity in Novel III

Good morning and welcome back to our lecture series on Narrative Mode and Fiction. We are discussing tragedy and comic absurdity in novel in the context of Gustave Flaubert's novel Madame Bovary. So we have talked about Emma's character, Emma that is the central, you know figure in this novel around which, you know all the happenings go on.

In fact, she is entering into new ventures and that is how the novel progresses or rather, the novel does not progress because those ventures lead her to nowhere. We have talked about the non-story. We have talked about the non-calendrical temporality, where we do not even look at the space where the space that Emma inhabits. It is more of a journey on the inner.

I was talking about how the nature has by the time Flaubert writes the nature has become a bland, insipid kind of a presence. The nature is a continuation of the ennui, the boredom that represents the marital relationship between Charles Bovary and Emma Bovary, right? So we have had an extended discussion regarding the unconventional character that Emma poses.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:17)

Madame Bovary – Narrative Style

- Flaubert deploys ironic romantic descriptions to establish a tension between various characters' experience of events and the real aspects of life. By combining ironic romanticism and literal realistic narration, Flaubert captures his characters and their struggles more fully than a strictly literal or a full-fledged romantic style would allow.

- The novel follows the French classical concept of literature, where there is a harmonious structuration and the narrative begins with expectation and energy, but ends in a dissipation.

So Flaubert deploys ironic romantic descriptions, in order to establish a tension between various characters in this novel, Madame Bovary, their experiences of events and the real aspects of life. So here life is and things are happening, but Flaubert is more interested rather than the happening on the outer Flaubert would be more interested in how these happenings, how these series of events are perceived by the different characters.

So there is this kind of you know each character lends to a given incident, their own lens. So they are looking at the same incident through their own lens. So for those letter, something that stands for a love letter for Emma, something that stands for a love letter for Emma, which is meant to express, you know a more love for Emma, stands for platonic affection when Charles Bovary is reading it.

He has no hint of the kind of relationship that Rudolph and his own wife share. So the same thing can be looked at in different ways depending on the position of the character, where the character comes from. So by combining ironic romanticism with literal realistic narration Flaubert captures his characters and their struggles more fully in a more well-rounded fashion than a strictly literal or a full-fledged romantic style would allow.

So he is kind of bringing in both the things an ironic romanticism along with the, you know the realistic descriptions to the minute details to the, so we have vivid word pictures that paint vividly about a given setting, about a given scene. The novel

follows the French classical concept of literature where there is a harmonious structuration and the narrative begins, we see with some form of some degree of expectation and energy whereas it ends in dissipation. So nothing forms, nothing holds for too long.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:17)

Madame Bovary - Motifs

- Time functions in the form of reminiscing past through memories, dreaming and wistfulness as a getaway from real social affairs. Protagonist Emma Bovary's first scene – looking outside of the window – signifies her wish to outgrow her frame.
 - Illusion as a major motif in the novel – there is a burning desire of pursuing and acquiring something, but before even concretizing it is over. The landscape is also without color, not green but blonde with roving and evanescent images that transform before one realizes. The sameness, stillness of nature that is lifeless, without a character and lie over a vast span echo the dreamy, introspective state of MB and her preoccupied being in trance.
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In Madame Bovary, time functions in the form of, you know reminiscing past through memories, through dreaming and the act of or the state of being wistful. So Emma's forever pensive, wistful mood, as a getaway from the real social affairs, so I was talking about being bored of whatever is happening around especially if it is a provincial setting, where Emma, you know lives.

Her immediate surroundings do not arouse any interest in her. So she is trying to recourse in or find interest, identify with the books that she read, and in turn, you know emulate the aristocratic ladies in those books. So the journey is a psychic journey. She is you know psychically detached from her surroundings in a certain sense, right?

So the plus being plus, being saturated about one's immediate cosmos, being uninterested, dispassionate about the mundane affairs going on around Emma. So protagonist, Emma Bovary's, first scene itself, the first time the novel introduces her, we see her looking outside of the window, and this signifies her wish to outgrow her frame, any limited frame, any provincial, you know parochial frame cannot limit her mental scape.

Her mental scape exceeds, outgrows the landscape, where she physically inhabits. And that is what is symbolized when she is looking out of the window. So mentally, she wants to explore beyond the horizon, beyond whatever can be seen around her through the window. Illusion plays a major motif in the novel. There is this burning desire of pursuing and acquiring something.

But even before the object of desire concretizes, it is over. So we see that there is this you know transience, this fleeting, roving nature of things. And this roving, fleeting, you know essence is very well captured through a recurrent image of the melting snow. It is a very beautiful imagery where the snow is there at one point, and the next time you see it has melted. The snow is changing its state so is Emma right, inwardly.

In the eye of Charles Bovary, she is the housewife, a very domesticated kind of a woman. He has no clue about the inner world of Emma, right? So the landscape is also without any color. Like I said, it is a bland land, it is not a green habitation, a green nature that we have around Emma's house. And so the images are evanescent. They appear for a moment and then they are gone. You cannot capture them.

They represent the ideal life that Emma is seeking, that she is trying to capture. So there is some ecstasy at one point and the next moment, you know it has gone and it is a mirage of that ecstasy. The love that Emma is forever in search of cannot be grasped enough, right? So we see that the images transform even before the protagonist or the characters realize. They are like a chimera, right?

The sameness, the stiffness of nature, that is lifeless without any character, without any, you know life almost no vibes and this nature scattered lying over vast span echo the dreamscape, the mind of Emma right, which is ever expanding, trying to outgrow, and the introspective state of Emma and her, you know preoccupied self which is constantly in a state of trance. Now we have some very effective as a realist Flaubert is very successful.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:45)

Madame Bovary

- Through the description of "A warm wind blew in her face; the melting snow fell drop by drop from the buds to the grass" – images are formed that are beautiful but fleeting, amorphous and changing – description of a glimmering snow that melts keep coming back, refers to how an image is undone even before it concretizes. Onomatopoeic words – sound describing a picture – is rife in the novel.
 - The outer and the inner – the geographical and the psychic shifts – are in tandem. While the Bovary couple leave Tostes, there are silhouettes of images, horses, figures at horizon that are not defined. This resonates with the emptiness of their Self, their thoughts, the meaning of their existence. **Are they taking anything stable and permanent with them from Tostes, in terms of memories, relation, identity? The desire for permanence and perpetuity is constantly flouted.**
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His descriptions are talking about the immediate material reality, but it goes on to become something more than description of the reality itself. It describes the entire setting the emotion that the novel carries, the emotion, so the nature and the character, the protagonist psyche, are in tandem. He is trying to say more through these descriptions.

And this is something we have already examined through, you know the description of Charles Bovary, the first time we meet Charles in his classroom and his awkwardness, which will never go away for the rest of the novel. Throughout the novel, he is carrying this, you know cumbersome, awkward, and couth kind of appearing, right. It never goes away. He is a shy lad.

That is how he remains even as a grown up man. So through the description of, you know certain scenes, let me read out a part I quote, "A warm wind blew in her face, the melting snow fell drop by drop from the buds to the grass." So once again the melting snow, the imagery of the melting snow. And so the contrast of warm and hot, it is very sensuous we could see.

It is sensory, it is sensuous and we find a lot of onomatopoeic words, onomatopoeia referring to, you know describing almost through sound, through appealing to one's sense. We have onomatopoeic words that set up the larger picture. It talks about the emotions of the characters too. It speaks to the human psyche.

So images are beautiful, but they are amorphous, they are fleeting, and they are constantly changing the description of the glimmering snow, the melting snow that keeps coming back, which refers you know how anything, any possibility of making, of doing, of construing a meaning is undone. It is unmade even before it concretizes, it reaches some sort of final form.

There is a miscarriage, there is a disappointment that you know dominates. That dominates as the final tone or the main, you know the mainstay of the novel. So the outer and the inner like I said, the geographical and the psychic shifts are in tandem, while the Bovary couple leave Tostes, there are silhouettes of images, there are horses figures at horizon that are not defined.

And this silhouettes, this outline, without you know much details, it resonates with the emptiness, the hollowness of their self, their thoughts and the meaning of their existence or maybe the lack thereof. So are they taking anything stable and permanent with them from Tostes? In terms of memories in terms of relations and identity, the desire for any kind of permanence and perpetuity is constantly flouted, right?

This is also a characteristic of the novel as a form, as a genre where the entire genre is about experimentation where we do not have any formulaic or you know way manner of writing, of laying down the novel. The novel does not abide by certain pre-given traits. It is constantly revising all the traits of earlier genres, earlier novels and that is how it grows.

In interaction with earlier traditions and yet in defiance of those traditions, we see that characteristic directly in this novel, right? So things happening very simple, mundane things are happening on the outer, like the statue of the priest, you know breaks, dismantles, at one point. The priest statue made up of Paris, dismantles and breaks at a point, which refers to the breakdown of the marital contract between Emma and Charles.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:10)

Madame Bovary

- **Irony**- The title of the novel is about a married woman designated by her husband's name, and suggests a stable domesticized persona. Quite on the contrary, the entire plot is about the female protagonist struggling and chasing her desirous Self through romantic encounters with several men.
 - The novel defies linearity through recurrence of happenings – both of Charles Bovary's wives die, after their death Charles goes back to touch their things. Emma and her paramour Leon in a cab that goes around Paris – it depicts the excess and pressure that is getting released.
 - Is the narrative progressing or dealing with large chunks of events that harp a few themes?
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So the title of the novel is about this married woman and therein lies the irony, the woman that is supposed to be designated by her husband's name. So that is how, that is also a commentary on how we identify women, traditionally speaking. So Madame is like we most of us know Mademoiselle is referred in the French tradition, mademoiselle is referred to the unmarried woman whereas Madame refers to the married woman.

Now in Madame Bovary, Bovary being her husband's surname, Emma is Emma kind of is shrouded. She is she disappears. And the entire narrative is about trying to find herself, find her, assert her desire, as opposed to this domesticated persona that she is supposed to be, that she is socially acceptable as. So the society accepts her as Madame Bovary, she wants to become something more or less than that name.

So the entire plot is about this female protagonist, who is struggling and chasing the desirous self through romantic overtures, encounters with a series of men. And the novel defies linearity through recurrence of happenings. There is a circularity in the, if we may use a word like progress, in the progress of the novel. Both Charles Bovary's wives die.

So Charles was married before also, his wife had died. And after the death of each wife shall go back, Charles goes back and he touches their things, the things that belong to them. And in another instance, we see Emma and her paramour Leon, a young man that she gets hooked to, they are in a cab. And it is a very sensuous, you

know scene where the car goes round and round Paris, it is not reaching any destination.

They want, they want to indulge in their erotic excesses within the car, inside the car and it depicts the pressure that is getting released, right? So the pressure that forms out of social expectations or the normative image that Emma has to wear around all the time, everything is getting released and the veneer is kind of gone inside the car when she is with Leon. So this circularity where a cab is not reaching anywhere.

And it carries the kind of, you know emotional, sensuous, emotional, sensual, erotic excesses. Is this narrative progressing to anywhere, it would make the reader ask or is it dealing with large chunks of events that harp few themes. Some overarching themes that keep coming back where you know lone incidents in their right are not very important.

But what is being said through these incidents, or the pattern that is being limbed, that is being portrayed through these incidents become more significant. Each venture of Emma with a paramour is a chunk of incident which does not take her anywhere. It is not like a story that is moving ahead in time. We see these you know chunks, heaped block after block one on top of the other.

It is not making any progress in the traditional sense of the term we understand. And in fact, if there is any in fact, if there is any movement, it is a spiral sort of a movement I read in Emma's journey, where she is moving towards, she is heading for an abysmal pit where she is, she will head on crash, right? So she is heading for an abysmal pit where she is going to head on crash in the end. As readers we can anticipate that.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:21)

Madame Bovary - Circularity

- From domesticity to cab, both spaces have stifling suggestions and Emma's sensuality, sexuality cannot be contained by either. Her excesses, as opposed to her husband's unresponsiveness, form the incentive to the novel's plot.
 - Like Charles' classroom, Emma's experience of visiting a waltz begins with coordinated and aesthetic dance movements that afterwards get corrupted and disjointed. So every time, the physical delight and ecstasy – jouissance – is miscarried after a point.
 - Circularity/flouting of a linear journey is also present in Emma going back to Rouen every time – Rouen witnesses her maidenhood and school life and her adulterous ventures as a married woman, and thereby her transformation through various stages.
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So from domesticity to cab, in both places, both in her home where she is the normative self and the cab where she is the unconventional socially unacceptable self-mistress of an unknown man, of an outsider. Both spaces have shifting suggestions and Emma's sensuality, sexuality cannot be contained either by the space of whom or inside the cab.

Her excesses as opposed to her husband's inertness, passiveness unresponsiveness form the torque or the incentive to the novels plot. That is what takes the novel forward or to the next level if we may. Like Charles's classroom, Emma's experience of visiting a waltz begins with some coordinated movements, some aesthetic dance forms.

And so some, there is some anticipation aroused inside the reader that you know the next thing that happens is going to be beautiful, something that has a concrete meaning. But after a while, even the waltz gets corrupted, it gets disjointed, it does not hold, it falls apart. So every time the physical delight, the ecstasy, the jouissance is being constituted, is being gathered, it is miscarried after a point, it cannot be maintained.

And so circularity and flouting of her linear journey is also present in Emma going back to ruin every time, a ruin that had witnessed her as a maiden as an unmarried woman and where she spent her school life, and then later, she goes there as an

adulterous right, as a married woman who is betraying, who is kind of, who cannot keep to the contracts of a marriage.

And thereby ruined almost witnesses every stage of Emma's life, her transformation through these various stages. And that is where we also find a circular pattern coming in, right?

(Refer Slide Time: 24:00)

Madame Bovary

- The imageries of fiction and dreams also follow the pattern of real life – Emma reads the tragic story of the Mademoiselle de la Valerie that evokes an image of “cracked glass” inside her, which promotes no optical sense.
- Her dreams are not ways of escaping the illusion and ennui of the reality, but further trap her within those feelings. The dreams are cacophonous with the raving sound of carriage; the image of the swan that becomes a dying swan, and the long, dark corridor suggest a typical cyclic progression – of waiting, confusion, and finally a fiasco and miscarriage of all feelings, leading to a nothingness, a void.

Now the images, the imageries of fiction and dreams follow the pattern of real life. Emma reads the tragic story of Mademoiselle de la Valerie, which evokes the image of cracked glass when she is reading the tales of Mademoiselle Valerie. She imagines cracked glass which obscures any kind of optical sense, clear optical sense and clarity. So in her dreams also we see there is no escape.

I mean, her dreams are not ways of escaping the illusion and the ennui, the boredom that pervades in the reality around her. But they further trap her within the same feelings of illusion, of ennui, right? The dreams are cacophonous with the raving sound of carriage. So sound images sound words, sound feelings, onomatopoeia recur throughout the novel.

The image of a swan, which goes on to become a dying swan. And the long dark corridor that Emma dreams about. It is typical, it suggests a typical cyclic progression. A cyclic progression comprising the process of waiting, confusion and finally a

fiasco, disappointment, a disappointment and a miscarriage of all, Emma's feelings, which leads to nothingness void.

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Madame Bovary – The Tragicomedy

- Flaubert's chronotope cannot contain the ambiance of traditional tragedy, so the tragedy is replaced by tragicomedy characterized by a dismal incongruous feeling. There is a weeping tone throughout that resonates and gets shriller, and is all over the narrative towards the end.
 - Like the scene of the classroom and the waltz, the marriage is also steeped in tragicomic moments. There is a comic vagueness, where the invitees want to look stylish but end up looking grotesque, the carnival-like situation described as "procession broke out" and people "loitered around", which refers to a deep-seated lethargy. Even the feast is fulsome and becomes repulsive after a while. Marriage is shown as a contrivance of an artist for an ostensible order, which falls apart into disorder and annulment. So it starts with a lot of promises but ends with vulgarity.
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So Flaubert's chronotope, the chronotope, the time space where Flaubert sits and writes cannot contain enough of the ambiance of traditional tragedy. So that tragedy is replaced by tragic comedy, tragicomic sense right, which is characterized by a dismal incongruous feeling. So a ludicrousness a comedy emerging from a sense of, you know absurdity, a sense of now being out of place.

So comedy can also engender from the fact that a person does not subscribe to the values of her immediate surroundings, does not really try to consciously violate them, but kind of her expectations do not match with the predominant sentiments that pervade around her, that dominate the society, the contemporary society. So tragic comedy that exists the interface of the self and the society.

Not really a conscious direct conflict or trying to tamper social rules and prescriptions, but a kind of haze, where the society cannot understand the individual and vice versa. The interface is not very fruitful, right? And it leads to incongruity, a kind of fragmentation. So there is we see in Flaubert's Madame Bovary there is this weeping tone.

A very silent weeping tone throughout the narrative that resonates with the larger nature around, the un-reciprocating, lifeless kind of nature. And it gets shriller and it

is all over, it is scattered all over the narrative by the time the reader reaches the end. Like the sense of the classroom, like the scene of the classroom, and the walls, the marriage of, marriage of the Bovary couple is also steeped in some tragicomic moments.

There is a comic vagueness and even to some extent, the desire to make the marriage picturesque, which is a timeless desire goes on to make it look more vulgar in some sense, where the invitees in the marriage we see when we look at the feast and the marriage party of the Bovary couple, the invitees want to look stylish but they end up looking grotesque.

So at the end of all desires, what awaits is grotesqueness, right? The carnival like situation described as a procession that broke out where there is no discipline, where form where there is a desire for some form, some meaning but which is that meaning constantly slips away, slips out of hand. So procession which is supposed to be you know disciplined, it becomes chaotic, right?

And people loiter around aimlessly, which refers to a deep seated sense of lethargy. Even the feast is so super saturating, so fulsome, it is almost people start feeling nauseous and it becomes repulsive after a while. There is there are too many things too much of you know dressing and food around. The feeling of being sober is gone. It is almost it makes one giddy the way things proceed, giddy and nauseous.

So there is no you know human control over anything, over any such incident which is supposed to work out in a, and present itself in a grand fashion. The grand goes on to become ugly. The arrangement for the marriage party and marriage feast becomes like I said, grotesque, fulsome and nauseous, nothing forms. So marriage is shown as a kind of contrivance, a kind of, you know endeavor of an artist for an ostensible order, right?

An order that we are, a meaning that we are constantly looking for in our society. Definitive, you know meanings (()) (31:29) something that would lead to something else, the causality. And this falls apart entirely into disorder, into chaos and meaning is annulled. So it starts with a lot of promises, lot of anticipations and expectations,

but end with vulgarity. The narrative carries a close intimacy between laughter, cruelty and tragedy.

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Madame Bovary – Tragicomic Absurdity

- The narrative carries a close intimacy between laughter, cruelty and tragedy – the letter written by Rodolphe to Emma (one of her paramours) is cruel, tragic and yet there is comic absurdity to it. Rodolphe's cruelty makes love absurd and there is still a hint of poignancy attached to the episode.
 - Emma is an embodiment of desire – she is first introduced against the backdrop of fire, Emma drinking water as Charles looks on, she pierces her finger with needle and then sucks her finger. Her eye colour changing from brown to black to blue shows a sign of camouflage and shift. Afterwards, the blue eye colour symbolizes the poison that she consumes.
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The letter written by Rodolphe for example to Emma, Rodolphe being one of her paramour is, at the same time, cruel, tragic and yet, amid this cruelty and tragedy, one also discovers some amount of comic absurdity to it. The relationship between Rudolphe and Emma I have already discussed in our earlier class, how it is full of lies.

So Rudolphe's cruelty makes love, the concept of love, the idea of some elevated idea of love itself absurd. And there is still a hint of poignancy, attached to this episode. The deadlock lies in the reader not knowing how to react whether this is a poignant sin, or it is a fiasco once you laugh at, or, you know it is a lot of cruelty being, you know meted out to a woman who is unprepared for the reality.

So Emma is an embodiment of desire throughout the novel, and she is first introduced against the backdrop of fire, which says a lot about her character. And the scenes the way she behaves while Charles you know looks on, they are almost they are redolent with a lot of sensoriness. Emma drinking water or liquor, and very vividly Flaubert describes, illuminates how she drinks from the cup or from the glass as Charles looks on.

Then at a point she pierces her finger with a needle and then she is sucking the blood that, you know comes out of the finger. Her eye color changing from brown to black

and then to blue shows a sign of camouflage and shift. And afterwards her blue eye color also goes on to symbolize a poison that she consumes to suicide.

I would like to read some parts or the sensuous descriptions of Emma, which tells us more about Flaubert's master, you know mastery, the masterpiece that Madame Bovary, the novel is and which also elaborates more about Emma's character. We do not have to describe her. We just all we have to do is read the way Flaubert has portrayed her.

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Sensuous Descriptions of Emma

- "As she sewed she pricked her fingers, which she then put to her mouth to suck them. Charles was surprised at the whiteness of her nails. They were shiny, delicate at the tips, more polished than the ivory of Dieppe, and almond-shaped. Yet her hand was not beautiful, perhaps not white enough, and a little hard at the knuckles; besides, it was too long, with no soft inflections in the outlines. Her real beauty was in her eyes. Although brown, they seemed black because of the lashes, and her look came at you frankly, with a candid boldness" (21).
- "The daylight that came in by the chimney made velvet of the soot at the back of the fireplace, and touched with blue the cold cinders. Between the window and the hearth Emma was sewing; she wore no fichu; he could see small drops of perspiration on her bare shoulders" (31).

As she sewed she pricked her fingers, which she then put to her mouth to suck them. Charles was surprised at the whiteness of her nails. They were shiny, delicate at the tips, more polished than the ivory of Dieppe and almond-shaped. Yet her hand was not beautiful, perhaps not white enough and a little hard at the knuckles. Besides, it was too long, with no soft inflections in the outlines.

Her real beauty was in her eyes, although brown they seemed black because of the lashes. And her look came at you frankly, with a candid boldness. In another part he says the daylight that came in by the chimney, made velvet of the soot at the back of the fireplace and touched with blue the cold cinders. Between the window and the hearth Emma was sewing.

She wore no fichu. He could see small drops of perspiration on her bare shoulders, unquote. So this is the level of minute details which adds up very successfully, which

add up very successfully to the character that Emma is and the possibilities in her what she is going to become in the course of the narrative. She is a very sensuous woman, no doubt.

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Madame Bovary's Romanticism

- Emma's fragile but hard hands, her energetic quality and masculinity posit her with respect to Flaubert's thoughts, her candour makes her unconventionally attractive
- Romantic literatures are based on time past, and Emma recourse to romanticism to seek a vision of ideal relation as is found in Goethe. Emma's romantic sentiments lead her to reverie and injudicious gestures, such that she is doomed by the time the reality of her situation dawns on her, and she wakes up to the crises that are grounded on a hardcore reality.
- Novel as a genre stands on a historico-philosophical premise, providing its legitimacy within the conditions of the contemporary spirit. Flaubert shows the friction that is caused when an excess romantic zeal cannot come to terms with one's immediate material facts.

Now Emma's fragile but hard hands, her energetic quality, her candor, her to some extent her masculinity, the hardness about her, as you know very strikingly opposed to the bovine or the placid nature that Charles represents posit her with respect to Flaubert's own thoughts. So we could see that through this woman this intractable woman to some extent.

This woman that does not give into social mores. We have Flaubert own image, Flaubert's thoughts in her and her you know unconventional attractiveness is could be very well seen as Flaubert's altered ego. A lot of critics actually say that Madame Bovary is Flaubert's altered ego, where he is constantly trying to outgrow his immediate surroundings.

Romantic literatures are based on time past and Emma recourse to romanticism to seek a vision of ideal relation as is found in Goethe for example. So Emma's romantic sentiments lead her to reverie and injudicious gestures, such that she is doomed in the end by the time the reality of her, you know situation dawns on her, and she wakes up to the crisis quite late, the crisis that are grounded on a hardcore reality.

The novel as a genre stands on a historical political premise providing its legitimacy within the conditions of the contemporary spirit. So Flaubert shows the friction that is taking place that takes place when excess romantic zeal cannot come to terms with one's immediate material facts, the doom that is going to follow thereby.

(Refer Slide Time: 38:48)

Madame Bovary's Romanticism

- Through the romance characters that she finds in texts, Emma explores for the ideal man and locates herself in a milieu where she would love to belong. Her journey in seeking a romantic partner is also an introspective journey in search of her inner self. It leads her from the mundane captivity of the present physical reality to a more heterogeneous and meaningless reality, which also paves the path to self-recognition – an aspect of her self that was hitherto concealed from her.
 - The union of Charles and Emma through marriage is a disappointment – while Charles, a medical officer, is symbolic of mediocrity in his profession and temperament, Emma aspires for a life in Paris but must settle for a surrogate experience in a smaller city. The friction between her ideal desires and real experiences is symptomatic of the novel as a genre.
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Through the romance characters that she finds in her texts, in her the books she read, Emma explores for the ideal man and locates herself in a milieu where she would love to belong. Her journey in seeking a romantic partner is also an introspective journey in search of her inner self, a self that is unknown to her. It leads her from the mundane captivity of the present physical reality to a more heterogeneous and meaningless reality.

And it also paves the path to self-recognition. Through exploring the different dimensions of herself, she is recognizing herself. She is discovering the possibilities of herself, an aspect of her that was hitherto concealed from her. So the union of Charles and Emma through marriage is surely a disappointment.

While Charles, who is a medical officer is symbolic of mediocrity, through and through in his profession, in terms of his temperament, Emma aspires for a life in Paris, but she has to settle for something surrogate, a surrogate experience in a similar city. So this is also novel between what life has to give, which is a flawed version and what we expect out of life, right?

We always we have to make do with some vicarious experience or vicarious version of what we want from life. And that is for real, the friction between the ideal desires and real experience is symptomatic of the novel as a channel.

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Madame Bovary

- The presence of the apothecary Homais – Homais starts writing and prefigures the uprising bourgeois. His dialogue with the priest, Monsieur Binnet, who is a clergyman, shows the antagonistic crossing between theocentric ideas and science
- Homais is a blind force that stands at each turn of Emma's affairs and suggests her a way without any deeper understanding
- Flaubert uses a manipulative language for Homais. He uses a jargon where different voices merge – philosopher, religious, scientist

Now we have the presence of this apothecary Homais. Homais who starts writing and prefigures the uprising bourgeois, his dialogue with the priest Monsieur Binnet, who is a clergyman shows the antagonistic crossing between theocentric ideas and science both of which are rising in Flaubert's immediate society and they kind of cross path how interestingly they cross path. Homais is a blind force that stands at each turn of Emma's affairs.

And without having any idea of what is going on in Emma's life really, he suggests her way without any deeper understanding like I said. So he is like a blind force standing at each turn, each vital turn of Emma's life. And he is making a suggestion without having any knowledge of how the suggestions speaks to Emma's reality. So Flaubert's uses a manipulative language for Homais.

He uses a lot of jargon where different voices merge, that of the philosopher, the man of religion, as well as a scientist. Then we have the figure of Lheureux.

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MB – Circular Pattern of Narrative

- The figure of Lhereux – moneylender that forebodes the society that is to come. He is polished, calculative, complex, makes obscene gestures to Emma, no one knows his earlier profession.
- He has a corrosive effect and acts as a hidden force eating away at the base of the society. He acts as a catalyst in putting Emma into debt and impelling her to suicide.

And so these figures represent the spirit of the age. It would be very wrong to say that Madame Bovary is completely a break away from the spirit of the age. The figure of Lhereux is that of a moneylender and it forebodes the society that is to come. It is inspired by the social happenings around Flaubert.

He is a polished, you know calculative complex person, and he makes obscene gestures to Emma and he is a very shady character because no one knows what his earlier profession was. Right now he is in the story plot. He is a moneylender, but no one knows about his past. He has a corrosive effect. And he is further luring Emma to her nadir, to her downfall.

And he acts as a hidden force that is eating away that is gnawing at the beasts of a society. As a moneylender he acts as a catalyst in putting Emma into perpetual debt and impelling her to suicide in the end.

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Madame Bovary

- The scene of the agricultural fair has polyphonic discourses merging, where different layers of voices mingle, coupled with the orgy of animals. There is a vain oratory factor where Rodolphe and the politicians speak at different levels; finance, commerce and agriculture are brought together. The effect is cacophony whose nature is repulsive.
- Cacophony and a cloy feeling adds to the feast too: "The feast was long, noisy, ill served; the guests were so crowded that they could hardly move their elbows; and the narrow planks used for forms almost broke down under their weight. They ate hugely. Each one stuffed himself on his own account. Sweat stood on every brow, and a whitish steam, like the vapour of a stream on an autumn morning, floated above the table between the hanging lamps" (232).
- Description of hands is recurrent in Flaubert. Emma's strong hands, the haggard labour woman's long-suffering exhausted hands – the question of class and means of production come in.

So I would very quickly talk about I will also talk about the scene of the agricultural fair, that has polyphonic discourses merging where you know different layers of voices mingle coupled with the orgy of animals. Once again, the confusion, the chaos prevail. There is a vain oratory factor where once again language fails. These are the themes that keep coming back in Madame Bovary.

Where we see, so we see Rudolphe and the politician speaking at different levels without comprehending what the other speaks. So finance, commerce, agriculture, all these topics are brought together, what emerges is a vague or a no communication, the lack of communication. So too many things are going on in the fair. No one can hear one another properly.

And effective cacophony is very repulsive in nature. And there is a cloy feeling, there is this cloyness, this dissipate feeling that defines the feast in this fair. I quote from the book, "the feast was long, noisy, ill served. The guests were so crowded that they could hardly move their elbows and the narrow planks used for forms almost broke down under their weight.

They ate hugely. Each one stuffed himself on his own account. Sweat stood on every brow, and a whitish steam, like the vapor of a stream on an autumn morning floated above the table between the hanging lamps". And description of hands are also you know recurrent in Flaubert's writing. Emma's strong hands, the haggard labor woman's long suffering, exhausted hands recur.

So the imagery of the hand, which goes back to the question of class and the means of production. It also, the labor for writing that Flaubert is undertaking in order to produce this masterpiece also comes in. So he is going back to the means of production.

And that is from there the novel is churning out. I would quickly like to read a portion from the book where the labor woman Catherine Leroux's hands are being, you know her entire being is her presence is being discussed, being described. A woman, a peasant woman who was given a silver medal for 54 years of service at the farm.

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The Agricultural Fair – Flaubert's Mastery as a Realist and Breakdown of Language

- Description of Catherine Nicaise Elizabeth Leroux, who was given a silver medal for fifty-four years of service at the farm:

"there came forward on the platform a little old woman with timid bearing, who seemed to shrink within her poor clothes. On her feet she wore heavy wooden clogs, and from her hips hung a large blue apron. Her pale face framed in a borderless cap was more wrinkled than a withered russet apple. And from the sleeves of her red jacket looked out two large hands with knotty joints, the dust of barns, the potash of washing the grease of wools had so encrusted, roughened, hardened these that they seemed dirty, although they had been rinsed in clear water; and by dint of long service they remained half open, as if to bear humble witness for themselves of so much suffering endured. Something of monastic rigidity dignified her face. Nothing of sadness or of emotion weakened that pale look. In her constant living with animals she had caught their dumbness and their calm. It was the first time that she found herself in the midst of so large a company, and inwardly scared by the flags, the drums, the gentlemen in frock-coats, and the order of the councillor, she stood motionless, not knowing whether to advance or run away, nor why the crowd was pushing her and the jury were smiling at her. Thus stood before these radiant bourgeois this half-century of servitude" (231).

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The dust of barns, the potash of washing, the grease of wools had so encrusted, roughened, hardened these that they seemed dirty, although they had been rinsed in clear water. And by dint of long service, they remained half open as if to bear humble witness for themselves for so much suffering endured. Something of monastic rigidity, dignified her face. Nothing of sadness or of emotion weakened that pale look.

In her constant living with animals, she had caught their dumbness and there calm. It was the first time that she found herself in the midst of so large a company, and inwardly scared by the flags, the drums, the gentleman in frock coats, and the order of the counselor, she stood motionless, not knowing whether to advance or run away, nor why the crowd was pushing her and the jury were smiling at her.

Thus stood before these radiant bourgeois this half century of servitude.” So once again communication fails. We are trying to, you know felicitate a labor woman with a medal, a silver medal and some money that is being given to her, and it is very self-congratulatory, complacent gesture on the part of the bourgeois people, the prize givers.

But she once again cannot construe the grandeur, the significance of this entire event, this felicitation. The gap between the giver and the taker is a commentary on the social gap, the economic gap. So this is Flaubert, a master as a realist, a realist writer. I would like to stop my discussion today here and we are going to meet again with another round of discussions. Thank you.