Abstract

Reading of Novels from a very young age got me into literature studies. So it was without any doubt that my PhD would be related to novels. A novel can be read for pleasure but one can enjoy and benefit from it only when a critical analysis is done. And to critically analyse any work of fiction it is an uphill task. But the best part is one can do many things with the novel form and it cannot be challenged as there is nothing right or wrong. A thesis cannot be done on all the aspects of the novel so had to decide on a specific aspect to be evaluated of the novel. That is when Dr. Pranava Dave helped me in finalising the area of research——“A Study of the form of Novel of Ideas: with special reference to five selected novels of 20th century.

The Novel is a fictional prose narrative of considerable length, typically having a plot that is unfolded by the actions, speech, and thoughts of the characters. The Genre encompasses a wide range of types and styles including picaresque, epistolary, gothic, romantic, realistic, historical, etc. The typical elements of a conventional novel are plot, character, setting, narrative method and point of view, scope and myth and symbolism. These elements have been subject to experimentation since the earliest appearance of the novel.

Since the inception of the novel form, various writers have adapted to varied styles either by their own creativity, imagination, compulsion of their era, criticism and patronage of their readers, resulting in certain established and recognized forms of novel writing adhering to established conventional elements and traditional forms of novel writing.

The earlier years of the twentieth century saw radical experiments in all genres, symbolism and naturalism underwent some profound changes.
These experimentations led certain authors to break away from the conventional novel form and also from their individual styles, which evolved in a bold expression of their assertions. This new form of experimentation eventually got recognized as the form of 'Novel of Ideas', where the author uses the novel as a platform for discussing ideas. Character and plot are of secondary importance.

In this study I intend to analyze works of selected five authors, who have been Nobel Awardees, and their works have been termed as belonging to the form of novel of ideas.

Since four of the five novels are not originally written in English this study is based on the English translations of these works. Assuming that the translations have not affected the soul of each work and are as close to the original, the study of each novel was undertaken.

All the five authors were not much popular or sought after during their times as most of the nations they lived in were undergoing turbulence or were affected by the world wars or political upheavals, effecting the delayed publication of some of these novels.

Much work has been done on this genre by Aldous Huxley and Mary Mcarthe. Their works have thrown significant light on the importance of this genre. I have seriously considered their analysis as reference during the course of this study and owe and acknowledge credit to their points of view.

For convenient understanding of this genre I have classified the prominent characteristics of the Novel of Ideas

For the novelist of novel of ideas the literary form is of not much importance. His focus lies in criticizing the contemporary society and its
apparent development; the form is just a medium of expression. As far as the portraying ideas of a mundane, decadent society are concerned the novelists of this genre are very modernistic in nature. Their ideas to change the prevailing situation by tackling the awful intellectual sterility through an intense debate of issues they consider being of major importance to mankind, are new.

The form is not rigid, it is flexible to change, modification, and adjustment whenever needed. It can assume a point of difference of mood and intonation. The authors developed a new technique to fulfill their objectives of introducing a strong social criticism and thereby putting an emphasis on the content of the novel, and thus promoting an enlightened but yet creative society which is able to integrate the asset of the three main cultural fields of science, religion, and art. The most apparent outcome of such a style and expression is the Novel of Ideas with its self staging novelist.

The novel of ideas deals with “the drama implicit in an idea which becomes explicit when it is shown as a point of view; there is the drama of ideas rather than of persons, the drama of individualized ideas.

-Aldous Huxley: The Novel of Ideas: Lecture at University of Marinela LUPSA 1st December 1918.

Though the Novel of Ideas is a work of fiction it does not contribute to the traditional practice of making characters to play prominent roles but instead it is an idea or concept or an interaction that takes the centre stage and is carried throughout the novel playing dominant subjective roles.

The author of a novel of ideas is a person of such greater interest in his own novel; his presence is more obvious, too. In the case of Huxley, there is a close interaction of the essayist with the novelist. They parallel each other for a
time; they frequently supplement each other. The essayist is a kind of “supply station”, to which the novelist has recoursed……. The essayist’s attempt to give life to his ideas leads to the novel of ideas….. Once the novelist deserts this position, his novels may become essays almost purely, the narrative itself being an exposition rather than a dramatization of ideas.

-Aldous Huxley: The Novel of Ideas: Lecture at University of Marinela LUPSA 1st December 1918.

The author acts as a symphony conductor and a stimulator for the ideas, which have to be controlled from straying and misleading the thought process. The author refrains from giving elaborate characterization of characters but goes to great lengths to describe events, politics, technology, philosophy, art, literature, economics, culture and controversies with the intention of provoking in a manner so as to trigger the intellectual interpretation of the reader but at times a frail attempt is also visible to contain or terminate the flow of these thoughts and perceptions.

To have a sort of control over the overall length of the novel and to ensure that the characters do not go astray from the subjects (ideas) and become inconclusive, the novelist uses various techniques to contain and to certain extent retain the flow of thought.

It is very essential for the Novel of Idea to have controversies to depict the various levels of intellectual interpretations of established theories, understandings and the contemporary environment, privileges of the Novelist.

It's the ultimate novel of ideas. A book of characters who spend most of their time spouting thoughts on big topics like love, religion, science, politics and sexuality. That is, when they're not engaging in the latter.
Since the Novel of Ideas always dealt with the contemporary it became necessary that it does not contradict general observations, creativity, events and the state of affairs portrayed by other forms of creativity adapted by artists, performers, historians, scientists in their work, which had to relate as a non-fictional reference point for the reader of the Novel of Ideas. However contradictory or in agreement the novelist attempted to portray his subject matter he ensured that these reference points indicated his work less of fiction.

The *Novel of Ideas* is a genre in which the author also establishes more empathetically strong views and philosophies from other disciplines like science, politics, culture, art etcetera.

Since the *Novel of Ideas* as a genre can be presumed to be born in the post modern era, when science, scientists, technology and innovations were playing major transformational and transitional roles in the ways of life of the human civilization, references to these are found throughout these novels. At times the core theme of the novel is also sourced around scientific developments.

The genre relates mainly to the post modernist era where science, technology, religion and politics had a major influence on the western society, transforming their way of life, culture and philosophy. The manner in which people adapted and rejected change in society also became a subject for evaluation and criticism. Since the major transformations affected the western society initially, the *Novel of Ideas* portrays largely on this contemporary society.
The characteristics detailed so far forms the basic structure of the *Novel of Idea*. It is to the best of my understanding by which I intend to analyze the five selected novels of this study to elaborate this genre.

A brief introduction to these authors and their selected novels considered as subject matter of this study.

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