

4.1) The History of Novel

- The eighteenth century has gifted English literature two entirely new forms which are without any traces in the ancient classical heritage.
 - 1) 'The Periodical Essay'
 - 2) 'NOVEL'.

Since the time of its origin, **novel** has been gaining popularity and growing gradually. Today, it is recognized as the most dominant literary **genre**. (**style**)

- **What is Novel?**

A novel is *a* relatively long narrative fiction which describes intimate human experiences normally in *a* prose form.

The present English word '**novel**' is derived from the Italian '**novella**', meaning 'new'.

A novel narrates *a* story **embellishing (decorating)** it with more details of time, place, nature, people and their minds, their gestures and activities.

It creates the picture of the society of that time. Novel makes life easier to understand than in drama and poetry. In modern era novel has adopted literary prose.

- **History of Novel:**

The novel as *a* literary **genre** (**style**) has *a* history of about two thousand years. Among the early precursors of novel *a* collection of tales known as Greek Romances dating from the second to sixth century may top the list.

These imaginative and delightful stories of ideal love and marvellous adventures profoundly affected the creative writing for the next thousand years.

In the 18th century, the appearance of newspaper and magazines attracted a large number of readers from the middle class.

These new readers had little interest in romances and tragedies, which were appreciated by the upper class.

Thus, need for a new type of literature arose that would express the new ideas of the 18th century. The 18th century new literature was characterized by the spirit of realism and denial of romantic features like enthusiasm, passion and imagination.

The foreground for the novel was prepared by all these factors. After 1740, novel originated as the literary form in England. Increase in trade and commerce, along with the Industrial Revolution, had given rise to the middle class. A class of people had emerged to occupy on elite status. The realistic picture of everyday life and problems of common people depicted in the novels appealed to the newly educated class and was regarded by them as respectable reading material.

Thus, novel as a form appears to have been designed for both to voice the aspirations of the middle and lower classes and meet their longings. The spread of machines could provide a time to the educated middle class for reading and discussions about the books.

Drama and poetry were the two literary forms that were fading away.

Novel was a combination of some features of them and some new features were added to the form. It was the prominent form in the eighteenth century and onwards to encompass the social, political and cultural happenings and scientific progress.

Indian Scenario:

'Rajmohan's Wife', by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay serialized in 'The Indian Field' was the first novel in English written by an Indian. The period after that is marked by few more novels written by the Indian writers. **These novels bore either nationalistic virtues or social issues as their main framework.** Mulkraj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao were the major trio who prevailed in the period after that. Novelists like Anita Desai Nayantara

Sahgal and Arun Joshi and Manohar Malgaonkar changed the current of Indian English novel through their works. Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and Upamanyu Chatterjee ameliorated the Indian novel in English by adding new features to it. Recent years have witnessed the dazzling performance by Indian novelists like Salman Rushdie, Arvind Adiga, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and Kiran Nagarkar. The tradition of Indian English novel has undergone a vital change since its birth and it has undoubtedly very bright future.

Novella:

A Novella, the word originated from the Italian word 'novelle', is a type of prose fiction which is shorter than a full-length novel and longer than short stories.

It is a well-structured yet short narrative, often satiric or realistic in tone. It usually focuses on one incident or issue with one or two main characters and takes place at a single tradition. Some of the famous novellas in English are —

- 'The Heart of Darkness' by Joseph Conrad
- 'The Turn of the Screw' by Henry James
- 'Billy Budd' by Hermann Melville
- 'Death in Venice' by Thomas Mann
- 'Seize the Day' by Saul Bellow
- 'Pearl' by John Steinbeck

Elements of Novel/ Novella

There are six elements essential of 'Novel' or 'Novella'. All these factors may be related to one another in the work by an author.

1) Theme:

Theme is the central idea in the novel which can be expressed in a **nutshell**. It is a philosophical statement or a truth which the writer has put forth through the narration of the series of events in the story and characters acting in the particular setting.

Plot:

Plot is essentially the story or the course of events that make up the theme. It is created by the conflict either internal (inside the mind of the character) or external (with other characters or entities). Plot may be simple (one plot) or complex (consisting the interweaving of many subplots).

Character:

Characterization is related to the plot as the course of events take place because of the certain behavior of the characters.

Depiction of character can range from a thumbnail sketch to deep, wordy, highly detailed verbal sketch. The important character may have been described in its every aspect by the writer. The minor characters are not given much importance. The reader follows the actions of one main character throughout the novel. This character is referred to as the 'protagonist'.

Protagonist (main character) is in conflict with a character or an entity or a force (internal or external) which is known as antagonist.

Setting:

Setting is the background in which the story takes place.

There are several aspects of the setting. It includes place, period, time, climate or weather and lifestyle. Plot and character are the two major elements that are affected due to setting.

Conflict:

The struggle between the opposite forces in the story is called conflict. Conflict in the story provides interest and curiosity about the plot.

Language / Style:

The language and the techniques used by the author for the narration of the course of events is known as the 'style'.

An author can use extensive vocabulary and high phrases or he may be laconic and would write only to the point or he may mix both according to the requirement for meeting his purpose. He may use linguistic devices to make the narrative effective. All these factors decide the 'texture' of the narration and

create an impact on the readers.