

* Definition and characteristics of Novel

1 Introduction:-

The term novel refers to a fictitious prose narrative or tale of a lengthy plot which represents a picture series of real or imaginary life. It is longer and much more elaborate than a short story. Its elements are fictitious prose story, long thin and more elaborate than a short story; a picture series of imaginary life passing as real life, well-knit plot ending on a likely issue, human characters, every now and then, suffering from emotional crises. 'History of the English Novel', E. A. Baker defines:-

"The novel is a prose story, picturing real life or something corresponding thereto, and having the unity and coherence due to a plot or scheme of some kind, or to a definite intention and attitude of mind on the part of the author."

Until the 17th century 'novel' meant a short story of the kind written and collected by Boccaccio in his 'Decameron'. By about 1700 it had got something like its present meaning. Oxford Dictionary says - "Novel is a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length in which characters and actions

representative of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity.

In other words a novel, as we understand it today, is a story longer, more realistic and more complicated than the Italian novella as written by Boccaccio and other writers of his time.

In England, the first novel was a prose romance. It was John Lyly's 'Euphues'. Then Robert Green's 'Momonida', Lodge's 'Rosalinde' and Thomas Nashe's 'The Unfortunate Traveller'. They were pieces of prose fiction moving in the direction of the modern novel. It was John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' which shows man the way to ^{the} Eternal City of God.

The English novel found its real form in the 18th century. The first novel of this century was Robinson Crusoe (1719) written by Defoe. Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne were great novelists. 'Pamela' and 'Clarissa Harlowe' are the great novels. Fielding's 'Joseph Andrews' and 'Tom Jones' are classics. 'Roderick Random' by Smollett, 'Tristram's Shandy' by Sterne, 'The Vicar of Wakefield' by Goldsmith are also good novels.

There are six kinds of elements or characteristics in novel. Novel is

criticism of life

1. Plot - There are many ^{controversies} in the matter of the plot of the novel. Plot means the main ^{sequence} of events in a novel. Dr. Pratap Narayan says - "Plot is a structure of events whether it is simple or complex ~~through~~ ^{the} through which a novel is written". It is duty of a novelist he should be faithful and honest while writing a novel. It requires authentic delineation of character or a ^{post} portrayal of everyday experiences in their most sordid actuality. It may involve a study merely of the minute details of things or ^{wholesome} wholesome fondness for the unclean and the disagreeable. The plot should have four essential qualities like originality, consistency, authenticity, and dynamic. There should be a sequence in events. The plot may have official and other connective stories but they must be unified in one story of thread. The novelist can present the plot using many techniques. some times he narrates the story himself sometimes with dialogues and sometimes letter method and sometimes mixed methods.

Characterization:-

CHARACTERS

Almost as vital as the part and of character portrayal is that of character grouping. Characters in novels do not stand alone and are not to be considered alone. Novel is a picture of human characters. There should be a good relation between character and plot. The novelist has different character in his novel and ~~deal~~ delineates various aspects of lives of various characters. He selects the characters nearby circles and peeps into them and represents good and evils of the characters in front of us. Sometimes the novelist takes the help of psychological method to show characters innerself. Such characters build up their own personality in spite of being toys in the hand of the novelist. W.M. Thackeray says:—

"I don't control my characters. I am in their hands and they take me where they please". There are two

kinds of characters found in novel. The first category of the characters belongs to the particular representative and distinct personality is the second. Tom Jones has the first and Lady Booby has the second categories. The characterization of the characters may be idealistic or realistic. Struggling characters are

attraction of the novel

Dialogue:-

The conversation between two characters or more than two are known as dialogues. It is the important feature of drama but it is used in all forms of literature now. It is used for different purposes in novel. It is used for developing the story, expressing dramatic ideas. Dialogue is dependent on naturalness, short, ^{spontaneous} instinct, and ^{purposeful} as well as psychological ^{virtues}. Dialogue is the main & inseparable part of the plot of the novel. If dialogues are an interesting, alive and instinctive, the novel will have clarity, liveliness and realism. The rational skill of the novelist can make the dialogues living.

The province or atmosphere:-

Generally any country, province, society, or condition of natural social, cultural, political situations make the province or atmosphere of the novel. None novelist can justify the novel by ignoring this element. The novelist must have knowledge of the incident, place, time, environment and different conditions of his time. Historical and provincial novels require special attention of all these things.

5. Purpose or ~~thought~~ elements of thoughts.

Though it was supposed that the main aim of novel is to entertain. But now it is clear that novel is a vast criticism of life. The novelist sees the life closely and absorb human conduct. Though it is the latest form of literature, it can express power more powerfully than other forms. The plot of the novel may be imaginative but it expresses living and in real way. A vast experience of the novelist play an important role for describing real or imaginary picture.

Diction:— The novelist embodies his experiences, ideas, feelings through diction. The novelist organises different elements with his diction. Language is the media of expression. The language of the novel is different than other forms. Language is only the media which makes the character and incidents alive. Novelist uses creative experiments with colloquial language. Power of expression increases by using suggestive, ironical, and so symbolic language. Every novel has its own diction. Usage also makes the language impressive if they are used according to incidents. There are many types of novel like, social, documentary, non-fictional, regional, historical, psychological and short.