CHAPTER – 1
THE NOVEL AS AN ART- FORM

1.1 DEFINITION OF NOVEL

The novel being one of the most powerful forms that emerged in all literatures of the world particularly during 19th and 20th centuries, is a literary type of certain length that presents a ‘story’ in fictionalized form. It can be distinguished from other literary forms by its immense flexibility. There have been numerous experiments with the form and it is difficult to say which phase is more important as its relevance has been changing from time to time. In literature one finds different literary types which are extremely rigorous and form-oriented. But the novel is not so. As Chris Baldick points out,

….the novel as a literary genre is itself exceptional: it disregards the constraints that govern other literary forms, and acknowledges no obligatory structure, style, or subject-matter. Thriving on this openness and flexibility, the novel has become the most important literary genre of the modern age, superseding the epic, the romance, and other narrative forms. Novels can be distinguished from short stories and novellas by their greater length, which permits fuller, subtler development of characters and themes.¹

Certain conditions are present in all novels: plot, character and action. The plot is important because it provides a sense of chronology. Ian Watt has observed that unlike the plots of plays, epics or poems, novels usually do not rely on traditional sources.²

This may not be applicable to all novels (the historical and the mythological novels are exceptions) but often fictional narratives have a degree of inventiveness that isn't quite the dominant feature in the other literary genres. Moreover, novels have complicated plot-structures because it is possible for the novelist to develop and elaborate the themes in ways that other genres do not allow. The mode of narrative is an important aspect of the genre of the novel. Many novels experiment with the narrative mode, which is related to the style of story-telling. So, along with the issue of what the story is all about, we have the issue of how the story is told occupying the genre of the novel. All of this is afforded by the length of the novel. No modern
literary genre can be as lengthy as the novel. Therefore a novel is a fictional prose narrative of variable or substantial length.

Marion Crawford, a well known American novelist and critic described the novel as a “pocket theatre”, which contains within itself not only plots and actors, but also costume, scenery, and all the other accessories of drama, without the necessity of actual representation on the stage. Clara Reeve described the novel as a “picture of real life and manners, and of time in which it is written.”

Based on above definitions it can be stated that the novel is a very effective medium for the portrayal of human life with its passion, interest and action as it is actually lived. Thus the novel is a form of literary art constituting the following elements:

- Plot
- Character
- Dialogue
- Time of action
- Place of action
- Criticism of life –total unified effect

1.1.1 Plot: The story element in the novel is a plot. It deals with certain events and situations and episodes. Something happens, or is done, some tragedy or comedy takes place, someone struggles, suffers, succeeds, survives, or dies. All such incidents and situations make the plot of a novel. These events, incidents, or episodes are mostly different. For example, in Walter Scott or in Alexander Dumas, there are about some thrilling historical incidents. In Jane Austen or in Balzac, these are again about the English or French social life of the early nineteenth century. Hardy’s novels are concerned with rural life of Wessex, whereas Thackeray deals with the life of the English society of the Victorian era. Flaubert or Lawrence is concerned much with the intricacy of human psychology. Again the setting of Dickens and Emily Bronte is deep moors of human situations, whereas in Arthur Conan Doyle, it is wide sea. Incidents differ, situations vary and actions move on different levels. It can be said that there are always actions and incidents and situations in all novels. The plot forms the significant part of the novel.
1.1.2 Character: These events and incidents that happen in a novel take place in the life of certain men and women, who are essential to form the plot of the novel. Without these men and women, action cannot proceed and remains unimportant, rather meaningless. These men and women have their own traits and characters. Some are successful, some fail, some become tragic, sad, some become ‘types’ and so on. These are the matters relevant to the story of the novel. All such men and women form the characters of the novel or movers of the action in the plot of the novel. The main concern of the novelist is to create characters, although a novel is a totality and must be assessed as a whole. Characterization is a part of this totality. So, here again men and women belong to different status, ranks and stations. For instance Thackeray’s men and women belong to a status different from Dicken’s and Austen’s. Sometimes characters are strongly presented in a novel as was done in Shakespeare’s plays, and they dominate the work in entirety.

1.1.3 Dialogue: As the novel is a totality so only by developing a plot or mere exposure of characters cannot make a novel. Here comes the necessity of narrative or dialogue i.e. the method of narration or of conversation making it an this is also an important component of a novel. So this narrative or dialogue serves both the purposes of taking forward the plot as well as developing the characters of the novel. Different characters communicate and this communication among them moves forward the action and forms the dialogue of the novel. Again the narrative is also used in novel to trace the development of the plot and show the nature of different characters. We can see that novelists over a period of time develop a large variety of modes or strategies to present a story. Generally a novelist uses only one specific type of narrative mode. Sometimes, several modes can be used simultaneously in a single work of novel. The following types of narrative modes are more popular.

- **Third Person Narrative**: In this type of narrative mode, the narrator is someone outside the story who refers to all the characters by name or as ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘they’. For example Chinua Achebe’s novel *Things Fall Apart* third person narrative mode is used.

- **First Person Narrative**: When a novelist creates a character or persona in first person and when he or she attempts to view other characters or situations through his or her eyes, then this mode of narration is called first
person narrative mode. For instance Charles Dickens *David Copperfield* is an example of First Person Narrative.

1.1.4 **Time of action:** The plot of the novel takes place at a certain point of time. It is seen that a novel can hardly grow without reference to or portraying an age or period of time - a time of action. For instance, in Walter Scott, the action of the novel belongs to the Elizabethan Age or to the seventeenth or eighteenth century. In Thomas Hardy, the plot is about the later half of the Victorian era. So what is important is the way in which the age is represented, and not the age itself.

1.1.5 **Place of action:** The incidents of a novel take place in a certain quarter or a locale that houses the people – in serene villages, as in Hardy, in comfortable living rooms, as in Jane Austen, in streets or market-places as in *The Mayor Of Caster Bridge*. Thus it is not at all necessary that the action of the novel is to be confined to a particular place. Scenes change, and the place of action in a novel, too, moves.

1.1.6 **Criticism of life:** This is an important component in the novel even though it is a bit difficult to define. It is something which expresses the author’s perspective or his philosophy of life. This is more or less criticism of life by the author and it colours the novel with a particular aspect. No novelist can remain absolutely passive in his pictures of the world around him. Those pictures must be coloured, somehow or the other, by his own views and ideas, visions and ideals. The novelist either directly or indirectly presents certain views through different events, characters and dialogue and such views contribute to the emergence of his criticism of life through the work. Basically a novel deals with a certain predicament of life and this predicament is often viewed from author’s own point of view mainly through his presentation of different characters and situations.

For instance, Dickens’s profound sympathy for the underdogs in the capitalist society is the criticism of life in his novels. Hardy’s tragic vision and D.H. Lawrence’s sex license constitute the criticism of life of the respective novelist.

Then novel as a form of art portrays human conditions and interprets life and the novelist is a creative artist who presents and interprets these concrete facts of life in an artistic way which again makes him or her acting like a historian in some ways. Like all forms of art, a novel grows out of life; it is fed by life; it acts upon life.
1.2 The Novel: its historical evolution

It is very difficult to say when the novel proper made its appearance in world's literary history. The desire to listen to stories is deep-rooted in mankind. From the beginning of history men have gathered round the campfire, fire side, in the public place to listen to the telling of a story. In India, in Sanskrit literature we had the Panchatantra and Hitopadesha stories, Gunadhya’s Brihat Katha etc from the earliest times likewise we also find stories of Arabian knights; then in the western world, the stories of Boccaccio’s (1313-75) Decameron, the Italian ‘novella’. Loosely, the telling of a story was meant to be the important thing in a novel. Perhaps it acquired its present meaning of fictions, prose-narrative by about 1700 A.D. It is however clear that there are many features of the novel, which we find in many earlier non-novelistic literary types as well. For example, the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle considered the epic to be a form of narrative. In Sanskrit also Kavya included, broadly all types of creative narratives. Indian epics and puranas were considered as Itihasas (histories). Prose romances were broadly divided into kathas and akhyayikas – kathas being imaginary and based on imagination, and akhyayikas being narratives based on facts of history and truth, containing sometimes biographical and autobiographical elements of the writer. (This point is discussed in some detail in Chapter –iii.) Though novels are usually written in prose, people have written novels in verse too. For example, Indian writer Vikram Seth's The Golden Gate (1986) is one such case. In this novel, which is in verse, Seth tried to present the situation of life and culture in the context of the Golden Gate Bridge at San Francisco, USA. The great Russian writer Alexander Pushkin’s (1799-1837) Eugene Onegin (1833) is often seen as the pioneering text in the novel in verse category. Mythologies and romances of the ancient world, full of stories, were also written in verse. These different mythological narratives of the world exhibit some of the features of the novel though not in modern concepts. They are characterised by the presence of a strong sense of morality and are usually associated with some religious or spiritual framework. One of the striking features of the novel as it traversed through the various stages of its evolution is its modernity. The growth and emergence of the novel as a literary form is a modern phenomenon. There were narratives in the ancient world, but the novel is a product of the modern period. The Czech novelist, Milan Kundera (1929) considers modernity to be its most important feature in a novel. So, it can be said that the novel is a fictional
prose narrative and a modern literary development.

Since the novel is a modern phenomenon it must be seen in terms of its place in culture. The Print revolution (in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries) was a major factor that contributed to the growth of the modern reader. Earlier, knowledge was closely bound up with religion and spiritual experience. With printed books being available to the general reader, the nature of education and readership also changed. That is why prose romances emerged during the sixteenth century. Some literary historians consider these narratives to be part of the novel's pre-history, while others believe that such writings are actually similar to the novel itself. It is interesting to note that many of these romances were extremely popular and well-received. The great English playwright William Shakespeare (1564-1616) based some of his plays on the romances of his contemporaries. In tracing the history of the novel it is noted that it was confined to just one or two locations. But it spread across different centres of Europe and developed with varying degrees of complexity and thus it made its appearance in Europe. Two remarkable examples from the early history of the novel are French novelist Francois Rabelais’ (1494-1553) five novels collectively known as *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1532-34) and Spanish novelist Miguel de Cervantes’(1547-1616) *Don Quixote* (1605). Both these novels are very different from one another. This was because the form of the novel was yet to develop fully. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, many people in Europe began to experiment in prose. In England also it emerged properly only in the eighteenth century. Similar writings appeared at the same time in Italy, Spain, France and Germany. By the nineteenth century many accomplished novelists emerged in the literary scenario of Europe and they continue to be revered very highly even today. It can be said that the growth of the novel was to some extent influenced by the changing current of ideas in the fields of science and general knowledge. People's perceptions were changing and such transformations were mirrored in the growth of an eager and curious readership in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The stories became more and more complicated and exciting as the novel reached the modern period. In this connection we must also take note of the role played by the publishing industry (represented to a great extent by periodicals and journals) and the libraries.

The novel's emergence in the modern world can thus be traced to certain
cultural and social developments in Europe. With the revival of learning during the
Renaissance, the growth of readership because of print culture and formation of
libraries and the availability of leisure, the novel consolidated its form and structure in
the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries in Europe. In the eighteenth century we
find the novelists experimenting in a variety of ways. In England, for instance, the
writers tried to present things in quite dissimilar ways. Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)
wrote *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) in the adventure tale format; Samuel Richardson
(1689-1761) wrote the narrative of letters (*Pamela* in 1740 and *Clarissa in 1747- 48*)
and Henry Fielding (1707-1754) tried out the picaresque novel in *Tom Jones* (1749).
By the nineteenth century, the novel was considerably consolidated as a recognised
literary form. Novelists like Jane Austen (1775-1817), Charles Dickens (1812-1870),
W. M. Thackeray (1811-1863), Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) and Thomas Hardy
(1840-1928) dealt with different aspects of contemporary social life. The novel during
this period was primarily realistic in orientation.

The developments of the genre outside England is of great variation and
experimentation. Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is a landmark in Spanish
literature as is already referred to. Following its publication in the early seventeenth
century, it paved the way for the genre to develop and consolidate in other European
languages. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, we find in Countess de
Lafayette’s (1634-1693) *La Princesse de Clèves* (1678) the arrival of the woman
novelist in Europe. Of course, Aphra Behn (1640-1689) had also written *Oroonoko*
(1688) and other novels in English in the seventeenth century. By the nineteenth
century the novel was a major literary form in Europe. The French naturalists and
realists such as Emile Zola (1840-1902) and Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880) had
created a new space for the novel through their fictional narratives. Thus the
nineteenth century was perhaps the most significant year for the novel in terms of its
spread and practice across the world. In Russia Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883), Fyodor
Dostoevsky (1821-1881) and Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) explored aspects of human life
and character in new invigorating ways. The writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-
1864), Herman Melville (1819-1891) and Mark Twain (1835-1910) announced the
emergence of the American novel.
In India too, writers have been considerably influenced and inspired by the eighteenth and nineteenth century fiction and their literary forms of the Western World, specially from England and Russia with their exposure to them, during the British rule in India.

The rise of the Indian novel was part and parcel of this widespread awakening (Indian Renaissance) in India. Towards the middle of the fifties of the nineteenth century, a few Indian graduates entered the literary arena and with the advent of these enlightened writers, the Indian novel was intricately involved in a complex cultural process. The writers in various regional languages in turn shaped their common image of Indian reality, an image created in historical and traditional continuity. Many of the Indian writers followed the models of Indian novel and some others tried to penetrate into deeper layers of culturally conditioned or of spontaneous experiences. Thus the Indian novel grew as a literature of a certain social class under certain historical, political, economic and topographical conditions.\

Opinions seem to differ as to which the first Indian novel was. However taking all accounts it appears that Syed Hassan Sha, a Persian novelist wrote the first novel in Parsi, in India in 1793 and another novel in Urdu was published in 1833 followed by another attempt to write a novel made in Bengali with Pyarichand Mitra serializing a novel in Masik Patrika in 1854.

This is said to be the beginning of the Indian novel and it is seen that various novelistic experiments being carried out in the vernacular languages. O. Chandu Menon's Indulekha (1889, Malayalam), Veeresalingam's Rajasekhara Charitra (1878, Telugu), Lakshminath Bezbaroa's Padum Kunwori (1895, Assamese) Padmanath Gohain Barua's Bhanumati (1891, Assamese) and Lahari (1892 Assamese), Rajani Kanta Bordoloi’s Miri Jiyari,(1895 Assamese) and Mirza Hadi Ruswa's Umrao Jan Ada (1899, Urdu) are some noteworthy early examples of the novel in Indian vernacular languages. In the early twentieth century the novel flourished in various Indian languages.

In the modern period, the journey of the novel has taken a new turn. Some of the modern novelists feel that the question of form cannot be taken for granted. They have experimented with form, content and language. There have been other challenges as well enveloping major technological developments in the twentieth and
the initial early years of the twenty-first century. These developments have greatly affected the character of the contemporary novel in terms of theme, technique and reception.

As David Daiches explains in *A critical History of Eng. Lit-Vol-II*:

> The plot patterns were constructed out of incidents and situations which were seen to matter in human affairs equally by writer and reader.  

> The modern context of fiction is different because of the changes that have taken place since the time when a common faith and shared values provided people with the means for perception and discrimination of meaning. The loss of authorial confidence in a shared background of belief and values with the reader and consequent erosion of authority had crucial implications for fiction, primarily because it forced the writer to reconsider his relation with the reader and after his narrative strategies to fit the changed situation.

> The psychological theories of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) also affected the technique of the novel. Their theories showed that objective science can describe the irrational depths of man. These theories also affected point of view – an aspect of practical concern to the novelist. Point of view relates to the narrative mode established by the author to present characters and events

> James Joyce (1882-1941), Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), Dorothy Richardson (1873-1957) are the pioneers in stream of consciousness technique. The mode was first used in *Pointed Roofs* in 1915. *Dubliners* (1914) and *A Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man* in 1916 is a ‘kunstleroman’ (a novel which traces the development of the artistic sensibility).

> Characterisation in the modern novel came to be depicted not so much through behaviour as through and exploration of consciousness. The practice of D.H.Lawrence (1885-1930) is a typical example of this new approach to characterization.

> The novels of Joseph Conrad (1857- 1954) and Henry James (1843-1916) are example of objective narrative characteristic of the modern, self effacing author. Their novels are the indicators of change in fiction writing.
In contrast to the interest in the hidden realities of “the deep heart's core” evinced by James and Conrad, a concern with the world of external reality, distinguishes the writings of Arnold Bennet (1867-1931) and H.G.Wells (1866-1946). Bennet offers a detailed documentary of day to day life in *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902) and *The Old Wives Tale* (1908). H.G.Wells is justly remembered for his pioneering role in Science Fiction.

The tradition of the realistic novel was continued by John Galsworthy in the *Forsyte Saga*, (1922) a series of four novels. The book is of great interest to the social historian as a reflection of the times.

Post modernist fiction is a more ‘avant – garde’ or more radically defamiliarising, deviant and experimental novelistic form. Graham Greene’s (1904-91) novels are highly topical – the sensational headlines of news dailies penetrate deep into his works: the depression, internationalist monopolies, war scare, spy – scare Anti – Americanism – all these headlines extend to most of his works *The Captain and the Evening* (1988) *The heart of the Matter* (1948), *The Quiet American* (1955), *The Human Factor* (1978) to name only a few. Greene adopts popular form of thriller to highlight the moral complexity of post- modern world. C.P.Snow (1905-1980) and Anthony Powell (1905-2000) are considered as historians of their times.

The contribution of Joyce Cary (1887-1957) is no less important. His Trilogy *Herself Surprised* (1941); *To be a Pilgrim* (1942) and the *Horse’s Mouth* (1944) are examples which deal with English History through English eyes for the last 60 years.

It is seen that anti- intellectual stance was proclaimed more aggressively by writers of the movement who also belong to the 50’s.

Bloomsbury traditions of fine writing for example, some of these writers cultivated a deliberately slap- dash, honest jack- style of writing, while the loose, picaresque structure often adopted was symptomatic of an empathic rejection of the old Jamesian concept of form in the novel.8

A representative novel of the revolt against the old literate is Kingsley Amis (1922-95) *Lucky Jim*. (1954). The experimental tendency, however, reasserts itself in the works of Lawrence Durrell (1912) and William Golding (1911-93) to provide a more substantial contribution to fiction. Durrell in his *Alexandria Quartet* (1957-60)
experiments with ideas of relativity and space time in fiction. William Golding is an altogether more sombre and pessimistic writer. The four novels which he published in the 1950’s were so completely out of key with contemporary realism and provincialism that *Lord of the Flies* (1954) was initially not at all successful and afterwards became best-seller. *The Inheritors* (1955) restored the fable to a place in English Fiction.

Again it is seen that, one of the most striking features of contemporary English fiction has been the large number of talented women novelists. Feminist writing became a trend. The examples of Muriel Spark (1918), Iris Murdoch (1919) and Margaret Drabble (1939) will go to show the futility of attempting to attach a single descriptive label to women writers.

Again, all the novels of John Fowles (1926) display an interesting technical resourcefulness. The first of them, the horrific *The Collector* (1960) is presented in part through the diary kept by the victim, which also contains passages of formally set – out dialogue.

*The Magus* (1964) with a revised edition in 1977 is to some extent an elaborate literary game with the writer as puppet – master and Daniel Martin (1977) alternates between first person and third person narration, frequently switches the tenses and incorporates ‘contributions’ from Jenny, Daniel’s young mistress left behind in California. But it is *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* (1969) which has achieved the most fashionable success. The basic plot, the love- affair between Charles and Sarah, is conveyed in the style of a traditional nineteenth century novel, with its solid characterization and scene setting, attended by carefully researched contemporary details. What Fowles has set to do in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* is to blend a self questioning post- existentialist modern text of the 1960’s with a traditional one of a hundred years earlier.

One of the feature of the modern novel which takes on great importance is the use of dialogue and conversation, especially when presented with very little narratorial intervention. Novelists as different as Evelyn Waugh in the 1920’s and 1930’s and Iris Murdoch in the 1960s and 1970s have experimented with this kind of speech presentation. Most innovative and successful exponents of the ‘conventional
novel’ are Henry Green (1907-1971) and Ivy Compton – Burnett (1884-1969).

Again Samuel Beckett (1906-89) is better known for his contribution to modern drama, but novels such as Murphys (1938), Watt (1953) and his trilogy – Molloy (1955), Malone Dies (1956) and The Unnamable (1958) are examples of fiction reduced to a minimum of action, in limited settings and often focused on a single consciousness. In terms of technical invention and experimentation Beckett is very much an heir to the Modernists and to James Joyce in particular. Then comes Campus Novel with campus as its setting and characters often academics or writers. Malcolm Bradbury’s The History Man (1977) and Cuts (1987) are notable examples.

Another technique that is very recent is the rewriting and re-interpreting the past. Julian Barnes (1946) mockingly rewrites the history of the world in The History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters (1989) and reinterprets the life of the French novelist Flaubert’s Parrot (1984).

Gay writing has also a new mode of writing. Homosexual themes have become more and more evident and explicit in modern novels by writers whether they are gay or not like Isherwood’s (1904-1986) A Single Man (1964) and Allan Hollinghurst’s (1954) The Swimming Pool (1988).

1.3 Experiments and changes in the art-form and treatment of truth and fidelity in fiction:

As discussed above the modern novel has broadened its base and has enlarged its scope of treatment. To many critics of fiction therefore, question of form cannot remain rigid and water-tight. Even, Henry Fielding (1707-54), an author of English novel in the earliest days of the history of English Novels, in his Tom Jones (1749) wrote,

‘As I am, in reality, the founder of a new province of writing, so I am at liberty to make what laws I please there in’.9

E.M. Forster (1879-1970), a British novelist and also critic in his Aspects of the Novel (1927) falling in the same line said:

‘...principles and systems may suit other forms of art, but they cannot be applicable here’ 10
But a reputed America-born novelist and critic, Henry James, whose views are still held in esteem, was very much concerned about the ‘craftsmanship’ of the novel in its artistic form, concerned with objective and impartial representation of the reality of life. In the essay on the ‘Art of Fiction’ published in *Partial Portraits*, he has shown the high ideals of Novel as an art-form. To him it should be judged by artistic cannons. In the construction of the novel there should not be anything superfluous, any phrase, paragraph or sentence that will not contribute to the total effect. His masters were Flaubert (1821-1880) and Turgenev (1818-1883). Henry James criticised Anthony Trollope (1815-1882), one of the famous British novelists of the nineteenth century as he digressed, gave himself away and while dealing with the past he turned to ‘making believe’. To Henry James it was a ‘betrayal of a sacred office’ and a ‘terrible crime’.

There are some other critics also who followed similar lines. Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) was also serious to the art of novel. In the same way Percy Wyndham Lewis, an American-born novelist (1886-?) in his book *The Writer and the Absolute* (1952) wrote:

‘The truth of the great novelist is different from and more personal, certainly than that of the contemporary ‘scientific’ historian. But in any case a meticulous fidelity to life is of its essence’.

But quite opposite to these ideas was the famous and popular author of historical and scientific romances H.G.Wells (1866-1946) who was not consciously an artist and was not much concerned with the form and function of literature. For him novel was only a vehicle for popularising his ideas. H.G.Wells in a letter to Henry James wrote:

I would rather be called a journalist than an artist, that is the essence of it.

Thus there were constant experiments with methods of novels - in structure, in themes etc., elimination of the role of author – narrator, importance to ideology and psychology, exploitation of stream of consciousness, adaptation of the motifs from myths and dreams etc. James Joyce’s (1882-1941) ‘Ulysses’ (1992) was a famous novel in the early part of the twentieth century both from the point of view of new experimentalism and the new sad attitude towards human society. It deals with the
events of a single day in the life of Stephen Daedalus. It is called the ‘interior monologue’ or stream of consciousness novel’ – activities of the human mind taking place below the consciousness. These novelists deal with the personal minds in human structure – not broad comprehensive picture of the society. Virginia Woolf, mostly in the line of James Joyce, Aldous Huxley (1864-1963), D.H.Lawrence are some distinguished novelists in early and mid part of the twentieth century who looked about individual’s sensibilities, intellect and emotions in their novels. These developments, thus, are constantly changing the traditional character and pattern of the novel and also have affected the artistic forms of the novel.

Considering all these ideas and views of different critics it can be held that the novel despite being an art-form and simultaneously being the vehicle for novelist’s expression of personal impression, must remain committed to truth and have fidelity to life. Every age has its own characters, manners, social behavior and patterns, and an attentive writer can observe these facts of history in their own art-forms and express himself according to his impulsive and imaginative capability. But he should not be an infidel to history or at the same time untrue to life. William H. Hudson, has said that Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), the famous author of historical romances or novels in the Romantic period was blamed for his anachronism in depicting the true picture of the Middle Ages. He appeared superficial and not real. Even the time of Shakespeare’s authorship of ‘A Mid Summer Night’s Dream’ appeared to be inconsistent.

But, today, the sense of importance of the historical truth has developed consciously. The scientific spirit has invaded it. The reader’s perception in matters of historical and social consciousness will have to be satisfied by the creative novelists in this line taking, in a way, the responsibilities of a chronicler. Striking a balance between his creativity and the treatment of social history or people in his art-forms he will have to satisfy the claims of truth of history as well as of art.

In the context of these discussions when we look at the work of V.S. Naipaul India: A Million Mutinies Now ‘ and Indira Goswami’s Pages Stained With Blood – both creative narratives in prose and expressions of impressions of the artists drawing materials from the past and contemporary social history- we cannot complain that they have been infidel to history or superficial to life. Rather, both these works of art
are deeply marked by the impassioned urge of sympathy and sense of humanity at the terrible situations of leading events, reflecting the true picture of the social events of contemporary India. Facts of history are not distorted nor shadowed by the author’s imagination.

1.4 Growth of novels and historical novels in Bengal and Assam:

It can be said in this connection that during pre-independent period Bengal and Assam also produced some novelists including Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94), Sarat Chandra Chatterjee (1876-1938) and internationally acclaimed Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and later, Bibhuti Bhusan Banerjee (1899-1950) {who struck a new line outside the influence of Western narrative –forms through legends, folktales and fables} in Bengal and Lakshminath Bezbaroa (1864-1938), Padmanath Gohain Barua (1871-1946), Rajanikanta Bordoloi(1867-1940) and Sarat Chandra Goswami (1887-1944) in Assam in its formative period.

1.4.1 Bengal:

Bhudev Mukherji (1825-94), an eminent collegian was one of the first to write historical fictions in Bengali literature, namely, his *Aitihasik Upanyas* (Historical Tales, 1862) and *Aunguriyavinimay* (Exchange of Rings), the latter being a story of Shivaji’s victory over the Mughal Army modelling somewhat after Scott’s *Ivanhoe* and supplying the essential nucleus of the plot to Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94) for his novel *Durgesh nandini* (1865). Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s well known novel *Anandamath* (1882) amongst many of his good novels is a politico –religious novel without a sufficiently structured plot. His fully recognised historical fiction, however, is *Rajsimha* (1881, enlarged in 1893) but with some historically irrelevant characters and episodes. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was a good storyteller, master of romance and well- known novelist in the early years of Indian novels.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), an all-round creative genius whose all –pervasive influence spread out in the whole of Bengal as well as Indian literature, the like of which was seldom seen in any country read all the novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his early years and with his creativity wrote a good number of novels depicting domestic, juvenile and universal conflicts in them and, with conflicts of the head and the heart. In some of his novels he took plots from history, mainly regional. His *Bau Thakuranir Hat* (1883), *Rajarshi* (The Royal Sage, 1885) contained themes
from histories of Bengal and Tipperah. Tagore’s famous historical novel *Ghore Baire* (1916) which is adapted into movie by Satyajit Ray which was released at Cannes Film Festival in France on 22nd May 1984 was just in the line of *Gora* reflecting or predicting the non-cooperation movement of Indian Independence movement.

His other notable novels portraying deeper analysis of individual human mind, psychosis of the characters which were unique in the then trend of Indian Literature were *Chokher Bali* (Eye – shore, 1902), *Nastanid* (The Lost Nest, 1903), *Naukadubi* (The Boat Wreck, 1905). His *Gora* (1910), an epic novel reflecting the problems that individual society and the state are increasingly facing, is not historical, but the social and political in nature reflects the destiny of the country. This novel has been viewed as a Mahabharata of modern India in view of its wide canvas and comprehensive and masterly treatment. His *Yogayog* (Links and Gaps, 1930) and *Sesher Kavita* (The Concluding Poem, 1929) are also very outstanding novels dealing with modern ideologies and sensibilities. Rabindranath maintained the harmonious and rare combination of qualities of novel as an art-form and as the reflection of social and human problems.

In case of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee’s novels, it was the rare popularity and warm reception among the readers, which marked his distinguishing qualities. He was not historical but dealt with contemporary social realities and sentiments readily acceptable to common readers. His *Devdas* (1901), *Parinita* (The married girl -1914), *Biraj Bau* (1914), *Pally Samaj* (The Village Commune,1916), *Shri Kanta* (in four parts-1917,1918,1927,1933), *Grihadah* (Home Burnt Down,1919) are some of his best and well-known novels.

### 1.4.2 Assam:

In Assam also, it was significant that in the early years of the growth of the proper Assamese novel, historical novels led the trend. Padmanath Gohain Barua’s two novels – *Bhanumati* (1891) and *Lahori* (1892) were based on historical settings – the last years of the Ahom Rule in Assam, depicting however the stories of love instead of political questions,—where heroines served the main role. Lakshminath Bezbaroah, doyen of Assamese literature and the pathfinder of modern Assamese short-stories, wrote only a single novel *Padum Kunwari* written in 1895 and published in 1905 on the basis of a historical episode of rebellion *Dandiya Droh* by
two zamindars in Kamrup against the Ahom Viceroy in Lower Assam. The history is only its setting, but the story is about the tragic love between the two lovers. Gohain Barua’s themes in the depiction of the two novels are, however, interconnected with the historical events and incidents with adherence to facts. The literary appeal is more in Gohain Barua than in Bezbaroah.

Rajanikanta Bordoloi (1867-1940)’s contribution was more remarkable in the evolution and growth of the Assamese novels, more particularly the historical novels. He was greatly influenced by Walter Scott of England and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee of Bengal and was known as “the Scott of Assam”. Besides his first popular social novel Mirijiyari (daughter of a Miri tribal man, 1895) depicting social and cultural picture of a tribal society i.e. the Miris (now called Mising), he turned to writing a good number of historical novels, very much true to history and novel. With great reverence to the past history of Assam and its cultural heritage he wrote Monomati (1900), Rangili(1925), Nirmal Bhakat (1926), Rahdoi Ligiri (1930), Danduadroh (1909), Radha- Rukminir Ran (1925) and Tameswarir Mandir (1926), published in 1936, and became very successful in turning the important events of Assam’s History during the Ahom period into the pages of literature in fictional form. The substance of history was not touched upon, neither there was any probe of social motivation of political incidents in his novels, but history provided him backdrop of his stories, sentiments, emotions, pictures and themes for appraisal in literature. It was noteworthy that in course of his writing and referring to historical matters, he had extensive field visits, enquiries and contacts with the people locating the places of historical incidents to unearth the past truth and social customs associated with his plots. This was exceptional and extra-ordinary in him, more particularly during the period in which he wrote.

The next litterateur to write a historical novel, Panipath was Sarat Chandra Goswami (1887-1944), a short –story writer of repute after Lakshminath Bezbaroa. Sarat Chandra completed writing of this novel, while he was in intermediate class of the college in 1906; and it was published in ‘Banhi’ serially during 1910 and 1911. It was finally published in 1930 only. The novel was based on the first historical war of Panipath between Babar and Ibrahim Lodhi. But mostly the story was imaginary, and full of romance. Following this several other authors took to writing novels with
material from Assam’s history more particularly to arouse patriotism during the struggle for freedom.

1.5 Relation of novel with history and travelogue:

The term ‘history’ is derived from the Greek word ‘historia’ which means enquiry, interview, interrogation of an eyewitness and also the reports of such actions.

History in the narrow sense, is the science of the human past. In wider sense, it studies the development of the earth, of the heavens and of the species, as well as of the civilization.17

It is often used to designate the sum total of human activities in the past. A more common usage looks upon history as the record of the event rather than the events themselves. In latter and in an objective sense, history is

...all we know about everything man has ever done or thought or hoped or felt18

However if subjectively contemplated,

...History may be regarded as a record of all that has occurred within the realm of human consciousness.19

For an ordinary reader, the term ‘history’ means a history of a country of the past, primarily its political history, which deals with the names of kings and monarchs and the details pertaining to ‘who succeeded whom and how at a particular point of time’. In more recent times, it is understood to engage with constitutional changes and the power politics behind them. However, it is difficult to define and describe the nature and subject of history in order to get a comprehensive idea of any particular period of time. It is necessary to take into account religions, inventions, warfare, expansion of trade and other cultural and economical activities.

Juliet Gardiner (1945) British Historian, describes history as an unending dialogue between the present and the past.20 Arthur Marwick (1936-2006) shows three levels of history in his work; first it can connote the entire human past as it actually happened. History, secondly and more usefully, connotes man’s attempt to describe and interpret the past. This is the sense, which comes nearer to the original Greek meaning ‘inquiry’. The third meaning indicates the systematic study of history, history as a scientific discipline.21 T.B.Macaulay, however, treats history differently. He holds that
history falls alternately under the sole and absolutely dominion of both, reason and imagination. It is sometimes fiction and sometimes theory.\textsuperscript{22}

Although the origin of history can be traced back to the oldest documents of ‘Eolithic’ or ‘Paleolithic’ ages, the historiography did not come into existence until the art of writing had been mastered. The earliest historical material or inscriptions were devoted chiefly to glorification of the kings, military victories and monarchical achievements. More often than not, myths, folk-tales and panegyric songs preoccupied the historical narrations of ancient time. A few important happenings were carried as ‘the tales of grandmothers,’ being handed down from generation to generation. Yet other accounts, creatively recorded in more organized way turn out to be epics like those of Greece and India. Interestingly some of the scholars have argued that the \textit{Iliad} and the \textit{Odyssey} are products of a non-literate culture, which were transcribed when the Greeks adapted a writing system.\textsuperscript{23} Further still, many scholars contented that ‘Homer’ was, in fact, two poets may be more, who composed the epics over a space of time.\textsuperscript{24} Putting aside the controversy regarding Homer, it is pertinent to note that the two epics, offer an impressive account of the events, which are important from the historic point of view of their time, and are useful sources of history as any of their Indian counterparts like the \textit{Ramayana} and the \textit{Mahabharata} and the \textit{Puranas}.

The earliest and the simplest form of a more authentical kind of historical account consists of dynastic lists, which are found at ancient Sumer and Egypt. After that, the first objective account of history is of the Persian War, in fifth century B.C. by Herodotus. Then onward history was divorced from folk tales and myth as the latter were considered to be opposite to ‘truth’ and ‘fact.’ The changed concept of history proposed that history is based on the fact, is linear and objective and deals with materials very different from fiction. However, the idea of historical progress is one of the contributions of the \textit{Bible}. The \textit{Bible} is not only the basis of the Western literature and culture; it has also influenced the concept of human history.\textsuperscript{25} To the Greeks, the Romans, and the Chinese, history was mainly a series of related developments containing practical and moral lessons for later ages. But the \textit{Bible} is unique in its depiction of history as the handwriting of God and in its conviction that the events of history express a divine plan for the world, with a definite beginning,
fall as a record of human striving towards a goal of divinely ordained perfection underlines the modern belief in material progress. However, the religious view gradually gave way to the secular, social and political influences during the later centuries.

At the other end of the spectrum, Aristotle is one of the earliest thinkers to mark distinction between history and imaginative literature. He declares in *Poetics*:

> The poet’s job is saying not what did happen but sort of thing that would happen, ...
> The difference between the historian and the poet is not merely that one writes verse and other prose the essential difference is that the one tells us what happened and the other the sort of thing that would happen.  

What is applicable to poetry can be applied to fiction as well, because for the Greeks poetry included everything that was imaginative literature. In this context, while history narrates the actual event, fiction tends to make general statement and deals with probability or possibility of certain character to behave in a particular way.

Hayden White (1928), American historian and theorist of meta-history, countering this view, argues:

> It was possible to believe that whereas writers of fiction invented everything in their narratives-characters, events, plots, motifs, themes, atmosphere and so on – historian invented nothing but certain rhetorical flourishes.

It implies that a writer does not necessarily cling to the concrete reality; he can go beyond that and create his own world in order to penetrate through the different plains of socio-political development of the concerned period. Even Lionel Trilling, American critic born in New York (1905-75) once claimed that realism is the basic drive behind all fictional creation, that lives of individuals in society have provided the stuff out of which novels have always been made. New Historicism refers to the works of critics who discuss literary works in terms of their historical contexts. It states that literary texts are cultural artefacts that can tell us something about the interplay of discourses, the web of social meanings, operating in the time and place in which the text was written. For new historicism, literary text and the historical situation from which it emerged are equally important because text (the literary work) and context (the historical conditions that produced it) are mutually constitutive, they
create each other. Like dynamic interplay between individual identity and society, literary texts shape and are shaped by their historical contexts. According to the new historicist, historians live in a particular time and place, and their views of both current and past events are influenced in innumerable conscious and unconscious ways by their own experience within their own culture. Historians may believe, they’re being objective, but their own views of what is wrong and what is right, what is civilized and uncivilized, what is important and unimportant, and the like, will strongly influence the ways in which they interpret events. For new historicist, history cannot be understood simply as a linear progression of events. The new historicists challenge the traditional concept of history as casual, closed and linear. Theorists like Michel Foucault (1926-84) and Hayden White opine that since history, when made up by the historian, is necessarily a political act, the empirical and objective narration of historical material should be discarded, as real life can never be truthfully represented.

Historians often miss the circumstances that influence the morals and manners of people, the transition of communities and silent revolutions, as they are not acquired by armies or enacted by governments. The literary writers, on the other hand, try to find out such gaps and fissures in history and fill these gaps with lively events, engulfed by literary imaginations. Obviously, history has always been his or her tool. What is narrated depends on ‘who’ narrates and ‘why’. The revolt of 1857, for instance, can be an illustration in sight. Will Durant, in this context observes,

This is what the English call the Sepoy Mutiny, and what the Hindus call the War of Independence.

But a historical novelist will try to discern the truth of facts to combine them in the imaginative structure of his fictional narrative. Some of the authors like James White (1928-1999), Jane Porter (1776-1850) and Joseph Strutt (1749-1802) have showed a great improvement over the imaginative treatment of history, though none of them has blended history and romance as competently as Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). Scott’s sense of history was first felt in Waverly in 1814. Later on, he established himself as a historical fiction writer with the publication of Ivanhoe. By turn of the century, the world literature was enriched by two classic historical novels, Tolstoy’s War and Peace (1869) and Pasternak’s Dr. Zivago (1957). The former
presents a complete tableau of Russian society during the wars from 1805 to 1815. The canvas of the novel covers the area from salons of St. Petersburg to the camps of war – from Moscow to the moffusils. The interminable series of incidents, portraits and reflections unfold the true picture of contemporary Russia.

Since then, Charles Dickens (1812-1870), Erich Maria Remarque (1898-1970), Ernest Hemmingway (1898-1961), William Faulkner (1897-1962), John Dos Passos (1896-1970), Robert Graves (1715-1804) and Nathaniel Hawthrone (1804-64) among the others have used history as source material in their novels in as varied ways as possible.

Literature in general and fiction in particular, measured by this yardstick, is not history but his story. This perception makes literature in any form more specifically novel, valuable as social document. So novel is a social document written with the writer’s imaginative approach towards the world around him and in course of time the novelist works like a historian in documenting the events and developments taking place in the society. The novel presents that segment of life and society, in more or less approximate terms, which has been seen and experienced by actual men and women of a particular period. The concept of mirroring or reflecting the society at large is more significant in the case of the novel than in poetry or drama.

Aleksandra Isayevich Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008) published a two-volume work on the history of Russian-Jewish relations Two Hundred Years Together (2001, 2002). This book stirred controversy and caused Solzhenitsyn to be accused of anti-Semitism. Again The_Gulag_Archipelago (three volumes) (1973–1978) is not a memoir, but a history of the entire process of developing and administering a police-state in the Soviet Union. August1914 (1971) is a historical novel about the beginning of a history of the birth of the USSR. The novel centers on the disastrous loss in the Battle of Tannenberg in August 1914, and the ineptitude of the military leadership.

In Hindi Literature, Bhagwati Charan Verma (1903-1981) the recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award in 1961 for his epic five-part novel, Bhootha Bisre Chitre (1959) was one of the leading writers. He wrote many novels, but his magnum opus was Chitralekha (1934). In the field of Hindi novel, after Premchand, (1880-1936) it is for the first time that we see such a comprehensive and artistic document of social
and political history depicting chronological development and changes in values of the first phase of the modern Indian society. It narrates virtually the changes that occur in relations among the persons of four generations of a family and depicts the disintegration of the joint family -system, state of the middle class, dominance of feudalism and capitalism and tension and struggle of generations breaking, of conventions, consciousness of contact with new ideas, progress and capacity for radical thinking during the national movement for freedom.

Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight Children* (1981) is primarily concerned with man’s quest for his identity in relation to his past. As Rushdie peers through the perforated sheet of memory to the whirling residues of the distant heritage and to the perturbing present, he envisages a possibility of a grand – scale story. Rushdie’s own version of facts by which he rejects historiographer’s narration of history, has divulged some of the events such as the gradual deterioration in relationship with Pakistan and the subsequent wars, the Chinese invasion at Thag La ridge and the unsavoury excesses during the emergency which would have remained obscure otherwise. It is a story, not only of its protagonist but of a country also, struggling to be re-born and history yearning to be asserted. In this sense, the novel becomes more than the history of the history books. His *Shame* (1983) deals with the political, cultural and social issues of the country rather than the family feuds. Though a shameless peripheral protagonist and the destinies of the two interrelated families occupy the reader’s mind most of the time, yet the work is basically, a story of political intrigue of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Ziaul Haq, garbed in fictional identities. The author, disturbed by unfulfilled promises, immaterialized dreams and the course taken by history, repeatedly points towards the ‘other possibilities’. He is inclined to discuss what should have happened rather than what has really occurred. There is a collision of national and domestic history, incorporating the issues of power play, violence, migration and the status of the women within its folds; drawing parallels between the reality and fiction, picking up the gaps left by the historians and filling them with versions of history.

Sashi Tharoor, (1956) like Salman Rushdie (1947), also chose to narrate Indian history of the 20th century in fictional terms but with the difference that his *The Great Indian Novel* (1989) is larger in its perspective as it covers post-
independent Indian history as a student. He employed the mythical / historical prop of the *Mahabharata* to narrate the history of India by rejecting its colonial and post colonial versions.

As works reveal, Tharoor and Rushdie are constantly haunted and pre-occupied with agonizing experiences in the post independent India, particularly the Emergency, which as they perceived it, intimidated democracy in our country. They have condemned the Emergency in their own way. If Rushdie showed how an individual can be handcuffed or nailed down to history, Tharoor taking a recourse to the remotest past, yokes myth to history in order to narrate his story, and strives to retell the political history of 20th century India through a fictional recasting of events, episodes and characters from the *Mahabharata*. In a way, the story is a chronicle of modern India, for it re-narrates its own modified versions of some of the noted historical events like the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, India’s independence, the Bangladesh war, and declaration of the Emergency. The characters of prominent Indian leaders are shown in new action as the dramatis personae of the *Mahabharata*.

Rohinton Misty (1952), like his predecessors, aimed at examining historical events and the way they influenced individuals and families, communities and the country in the post – independent period. He narrates the history of his community and of his country as well in fictional terms. Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy* (1993), basically, deals with some of the pertinent issues like politics, secularism, changing traditional values and crisis in the family bonds and marriage -systems during the fifties. He appropriates historical characters in their fictionalizing of historical events. With the creation of individual characters imaginary and real – the author investigates the social being of man and the role of certain section in history, their conflicts, clashes and cleavages.

The historian and the novelist probe into the past to unearth its truths. Their treatment might differ in tone and technique, as the historian would follow the chronology of the events while the novelist would re-think, analyse and reinterpret the past from different perspectives, depending on the inclusions and exclusions of the facts and events. However, a novelist is at a liberty to make changes in the received and perceived data of history. He can transcend history in more than one ways, can compress many a detail in his fictive framework. For instance, in *A Suitable
Boy history of almost half a century is condensed within a span of a decade. The demolition of Babri Mosque an event of the nineties and the incident of rampage of several hundred people in one of Kumbh Melas during eighties are shifted back to the time frame of fifties by the author. Yet the depictions and their impact on the people donot become less effective and the changes made in the names and locations in both the cases donot make them less real and reliable.

While dealing with the historical setting, using history as the source – material for the plot, time and character or social situations of the time in the prose –narrative, fiction or travelogue, it should not lose sight of the sense of importance of truth of history – the life, society or the spirit of history. The historical novel or travelogue is also a house of facts about people, their behaviour, environment, passion etc though these are reflected partially or episodically in them.

Santha Rama Ram (1923-2009) has a number of travel books to her credit – Home to India (1945), East of Home (1950), My Russian Journey (1959) and Gifts of Passage (1961). But these travel books can also be said to be novels in the present context. Incidentally she has made a successful dramatic version of Forster’s A Passage to India in 1960.

V. S. Naipaul’s India: A Million Mutinies Now is basically a travelogue but with novelistic techniques. In this modern context it is a novel. According to many critics of travel writing, writers use travelogue as a synonym for travel writing. So dictionary meaning of the travelogue is that it is an account of travel – a narration of things experienced or observed in travelling; a lecture or discourse on travel usually illustrated pictorially. V.S. Naipaul himself writes about certain travel books –

No travel book could be only about roads and the hotels. Such a book can only be written about certain countries in Africa.31

But today it has ceased to be completely separated as a genre from novel – narrative or short story. Right from the renaissance period travel- writing had been in vogue. Richard Hakluyt,(1552-1616) who sooner or later may be recognised as the father of travelogues, collected the testimonies and celebrated the exploits of contemporary sailors, traders, adventures and explorers in Principal navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nations (1589-1600).
A little later came the tide of diary writing. It too was not exactly non-fiction in its complete projection. (same is discussed in the next paragraph). The diary served as an indispensable historical resource with the vivid accounts of courts and parliamentary intrigues and great misfortunes viz, the plague of 1665, the great fire of London 1666 etc. Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn will always be standing at the pathfinders of this kind of writing. Shakuntala Shri Nagesh published a book in 1955, *The Little Black Box* where the story is told in the form of a diary by the narrator – heroine, Sarla. It is a social family novel of distress and morbidity. But the problem with diarists is that they can’t remain disinterested and allow much of their personal whims and fascinations to be adjusted in their writings. Moreover diaries can record only a particular span of time in the history of a country or person whereas nonfiction may render the impact of total history on the present of a particular phenomenon or situation.

Viewing under this point of context, Indira Goswami’s *Pages Stained with Blood* initially in a diary of impressions of the fall out of contemporary historical events is developed into a complete novel. D.S. Satyanath, professor of Delhi University in Modern Indian Languages, on reading *Pages Stained With Blood* observed referring to the blurb on the back cover of the book that the author might have planned her work initially to be diary (‘just pages from a diary’), but the actual title of the narrative both in Assamese and in English translation does not go quite well with the theme of a diary. The author repeatedly goes back to history of Delhi, its places, events and people connecting the past and present on the one hand and multiple narrative on the other in intricate manner. Further he says, it has been claimed to be a novel. However it also looks autobiographical, not only because the author identifies herself as the narrator, but also because two of her colleagues, Jetley Sahib and Vinodabai, are referred by their names in the novel.32 This brings to the issue of relationship between autobiography and novel. To Satyanath, the shift that transforms the narrator’s desire of writing a romantic historical fiction into a contemporary account of violence and bloodshed is symptomatic of an ambiguity inherent in the genre to which it could be assigned. This has made the Pages Stained with Blood a remarkable narrative of pain and suffering. He holds that the text with its ambiguity and challenges contains the most fascinating aspects of the narrative.32
Our discussion would be incomplete without mentioning about another variant of novel i.e. Memoir. Memory public or personal always being a part of culture and society also plays a role in the construction of history. Memoir, a story, a life and autobiography of an individual is also the story of a life. A memoir is more intimate and it focuses on emotion and perspective. Therefore a memoir is therefore a historical account or biography written from personal knowledge or special sources by the writer. The first recorded instance of memoir came in 1798 from the German philosopher Friedrich Schlegel.

Even one variant of the historical novel has been known as documentary fiction which incorporates into it not only historical characters and events but also contemporary journalistic reports as in John Doss Passos USA (1938), E. L. Doctorrow Ragtime (1975) and Billy Bathgate (1989).

The great Russian writer Boris Pasternak (1890-1960) has labelled his coverage of life in the United States, OK (1933), his last published work. Here, there is no protagonist but himself and the people and the institutions of the country which he visited. There is also another type of novel which using novelistic techniques gives a rendering of recent characters and happenings, and is based not only on historical records but often on personal interviews with the chief agents. This may be known as non-fictional novel. Trueman Capote’s (1924-1984), In Cold Blood (1966), Norman Mailer’s (1923-2007) The Executioner’s Song (1979) are instances of this type. Both these books offer a detailed rendering of the life, personality and actions of murderers, based on series of prison-interviews with the protagonists themselves. In fact V.S. Naipaul’s few works like India: A Million Mutinies Now, An Area of Darkness (1964) and India : A Wounded Civilization (1977) can be categorised into non-fictional in terms of content but novel like in presentation skill,

So in this context the novels of V.S. Naipaul’s India A Million Mutinies Now – a novel like travelogue and Dr. Indira Goswami’s (Mamoni Raisom Goswami) Pages Stained with Blood novel like diary depict history of two different periods in two different ways. These two major writers coming from two different social and cultural environments have portrayed the society around them in general, and the Sikh history of a very crucial time in particular. These two works are the results of fiery imagination which tend to be living testimonies of two historical periods.
Though the relation of novel and history may sound paradoxical on the surface, yet the truths that all these works contain in them are traces of history. The study reveals that fiction grows out of the sensibility of its creator, which consciously or unconsciously offers a rich and complex account of the society they live in. These authors bring in the elusive complexities of their time, involute issues of class, race and gender, and appropriate and transform them within a matrix of his/her story. History, to many of them, is like a mirror house, reflecting different images. If these images differ, it is because of the mirror and the angle at which it is held by the concerned novelist in the given work and in a given situation. In other words, it is possible to have several images of same events in accordance with the standpoint of the beholder. In this sense, though their fictional works cannot replace history they complement each other and thereby help us in understanding the past.
References


16. Ibid. p. 160-161


19. Ibid, p-19


24. Ibid, p. 7

25. Ibid, p. 152-53


