

Elements of Literature and Creative Communication
Prof. H S Komalesha
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur

Lecture - 31
Fiction

Hi, we are in the 7th week of our course Elements of Literature and Creative Communication. I would just like to know so far how have you been enjoying this course, if you have any concerns I want you to take a deep pause and then reflect on some of the learning objectives and see how far they have met, how far we have met, what kind of progress we have made. And then if you still have any questions or concerns, or even if you wish to convey a note of appreciation please use the forum that we have for this course and let us know. So, we are with this week we are beginning with Fiction. For the last couple of weeks, we have devoted ourselves to discussing poetry in detail, beginning with the origins of poetry. We discussed various poetic devices and the techniques that poets use in their craft. And we learned figures of speech and other devices. And then we discussed the origins of poetry across the globe, and then we discussed Indian English poetry, we devoted an entire week to discussing Indian English poetry. Then we devoted one more week to discussing contemporary world poetry. So, the purpose of these classes as you have already noted is to give you a firsthand account of poetry, all right. So, just let us know, let us know how you have enjoyed it because from this week onwards we are entering a different world. Because if the world of poetry gives you some experience then the world of fiction gives you an altogether different experience because it is going to be all the deeper and wider. It is like watching a movie on a very big screen. So, we are entering into a different world, the world of fiction. The tagline says 'The truth inside the lie', in fact, that is how fiction is often described. When we say fiction broadly speaking we deal with novels and short stories.

We are going to discuss what exactly we mean by fiction in a short while. But remember in one of the very beginning classes we discussed different forms of literature and fiction is another form of literature. If poetry is one, fiction is another form. So, it is altogether different in its constitution, in the way it imparts experiences, and in its outlook towards life, everything in fiction is radically different from poetry that we have read. But this would be equally challenging -like poetry, fiction is equally challenging. More than poetry, of course, fiction is the most preferred genre of literature. Even commercially speaking the number of copies sold let us say for every single book of poetry, approximately 6 to 8 books of novels

are sold. So, that is the ratio. So, fiction is one of the most preferred genres of literature for various reasons. We will discuss in a very short while why is this, what is the reason behind this kind of popularity for this fiction, why is it that many people go to fiction. Is it because it is like of course, many described fiction as reading a movie. It is like holding an entire movie in your pocket or in your hand and then start reading it whenever you want it, like opening an entire universe because each novel contains within its fold, the universe you just have to open it and begin reading it. So, and in terms of language is it a little more simple, simpler compared to poetry why is it that novel as a genre or as an element of literature why is it preferred these are some questions we are going to discuss in the course of our class, yeah.

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WHAT DO WE CALL A FICTION?
Understanding the Genre

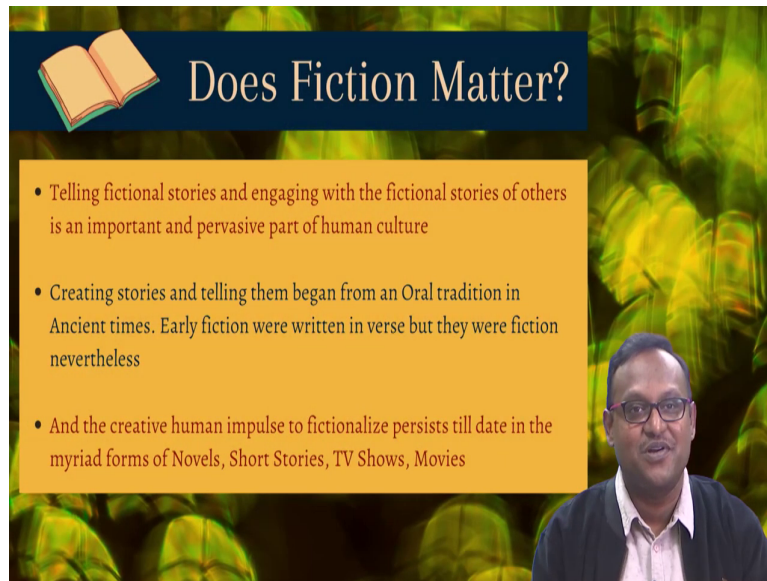
These features are, however, not exclusive. There are many exceptions and transgressions that we are going to discuss!

- Fiction is any creative work, chiefly any narrative work, portraying people, events, or places in imaginary ways
- Fiction is not strictly based on History, or Fact! Hence, Fact vs Fiction is a commonly used phrase
- A work of Fiction implies the construction of an imaginary world, which is based in a real setting with believable characters.

Let us take a quick look at the question- What is fiction? Fiction is basically any creative work, a narrative work because it involves narrating. What do you narrate? I am sure all of you have read at least a novel or to, right, whatever language it may be written in you may have written you may have read this novel in your own languages, first languages, mother tongues or in English or in any other language just think of any novel, what does it do? It is a creative work. And it narrates a story, so there is an element of narration. There is an there is a story in that every novel will invariably have a story, more than one story in many cases. And how does that happen? there are a lot of characters. In fact, characters are equivalents of people that you and I see in the real world, right. So, in the nation of novels, people are called characters. What we call citizens here in our regular life, in the republic of novels they can be called characters. And like we live in a place characters too will have to live in a place, so,

therefore, you have settings that are different. I am talking of different elements that constitute a novel. Of course, in order to understand a novel we need to know what is inside that, alright. So, there are places, there are sometimes real places, there are imaginary places, there are characters, and something happens, there is an event or two or many events that take place, and there is a story that runs through all these characters. So, in general, this is a kind of broad picture when we say novel or fiction that comes before our eyes. We need to, before we delve deep into fiction, we need to know one thing, right, fiction is not history. Well, there are certain novels, there are certain fictional creations based on history, but you cannot replace fiction with history or history with fiction. Even when a novel is based on certain historical factors, it is not strictly, does not strictly adhere to facts that is the reason why sometimes you hear people saying fact vis-a-vis fiction, fact versus fiction that is a common phrase we use, right. So, if facts drive history, the element of fiction drives the novel. So, that is something that you have to keep in mind. So, a work of fiction generally speaking implies the construction of an imaginary world that may be based on a real setting with a believable set of characters. In other words, when a novelist creates a world novel, so it is like a parallel world and whoever he or she creates in them we have to treat those characters as real, right. Of course, that is the power of fiction because that is why we say there is the truth inside fiction. Fiction also has another meaning by now you must have understood that fiction also has the meaning of a lie. Fiction also means it is not a fact; fiction means something which is concocted, something which is concocted. But on a deeper level even within the confines of this concocted world is truth, truth in a different sense. So, there is an imaginary character that is not true, there is an imaginary place that is not true, there is an imaginary action that is not true, there is an imaginary plot that is not true, and there is an imaginary story that is not true; but what it says in this series of not true is the truth. What a paradox, right? What a paradox. You have a series of lies here and all these series of lies point towards one vortex, one central thing that is true. What is this truth? the truth about life, the truth about life, that is the biggest paradox that we can think of how through the series of lies a novel makes you touch that flame of truth, that is the beauty of the novel. Of course, we are going to discuss all these features, characters, and all these things in subsequent classes.

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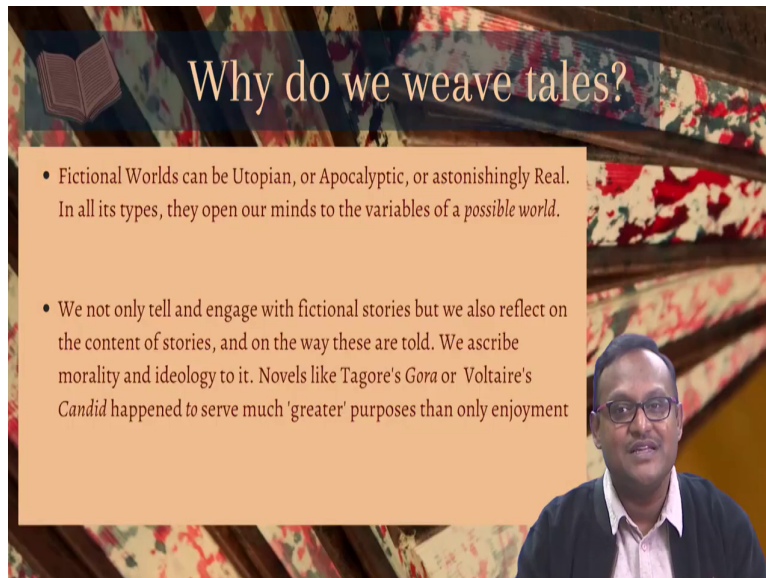
Does Fiction Matter?

- Telling fictional stories and engaging with the fictional stories of others is an important and pervasive part of human culture
- Creating stories and telling them began from an Oral tradition in Ancient times. Early fiction were written in verse but they were fiction nevertheless
- And the creative human impulse to fictionalize persists till date in the myriad forms of Novels, Short Stories, TV Shows, Movies

So, now we can ask a question here - is fiction relevant even to this even to this day? Of course, fiction is always relevant for various reasons. In one of the earlier classes, you can recall I had used the terms *homo fabulan* and *homo narrans*, to explain how homo sapiens turned everything they touch into stories and myths. If you recall in the introductory video that many of you may have watched, you have seen how in that poem the mythic people say - whatever we touch we turn everything into tales and songs. Hold our hands we turn you into tales and songs, right. Hold our hands we turn you into tales and song. What do we mean by that? The 'we' here refers to this course refers to elements of literature. So, if you hold the hands of literature, literature has the ability to transform us into a part of a tale or it converts us also into a song, into a beautiful story that was the meaning. So, that is always relevant because this element of narrativizing is an integral component of the human gene, right. So, it is a part of our genes. It is there in our entire makeup, in our genetic makeup. Therefore as long as human beings exist, novels exist, and fiction exists, in some way or the other, in some form or the other, right. So, whether it is novels, short stories, TV shows, movies that you keep watching, reality shows whatever you do, there is an element of the story there, there is an element of the story that is why we are hooked on that. And this obsession with stories is not of recent origin you remember, right. We discussed the earliest available text to something like 2400 or 2500 BC. So, even before that human beings are known to share their experiences using concocted stories. Of course, earlier poetry did the job of the story as well.

Poetry was used also to convey a story, but, so that is why you can say that novel has its origin in the oral tradition of literature.

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Why do we weave tales?

- Fictional Worlds can be Utopian, or Apocalyptic, or astonishingly Real. In all its types, they open our minds to the variables of a *possible world*.
- We not only tell and engage with fictional stories but we also reflect on the content of stories, and on the way these are told. We ascribe morality and ideology to it. Novels like Tagore's *Gora* or Voltaire's *Candid* happened to serve much 'greater' purposes than only enjoyment

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But later, of course, as technology developed and advanced especially with the advent of the printing press and industrialization, the novel as a distinct form of literature emerged in a substantial way, in a substantial way that is why in we can see that novel is coterminous with very many things.

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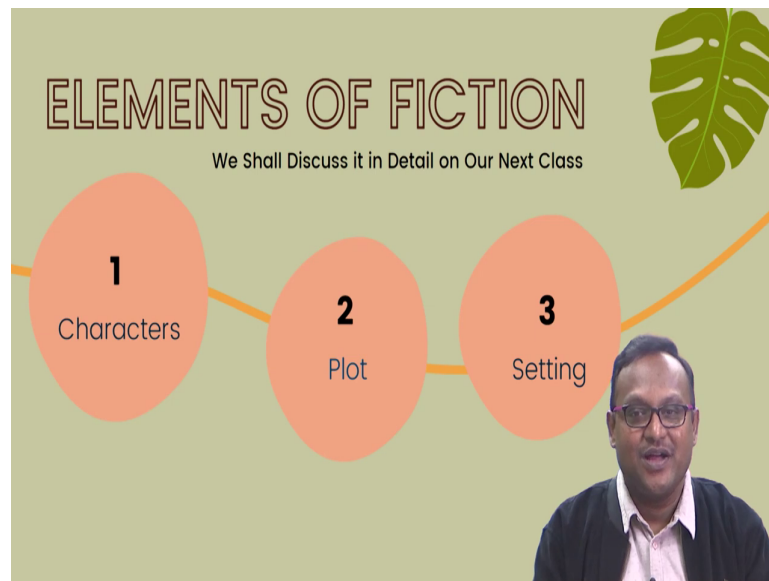
"...in reading a piece of fiction we subscribe a silent agreement with its author, who pretends that something is true and asks us to pretend to take it seriously. Secondly, we know that every fiction designs a possible world and all our judgements of truth and falsehood must concern that possible world."

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“.....in reading a piece of fiction we subscribe to a silent agreement with its author.”

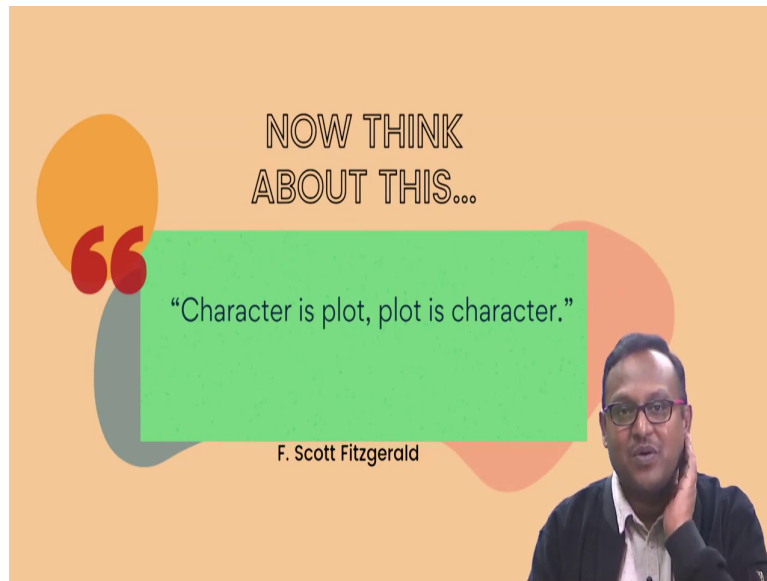
Of course, this is Terry Eagleton, an excellent and remarkable theorist who makes this comment on the ability of the novel to create a parallel universe and how it creates a make-believe world for us, right. That is the reason why even though we know the novel we are reading is a fictional one, it is a fictitious entity. Most of the time we start crying when we are reading a novel or we start smiling, we start laughing. We feel happy when the character feels happy. Why does that take place? Because the novel that you hold in your hands has an innate ability to transport you into its own world. You just have to hold the novel in your hands, you also become a character there. You become a spectator and you start watching what happens to all those characters. So, you become the great spectator, watching everything that happens in that universe first-hand, that is the reason why you get affected so much when you read a novel. This is what the critic Terry Eagleton remarks, “In reading a piece of fiction we subscribe to a silent agreement with its author, who pretends that something is true and asks us to pretend to take it seriously.” And we do that, right. And secondly, we know that every fiction designs a possible world, even a universe and all our judgments of truth and falsehood must concern that possible world alone. So, we become an integral part of the world and that is the reason why of course, we are attached to that, yeah. Why do we weave tales? Again I said that it is a part of our gene, it is in our genetic makeup, that is why whether formally or informally we go on concocting. That is why when you say that when you tell a lie, it is again you are spinning a beautiful narrative around, you are just giving a beautiful spin to it. Therefore, you can say that origin of the novel may be in the ordinary lies that you and I invent. Because lying is not easy, right you will have to have a solid background, you have to arrange things to suit your lie. So, therefore, every lie that you and I utter is a micro novel. Of course, we should not end there we should stretch it and create a novel. Of course, I am saying it in a lighter vein, yeah. We not only tell and engage with fictional stories, but we also reflect on the content of the story. That is the reason why I said it is like make-believe. And we ascribe certain morality to it, certain ethical values to it, and even ideologies to it, and most of the time these novels reflect the aspirations of an entire race. They reflect our vision, the vision of contemporary society that is why reading novel becomes an important thing because it has an extraordinary ability to reflect our society. But if it were just to reflect our society we do not need to read it, more than that to offer a ray of light, to guide us, to guide us towards the higher principles that humanity always aspires to. So, that is the reason why you and I need novels.

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We have been discussing why we read novels and what happens when we read novels, but now is the time for us to go a little deeper into this world. What do I mean by what constitutes this world of the novel? What constitutes this world of fiction? In other words, what are those elements of fiction? Of course, remember, I am just introducing you to these concepts now and later we are going to, in our next class, we are going to pick up various elements of fiction in a detailed manner. But of course, let us begin with characters. Of course, I said characters are equivalents of analogous to people that you and I see in our real-life including you and me, right. So, characters are a replica of us. So, next is the plot. What is the plot? Of course, I said every novel has to have a story, right. A story happens in a particular way. In fact, it happens in a time. Let us say for instance a plot is a combination of a story plus a causal element to that. And again in subsequent classes, we are going to distinguish that. But you can say that plot is the way in which a story unfolds therefore, you can also include the story as a part of the plot. And the way in which it unfolds the cause and effect factors added to that story element becomes plot in a way, ok. Then comes a setting, the setting is like the background the place in which we live and what happens in the time in which we live is called the setting in the novel. the place in which the entire world unfolds, the time in which it happens the background, the socio-cultural backgrounds, the political background, and the entire flora and fauna that are described there that constitutes the setting in the novel, yeah.

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Here is before we move ahead Scott Fitzgerald's extraordinary line,

"Character is plot, plot is character".

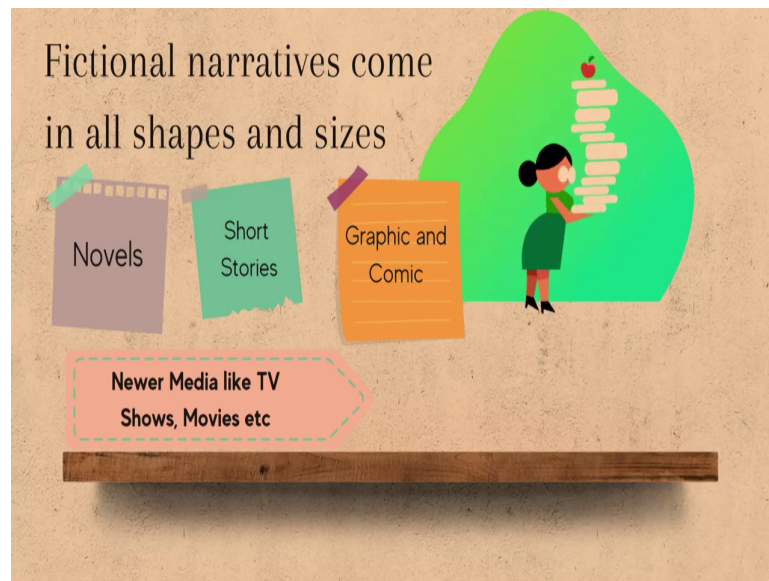
Just think about it. In fact, I am just trying to let, I am trying to sow seed here and we are going to pick it up for discussion in subsequent classes. Just come to think of this particular thing, "character is plot, plot is character" because in the previous slide we discussed character as separate from the plot and here Scott Fitzgerald a well-known writer himself says that character is plot and plot is character. In what sense does he say that please think of it. We will take it up for discussion in the next class.

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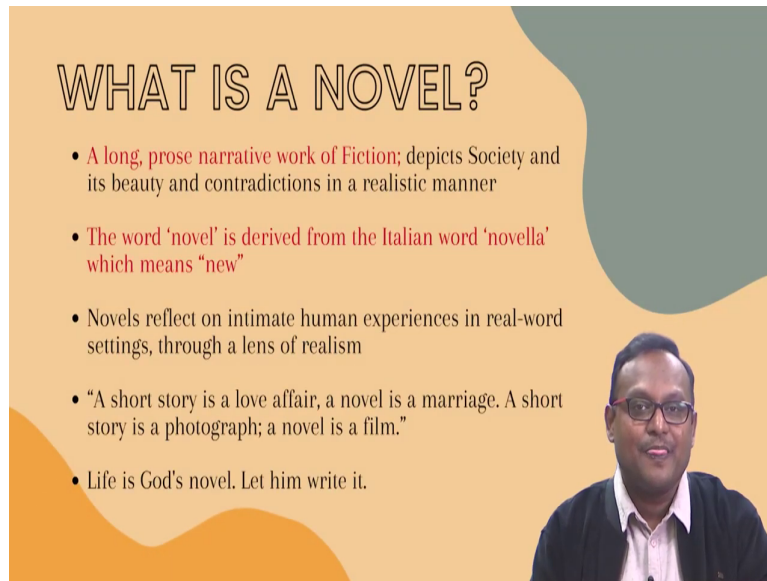
Continuing our discussion of the elements of fiction, we have a point of view. point of view is when there are various characters in the novel, each of the characters will have his or her own perspective, right. The characters have their own perspective, their own point of view. So, how is the novel presented becomes important, is it who is narrating, is the protagonist of the novel narrating it? Is then it becomes the first-person narration, of course, the narrative style also comes along with that. Then accordingly you have narrative style - who is narrating it, what kind of narrative style is it, is it the first-person narration when the protagonist speaks it becomes first person, is it the other person. There is also something called omniscient narrative. Sometimes the writer starts describing the characters are he, she, it and other things, right. So, that is when it becomes an omniscient narrative. So, what kind of narration is it; you have to identify. So, these are various things that are a part of fiction. And then there is conflict, conflict is what propels the entire action of the novel conflict, because obviously, when there are characters with different perspectives it is going to lead to some kind of a conflict. So, does the novel resolve that conflict and move ahead or does the conflict itself define the entire novel that depends on the discretion of the novelist? But otherwise, conflict becomes a very important thing. Anything that has action, plot, and characters will have conflict and an entire novel deals with that conflict in its own way. So, these are generally speaking various elements of fiction. We are going to pick all of them up and maybe some more in our subsequent classes, yeah.

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Now, you can ask what are the types of fiction. Well, of course, fiction comes in various shapes and sizes, that now. You have novels, short stories, graphics, and science fiction, all of them come under fiction. Fiction is a very vast genre of literature that you will realize, as we go ahead you will realize how vast and big the genre is. And you can even call the newer media like TV shows, movies and this web series all of them are part of fiction you can say that. Novels and short stories, web series, TV shows, movies, graphics comics of them are part of fiction. But generally, when we say fiction we refer to novels and short stories, but that does not preclude other types that we have just now listed, yeah.

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WHAT IS A NOVEL?

- A long, prose narrative work of Fiction; depicts Society and its beauty and contradictions in a realistic manner
- The word 'novel' is derived from the Italian word 'novella' which means "new"
- Novels reflect on intimate human experiences in real-world settings, through a lens of realism
- "A short story is a love affair, a novel is a marriage. A short story is a photograph; a novel is a film."
- Life is God's novel. Let him write it.




Now, continuing our discussion on the philosophical debate of the novel, the novel itself like fiction has another meaning, the novel also has another meaning to it. In fact, in Italian it has an Italian root, novel means something 'new', that is why in the dictionary when you say novel it means also new. So, the very genre of the novel is also new. Compared to other forms of literature like you have read epic, you have read sonnets, you have read poetry, you will be reading the drama in subsequent classes. compared to all these things novel is of recent origin. Therefore, it is as well symptomatic of the other meaning. it is also when you say novel the pun is intended, it is also new as a form of literature that is also new.

And generally speaking, what happens in novels reflects on intimate human experiences in real-world settings through a lens of realism, but these days you also have something called magic realism. When you read a work of works of Marquez where magic becomes a part of that world. Or even when you read novels or watch the Harry Potter series what happens magic is a part of that. So, that is called magic realism. Now, think of it - "life is God's novel, let him write it." This is an extraordinary statement and lets us see how much of it is reflective of the genre that we are talking about what do we mean by that; does this statement help us in realizing the potential of the novel in some way. And another writer very cleverly compares a short story with a novel and says, "a short story is a love affair, a novel is a marriage"; or "a short story is a photograph whereas, a novel is a film." So, this is talking about not just the length, not just the length, of course; constitutionally speaking, structurally speaking, aesthetically speaking they are altogether different.

Of course, a short story may be considered as a miniature version of a novel whereas, a novel in its depth scope and magnitude is definitely far bigger than a short story, ok.

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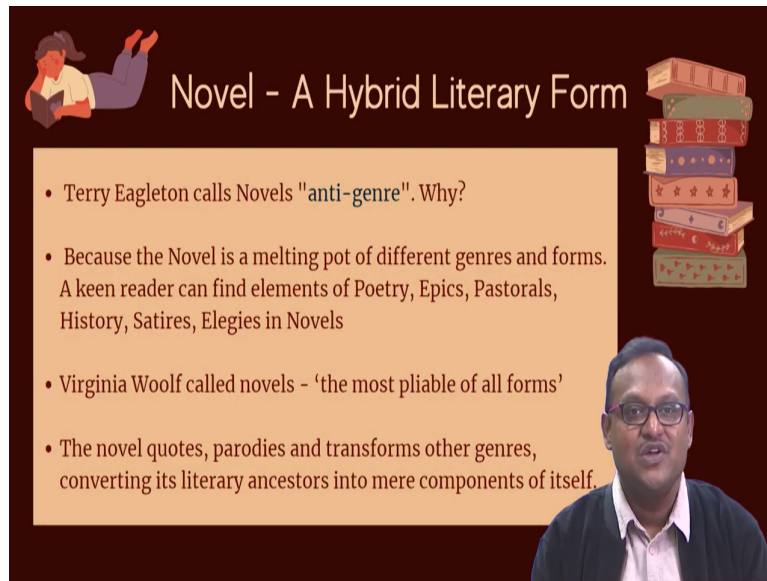
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RISE OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

- The Rise of the Novel is analogous to the rise of the "Reading Public"
- A popular genre, the one mainstream literary mode which speaks the language of the people - inextricably linked to the rise of a middle class and affordable print culture
- The novel was born at the same time as modern science, and shares its sober, secular, hard-headed, investigative spirit, along with its suspicion of authority.

I said that the rise of the novel, the reason behind the popularity of novel is because it is coterminous with modern civilization or industrial civilization. With the advent of industrial civilization, our modern civilization is co-terminus with the birth of the novel. That is the reason why it has remained a kind of a popular genre. And a mainstream literary medium. And interestingly speaking with the rise of industrialization there is a steady rise, there is a steady rise in the middle class as well therefore, you can as well say that novel is coterminous with the middle class. It is born along with the rise of the middle class. So, these are some things that we have to keep in mind. And along with all these things well it is also coterminous with the advent of modern science. Remember the late 16th century or especially the beginning of the 17th century onwards how science begins playing an important role in defining our civilization, in defining our way of life, and later that led to industrialization. So, therefore, novels can be linked to these sociological factors of our race, our civilization, and these sociological factors as well. So, we have to keep all these things in mind. So, yeah, the novel rose during the high term of British imperialism. Of course, with imperialism, with colonization that the British brought, they also sowed the seeds of the novel all over the colonies and as a result of that sometime towards the middle of the 18th century and towards the end of the 18th-19th century, you find novel in a full-fledged way in almost all the colonies. So, these are a couple of things that you have to keep in mind.

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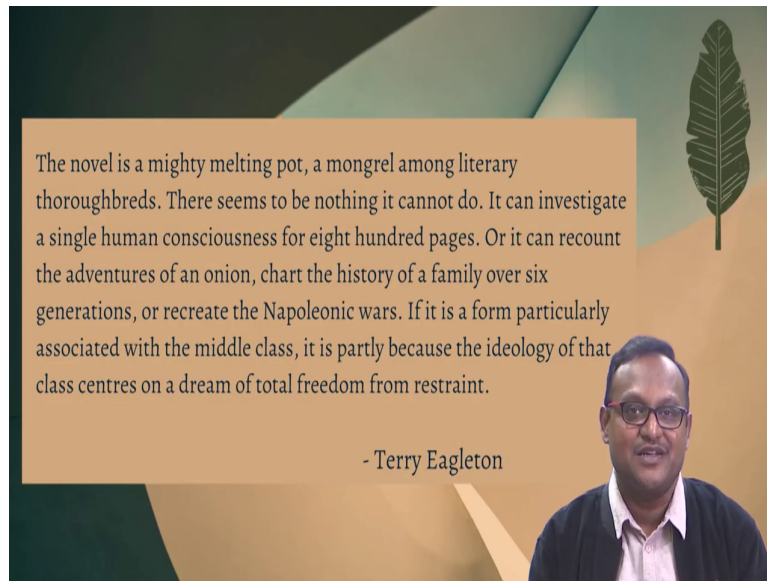


Novel - A Hybrid Literary Form

- Terry Eagleton calls Novels "anti-genre". Why?
- Because the Novel is a melting pot of different genres and forms. A keen reader can find elements of Poetry, Epics, Pastorals, History, Satires, Elegies in Novels
- Virginia Woolf called novels - 'the most pliable of all forms'
- The novel quotes, parodies and transforms other genres, converting its literary ancestors into mere components of itself.

Many critics consider the novel an anti-genre. Why is that? Because for other genres of literature there are some clear-cut boundaries, but in terms I mean as far as the novel is concerned it is a kind of a holdall, you remember 'holdall', right? You can dump anything to that, right. You can dump almost anything into novels. So, something like that is why you can call it a literary holdall. You can dump anything into it. So, that is why you find elements of poetry, epic, pastorals, history, elegies, of them in novels. So, that is the reason why a well-known 20th-century novelist Virginia Woolf calls a novel 'the most pliable of all forms'. It is like a metal, it is not rigid, malleability is what defines it, you can bend it to any shape you wanted. That is why extraordinary experiments have happened in the novel. Using just what is happening within your head you can write an entire novel. So, a lot of experiments have taken place which is why you can call it a kind of hybrid literary form. A 'hybrid' literary form is the reason why it has an extraordinary ability to defy the conventions of its own boundaries, it defies its own boundaries and transgresses them. That is why, and somebody says that in the novel you find the drippings of other genres of literature just think about that particular statement.

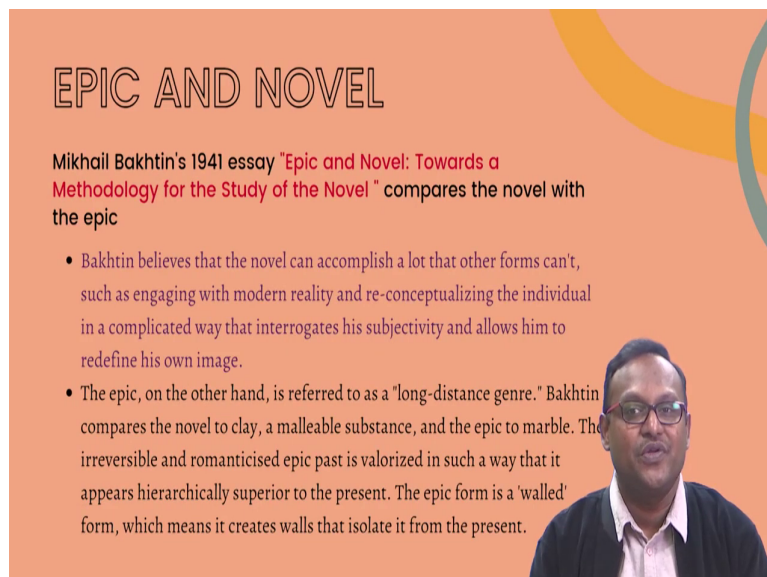
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And again Terry Eagleton a scholar of the novel form talks of how ‘a novel is a kind of a mighty melting pot, a mongrel among literary thoroughbreds’.

It is an interesting quote from Terry Eagleton, you can take a look at it a little later.

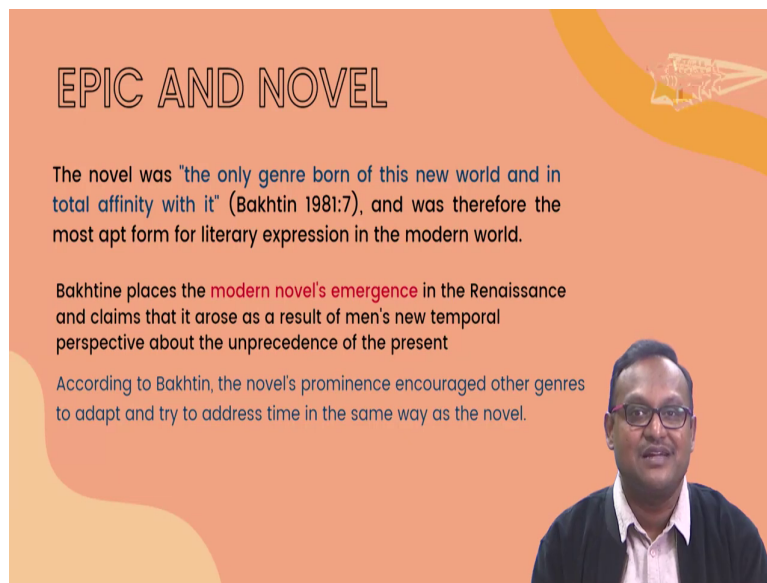
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From here we come to Mikhail Bakhtin, another remarkable theorist who compares novels with another genre of literature - epic.

If there is one, if there is one thing or if there is anything that can be compared with novel whether it is in poetry or in drama it is epic. So, you find a lot of resemblances between epic and novel, but the novel has novel surpasses epic in very many ways, that is why Bakhtin says that while epic is pinned to the past, the boundaries of the epic are quite rigid. While the novel embodies the spirit of epic and walks ahead, that is why he says the novel as having an advantage over epic.

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EPIC AND NOVEL

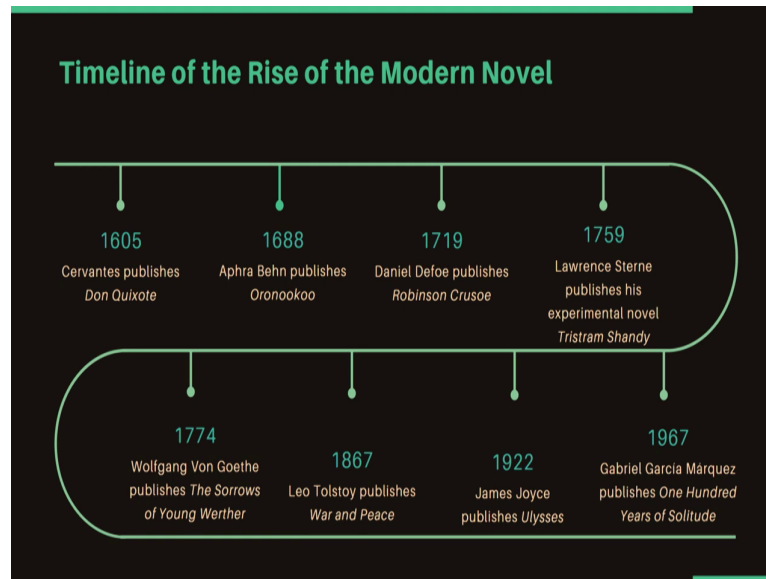
The novel was "the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it" (Bakhtin 1981:7), and was therefore the most apt form for literary expression in the modern world.

Bakhtin places the **modern novel's emergence** in the Renaissance and claims that it arose as a result of men's new temporal perspective about the unprecedent of the present

According to Bakhtin, the novel's prominence encouraged other genres to adapt and try to address time in the same way as the novel.

And he continues the discussion and says that with the birth of the new world you find the birth of the novel. That is why he says that novels prominence encouraged other genres to adapt and try to address time in the same way as the novel does because if there is one characteristic feature that defines a novel it is its adaptability, it is very quick to learn. Therefore, Bakhtin advises other forms also to be as accommodative as a novel.

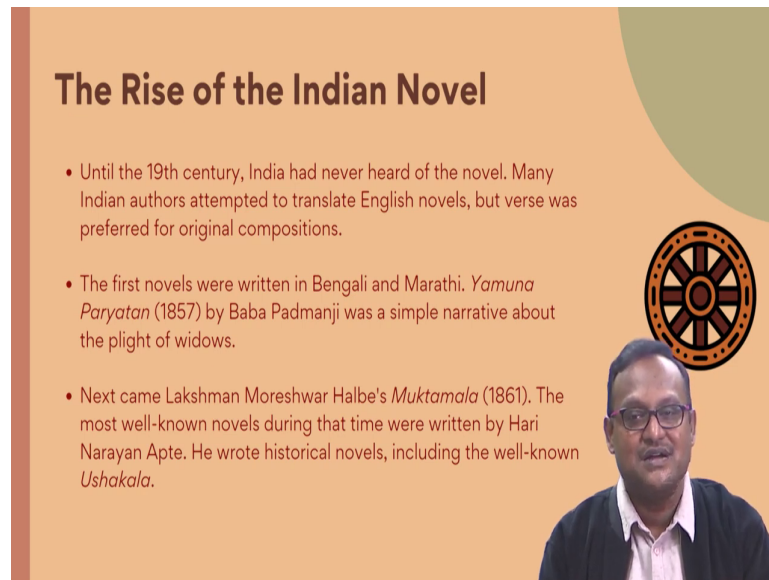
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Here is a very brief timeline I want you to keep in mind, generally speaking in the western tradition, of course, remember. Cervantes publishes *Don Quixote* in 1605, which is considered a prototype of the novel. In fact, many critics consider *Don Quixote* also as the first novel. So, therefore, *Don Quixote* can be considered arguably the first novel, modern novel. Then you have 1688, some experiments take place. And it is in 1719 that Daniel Defoe publishes the first English novel - the birth of the modern novel, the socialist realism, a realistic type of novel, all beginning with *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). And afterwards, towards 1759, you have Lawrence Sterne publishing *Tristram Shandy*, an experimental novel. Of course, remember novel is quite at its natal stage at that point in time. So, *Tristram Shandy* experiments with the form in extraordinary ways. Then you have 1774, Goethe, of course, you can recall Goethe, I mean Goethe's influence on world literature and the influence of world literature on Goethe; he was well versed with Chinese novels therefore, he writes in 1774, a modern novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. And in 1867; these are important milestones. Remember we may have skipped very many things, Leo Tolstoy publishes *War and Peace*. In fact, *War and Peace*, many consider *War and Peace* as the king of novels. If there is one novel that is extraordinary of course, it's more than a 1000 pages and philosophical meditation on the form itself as well as a brilliant accomplishment, therefore it rightly occupies the sobriquet - 'the king of novels'. Then, when it comes to the 20th century, you have James Joyce who publishes *Ulysses* in 1922. Again it inaugurates a new wave of novels using the stream of consciousness technique. And then you have 1967, where



Marquez publishes *One Hundred Year of Solitude* that inaugurates another important sub-genre of the novel called Magic Realism. This timeline is very important, you can just recall it.

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The Rise of the Indian Novel

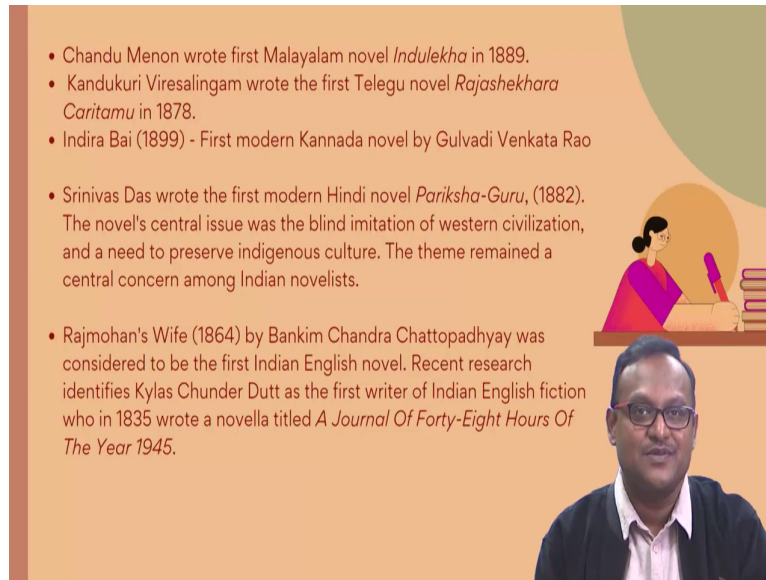
- Until the 19th century, India had never heard of the novel. Many Indian authors attempted to translate English novels, but verse was preferred for original compositions.
- The first novels were written in Bengali and Marathi. *Yamuna Paryatan* (1857) by Baba Padmanji was a simple narrative about the plight of widows.
- Next came Lakshman Moreshwar Halbe's *Muktamala* (1861). The most well-known novels during that time were written by Hari Narayan Apte. He wrote historical novels, including the well-known *Ushakala*.



Of course, based on this let us quickly discuss the rise of novels as far as the I mean in the Indian subcontinent is concerned. Of course, because of the influence of the colonizers and of course, *Macaulay's Minutes on Indian Education*. And now English education is I mean is gaining a kind of traction in the late 18th century and 19th century, as a result of which you find by 1850s many regional writers experimenting with this form called a novel. That is how you have *Yamuna Paryatan* (1857), it is generally said in the Indian context that by the mid-19th century you find a flowering of novels especially the realism kind of novel. Of course, there are other historical and a combination of poetry and prose these kinds of experiments were there even earlier, but in the mode of social realism - novel flowers sometimes in the mid-19th century, the 1850s. And then you have Lakshman Moreshwar Halbe's *Mukatamala* (1861), and predominantly all of them discuss various social reformation using novel. The novel becomes a suitable medium for the writers to express their aspirations for society to change. And accept modernity in some way or the other, accept modern values.

So, a kind of a clarion call wherein these writers exhort the society to adopt modern values. So, even novels play a major role in ushering modernity into the traditional societies, colonial societies.

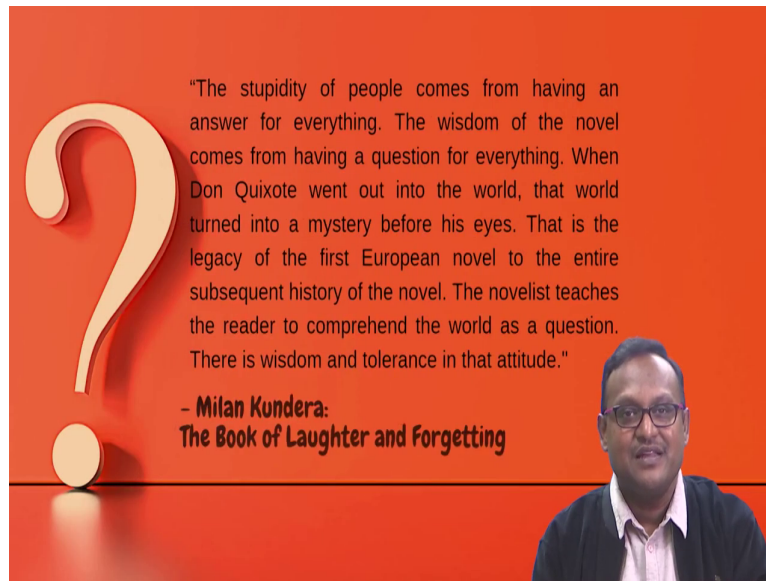
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- Chandu Menon wrote first Malayalam novel *Indulekha* in 1889.
- Kandukuri Viresalingam wrote the first Telugu novel *Rajashekhara Caritamu* in 1878.
- Indira Bai (1899) - First modern Kannada novel by Gulvadi Venkata Rao
- Srinivas Das wrote the first modern Hindi novel *Pariksha-Guru*, (1882). The novel's central issue was the blind imitation of western civilization, and a need to preserve indigenous culture. The theme remained a central concern among Indian novelists.
- *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was considered to be the first Indian English novel. Recent research identifies Kylas Chunder Dutt as the first writer of Indian English fiction who in 1835 wrote a novella titled *A Journal Of Forty-Eight Hours Of The Year 1945*.

And that happens in other languages as well. As a result of that, you have in 1889, Chandu Menon published his first Malayalam novel called *Indulekha*. And you have Kandukuri, I mean Viresalingam publishing his Telugu novel *Rajashekhara Caritamu* in 1878. And you have the first Kannada novel written by Gulvadi Venkat Rao called *Indira Bai*. So, these were some experiments that were taking place in the Indian context. As far as Indian English novel is concerned it is generally believed or widely believe that *Rajmohan's wife* was published in 1864 by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Until recently it was called the first Indian English novel. Of course, now, research suggests contemporary research suggests that as back as 1835, Kylas Chunder Dutt had written a novel called *A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours of the Year 1945*. A kind of a futuristic novel in 1835. Therefore, now this particular novel by Kylas Chunder Dutt has dethroned *Rajmohan's wife* and now a journal of 48 hours of the year 1945 is considered the first Indian English novel. So, this is a very bird's eye view of in novel in the Indian context and in the western context.

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Before we call it a day let us quickly go through this remarkable quote by Milan Kundera, one of the exemplary practitioners of novels who also has a book called *The Art of Novel*. He is an accomplished novelist himself. This is from his book called *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*.

“The stupidity of people comes from having an answer for everything. The wisdom of the novel comes from having a question for everything. When Don Quixote went out into the world, that world turned into a mystery before his eyes. That is the legacy of the first European novel to the entire subsequent history of the novel. Rightly acknowledging the value and significance of the first European novel. The novelist teaches the reader to comprehend the world as a question, there is wisdom and tolerance in that attitude.”

A novel rather than giving answers to you, raises pertinent questions, relevant questions. And the importance of these questions is it makes you think in that direction. Therefore, it is the driving force of a novel, the appeal of the novel lies not in its ability to answer our questions, but in its ability to raise some relevant questions. And therefore, shape our thinking towards it. Of course, if anybody says they have answers to all your questions, of course, you need to take such people and take their words with a pinch of salt. I am not asking you to disbelieve them, but weigh in, weigh in your options. Because well it is only a con man or a god who has the capacity to say that he or she has answers to all your questions. So, you decide whether that person is a con man or really a god or an incarnation of God. But for the rest of

us mortals like you and me, what we need to is that know our wisdom and tolerance lies in the attitude, that the world is a huge question, and we need to seek our answers gradually through our journey. And of course, through the novels through the literature that we read through various elements of literature, we are going to uncover that question and we are going to gradually seek an answer to the questions that have been guiding humanity since time immemorial. Thank you. In the next class, we will come up with more discussions on novels and elements of fiction and other things.