Chapter-II

CONTEMPORARY SCENARIO AND GOLDING'S VIEWS
CHAPTER – II

CONTEMPORARY SCENARIO AND GOLDSING’S VIEWS

Today we apply the term ‘novel’ to a wide variety of writings that have in common the only attribute of being extend works of fiction written in prose. As an extended narrative, the novel; is distinguished from the short story and from the work of middle length called the novelette, as a narrative in verse of Chaucer, Spenser and Milton.

The term for the novel is most European language is Roman, which is derived from the medieval term, the romance. The English name for the form has its origin in the Italian word ‘novella’ which means a tale or a ‘piece of news’ in prose. Currently the term ‘novella’ is often used as an equivalent for ‘novelette’: a prose fiction of middle length such as Joseph Conrad’s The Heart of Darkness.¹

Miriam Allot quotes Clara Reeve while writing about novel. According to Clara the novel is a term indicating a particular literary genre with a French note of confidence. She says:

The novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is
written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language. Describes what never happened nor is likely to happen. The novel gives a familiar relation of such things as pass everyday before our eyes.

According to J. A. Cuddon a novel is like story having characters, actions, incidents and a plot. He remarks that the novel is a form of story or prose narrative containing characters, actions and incident and perhaps, a plot.²

Among the early precursors of the novel, we must place the Greek romances dating from 2nd to the 6th centuries. A second group of predecessors is found in Italian and Spanish pastoral romances which were inspired by the Eclogues of Virgil. These were extremely popular in the XIV and XV centuries and their influence is seen in Sidney's 'Arcadia'. The third group of predecessors of the novel is made up of romance of chivalry, such as are found in Mallory's Morte D'Arthur.

In the Elizabethan age the idea of novel grew definitely in the attempts of prose fiction such as Lyly's Euphuism, the euphuistic romance of Lodge and Greene, Nash's Jack Wilton and Deloney's Gentle Graft. In the 17th the 'Character' writers, the French heroic - romances and the novels of Mrs. Aphra Behn.
In the 18th century, the character sketches such as that of Roger de Coverlet by Addison and Steele also inspired the growth of the novel. However, the narratives of Bunyan, Defoe and Swift cannot be categorized as novel because they have little character interest. If the chief interest of romance is in extraordinary events that of novel in characters.

Generally a novel is called a long tale with characters and incidents from real life. The novel in this way found its corrective in the middle, years of the 18th century in the efforts of the writers like Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne. In pattern Daniel Defoe’s narratives are fictional autobiographies always pretending to be true stories, and so cleverly authenticated with detail as to look like actuality. He has been regarded as following the picaresque tradition. But actually he wrote rouge biography rather than the true picaresque.

The XVII century conceived the picaresque in the light of La Sage’s ‘Gil Blas’ (Published 1715-1735). The picaresque tradition required biographical pattern with the hero living by his wits and passing from one social stratum to another or from one professional class to another, the object of the change being social ‘expose’ or satire. This tradition is common in 18th century novels.
Defoe's traditions on the other hand are those of biography, voyage literature and the moral treatise.

In the 18th century novels are lengthy in size and they are generally written in the epistolary method. They are materialistic in vision, mock erotic in mode and realistic in medium. If the drama and poetry of the 18th century served largely the interest of the upper class, the novel catered to the needs of the middle class.

During the 19th century novels were characterized by the massive stability. They were long and typical. Some of them were published in the three volumes. The novelists of this age turned their backs rather sharply upon the historical novels of Scott. Some great novelists of 19th century are Charles Dickens, Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot, George Meredith, W.M. Thackeray, Bronte sisters and Thomas Hardy. The novels of this are based on scientific ideals, ethical purpose and philosophical interpretation of life.

Charles's Dickens, considered as one of the great novelists of England, and is highly influenced by Goldsmith, fielding and Smollett. He gives references of Smollett's novels in his novels. He writes about evils of society. His main novels are *The Pickwick Papers*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*. He himself being a reformer, attacks multitudes of social, political and economies evils of society.
George Eliot's *Middle March* is a great novel. George Meredith's novels are *The Egoist, Richard Federal, Beauchamp's Career, The Shaving of Shag pot and Vitoria*. Thackeray's greatest novels are Vanity Fair, Pen Dennis, Henry Edmond and the New Comer. Thomas Hardy, another popular novelist of the later part of this century is considered as a poet and as a master of landscape. His tragic novels *The Returns of the Native, Tess of the d'Aubervilliers, Jude the Obscure* and *The Mayor of Caster bridge* give a harrowing picture of the consequences of sexual frustration and social deprivation of human life.

In the 20th century the genre of the novel continued to occupy the dominant position as it had in the Victorian age. As far as the quality is concerned it made no significant advance. However, the modern novelists were free to enjoy greater freedom of expression in the treatment of sex. The novelists of the age were interested in the individual flights of their characters. Frustration and brutality caused by the two world wars also molded their outlook.

In the beginning of the 20th century the novelists like Meredith and Hardy continued their pens and some of the younger writers like Bennett, Galsworthy and Wells being product of the Victorian noise came in prominence only during the period. Moreover, the early years of the 20th century developed the new
aesthetic interests and the technical progress of the novel form. The important novelists of the period are Samuel butler. John Galsworthy, Arnold Bennett, Joseph Conrad and H.G. Wells.

The 20th century English novels can be best studied against the backgrounds of the Victorian novel from which it has evolved. It will not be unreasonable to say that the society in the Victorian age was stable with a generally accepted code of moral and social behaviour. A Victorian novelist within this code of moral and social behaviour portrayed the interplay between the hero and heroine on one side and the people and institution around them on the other. The Victorian novelists were interested in both the society and the individuals. On the other hand the modern novel has generally an individual’s flight.

The modern English novel has completely shaken off the inhibitions and taboos which the Victorians had imposed on it. This newly – won freedom, complete defiance of old world conventions and restraints can be seen in the work of D.H. Lawrence, Huxley and finally, which we find in the Ulysses of James Joyce. The Victorians wrote much about love but they had fought shy of sex and his pendulum has swung to the other extreme in the modern novel.
There is a deep sense of bitterness and disillusionment in many of the well-known modern novels. The Victorians had believed in certain things, stood for certain well defined values, but the modern novelists like Huxley have no set of values and they mock almost at every thing, filling the air with the sound of Hollow, unholy laughter, Conventions, beliefs, morals, social values seem to have suffered complete ship wreck.

In order to have a touch and go view of the modern novel one has to keep in mind that the modern novel is quite different form the Victorian novel in thematic and technical concerns. The modern novel has immense variety and complexity. The novels are written on all possible themes and subjects. There are traditionalist like H.G. Wells, A. Bennett and Galsworthy, who propounded new ideas and opened new vistas to the human mind, but follow the Victorian tradition as far as the technique of the novel is concerned. There are innovators like Henry James, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, who have revolutionized the technique by probing deep into the sub-conscious. There are biographical novels, war novels and novels of humor like those of P.G. Woodhouse.

The realism is another landmark in the modern novel. It deals with all the facts of contemporary life, pleasant and unpleasant, beautiful and ugly, the woes and sufferings of the poor, their misery
There is a deep sense of bitterness and disillusionment in many of the well-known modern novels. The Victorians had believed in certain things, stood for certain well-defined values, but the modern novelists like Huxley have no set of values and they mock almost at every thing, filling the air with the sound of Hollow, unholy laughter, Conventions, beliefs, morals, social values seem to have suffered complete ship wreck.

In order to have a touch and go view of the modern novel one has to keep in mind that the modern novel is quite different form the Victorian novel in thematic and technical concerns. The modern novel has immense variety and complexity. The novels are written on all possible themes and subjects. There are traditionalist like H.G. Wells, A. Bennett and Galsworthy, who propounded new ideas and opened new vistas to the human mind, but follow the Victorian tradition as far as the technique of the novel is concerned. There are innovators like Henry James, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, who have revolutionized the technique by probing deep into the sub-conscious. There are biographical novels, war novels and novels of humor like those of P.G. Woodhouse.

The realism is another landmark in the modern novel. It deals with all the facts of contemporary life, pleasant and unpleasant, beautiful and ugly, the woes and sufferings of the poor, their misery
and wretchedness as well as the good in them. The modern novel is pessimistic in tone. It presents realistically the conflicts and the frustrations of the modern world, mainly in the novels of inter-war and post-war years. There is a sense of criticism, condemnation of contemporary values; E.M. Foster is distinguished in his attack on the business mind and the worship of bigness in industrialized England. Maugham reflects the bitter cynicism and frustration of post-war generation. Huxley analyses the disease of modern civilization and Lawrence revolts against reason and intellect.

The modern novel has an open treatment of sex. There is a free and frank treatment of the problems of love, sex and marriage. Sex both within marriage and outside marriage is a common theme in the modern novel. In the early years of the 20th century Freud and Jung shook the foundations of human thought by their revolutionary discoveries in the field of psychology. They discovered that human consciousness has very deep layers and buried under the conscious, are the subconscious and unconscious. Thoughts buried deep in the unconscious and the subconscious constantly keep coming to the surface and on account of human personality cannot be complete and satisfactory unless these hidden elements are given their due weight. Henry James, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Elizabeth Bowen have made the English extremely psychological in nature.
One of the most distinguished features of the modern novels is that it is not merely are entertainment but a serious work of art. The first and foremost mark of modernism regarding the technique is that it is no longer merely a narrative for entertainment or social representation but a work of art. The novel according to Henry James is not what it was for the Victorians. He says:

A novel is a living thing, all one continuous like any other organism, and in proportion as it lives will it be found. I think that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other part.  

A novel in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression. But those will be no intensity at all and therefore No value, unless there is freedom to feel and say. The tracing of a line to be followed, of a tone to be taken, of a form to be filled out, is a limitation of that freedom and a suppression of the very thing that we are most curious about. The form, it seems to me, is to be appreciated. After the fact....... the execution
belongs to the author alone; it is what is most personal to him, and we measure him by that.⁴

Joseph Conrad also stresses the need for the novelist’s devotion to his art. He similarly lays stress on the intensity of the writer’s impression of life in terms of the concentration of every detail on the central truth embodiment in the novel. According to him a novel is:

A work that aspires, however humbly, to the condition of art should carry its justification in every line. And art itself may be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the higher kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspiration.

In spite of the serious consideration that the novel is an art form in the 20th century, it suffers from many drawbacks. According to many critics the story seems to have died out of the 20th century English novel. Unlike the Victorians the modern novelists refuses to fall in to the mould of a story. The great modern novels like Ulysses have the stories without an ending. The modern novel is like an incomplete sentence because under the influence of new
psychological theories, life is not regarded as a continuous process, but a series of separates and successive moments.

Like the story in the modern novel the character has also decayed. In delineating the character the Victorian novelists adopted two methods: the method of direct narration and the dramatic method. The externals of personality like habits, manners, physical appearances were graphically described and further the light was thrown on the nature of characters by their own words and actions and by the opinion of others. But unlike them the modern novelist realizes that it is impossible to give a true psychological account of character by such means. By probing deep in the dark hidden resources of subconscious and unconscious of a character he lopes himself in the complexity of inner life: instead of depicting a conflict between different personalities, he depicts the individual at war with himself.

As far as the novel of the 1950s or the age of Golding is concerned we come to know that a number of young authors in the 1950s protested violently with sound and fury against the society which under the aegis of the welfare state did not fulfill the hopes and aspiration they had. These protesters are known as the Angry Young Man. The label is convenient however, they have very
little in common, and the group comprises Kingsley Amis, John Wain, Doris Lessing, John Braine, Allen Sill toe.

These writers express their revolt against "The Establishment" and stress on the fact that their elders and their deals have made a mess of world. However, literary scholars consider this protest only a sign of immaturity, the traditional values of society enshrine the wisdom of the ages and any attempt to root them out is only to root out the very foundation of human order, moreover, they only make meaningless revolt as they do not offer any kind of alternative values, so their attempts is only the result of nihilism. Stephen spender called it a 'rebellion of the lower middle brows: and observed that "there was an aroma of inferiority about its protest, attribute to the self - conscious provincialism of the writers.

The years 1954 also introduced great novelist William Golding. His first novel Lord of the files made little stir at the time of its publication because it did not belong to the edifying and encounter edifying stream of 'anger' had gradually become better known. It is a sort of Robinson Crusoe but that simple and picturesque story it made the starting point of philosophical allegory on the duality of human nature. The 'Lord of Files' in none other than the Devil, lurking in the hearts of those fledglings and
waiting to reveal himself only until such time as he is no longer held in check by the taboos of civilization.

William Golding is one of those novelists who are versatile in their achievements. He deals with themes which are deeply associated with love, sex, war, marriage, evil in men and religion.

William Golding gives true picture of war in his novels. Violence becomes the major theme of his novels. In *Lord of the flies* and *Darkness Visible* he shows the results of war. In *Lord of the flies*, war becomes the main cause of the evacuation of the children from their native place. In this process the plane has been attacked by enemy planes. The crews have been killed, but the passenger tube has been released, so that it crash – lands in the jungle of an island. The air craft had flown off in flames and the remains of the tube have been swept out to sea in a storm.

In *Darkness Visible* Golding presented the scene of war “trough it all – the roar of the fire, the drone of the departing bombers, the crash of collapse – there was now and then punctuating explosion of a delayed – action bomb going off among the trouble, sometimes casting a kind of blink over the mess and sometimes so muffled by debris as to make nothing but noise”.

*The Spire* is Golding's historical novel in which he describes medieval England. In all his work he is profoundly disturbed by the power of evil in the world. There is supremacy of evil in his novels. In *Lord of the Files* he presented that the defects of society go back to the defeats of human nature. In *The Inheritors*, the evil is built in the hero. The story of the novel demonstrates what happens when a group of innocent savage meets a corrupt but more civilized tribe.

The *Scorpion God* is Golding's religious novel. In the twentieth century it becomes a fashion to be converted to Roman Catholicism. He shows an intense interest in the forms of worship, Golding writes for the society and its people. He tries to deliver a message through his novels.

Modern novelists ignore plot and use stream of consciousness technique in their writings, but Golding is quite different in this case, much of the charm of his novels, and particular that of *Lord of the Files* lies in its story, plot and character. He has not ignored them. The novel begins with a vaguer setting and references to the aero plane crash.

William Golding points out that there are two ways of writing a book. First is that we think about the theme of a book first and then write a book. Secondly we write a book and find the
theme afterwards. He has successfully tried both the ways in his writings. Golding expressed his view about his themes and titles of his books in the following manner:

What can! Say then about my choice of theme? Ideas come easily enough. I scuff with my foot and turn up themes like a pig rooting for truffles. Why are some truffles and some useless buts of stone? At the last I am driven to a wry conclusion. The writer does not choose his themes at all. The theme choose the writer.\(^7\)

William Golding regards his approach to a novel as a hand – to – mouth thing and he admits that, "Men do not write books they should, they write the books they can". Golding is considered as a conscious artist. He is of the opinion that a novelist does not sing as the bird sings, "Warbling his native wood notes", a successful novelist knows what his readers expect of him, "What would draw old men from the chimney corner, what would keep an audience silent in hall and what ensured that he would be asked again. The story – teller must have this Homeric third ear, this equipment to be without it would be unprofessional". Secondly, the teller tells because the listener listens. If there are no novelists the reader will produce one out of a 'test tube'. They feel a deep need for the creator rather than the critic. "We are prepared to pay a good
price for ‘the creator’ and exhibit the creature in our universities, on a leash indeed, but a fairly long one.

Money cannot buy a writer who is able to produce a work, “......as easily as the leaf comes to be the tree”. According to Golding the novelists is like an Oak which puts out one green leaf now and then and apparently with much labour.

Imagination is the source of novel writing. It is supposed to be, “The rearrangement of material in the mind”. In an interview with John Carey, Golding puts forth his idea about imagination, “I saw things, once or twice — I imagined things so strongly that I thought I saw them. I had a vivid imagination, and made no distinction between what was true and what wasn’t to me the main thing about something was whether it was interesting or not: if it was interesting, well, it was true.” On the one hand there is a part of his self which is creative, which strives to discover truth or a least a fragment of it. On the other hand there is another part of his self which acts as an assessor, a judge, which controls things, advance them, survey the interior scene with perfect calm and is also aware how he should like it to proceed. In such moments the novelist has luck, grace, and lightning. He gets a truth which is ‘an unsupported conviction. Like God’.

He comprehends this truth and his pen
begins to race to communicate it to its readers. According to him the novelist is God of his own world. He said:

The novelist is God of his own interior world. Commonly men make God in their own image – he is warrior, a lover, a mathematician, a father, son, mother, a remote universal and a small image in the corner of a room. Let us add our quote of inadequate description and say that he is of all things an artist who labour under no compulsion but that of his own infinite creativity. Are we, in some sense, his novels? We are said to be made his image and if we could not understand our flashes of individual creativity we might glimpse the creativity of the ultimate Creator.10

About the art of the novelist William Golding strongly felt that a writer’s book should be as different from each other as possible. He strongly opposed those writers who can go on writing the same book over and over again. Secondly, the novelist “Like the cobbler should stick to his last”11 as the story – teller, it is his privilege to be mystifying, inconsistent, impenetrable and any-thing else he please, he fulfils the prime clause in his, “unwritten contract and keeps the attention of his audience”.12

Analyzing the source of his own inspiration William Golding said that his creativity had originated in ‘a sense of continual astonishment my epitaph must “He Wondered”. At another
place he said, "What man is, whatever man is under the eye of heaven, that I burn I know and that – I don not say this lightly – I would endure knowing. The themes closest to my purpose, to my imagination have stemmed from that preoccupation, have been of such a sort that they might move me a little nearer to knowledge".

Golding considers he a pragmatist with a touch of empiricism. He avoids all theory and gives a down – to earth definition of which he includes in the word 'novel'. He is of the opinion that 'a story which is at least in part of fiction and which is not seen on a screen or head through a loudspeaker but written down in a physical book'.

It would seem that consummation of life – time experience and inspiration go up to make a book. Golding has an interesting anecdote about his novel *Lord of the files*. This anecdote is about the idea of the novel that how it came into his mind:

More than a quarter of a century ago I set on one side of the fireplace and my wife on the other. We had just put the children to bed after reading to the elder some adventure story or other – carol island, treasure island, coconut island, pirate island, magic island, God knows what island, island have always and for a good reason bulked large in the British
consciousness. But I was tired of these islands with their paper – cut – out goodies and baddies and everything for the best in the best of all possible worlds. I said to my wife, ‘Wouldn’t it be a good idea if I wrote a story about boys on an island and let them behave the way they really would? She replied, at once, that’s a first class idea. You write it’. So I sat down and wrote it .... How then do I choose a theme? Even then, did I know what I was about? It had taken me more than half a lifetime, two world wars and many years among children before I could make that casual remark because to me the job was so plainly possible.\textsuperscript{15}

At first the title of the novel was \textit{Stranger From Within}. Golding sent it to the publisher to publish it, but the Book Committee rejected his novel. Charles Montieth, the member of Book committee was not satisfied with the judgment of the Book Committee. He said that the novel was odd, imperfect but potentially very powerful and that he would like to discuss it with the author. In his meeting with Golding, Charles suggested him to change some situation and story of the novel. After the change in the novel the Book committee decided to accept the book for publication. There was also another problem; it was the problem of the title of the novel.
REFERENCES


4. ibid., p. 657.


10. ibid., p. 200.
12. ibid.
13. ibid., p. 199.
14. ibid., p. 156.
15. ibid., p. 163.