CHAPTER - I

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‘Fiction’ is a narrative writing drawn from the imagination of the author rather than from history or fact. The term ‘Fiction’ is most frequently associated with novels and short stories, though drama and narrative poetry are also forms of fiction. Fiction is, hence a subject matter rather than a type of literature. ‘Novel’ in its broadest sense is used to designate any extended prose or narrative fiction.”¹

The narratives will represent character either in a static condition or in the process of development as a result of actions or events. The narrative will have to have some organising principle called plot, theme or idea. Without exception, the term ‘novel’ refers to prose work. A short compact and broadly realistic tale that was popular in the Middle Ages in Italy is called ‘Novella’ and they are best represented by the tales in Decameron. Instead of the word ‘novel’, in most of the European countries the word ‘Roman’ was used and ‘Romance’ must have been the predecessor of the novel. But the word ‘Roman’ is associated with poetic material and the word ‘novel’ invariably meant the realistic representation of the world of common people. In the 18th and 19th centuries, a definite distinction was made between a romance and a novel

and romance meant a story of distant past that takes place in a far away land, something that was imaginatively improbable. On the other hand, a novel functioned within the frame work of the facts of the actual world and was controlled by the laws of probability.

A fictional narrative representing life functions within a frame called form.

A fiction of serious nature deals with human beings involved in significant action and
such actions vary from author to author. An author's world can accommodate an event that happens in the human unconscious as well as the hunt of a whale for its theme. The subject matter of a novel cannot be defined or catalogued. It may range from humorous recollections to complex philosophy. The novelists have also shown immense variety in shaping their richly various material to suit the demands of fiction. A novel may concentrate on character there by totally excluding plot or incident. It may be a work where a series of incidents are strung together. It may be episodic in nature or epic in proportion. It may have a solid plot or a loose structure. It may try to reproduce even the unconscious flow of the emotions.

The English novel is undoubtedly a product of the 18th century. It owes immensely to the novella of Italy for its narrative form and name. France, like Italy had its narrative fiction called novella. Though the works that came from France as early as 1535 like the 'Gargantua of Rabelais' cannot be called novels they did sustain narrative interest. The contribution of the French literature to the literary form Novel is immensely significant. The writers of English during the 18th century had a rich cultural background provided by continental Europe. Greece and Rome gave them the classical literature, pastoral literature and the rest of the continent supplied them with the Romances and Tales of adventure. Hence the 18th century English novel was a crystalised form of artistic elements accumulated down the centuries.

The English novelists had native parallels of their own-the Arthurian materials, The Euphues of Lily (1579), The Arcadia of Sir Philip Sydney (1580–1581), the NARRATIVE interest in Lodge's Rosalynde (1590), the Picareusque element in Nash's The Unfortunate Traveller (1594), the NARRATIVE CHRONICLE of Apha Behn's Oroonoko (1688), the extended NARRATIVE of moral significance in John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress (1678-1684),and the CHARACTER element present in the Spectator Papers of Addison and Steele. Defoe in Robinson Crusoe (1719) and Moll Flanders (1722), using very loose NARRATIVE Structures and Swift, in Gulliver's Travels (1726), using satiric ALLEGORY, ad brought
VERISIMILITUDE to the chronicling of human life, two component parts of the later novel FORM.²

Thus the soil was fertile tilled and ready for seed when Samuel Richardson produced his ‘Pamela’ in 1740. The critics and historians unanimously acknowledge this book as the fully realised novel. After Richardson’s success, other significant novels followed rapidly. Henry Fielding, Smollett, and Defoe were the novelists who gave the first real impetus to the English novel. Soon the literary arena was crowded with eminent writers like Sterne, Horace Walpole, Oliver Goldsmith, Fanny Burney and Ann Radcliffe.

The blossoming of English novel as a brilliant genre took place in the 19th century when it became a tool for portraying the middle class society. Jane Austin produced her novels of manners and Scott his historical novels. The great Victorian novelists like Dickens, Trollope and Thackeray created novels that were populated by social types and were filled with actions of intricate nature. The last half of the 19th century produced Thomas Hardy and George Eliot who with varying degrees introduced naturalism to the novel. The 20th century produced master craftsmen like Henry James, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Joseph Conrad, William Faulkner and others who used novel to probe more and more deeply into the human psyche.

Impact of Psychology in Modern Novel

The modern age is one of disintegration and interrogation. The society being no longer homogeneous is swayed by conflicting intentions and inconsistent values. Communism and Capitalism, optimism and skepticism provided the people with the postulates that cannot be accepted at their face value. Science which plays a predominant role today insists on analytical approach to everything and the modern
man under the influence of science is not particularly interested in anything that is unexplained or illogical.

The roots of the change in the modern novel lay tangled deep in modern experience. A confluence of psychological, scientific, social, philosophical, economic and political causes, explanations and analogues leave on a novelist's mind indelible impressions about the world he inhabits. Modern psychology has convinced a writer of novel of this century that the special genius of the novel as a genre is its ability to depict not only the exterior world of action, but also the interior world of character, and the relation between them.

The modern novel is psychological and a psychological problem has its concern with the nature of consciousness and its relation to time. A prose fiction that places unusual emphasis on interior characterisation and motives and circumstances is called the psychological novel. It is not satisfied with stating 'what' happens but goes on to say the 'why' of the occurrence. As a result, characterisation is more than usually important. In one sense, a psychological novel has nothing modern in it at all because a psychological story is as old as the first drama, a ballad or a tale. These old forms accounted for an external action by recounting the qualities of the character or the protagonist. 'Troilus and Criseyde' by Chaucer is a psychological novel in verse. All the tragedies of Shakespeare are psychological dramas. The psychological novel is an interpretation of the invisible inner life.

A group of 19th century novelists heralded through their works the arrival of the psychological novel. In a looser sense, they were the forerunners of this literary form. The chief amongst them were George Eliot, George Meredith and Mrs. Gaskell.
Mrs. Gaskell stated that, "all deeds however hidden and long passed by, have their external consequences." Thackeray and Dickens were interested enough in portraying motives and mental states. Hardy and Conrad attempted to picture the interior motive while Henry James, with his intense concern for the psychological life of his characters and with his development of a unique technique, was interested in bringing to surface the inner self of man. With the advancement of scientific psychology, the term psychological novel came into popular use. Freudianism gave impetus to this type.

There were three brilliant stars in the firmament of the psycho-analytic movement namely, Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler and Carl Gustav Jung. Freud employed the method of 'free association' to cure all his patients. His patient was encouraged to relate all his mental experiences pleasant and unpleasant, trivial or significant without any inhibition in order to enable the analyst to diagnose his ailment. The condition in the doctor's room helped the patient's flow of thought. In Freud's system, the great source of psychic energy is in the unconscious which influences every action, but it cannot be recalled or understood by normal processes. The mind has three major areas of activity, the id, the super ego and the ego. The id is in the unconscious and is a reservoir of instinctual impulses. It always works for the gratification of instincts through pleasure principles. The super ego is an internal sensor that exercises social pressures on the id. The ego is that part of the id which is modified by contacts with the social world. The ego which is consciousness must always maintain a balance among the demands of social pressure, the sexual demands for satisfaction arising from the id and the claims of super ego. The ego has various
defence mechanisms including repression and sublimation to protect itself from the compulsion of id.

Although Freud himself was greatly interested in the enigmatic aspects of human mind, the schema of the human mind that he unfolded has had immeasurable significance and influence on almost all literary forms and practically on all the writers of the 20th century. The focus on the unconscious with its hidden fountain heads of motivation, the drama of eternal conflict of Id, Ego and Super Ego, and the plot situations inherent in problem relationships such as Oedipus complex – all these have been food for the creative mind as well as instruments for the critical faculty. Even biographers wanted to unravel the mysteries of master minds and critics started reviewing the creator and the created work in new lights. The psycho-analytical assumptions propounded by Freud, whether understood or misunderstood, used properly or improperly, prove to be a great force in contemporary literature.

Freud attached great significance to the study of dreams. In sleep, most of the human experiences appear in the form of visual images and are also mixed with thoughts and feelings. A dream has two contents, the latent content and the manifest content. The latent content is the basic idea of dream and the manifest content is the distorted aspect of the latent content. As a press censor disallows certain aspects of the news to be published, a dream censor controls and causes distortion to the latent content. This censor is against acts that are not permissible in society from moral point of view. Incest is forbidden by the society and the pleasure seeking tendency of id is controlled, and hence prohibited ideas appear in distorted forms in dreams. According to Freud, a dream is a symbol of some unconscious thought and children’s
dreams are mostly wish fulfilments. As dreams are archaic, through them the early experiences of childhood gone into the unconscious are recollected.

Freud was equally fascinated by the study of neurosis and its symptoms. In Freudian psychology, the study of the unconscious is also very important. The thoughts coming from the unconscious into the conscious are checked by the censor. Those thoughts and feelings which are curbed by the unconscious and not allowed to enter the focus of the consciousness are repressed.

In Freudian psychology, sex plays a significant role. Sexual aberrations have taken for theme in some of the 20th century novels. Fantasy and day dreams are the means through which sexual desires are satisfied. With Freud's contribution to the world, the concept of exploring the unconscious, the use of psychology in literature became very great. Marcel Proust, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Graham Green, Isher Wood and May Sinclair came directly under the influence of Freud, and in their fiction the delineation of the unconscious is a common feature.

Alfred Adler, an associate of Freud, is a founder of individual psychology in which individual differences have been studied. An individual's weakness or inferiority impels him to strive for superiority. Thus he seeks compensation for his feeling of inferiority. Adler studied elaborately inferiority and the physical compensations, pampering and neglect, sex and neurosis. His study of individual psychology categorises human problems as occupational, social and sexual. "It is in his response to these three problems that every individual human being unfailingly reveals his own deep sense of the meaning of life".4
Adler denounces not only the Freudian conception of sex, but also his theory of dreams. In Adler's opinion, Freud takes dream interpretation out of the bounds of science. But according to Adler, there is no gap between the work of mind during day and that of night. Consciousness and unconsciousness are not contradictory to each other. Adler's idea of inferiority and the physical compensation aspired by the human mind have been depicted in 'Ulysses' by James Joyce. They are illustrated by the writer as hallucinations and day dreams of Leopold Bloom.

In the galaxy of psycho-analysts, there is another name whose theories have influenced the novels of D.H. Lawrence and James Joyce. He is Carl Gustav Jung who was familiar with Freud and when he met Freud in 1907, he became preoccupied with psycho-analysis in his work. In 1912, he published his criticism of Freud’s opinions in his work ‘The Psychology of the Unconscious’ and broke away from him completely in 1913. Jung did not concur with the views of Freud and Adler. Freud regarded sexuality as the only driving power but Jung recognizes many drives. He considers 'libido' the total vital energy which is not restricted to only sex.

Jung splits psyche into two aspects, the consciousness and the unconsciousness. The consciousness is a small part of the psyche and "it floats like a little island on the boundless sea of unconsciousness". The ego is surrounded by consciousness and it is that part of the consciousness which is concerned with a person’s adjustment with the outside world. Consciousness deals with the present and quite close to it is the area of unconsciousness termed as the area of personal unconsciousness. It hides all the unpalatable and unpleasant experiences of a person. These experiences can be drawn into the focus of consciousness. The next region which is close to personal unconsciousness is the sphere of collective
unconsciousness. The collective unconsciousness has two layers of which, one deals with emotions and the other conceals neurosis, psychosis, visions and hallucinations.

Jung classifies persons according to the person's attitude to the external or internal world. These two attitudes decide whether a person is an extrovert or an introvert. The extroversion and introversion are complementary. If consciousness is extroverted, the unconsciousness will be introverted and vice versa.

In Jung, the importance of mythology is very great. The symbols of mythology conceal within them the problems of human race. They represent the collective unconscious. The motives and symbols in mythology are Archetypes and represent instinctive reactions. "Archetypes are self portraits of the instincts in the psyche, as psychological processes are transformed into pictures as primal patterns of human behaviour". The language of the unconscious is of pictures. The Archetypes appear in the symbolic form of pictures. The mythologies, fairy stories and tradition express this. The creative artists have thus depicted the collective unconscious and the archetypal patterns through their use of mythological subject matter. The work of art modifies and improves the symbols in the unconscious and brings them to light. D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce and Aldous Huxley have used mythology, the collective unconsciousness and the archetypal patterns in their novels.

William James was a very great American Philosopher psychologist and he published 'the Principles of Psychology' in 1890. He presents five characteristics of thinking. Thought belongs to personal consciousness; it is always changing and is sensibly continuous. It always appears to deal with objects independent of it. It is interested in some parts of these objects; it chooses, welcomes or rejects from
among them all the while. Out of these five characteristics, the Stream of Consciousness technique is concerned with the continuous flow of thought and its variation.

William James held that it was impossible to experience the same sensation of an object twice or thrice. Two sensations of the same object are never alike, because what is constant is the physical object and not our consciousness. As our sensibility is always changing and is never stationary, it is in a flux. The intervention of time cannot break the continuity of consciousness of an object. There can never be cracks and breaks and it runs in a stream and flows like a river. William James thus coined the phrase ‘the stream of thoughts or the Stream of Consciousness’ to delineate the characteristics of consciousness as imparted into fiction, to describe the techniques employed by the novelists, to engrave the vague and fleeting thoughts of human minds in their novels.

The thought of an object, mostly identifies itself with the object and it is very difficult to separate it from the object. But sometimes, there is a chance of a thought getting detached from the object of thought also. Irrespective of the complexity of the object of thought, the thought is the undivided state of consciousness.

Another significant trait of the stream of thought is that it is focused on one part of its object and it selects rejecting many things. Consciousness can concentrate only on one thing or object and can never attend to various impressions together. Consciousness is, like our senses, very selective. According to William James, self is always changing and varying. The ‘previous self’ is different from the ‘present self’, which in turn from the ‘future self’. A person is a perpetual blending of changing and
moving thoughts along with other psychological aspects. Hence the personality of a man is a ‘flux of identities’.

Henri Bergson, a contemporary of William James propounded a new theory of consciousness and time. He perceived time as indivisible. In his book ‘Time and Free will’, he explained his concept of reality as the real duration. There is an element of succession in time but it cannot be specifically mentioned that so much is before and so much is after. The continuity of consciousness cannot be broken. In his conception of time, the present penetrates into the past. It is difficult to say that a particular moment is the present instant. The entire area of our experience covered by our attention forms a part of our present and as soon as our attention is withdrawn from that area, it becomes a part of the past. Then our present is blended with the past. “Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances. And as the past grows without ceasing, so also there is no limit for its preservation”8

Bergson’s psychological time is opposed to mechanical time because the former is elastic and it is the prolongation of the past into the present and the future. It is an unbreakable whole. This conception of time has been portrayed by novelists like Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. The continuity of inner life is perceived thorough intuition and it is not static like intellect. So to think in terms of intuition is to think in terms of inner life.

Bergson, like William James, considered personality the sum total of mental states like sensations, desires, memories, feelings and ideas. These mental states are ever dynamic and Bergson perceived that, “the continuous melody of inner life is a
melody which is going on and will go on indivisible from the beginning to the end of our conscious existence". He also went to that extent of saying that what has not been perceived cannot be foreseen.

Bergson’s idea of memory is that it does not maintain a register to record the past events but instead all the past events and experiences are preserved quite near to the present which is to become a part of the past. Bergson speaks of two types of memory, the involuntary memory and the voluntary memory. In involuntary memory, the recall of the past events is beyond the control of a person. It is not guided by reason. Marcel Proust’s pure memory is the involuntary memory of Bergson. Past things and experiences are recalled in the case of voluntary memory which is supported by intellect and reason. Bergson insisted on the need for inventing new narrative techniques that can convey reality, a dynamic and fluid thing. Virginia Woolf used parenthesis, Dorothy Richardson used dots and dashes and James Joyce experimented with the language extensively in his ‘Ulysses’ and ‘Finnegans Wake’.

Thus the psychological theories of William James; La Duree of Bergson and his views on intuition and innovations in language; the psycho-analytical researches of Freud, Adler and Jung, and other aesthetic experiments of the 20th century had significant impact on the creative minds of the writers of the time. Artists like Henry James were deeply conscious of the need for various narrative techniques that can transport with ease the workings of human consciousness from the writer to the reader. Preoccupation with time, subjectivity, inwardness, absence of action, plot and catastrophe, insight into the unconscious, point of view, employment or withdrawal of an omniscient narrator, and experiments in language are the various traits of the narrative techniques that were employed by the writers like Dorothy Richardson,

HENRY JAMES (1843-1916)

Henry James was the largest literary figure to come out of America during the 19th and early 20th centuries. He was not ‘large’ as Melville is large; he did not have Melville’s global vision, nor did he dream of epical landscapes. His largeness stemmed rather from the literary territories he annexed to the New World and the career he fashioned in two hemispheres.¹⁰

Henry James, one of the most significant of the elder novelists was an American naturalised in England. Perhaps because of his foreign origin, Henry James remained untouched by the pessimism of his age. His emphasis was more on the mental and emotional well being of his characters. In his earlier novel, ‘The Europeans’ (1879), Henry James’ chief concern was the clash between the American and the European minds. His later novels, though deal with simple situations, are pregnant with the most complex psychological effects. ‘The Golden Bowl’ shows Henry James breaking new ground and finding a resolution to the questions left unresolved in his other novels. He chooses a triangle – husband, wife, mistress – but the twist in the story is that he marries off the mistress to the father of the wife and makes her the stepmother of the betrayed heroine. It is the psychological complications both before and after the wedding of the friends and the father which provide the whole material of the story. Every thing is narrated in a subdued tone and it is the nobility and decency which all the characters preserve in their behaviour which gives a unity to the novel.
‘The Ambassadors’ published in 1903 highlighted Henry James’ ‘Point of View Technique’, a method of telling the story through various angles of vision. With the help of this method, Henry James was able to make the reader feel himself at one with the given character and provide him only as much of the story as the character receives at any given moment. Because of this technique, ‘The Ambassadors’ became a unique novel in the history of fiction. ‘The Ambassadors’ exemplified the way in which Henry James made his subject matter dictate the structure of the novel and how he believed that through an appropriate technique, he could achieve an organic novel. ‘The Ambassadors’ and ‘The Wings of the Dove’ underwent an elaborate rewriting.

To each novel and each collection of short stories, Henry James affixed a long and compactly written preface. The main contribution of Henry James is his experiments with the technique of narrative. The later psychological novelists like Virginia Woolf and others were very much influenced by his style which was narrative at second hand.

The English speaking world honoured him on his seventieth birth day and while efforts to obtain the Nobel Prize for him failed, James was given a golden bowl by 250 friends and admirers who also asked him to sit for his portrait to John Singer Sargeant. That portrait is now in the National Portrait Gallery in England... An inscription on his grave describes him as the interpreter of his generation on both sides of the sea.\textsuperscript{11}

JOSEPH CONRAD (1857 – 1920)

Joseph Conrad was the chief amongst those who used the technique of Henry James. Though a Pole, he wrote exquisite English. He took art seriously and his approach to literature was an integrated one in the sense that he responded to the demands of both outer and inner life. Maupassant, Flaubert, Henry James and
Dostovsky influenced him immensely. He was against all artificiality and verbosity. He admired Henry James' artistic rectitude and psychological subtlety. He learned the attitude of detachment and an acute observation of environment from the French novelists, and from the Russians he imbibed a cosmopolitan outlook. His personal life as a sailor provided him with knowledge of humiliations and corrections under authority and he was greatly interested in people, whose souls were tormented and harassed by others.

The masterpieces of Joseph Conrad are the 'Nigger of the Narcissus' (1898) 'Lord Jim' (1900), 'Typhoon' (1902) and 'Nostromo' (1904). These novels portray an extensive range of human activity. The characters in the novels are not refined or fashionable people. They have tormented souls and are often tragic. Conrad's greatest merit in these novels is to make the reader see the unseen. His novels exhibit great ideals of impartiality, wisdom and freedom from sentimentality. He is a tireless experimenter for whom the novel is a plastic form to be reshaped to suit the changing intention and design.

Conrad was conscious of the same artistic problem that Henry James had. It is the basic problem of rendering in a suitable form in fiction, the myriad forms of human consciousness. The word consciousness itself was used by Conrad and like Henry James he was constantly calculating the effect of his art.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON (1873-1957)

Dorothy Richardson was the first exponent of the Stream of Consciousness in English fiction. She was well aware of the employment of interior monologue and the shortcomings of the Stream of Consciousness technique. The self-consciousness is
invariably interfered with and overwhelmed by external events. The experienced moment as it is felt cannot be depicted in the work of art because it cannot be enlarged as it actually happened. Dorothy Richardson felt that the stuff of creative life is the microscopic study of a moment. She resembled in her work Marcel Proust in many respects. From her work 'Pilgrimage', it is evident that Dorothy Richardson understood the significance of psychological time so much emphasised by Bergson. She depicts Bergson's 'La Duree', the real time, in different books of 'Pilgrimage'. Miriam Henderson's introspective analysis and the movement of her consciousness backward and forward, show the Bergsonian time. Her moods and her feeling of elation and depression have been represented by discontinuous sentences. Behind this apparent discontinuity, lies a continuity of thought.

Unlike most originators of artistic genres, the 20th century pioneer in stream of consciousness remains the least well known of the important stream of consciousness writers. It is the price a writer pays, even an experimental writer, engendering monotony. Readers may justifiably neglect Dorothy Richardson, but no one who would understand the development of the 20th century fiction can. With a great debt to Henry James and Joseph Conrad, she invented the fictional depiction of the flow of consciousness. Some times she is brilliant; always she is sensitive to the subtleties of mental functioning; but finally, she becomes lost in the overflow- a formless, in ending deluge of realistic detail.12

Dorothy Richardson's well known works are 'Pointed Roofs', 'Backwater,' 'Honey-comb', 'A Tunnel', 'Oberland', 'Interim', 'Dawn's Left hand', 'Clear Horizon' and 'Dimple Hill; She deserves more recognition and credit as a forerunner in novelistic method than a successful creator of fiction.
VIRGINIA WOOLF (1882 – 1941)

Virginia Woolf was the most distinguished woman writer of her generation. She made an exciting use of the Stream of Consciousness technique. She was immensely impressed by ‘Ulysses’ in which James Joyce had found an alternative to a well made plot and external characterisation. She found that the inner drama of human mind had tremendous artistic possibilities and decided to exploit them to the fullest extent. This method suited her well because; much of her experience came from books rather than from real life. She had a time sense of language and a poetic temperament.

Under the influence of James Joyce and the French novelist Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf disregarded the outer personality ignoring it ‘simply as the semi transparent envelope’ through which she could study the ‘reality’ namely, the thoughts, feelings and impressions. She depicts in her novels the shift of her life—the thoughts, feelings, impressions steeped in the richest dyes of her imagination and turned into images by the poetic sensibility. In her first novel, ‘The Voyage Out’ (1915), Virginia Woolf followed the traditional pattern of story telling. Her second novel was ‘Night and Day’ (1919), and her next novel, ‘Jacobs Room’ (1922) represents her first serious experiment in the Stream of Consciousness technique. Here she makes an attempt to construct pictorially the personality of a young English man from his infancy to the age of twenty six, when he is killed in the war.

In ‘Mrs Dalloway’ (1925), Virginia Woolf explores and recreates the personality of a middle aged woman, called Mrs Dalloway. She records the incidents of a day in her life, and the recording is supported by visual, mental and emotional impressions. Mrs. Dalloway’s smooth flow of stream of consciousness is expressed through the long interior monologue which is interacted by the striking hours of the
clock. Her most successful novel is ‘To the Light House’ (1927). The novel is set on an unnamed island and the Lighthouse symbolises in a strange way ‘the reality’ never experienced. On reading ‘To the Light House’ for the first time, the reader will encounter difficulties because of the lack of a ‘story’ and the absence of a narrator who explains situation, event and character. While attempting to master the technique of Stream of Consciousness, Virginia Woolf made a diary comment on 27th June, 1925. “A New – By Virginia Woolf. But What? Elegy?”

Virginia Woolf’s next two books were written in a lighter vein. ‘Orlando’ (1928) is a fantasy in which the hero lives through several centuries and changes from male to female. ‘A Room of one’s own’ (1929) is not a novel. It deals with the problems facing the female writer and is perhaps the best introduction to Virginia Woolf’s writing. ‘The Waves’ (1931) traces the lives of three men and three women and the narrator’s voice has completely disappeared in this novel. ‘The Years’ (1937) deals with over fifty years starting in 1880 and may be related to ‘To the Light House’. Her last novel, ‘Between the Acts’ (1941) includes a pageant of English history in a manor house in the summer before the Second World War began.

JAMES JOYCE (1882 – 1941)

James Joyce is a novelist of unique and extraordinary genius. He was born in Dublin and left for Ireland in 1904 to become a European cosmopolitan. He was a highly gifted man with a temperament for art and symbolism. He was acutely responsive to observed details. The atmosphere around him at that time was one of frustration, aimlessness and disintegration. Like Henry James, James Joyce also felt the need for a unique technique in order to express himself as a novelist. He learnt from the psycho-analysts and biologists of his time that our speech occupies the dominant association area in our brain. The Stream of Consciousness technique
which was confined to the recollection of the past and the visualisation of the future in the works of Virginia Woolf, became much more complex and involved in James Joyce’s novels. His style marks a complete break with the traditional fiction in respect of subject matter, technique and language.

James Joyce’s portrayal of psychological time, his delineation of character in an unconventional way, his adoption of novel technique to probe the conscious and the unconscious, his employment of interior monologue to depict the flow of mental state, confirm him not only as an innovator in fiction but also the founder of a new genre.

James Joyce was influenced by Edouard Du Jardin’s interior monologue. Du Jardin was a symbolist and he expressed the unconscious mind with the help of interior monologues. The important novels of Joyce are ‘The Dubliners’ (1914), ‘A Portrait of the Artist as a Youngman’ (1916), ‘Exiles’ (1918), ‘Ulysses’ (1922) and ‘Finnegans Wake’ (1939). Of these, ‘Ulysses’ is his masterpiece. In all these novels, James Joyce makes a study of the artist who frees himself from various shackles and ultimately comes to the realisation of his true personality.

‘Ulysses’ is presented as an epic, the counterpart of Homer’s ‘Odyssey’. Joyce lays emphasis on the speeches of the hero because according to him, speech not action is a token of humanity. Our true nature reveals itself through speech and in order to demonstrate it completely, a day of twenty four hours is sufficient and there is no need for any change of scene. ‘Ulysses’ is different from other great novels as it does not present truth to lie. This may be the reason why it was considered a failure. Joyce exercises tremendous intellectual appeal only to the thoughtful readers. ‘Ulysses’ is a pioneering work in the exploration of the stream of consciousness and hence it holds a significant place in the history of the modern novel.
WILLIAM FAULKNER (1897 – 1962)

William Faulkner was born in New Albany, Mississippi and his family soon moved to Oxford, Mississippi. Almost all his novels take place in and around Oxford which he renames Jefferson, Mississippi. From 1926 to 1962, Faulkner published 19 novels and more than 75 short stories. 15 novels and many of the short stories are about people from a small region in Northern Mississippi, Yoknapatawpha County, ‘William Faulkner, Sole Owner and Proprietor’.

In Yoknapatawpha county fiction, the same characters appear again and again, and Faulkner’s characters fall under three major social groups: the Aristocrats, the country people and the Negroes. The theme that pervades Faulkner’s writing is the image of modern society as a wasteland. Man is dehumanised by the mechanised and industrialised society that compels him to cultivate false values at the cost of human virtues like fortitude, honesty, goodness and courage. The right of a man to live his own life is another of Faulkner’s central themes.

Some of his great works are ‘The Sound and the Fury’ ‘Absalom, Absalom!’, ‘Sartoris’, ‘The White Rose of Memphis’, ‘The Hamlet’, ‘As I Lay Dying’, ‘Sanctuary’, ‘Light in August’, ‘Pylon’, ‘Go down, Moses’ and ‘Intruder in the Dust’. In 1949, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature and in his speech on that occasion, Faulkner stated that, “Man will not only endure; he will prevail”. In all of his work, Faulkner has used new techniques to express his views of man’s position in the modern world. In his early works, he saw modern man as a weak creature incapable of rising above his selfish needs. But later, Faulkner’s view changed. He started viewing man as potentially great. Faulkner, in almost all his novels penetrated deeply into the psychological motivations for man’s actions and investigated man’s dilemma in the modern world.
D.H. LAWRENCE (1885 – 1930)

D.H. Lawrence explored the obscure region of the unconscious in his novels and presented a revaluation of sex and the problem of human relationships. He was a great and original writer who brought a new kind of poetic imagination into English fiction. In his novels, he emphasises the role of instinctive life of a man and explores his theory of ‘Blood Consciousness’. He had his own views of the unconscious and propounded them in his works ‘Psycho-analysis and Unconscious’ and ‘Fantasia of the Unconscious’. He differs from the popular psycho-analysts, especially Sigmund Freud and sometimes even denounced him.

D.H. Lawrence was never in favour of the abstraction of self. He held that there should be an outside world for a person to develop his inner world. He also held that sex is important in life, but it has only a subsidiary part to play. Yet, fulfilment is not possible in a man’s life without the gratification of sex. A man gets fulfilment through a woman and a woman through her children. All the great ideals and art are essentially based on sexual fulfilment, otherwise they would not survive. In his ‘Fantasia of the Unconscious’, Lawrence makes a through study of the problems of parent love, dreams and repressions. Along with Freud, he also accepted that the sex life of a person has been repressed.

D.H. Lawrence studied mythology, theology and Yoga to fathom the mysteries of the unconscious. In ‘women in Love’, there is a reference to the Scandinavian mythology and the African statue; and in the ‘Plumed Serpent’, the activities centre round the Mexican God, Quetzalcoatl, half bird and half snake and various rituals; in the ‘Woman Who Rode Away’, the story is about the desire of a woman to mix with the primitive tribals of Mexico and her willingness to be offered as a sacrifice to their God.

New developments in science and technology changed the intellectual horizon of the world. Scientific thinking was closely associated with new researches in psychology. The theory of associationism held that man is mentally automat on. The important developments in the field of psychology believed that the precepts and prohibitions of a conscience are traceable to the thwarted sex instincts. New stimulus from realistic naturalistic fiction came from France and Russia. English writers were influenced by the novels of working class written by Zola. Maupassant by his conscious realism and Turgenev by his delicate portraits of women had their impact on the English writers. Impressionism and symbolism influenced realism from inside and enriched its emotional content. Naturalism has insisted on environment by transmitting the author’s mood or disposition. Dostovsky, Tolstoy, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, D.H. Lawrence and Dorothy Richardson through their works affirmed that there is an internal, intricate, almost invisible life which runs through the whole universe. They conveyed this with amazing immediacy and actuality and with a strangely powerful simplicity.

Impressionism focused its attention on the subjective drama of life. It was reinforced by Expressionism and Existentialism and led finally to the Stream of
Consciousness technique. Closely combined with Expressionism was a movement called Dadaism which was essentially a doctrine of negation. Existentialism has existed ever since Dostovsky explored the inner regions of the human soul. Danish writer Kier Kegard was its great exponent who affirmed that truth is subjective and he further said that such subjective truth moulded the life of individuals. The staunch supporters of Existentialism were Kafmann, Jaspers, Jean–Paul–Sartre and Camus. Existentialism was a philosophy born out of the anguish of our time and emptiness due to our lost and shattered faiths.

Various movements and isms made fiction open to a considerably large audience. The Russian masters along with the theories on subconscious mind helped the English novel to undergo a conscious evolution. Thus the literary soil was ready to receive the seeds of innovative techniques through which a new kind of narrative was given birth to in England. The twentieth century has been enriched by the best minds of all nations. Every great novelist is a great philosopher who has given his own interpretation of reality and his own vision of life of all the branches of literature; it is the novel that has mirrored faithfully the complex life of the modern age.

Evolution of Novel in Malayalam literature

One feature that persists throughout the whole history of Malayalam language and literature is its willingness to borrow and assimilate the best cultures with which it comes into contact. Earlier phases came under the strong influence of Tamil and Sanskrit. The effects of the coming of English to this part of India were even more extensive. Perhaps with still greater certainty it is possible to say that in contemporary Malayalam literature, all present forms and movements owe their origin to English literature (or to a lesser extent, to other literatures of Europe that became known through English translations.) “The whole range of it – Novel, short story, Drama, Essay, literary criticism, Biography, History, Travelogue – is conceived after English patterns” and certain indigenous poetic forms, for it must not be
supposed that older traditions have been entirely forgotten, "have taken their tone from the same source".15

Undoubtedly it is clear that, though Malayalam literature abounds in stories narrated both in verse and prose, novel as a genre of literature was certainly an imported idea to Malayalam. It accepted this literary form with its name without insisting on any change to its form or name. As Dr. K. M. George rightly states, this new method of narrating a story does bear traces of western influence without any doubts.16 The foundation for this form was well laid by three men who enjoyed abundantly the blessing of English education. Appu Nedungadi, Chandu Menon and C. V. Raman Pillai had not only an easy accessibility to English literature, but also their own interesting personal urges to tell stories to their kinsmen.

The foundation for the great edifice of the Malayalam novel was laid by three English - educated stalwarts, Appu Nedungadi, Chandu Menon and C.V. Raman Pillai. Nedungadi first came to the field, cleared the ground and dug the earth; Chandu Menon laid the corner stone on the northern side and C.V. Raman Pillai, the corner stone on the southern side; then the west facing edifice rose up step by step. Kundalata (1887), by Appu Nedungadi - the first Malayalam Novel. Indulekha (1889), by Chandu Menon - the first outstanding social romance. Marthanda Varma (1891), by C.V. Raman Pillai - the first outstanding historical romance.17

The advent of Fiction in Malayalam was with a genuinely fascinating story of 'Slayer Slain', published in 1878. In 1845, the translation of John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' was brought out by Arch Deacon Koshi which was followed by 'Holy war' which intern, by an adaptation of Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors'. But all these books do not worth anything more than a mere mention. 'Slayer Slain' was written by Mrs. Collins, wife of Richard Collins, who was the Principal of Church Mission Society College at Kottayam. Her work which was in English was translated and
published in 1878. The novel is written in the contemporary context, and the locale is Kerala itself.

The novel talks about Koshy Kurian, a wealthy land owner, whose cruel and intolerable nature undergoes a change. His hardness towards his pullaya labourers disappears, and the killer in him is killed. The novel attacks casteism but ironically the writer introduces a Brahmin character to ascertain the pedigree of the heroine. It attempts to identify the social evils that are prevalent, and its influence has been accepted by the author of 'Indulekha' that was published in 1889. Though written by a westerner, the novel ‘The Slayer Slain’ breathes the culture and life of the Malayalam milieu. The novel is highly satiric with a definite didactic purpose.

There is still a controversy regarding which work should occupy the position of the first novel in Malayalam literature, and eminent literary critics hold variety of views in this matter. DR. K. M. Tharakan states that:

The first novel to appear in Malayalam is a translation of 'Slayer Slain' written by Mrs. Collins in imitation of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'. The story has for its background the life of the Christians in Central Travancore. In it, the novelist tries to show how the protestant missionaries gave a new life to the Syrian Christians and the low caste people, by bringing the different sections into one blend in Christ. But the story is not well told. 'Pulleli Kunju' written by Arch Deacon Koshi in 1872 is nothing but a discussion. Neither of these books can claim any artistic excellence, but they may be viewed as precursors of the modern novel.

Dr. Tharakan further holds that 'Kundalatha' by Appu Neubungadi can be considered the first novel in Malayalam though it is a narrative adaptation of Shakespeare's 'Cymbeline'. The novel has an admirable narrative style, and it holds the reader in suspense till the end. Yet, it is more like a well-told tale than a novel. The first novel, in Malayalam worth its name, according to many scholars is Chandu
Menon's 'Indulekha' which appeared in 1889. According to Krishna Chaitanya, the attitude and outlook of Chandu Menon's 'Indulekha' is nearer to this generation of readers than 'Kundalatha'. The characters of 'Indulekha' are from the upper strata of the Hindu society in Kerala, the Nairs and the Namputhiris. The story is intricately woven around the every day happenings of the domestic front. The dialogues are drawn from the ordinary conversation that takes place among individuals.

'Indulekha', as can be guessed by any of its readers, aroused strong criticism and resentment from the Namputhiri community. Inspite of its enormous length, the modern reader should be truly grateful to the social awareness kindled by this novel and the progressive urge felt by a few in a traditional and stagnant society.

Chandu Menon's second novel 'Sarada' was to be published in two volumes, the first of which came in 1882. Unfortunately, Menon never got time to finish the second part before his death in 1899. It is worth recording that Chandu Menon himself had acknowledged his indebtedness to Western literature in prompting him to take up novel writing. It is mentioned by critic K. M. George:

Chandu Menon's fondness for English novels, his wife's interest in such stories, her ignorance of English and insistence of getting same thing similar in her language, the author's discovery that a translation would not be an adequate substitute, his decision to try a hand - all these factors put together produced the great Malayalam novel 'Indulekha', which is not only a masterpiece of craftsmanship but a milestone in the history of Western influence on the literature of Kerala.

Chandu Menon had catalogued various reasons that induced him to write a novel in Malayalam in the preface to the novel 'Indulekha'. He had sent a copy of the novel to W. Dumergue with a personal letter which serves as an important document from the researcher's point of view.
The decay of the feudal Nair joint family is the background of the novel. This theme of specific degeneration and decadence of a particular set up in the society has rendered itself for repeated analysis and treatment by many writers, who arrived after Chandu Menon. The concept of Nair 'Tharavadu', the traditional ancestral family has been an imperishable source of creative writing for it gave ample scope to the writer to probe into the psychological depths of a community, which faced extinction. Masterpieces of later novelists took firm roots in this congenial soil of social changes. Krishna Chaitanya while talking about Menon's contribution states that:

It is a pity that Menon was not able to complete 'Sarada'. There is a deeper probing into human nature here than in 'Indulekha'. Dangerously evil characters, whose introduction in the earlier novel would have been mid summer madness appear here. In 'Indulekha' we only sense the social decay behind the foreground events, and we also feel fresh winds of change beginning to blow; here we begin to be drawn into the eddies of social dissolution.

In 1891, C. V. Raman Pillai published his historical novel, 'Marthandavarma'. It was followed by 'Dharma Raja' in 1913 and 'Rama Raja Bahadur', the first part of which was published in 1917 and the second in 1920. Thus he laid a very strong foundation for a new class of novel writing, 'the historical novel'. In his novels Raman Pillai brings to life the Nair elite and a princely dynasty that ruled the country. He has successfully presented "a vast epic fresco crowded with figures, turbulent with incidents."

Of his three historical novels, the first one 'Marthanda Varma' was received with great enthusiasm because the readers had least idea of how their history could be given a magical touch to make it into a magnificent piece of art. Unlike a novelist of social theme, Raman Pillai was under the constraints of facts and figures which prevented him from creating characters from his imagination. Yet his imagination helped him to add colour and life to the past and the buried.
Several critics have pointed out the striking similarity that exists between 'Marthandavarma' and Walter Scott's 'Ivanhoe'. M. P. Paul has indicated certain similarities not only in characterisation and plot design but also in external features like using suitable quotation at the beginning of each chapter. John of 'Ivanhoe' and Padmanabhan Tampi of 'Marthandavarma' resemble each other. In the same way Wilfred, the knight of 'Ivanhoe', and Anantha Padmanabhan of 'Marthandavarma' perform similar roles, particularly in their disguised moments. Paul also thinks that Shakespeare's 'King Lear' is also seen in 'Marthandavarma'.

Many novels were written in imitation of these forerunners, and Raman Menon wrote a novel 'Parangodi Parinayam' in 1892 criticising the novelists who imitated the masters. O.S. Gopala Panicker, Ambady Narayanan Poduval, Murkkoth Kumaran and Vengayil Kunjiraman were the pioneers of the great Fiction writers, who were to dominate the later half of the twentieth century Malayalam literature.

In the nineteen thirties, the novel had a tremendous appeal to the sensibility of the critics as well as the readers. It was a time when translation invaded Malayalam literature. The works of Scott, Dumas, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy were translated. Bengali novels also had an instant impact on the minds of the readers. This plethora of political ideologies promoted a strong awareness for social revolution, thus giving rise to a constellation of new writers of fiction. Like other languages in India, Malayalam was also copiously conditioned by the current of Marxism and Freudian psychology. The newly acquired knowledge urged the creative minds of Kerala to offer constructive criticisms against existing social set up. Pen became the mighty sword to bring down the empires of Capitalism and Feudalism, which kept the poor under suppression and perpetually subjected them to unspeakable harassment. The
protest of the writers in the novels and short stories of the time had a deep impact in
the minds of the readers.

An inevitable lull, a span of literary unproductivity, followed the pioneers of novel writing in Malayalam literature. Though Appan Thamburan and K. M. Panicker attempted to improve the quality of historical novels that followed C. V. Raman Pillai, nothing much was added. He was responsible for introducing the inert writers of Kerala to European literature. His periodical 'Kesari', appealed to their intelligence and shook them out of their intellectual stupor. Hearts that have been hibernating so long, totally insensitive of the therapeutic values of literature in curing the social illnesses, responded instantly to the live wire literature of Europe. Masterpieces of Goethe, Mapaussant, Chekov, and Ibsen threw bare the ugly, dark and hidden corners of human conscience to the shocked literary audience. A. Balakrishna Pillai repeatedly recommended these writers to the men of letters of his land. He also attacked vehemently the listless literature that attempted to claim credit during this time. The vehemence with which Pillai criticised bore a happy result in provoking young writers to a literary resurrection. A change in the selection of themes, treatment of subject matter, approach and narrative technique became apparent. Thus constructive criticism, tinged with caustic remarks, promoted a new era in Malayalam literature. Kesava Dev and Thakazhi exhibited a remarkable novelty in their creativity heralding a revival in novel literature.25

The foundation laid secure by Chandu Menon and C. V. Raman Pillai was commendably used for further construction by Kesava Dev, Thakazhi, Basheer and Pottekkad, the colossal structures of modern Malayalam literature. Their approaches are delightfully divergent, rich in variety and rare in quality.

Kesava Dev (1904 - 83) excels in realism both in his novels and short stories. He chose the characters for his writing from the ordinary people with extraordinary qualities. Dev's characters are human and humane. His 'Oodayil Njanu' (From the Gutter - 1942) is an individual's reaction to his unfortunate predicament. The hero Pappu, even as a boy finds it difficult to tolerate the discrimination prevalent in the society against the poor. The rich are allowed to remain free while the poor receive
punishments for acts of indiscipline even at school level. His clash with his teacher, finds him on the street compelled to live the life of a hunted. He becomes a rickshaw puller after his return from the jail and one day he saves a little orphan girl who becomes his adopted daughter.

This new relationship offers Pappu a better meaning to life, compelling him to work for the sake of the girl's education and good living. Later Pappu had to accept a separation from his adopted daughter as she falls in love and gets married to a rich young man. The character of Pappu gains great appreciation as it triumphs over expectations of gratitude. Inspite of his failing health, he declines any help from his son-in-law. Pappu's integrity of mind and determination of will inspire of penury surface frequently. Dev's brilliant portrayal of the destitute poor and their constant struggle against the tribulations of life and their ultimate personal victories over such misfortunes, heralded a new era in novel literature in Malayalam. For the first time, literature opted to listen and echo the voice of the down trodden.

The novel 'Aarkku VendV' (For Whom- 1950) reflects the political scenario in Kerala during that time. Parties with ideologies moving at tangents formed coalitions much to the shock of the people. In his preface to the novel, Dev speaks of 'the anxiety, sleepless nights, the tormented self questionings' which shook his communist political philosophy to its roots. The power-greedy politicians allowed their ideologies to be eroded shamelessly, causing anguish to those who believed in principles. In his personal life Dev had rich experiences with theatres, and the literary result of this relationship promoted him to create the novel 'Nati' (Actress). The style of Dev is pictorial, and his words are like powerful dynamics.
Vaikkom Muhammad Basheer (1910 - 94) found an easy access to the hearts of the readers through two great novels 'Balyakala Sakhi' (childhood girl friend) and 'Yende Uppappkor Aana Undarnnu' (My grandfather had an elephant). His inimitable narrative style is racy and strong like the rapids; it is gentle and feathery like the touch of dream, both strangely at once. He is par excellence in bringing out the in-built melody of Malayalam language through his musings of human minds. The readers for the first time could get a glimpse of the rarest and greatest heights men and women can ascend through their selfless sacrifice and acts of compassion. His Suhara and Majeed live with us as they take us for confidants in 'Balyakala Sakhi'. Basheer's unique way of handling Malayalam as spoken by the Malabar Muslim community adds delicate hues to the already vibrantly colourful language. His sharp and subtle humour infuses life into 'Vappa' (father) and 'Umma' (mother), thus bringing out the extraordinariness of ordinary people. His characters are so common, yet supremely uncommon because of the Midas touch of Basheer's creativity.

'Mathilukal' (The walls) is a profoundly moving narrative that highlights the powerful role played by irony in one's life. The narrator in the novel looks eagerly forward to meeting of a woman, whose voice alone he is familiar with, because they share a common wall that separates them in the jail. He is discharged on the very day he had promised to meet the woman. The reader easily experiences the choking emotions felt by the narrator as irony plays a nasty trick on him.

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's (1912 - 2000) writings are realistic in style much like the works of Goethe and Maupassant. His characters maintain a definitely different concept of morality and conduct. Hence his early novels 'Pačita Pankajam'
and 'Pratibalam' invited criticisms from the word of the orthodox. In his later days Thakazhi was more concerned with the ever-present, never-solved social problems. His novel 'Thalayodu' (The Skull) has for its theme the communist unrest that took place in Vayalar. 'Thottiyyude Makan' (Scavenger's Son) and 'Thendi Vargam' (The Vagabonds) depict the most destitute and deprived of the society. 'Randidangazhi' (Two Measures) is a story that deals with the life of scavengers in Allepy, a densely populated industrial town of Kerala.

The most popular of Thakazhi's work is 'Chemmeen'. The novel paints with words the lives led by the fishermen, who live on the shores of Ambalapuzha and Thirukunnappuzha. Unlike the other novels, 'chemmeen' does not portray communal clashes. Instead it echoes the fundamental philosophy of love and compassion that guide and conduct human life. The fishermen believe that a woman's violation of chastity brought death to her man, who goes for fishing. Kadalamma (the sea mother), gentle, generous and the guardian of the fisher women's chastity, punishes any breach of faith by the women folk, when the men are off shore. What appears to the rational reader a superstition was in reality a living faith for the characters of 'Chemmeen'. Thakazhi is very visibly empathetic towards the fishermen, and along with his characters accepts the verdict of Kadalamma.

The novels of S. K. Pottekkad are predominantly romantic as visible in 'Visha kanyaka', 'Mudupadam' 'Naadan Premam' and 'Premasiksha'. In 'Visha Kanyaka' he blends realism along with romanticism. The story is about some Christian labourers, who settle in the barren lands of Malabar, and the experience of this exodus from Travancore is delightfully described by the writer. The description of individual experiences in this novel reminds the reader of 'Good Earth' by Pearl S. Buck. The
extremely industrious nature of the people and their inevitable weakness for evil habits, both receive equal weightage in the narration. The writer appears convincingly to be a realist, when one observes his exquisite artistry in the description of the ups and downs in the lives of individuals. But the development and end of the novel show his romantic leanings. His style adds to the dreamy climate created through the love story of Madhavi and Antony.

Pottekkad proves that he is essentially a humanist, when his short stories are considered for analysis. The realism found in his short stories appeal easily to the emotions of the reader when they reveal the harsh realities of life and the apathetic helplessness of individuals. The plot construction and the brilliant twists found in his short stories do not fail to win the appreciation. 'Rajamalli', 'Padmakaram', 'Nishagandhi', 'Mani Malika' and 'Ranga Mandapam' are the collection of stories brought out by him.

Social awareness blended with intense intellectual responsibility towards educating and enlightening the mass, compelled writers like Ponkunnam Varki, Karur Neelakanda Pillai and Uroob create works that would withstand the test of posterity. Unlike Basheer, Varki is direct and aggressive in his attack against the social evils. His style is explosive and conversations of the characters sound more like battle cries. He is brutally blunt in exposing the hypocritical elites.

Karur Neelakanda Pillai is beautifully delicate, subtle and soft in his approach to the social problems. The ordinary becomes extraordinary in his hands. Humour, insulating his rich and mellowed philosophy of life, enriches his works with a soothing touch.
Uroob is the pseudonym of P.C. Kuttikrishnan, who is the master of themes that handle the problems of middle class families. Humour and irony add charm to his stories. The middle class life of Malabar gains exquisite beauty not only through the picturesque description but also through the dialogues rendered in the local dialects. With the least trace of artificiality, the ease with which the stories and the characters are evolved, surprises the reader.

**LIFE AND LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS OF M.T. VASUDEVAN NAIR**

According to critics, the most influential short-story writer of Malayalam to occupy the scenario after Basheer and Uroob is M.T. Vasudevan Nair.

The suffering human being of central Kerala finds a self-expression in the moving symphony of Vasudevan Nair’s short stories brimming with poetic feelings. M.T. Vasudevan Nair has an eye for the deformed, malformed, the insulted, the oppressed and the molested. He has an obsession with all the shades of adolescent love; his major theme is the woman presented in our society. The gross waste of goodness, the ruthless destruction of humanity and the monstrosity of social structures are other themes that engage the attention of Vasudevan Nair...Surveying the history of Malayalam short story since 1930 to the present day one may note that M.T. Vasudevan Nair stands at a turning point in the course of its development

M.T. Vasudevan Nair, popularly called ‘M.T’ was born on 9th August 1933, in Kudallur in Ponnani Taluk of Malabar in Kerala. He was the youngest son of Narayanan Nair and Ammalu Amma. M.T’s parents were in Sri Lanka as his father worked as a Manager in an Indian trading company. His mother, who was born in an ancient Nair family, came back to India to take care of the children’s education, while their father continued his stay in Sri Lanka. M.T passed his S.S.L.C. when he was fourteen years old and was compelled to wait for two years before he could join the college as the minimum age for admission into it was sixteen years. These two years of stay outside the academic portals helped M.T tremendously to bloom as a writer.
Even as a child, he was very fond of Tullal and Pulluvan Pattu which kept his imagination agile and alive. He lost his mother during his higher education at Victoria College, Palghat. M.T who was very fond of his mother took solace in the sisterly love offered by his eldest sister-in-law, Madhavi Kutty. He called her Ooppu (sister) whose contribution to his literary growth was very significant. His skill in getting literary works like ‘Sri Krishna Charitam Manipravātan’, ‘Sahithya Manjari’, ‘Sishyanum Makanum’ by heart was constantly and continuously put to test whenever he had the game of Anthashari played with ‘Ooppu’. Not until he read Pottekkad’s ‘Nadan Premam’ and ‘Prema Siskha’ did M.T think over his option of writing stories.

After his graduation in 1953 he joined M.B. Tutorial as a teacher. The proprietors of M.B. Tutorials were publishing a magazine called ‘Maṭayali’ and M.T published his first novel, ‘Pathiravum Pakal Velichavum’ in this magazine. He became the sub-editor of ‘Mathrubhoomi’, the popular daily in Malayalam in 1956 and its editor in 1968. He left Mathrubhoomi in 1981 and got himself thoroughly engaged in hectic literary activities. He was invited to take over as the editor of Mathrubhoomi periodicals in 1988. Since then he has been holding many coveted positions in Film Finance Corporation, Central Film Censor board, National Film Archives, Indian Committee of UNESCO, National committee of Adult Education, Film Institute of India, and Sahithya Academy, Delhi. At present he is the Chairman of Thunjan Memorial. He was the President of the Kerala Sahithya Academy also.

In his book ‘Kadhikande Panippura’ (The Writer’s Workshop), M.T. recollects vividly the infinity of the passion that haunted him to become a Writer, even at a very early age.
I had only one desire always, while at labour or leisure, I must write. I should become a Writer... I was not sure that story writing was my arena when I started to write. I must write. I must write on many things. This alone was my passion. Initially I tried writing poetry, essays and stories and at last after aimless groping, the needle fell in the right groove, of story writing. There I found a satisfying rhythm.²⁸

M.T reminiscences how he spent his vacation as a student, by travelling long distances, some twelve mile everyday, to procure books. He came under the direct influence of the writings of Basheer, Thakazhi and Pottekkad, who urged him to take up writing. Pottekkad won his appreciation and Basheer his love.

The initial stages of M.T’s evolution as a writer were unpleasant and rugged. Like the formative years of all the great men of letters, M.T underwent his share of anticipation and anxiety. The unending wait to see his writing in print was haunting him and urging him not to give up easily. The sensitive mind of M.T absorbed life around avidly and honestly. He could confide his pangs of waiting for a positive reply from the weeklies to no one.

I waited every day for three years at the gate of the post office awaiting the arrival of the post man who dragged himself along because of the pain caused by the corn in the leg. At last on a day in 1947, I saw my article on print. I felt a sense of fulfilment in my life. I confided it only to my Jeshtathiamma (Elder brother’s wife). I showed it to her which she appreciated. Still five more months had to pass for my first story to get salvations. It was in 1949. This struggle of continuous waiting extended for five more years till 1953. Neither had I approached anybody nor had anybody recommended my writing.

There is a reason for my mention of the year 1953 to be a turning point. ‘Jaya Keralam’ sent me ten rupees as a reward for my story. I heard a knock at the door of my college hostel room, when I was musing over the means of getting money for a cup of tea. Francis, the postman, announced that I have received a money order. When I received it, I was happy yet I had an urge to cry... That sum of rupees ten was a treasure for me as I had to manage fees and dues within sixty rupees every month.²⁹
LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS OF M.T. VASUDEVAN NAIR

I. Novels:
1. Naalukettu (1954)
3. Arabipponnu (Co-written with N.P. Mohammad) (1960)
4. Aggravithu (1962)
5. Manju (1964)

II. Short story collections - 19

III. Literary studies - 3

IV. Anthology of Essays - 3

V. Travelogues - 3

VI. Drama – (Gopura Nadayil) - 1

VII. Children Literature - 2

VIII. Speeches (Vakkukalude Vismayam) - 1

IX. Cine – Scripts - 48

X. Movies Directed - 6

(Nirmalayam, Bandhamam, Varrikuzhi, Manju, Kadavu, Devalokam)

(M.T. Oru Anuyathra pp.133-140)

M.T is undoubtedly one of the most widely read novelists of contemporary Malayalam literature. It had helped him tremendously to update his knowledge of innovative narrative techniques and advancement in psycho-analytical approaches. As he states in his book ‘Kaathikande Panippura (A Writer’s workshop),

Among the western writers, I looked upon Henry James, Chekov and Maupassant as my literary Acharyas. As I have already mentioned, in the beginning my only desire was to write stories. So I wrote in plenty. I did not even hesitate to write two stories per day. Many got published. Many went to the dust bin. But I was dissatisfied with my
self. Since 1952, I started reading voraciously and methodically. Many of my misconceptions began to disappear.

I realised that there were stories even beyond those of Anton Chekov and Maupassant. In the meantime, while I understood one fact, let not anybody imitate anybody else. Imitation takes one nowhere. Only after travelling through the vistas of novels and short stories of modern western literature, did I get a glimpse of a new light. It gave me a new outlook about story writing. To be very specific, it was the western literature after 1920s. Only after my having taken to heart the great contributions of the west, did I realise my smallness. I found a new parameter to assess myself as a writer. If I have to do justice to myself as a writer without self-reproach, I will have to get closer to that parameter. All my literary efforts were for that achievement. My efforts still continue - though satisfaction is still far away.

(Kathikande Panippura, pp.20-21)

As stated by M.T, his accessibility with the modern literature of the west, gave him absolute control over literary tools which can be effectively employed in the writing of a novel. Henry James and Joseph Conrad were making tremendous experiments with narrative techniques because they were convinced that the traditional method of story telling will not help them adequately. With the advent of new psychological theories, a new kind of literature started gaining currency, the psychological literature. To achieve a satisfactory depiction of human mind the novelist had to look out either for the invention of new fictional technique or re-focussing of the old ones. Of course, the urge for innovative methods did lead to some confusion. But artists like Henry James did not give up easily. The inadequacy of the existing traditional tools was responsible for the invention of innovative methods of narration like the Single Consciousness or Single Point of View, the Stream of Consciousness and the Multiple Point of View.

For the first time, the ‘drama techniques’ were introduced into fiction writing to achieve an objective representation of the unspoken mental life of the characters. This need for technical innovation was a logical outcome of the change on thematic
level also. From the external world the emphasis moved over to the internal world. From social realism novelists turned towards psychological realism.

M.T’s arrival as a novelist in Malayalam literature was fortunately well timed because after the era of social realism represented through the works of Thakazhi, Pottekkad, Basheer and Uroob, there was a need for representative writing that would probe into the enigmatic world of human psyche. The communist ideologies had already shaken the roots of the feudal system that existed. What followed was just not a rapid dismantling of the social setup but also a collective nervous breakdown experienced by a section of the society that has so long enjoyed the privileges of aristocracy. The Nair Tharawad was on its gradual steady decline shattering the inner stability of the inmates. The crumbling of the matrilineal Tharawad system of Nairs in Kerala, its Sambandham system of contractual marriage, its conflicts and problems and the changes in land legislation that sharply eroded the feudal order had invisible but intense impact on the individuals of the Nair community.

M.T was at the threshold of this change. His personal experience as a member of the above mentioned community gave him first-hand knowledge and material to invest on. As a conscious experimenter of new techniques, M.T was in need of tools that will represent the chaotic state of human mind, its unspoken fears and hidden desires. He was acutely conscious of the inchoate aspect of non-verbalised emotion which had been so long communicated through verse. Direct and Indirect Interior Monologues, Omniscient Description and Prose Soliloquy appear to him to be the effective tools which are capable of carrying the awkward and strange burden of human consciousness into the portals of prose fiction.

The transition from social realism to psychological realism, according to M.T, is a natural phase in the evolution of Malayalam literature.
Yes, the face has changed. The face of literature will keep on changing. The soul of literature also changes. There has been a change from Edgar Allan Poe to Henry James, from Henry James to the generation of Hemingway, from there to John Updike of the present. You can see parallel changes in Malayalam literature also. The themes of earlier stories were focused on man’s hunger for food. That became the matter of discussion. Now man’s mind is being discussed in the stories. This is only an evolution process. There is nobody to be blamed for this. The old and the new generations represent the phases of the progressive transition.

(Karthikande Panippura, pp.27-28)

M.T’s complete mastery over the techniques that once belonged to the genre of drama has enabled him to excel in the art of script writing for movies. M.T’s style is vividly picturesque recording every minute detail. The fact that he has written scripts for 48 films speaks volumes about how M.T could easily make use of the same technique for both fiction writing and script writing for films. Technically it is called ‘Camera Eye Narration’ which is a kind of story telling, resembling the camera eye sections of John Dos Passos’ ‘U.S.A’ (1936) in which the writing gives appearance or impression of being thoroughly objective, realistic and anatomical. In twentieth century experimental fiction, a similar device borrowed from film is used to establish a scene or an atmosphere by a series of brief pictures apparent logical order. This device is specifically used in the interior monologue 30. This is a vital contributory factor for the success of his film scripts and the cinematic version of his novels and short stories.

As Robert Humphrey in his book ‘Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel’ States:

Another set of devices for controlling the movement of Stream of Consciousness fiction is a group that may interplay between the notion picture and fiction in the 20th century provides material for an enlightening and enormously valuable study...

A basic device for the cinema is that of montage. Among the secondary devices are such controls as “Multiple-view”, “Slow-ups” and “Fade-backs”. “Montage” in the film sense refers to a class of devices which are used to show inter relation or association of ideas,
such as a rapid succession of images or the super imposition of image on image or the surrounding of a focal image by related ones. It is essentially a method to show composite or diverse views on one subject in short, to show multiplicity. The secondary techniques are methods for achieving the effect of montage, devices for overcoming the two dimensional limitation of the screen. Some of them are concerned with achieving the flow of events; others are more concerned with subjective details or as Professor Beach has said, with “the infinite expansion of the moment”$^{31}$.

This study probes into the extensive use of the techniques propounded and popularised by western writers like Henry James, Dorothy Richardson Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner and James Joyce in the fiction of M.T.Vasudevan Nair. It analyses how the technique of Single Point of View is used in the narration of ‘Naalukettu’, ‘Iruttinde Atmavu’ and ‘Vaanaprastham’. ‘Manju’ has been taken for an analysis of the effective employment of the Stream of Consciousness along with Indirect Interior Monologue and Direct Interior Monologue. ‘Vilapayathra’; ‘Kaalam’ and ‘Asuravithu’ are taken for the study of Multiple Point of View technique. ‘Randamoozham’ uses mythological subject matter to depict Collective Unconscious and Archetypal patterns. The present study attempts to analyse the delineation of Bhima’s character as a prototype and the use of Stream of Consciousness in the Novel.
NOTES


2 Ibid. 338.

3 Ibid. 402.


6 Ibid. 61.


11 Ibid. 39.


16 Dr. K.M. George. *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature* (New Delhi: Sahithya Academy, 1972) .89.

17 Ibid.89.

Ibid. 48.


Ibid. 267


Ibid. 267


Ibid. 64-65.
