“A fictional technique always relates back to the novelist's metaphysics. The critic’s task is to define the latter before evaluating the former. . . . Man's misfortune lies in being time-bound.”

Jean Paul Sartre
INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about literary aesthetics. It is limited to making certain enquiries in the field of 20th century novel in the light of the structuralist theory that developed in the late twentieth century. Selected fiction of two exemplars of the twentieth century novel is studied in the thesis. It takes into consideration the scientific and philosophical ideas of the times which have had a profound influence upon modern art and literature. In other words, the work is informed by a philosophic concern which is at the heart of all aesthetics.

Literary aesthetics is that branch of the theory of literature which is (a) distinctively philosophical and which (b) focuses attention on those aspects of literary works in virtue of which they are works of art. The subject matter of literary aesthetics is defined by the specific application to literature of the question raised in aesthetics about works of art in general. (Lamarque, Introduction 1)

When we speak of literature as an art and try to work out a theory of literary aesthetics, the first thing to be remembered is that “a work of literature is not only a work of art, it is also an expression in a language; it has both an aesthetic and a linguistic dimension. A central issue in literary aesthetics is the relation between these two dimensions” (2).

The novels that are analyzed in this thesis represent two phases in the evolution of the modern philosophies of time and space. The first is the modernist (early 20th century) phase in which Henri Bergson’s philosophy and Freudian psychology were influential in the development of the stream of consciousness fiction. There were radical structural innovations in narrative. The second phase – designated as the postmodernist period – saw the widespread application of
metafictional modes. Sharon Spencer calls them – a little apologetically – as “architectonic” novels. These novels “embody time-space fusion achieved by various structural procedures” (Introduction xxi). The postmodernist methods maybe viewed as a continuation of those methods initiated in the modernist era. One feature that links these two writers is that both of them wrote novels that would fit the description of “tales about time” as opposed to “tales of time” (Ricoeur 1:101). Paul Ricoeur distinguishes between these two categories of novel thus: “All fictional narratives are “tales of time” inasmuch as the structural transformations that affect the situations and characters take time. However only a few are “tales about time” inasmuch as in them it is the very experience of time that is at stake in these structural transformations” (1:101).

**Fiction and the World**

Fiction of any kind is not produced out of a cultural vacuum, nor do they operate in a vacuum. Fictional narratives connect to our world as ‘representations’ in one medium or the other of the lived world. Therefore the argument that “literary fictions are totally cut off from the real world” (Lamarque, Introduction 6) is untenable. Peter Lamarque notes that

works of fiction, by their very nature, are offered with different *referential* intentions from those of historical or non-fictional-writing; the writer is not attempting to recount facts so much as to construct and present imaginative worlds with fictional people and events. But a theory of fiction must be able to account for the *similarities* between these imaginative worlds and the real world, as well as their differences. A writer is not writing *in vacuo*; he draws on reality, and
must do so, for the substance of his fictions. In turn the fictional works reflect a reality beyond them and no doubt capture our interest precisely on that account. (6)

One of the most distinguishing features of the modern world literature is that it is dominated by the comparatively new form of prose fiction which includes the novel and the short story. ‘Prose narrative fiction’, as they are called nowadays, has a history which can be traced back to the ancient world, though it never had the prominence that it enjoys in the modern world. The novel form appears to be the characteristic literary form of the modern era.

The reasons for the rise and growth of modern narrative prose fiction after the 16th century can be attributed to a variety of factors. Its historical trajectory can be traced back to the Renaissance Europe, with Boccaccio and Cervantes taking the lead. By that time the culture of prose had established itself through the spread of printing and the ascendancy of vernacular languages over the classical languages, opening access to literature to the common man. The spread of literacy also had a hand in the creation of a general public who would be potential readers. This is what Marshall McLuhan has called the “Gutenberg Galaxy”. In his Art of the Novel, Milan Kundera, speaking in a pan European context, observes that the novel form was a response to the rise of the new world of change in moral and philosophical outlook ushered in by the rise of science and humanism. To him, the novel was a response to the decline of the old world of moral and metaphysical certainties. Citing the case of Don Quixote (1601 and 1616), considered to be the forerunner of modern realism and the novel form, Kundera puts Cervantes among the founders of the Modern Era (4). It points to the philosophical importance of the novel form in the evolution of modern
civilization. Kundera observes how by the end of the Renaissance, the new science of Galileo and the philosophy of Descartes had eroded the idea of “man’s concrete being’ and with Cervantes, a great European art took shape that is nothing other than the investigation of this forgotten being” (5).

The Literary Status of the Novel

Ian Watt in his The Rise of the Novel gives a detailed and multifaceted study of the rise of the new literary form in the context of England in the 18th century. He explores the philosophical, social and economic aspects of the rise of the novel in the 18th century, which is the eve of the industrial revolution. Realism was the defining characteristic of this new form of prose fiction (Watt 10). But this realism as Watt sees it, did not reside in the “kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it” (11). It relied on the principle of verisimilitude in character and locale, constructing stories with plots that relied on causality and characters that could be identified as somehow real. “A fiction is realistic if it describes characters with combinations of properties that would not be strange or out of place if exemplified in individuals in the real world (Lamarque “Fiction and philosophy” 64).This real world was the world of everyday life and characters such as Pamela or Robinson Crusoe who embodied the ideology of the rising middleclass.

With the influence of European literature over other literatures of the world during the age of colonialism, the novel form came to be adopted into other cultures of the world too. It was through the colonizing enterprise of the West that modern science and the philosophy of the Enlightenment percolated into other cultures of the world. The changes that took place in the socio-cultural environment of the West were
carried all over the world. Arguably, what Ian Watt and Milan Kundera have observed about the rise of the Western novel can well be attributed to any other culture in the modern world in general, where the novel form has come to signify broadly the idea of modern literature itself. What we today refer to as ‘Modernity’ or ‘Modernism’ is actually the cultural phenomenon that was born and nourished in the West. Its influence is global. Therefore an exploration of its evolution in the context of a historical and philosophical framework is helpful in studying the evolution of some of the important facets of human civilization.

We are here concerned with the history of the novel form in a special way. The novel is the most influential of all literary forms. No other form of human expression in language has come to embody human life in the way the novel has done. Its versatility itself defies a ready-made definition. A derivative of the Italian root ‘novella’, the term was applied in English to refer to a class of prose fiction produced in the 18th century, characterizing unheroic themes and characters, and presented in an ordinary language, devoid of the traditional rhetoric or narrative devices and concerned with common life. This was used to distinguish the realistic prose fiction of Defoe and his contemporaries on account of its affinities with the Italian novella, which despite its melodrama and exaggerations, had a general tone which George Saintsbury characterizes as “bourgeois” or “at any rate domestic” (15). “The Italian prose tale had begun to exercise that influence as early as Chaucer's time: but circumstances and atmosphere were as yet unfavourable for its growth”(15). Generally other European languages use the terms ‘romance’ or ‘roman’ to denote prose fiction. In English there is a distinction made between two types of prose fiction – novels of action (romance) and novels of character (novel proper). The English critic and
novelist E. M. Forster characterizes these two using the terms “life in time” and “life in values”, the former referring to the narrative method of romances (novels of action) and the latter to realist novels (novels of character) respectively. “What the story does is to narrate the life in time. And what the entire novel does – if it is a good novel – is to include the life by values as well…” (Forster 30). These definitions, useful in a certain way, are now more or less discarded by theoreticians. After all, Forster’s critical theory was grounded on the conventional realist approach which was more or less content based.

With the rising influence of formalist and structuralist approaches, especially with the percolation of Mikhail Bakhtin’s ideas into the world forum, the subtle distinctions characteristic of the British approach have been treated as obsolete. Moreover, the study of the novel concentrates more and more upon stylistic/textual features and structural patterns.

Though novelistic narratives were considered a form of light entertainment not worthy of critical attention till the late 19th century, their aesthetic and philosophical import began to be recognized with the arrival of serious practitioners of the form – Flaubert, Zola and Balzac in France, and Henri James and his followers in the English speaking world. In the context of his discussion of Martin Heidegger’s philosophical work Being and Time, Milan Kundera observes that “all the great existential themes Heidegger analyzes in Being and Time– considering them to have been neglected by all earlier European philosophy– had been unveiled, displayed, illuminated by four centuries of the novel (four centuries of European reincarnation of the novel)”(5). This remark would help us understand how the novel form has embodied serious philosophical concerns ever since its beginning as a literary art.
Fictional narratives in whatever form – novel, or film, cartoons or plays – present to us a world of experience more intense and emotionally satisfying than real life. Whether they are fantasies like Harry Potter or Alice in Wonderland, exotic tales like Arabian Nights or Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream, or a starkly realistic work like Upton Sinclair’s The Jungle or a cartoon strip like Superman, they never cease to engage human attention. We willingly suspend our disbelief to enter into this virtual world of fiction and imaginatively participate in the goings on there. It is immaterial whether they have any empirical reality about them.

Whatever the characteristic of the narratives that we read, there is one thing that is common to all of them – namely the experience of time. All human experience is bounded by this one reality which is also one of the most elusive and paradoxical. Time appears as a phenomenological reality whether it is on the empirical level or on the aesthetic /subjective level. Though often not directly addressed, all human narratives embody a certain attitude towards time, and in literature it is the novel form that has embodied this problem at different levels, far more comprehensively and diversely than any other form. This is why Paul Ricoeur refers to the novel “as the protean genre par excellence” which “has constituted for at least three centuries now a prodigious workshop for experiments in the domains of composition and expression of time” (2:8).

Raimon Panikkar observes that time is “an abstraction ...of events, of what we call temporal things” (24). He notes further that “if the concept of time is an abstraction, it should be an abstraction of temporal things . . . And here we discover two astonishing facts. We discover that we have to previously detect the temporality of things in order to abstract from them the concept of time” (24).
A critical examination of all fictional narratives from the ancient times to the present would provide us with insights into the way the world was conceived and articulated by different cultures in different periods of time. The cosmology, or world picture of a particular civilization at a particular point of history can be abstracted from the various narrative forms that were produced by the respective cultures, the concept of time being a vital aspect of it. If it was mythology in the ancient world, it is the various more sophisticated narratives in the modern world. The form of the modern novel is of special interest to us here. An investigation of the 20th century novel form in two significant stages of its evolution is the chief focus of this thesis.

“The novel has accompanied man uninterruptedly and faithfully since the beginning of the Modern Era” (Kundera 5). Its philosophical concerns were born with the first novel itself. Speaking of the arrival of Don Quixote, Kundera notes:

As God slowly departed from the seat whence he had directed the universe and its order of values, distinguished good from evil, and endowed each thing with meaning, Don Quixote set forth from his house into a world he could no longer recognize. In the absence of the Supreme judge, the world suddenly appeared in its fearsome ambiguity; the single divine Truth decomposed into myriad relative truths parceled out by men. Thus was born the world of the Modern Era, and with it the novel, the image and model of that world. (6)

For a long period of time, as far as the critics were concerned, the novel remained in the rearguard of literary discourse. Sometimes it was even derided. But novels continued to be written and were enjoyed by a large body of readers and almost
edged out other forms, especially poetry, which was once considered the queen of literary arts.

Criticism began to turn its attention seriously to the novel with the pioneering work of Henry James. James’ *Art of Fiction* did to the novel what Philip Sidney’s *Apologie for Poetrie* (1595) did for Renaissance English poetry. Like Philip Sidney answering to the accusations of Stephen Gosson in the 16th century, James also takes up his pen to defend and glorify the art of the novelist while answering to the criticism of Walter Besant. One important observation that James makes at the beginning of his treatise is how the English reading public had entertained an ambivalent attitude—an attitude of patronizing tolerance in place of “the old evangelical hostility” (804) towards the novel form. Its significance in the world of fine arts was that “a novel is a novel, as a pudding is a pudding, and that our only business with it could be to swallow it” (804). According to James, the narrowness and open hostility of the evangelical attitude, reflected in Besant’s treatise “was in reality far less insulting” (804). He then goes on to establish the novel as a serious art form which is to be considered along with the other fine arts. “The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life” (804). He equates the business of the novelist with the business of the historian. In the same way that a painting represents reality or history represents life, “the novel is history” (804).

Thanks to his efforts both as a critic and as a practitioner of this form, the novel soon began to occupy the centre stage of critical discussions.

A close study of the evolution of the novel and the changes that have happened over the last two centuries would yield rich returns in terms of understanding the evolution of modern societies. This is why so much attention is
nowadays given to the study of the novel form. “The path of the novel emerges as a parallel history of the modern Era” (Kundera 9). Therefore an examination of the evolution of the novel in its various manifestations from the ancient romances to the postmodernist metafiction would help us comprehend the history of ideas that have made the world what it is.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the novel form began to gain serious critical attention and through the era of modernism into that of postmodernism, it became a central concern for theoreticians. The emergence of formalism and structuralism radically reoriented critical concerns. As a result there have been many successful attempts to forge new avenues of novel study. This thesis attempts to focus mainly on the evolution of the novel form during the past one century. An analysis of the narrative innovations brought in by the 20th century novelists will help us understand the changes that have taken place in the cosmology of the modern world as reflected in the writings of two representative novelists of modernism and postmodernism. The chief concern is the temporal structure of fictional narratives in terms of a structuralist perspective.

For the purpose of our analysis, the evolution of the novel is divided into three historical stages. The first stage is the classical stage represented by the prose romances whose influence extends from the ancient world to the Renaissance.

**The Romances – a World without Time or Place**

This first stage consists of the long period from the ancient classical world of the Greco-Roman romances to the 17th century when the narrative methods and themes remained more or less unchanged. These are taken together because of the fact
that time narrated in these works expressed in terms of its chronotopology\(^1\) remained the same from the classical world to the fag end of the Renaissance. It may be noted in passing that the English novel is something that came into its own nearly two centuries after Cervantes’s epoch making *Don Quixote*, whose cultural and philosophical concerns cannot be underestimated. Cervantes’s novel looks forward to the modern age, or, in the words of Milan Kundera, “if it is true that philosophy and science have forgotten about man’s being, it emerges all the more plainly that with Cervantes a great European art took shape that is nothing other than the investigation of this forgotten being” (4). This would point to the importance of the novel as a means of investigating some crucial philosophical problems.

In England the novelistic impulse can be traced to Chaucer, though a critic like George Saintsbury would put Thomas Malory to head the list, because for him “in every romance there is the germ of a novel and more”(6). Walter Allen would not agree to consider Malory’s work *Le Morte D’Arthur* (1485) as novel because it is a loosely woven series of tales surrounding the legend of King Arthur written in prose. It is at best a compilation from many sources, written more in the vein of epic and romance.

Chaucer’s ‘Troilus and Criseyde’, adapted from Boccaccio’s ‘Il Filostrato’ does contain subtle psychological insights into character, a method of characterization

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\(^1\) The term is derived from the Greek *chronos* (time) and *topos* (place or space). Bakhtin uses this to denote “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (84). Chronotopes are “the organizing centers for the fundamental narrative events of the novel… where the knots of narrative are tied and untied…. Time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins….Thus the chronotope, functioning as the primary means for materializing time in space, emerges as a center for concretizing representation, as a force giving body to the entire novel. All the novel’s abstract elements – philosophical and social generalizations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect – gravitate towards the chronotope and through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work” (Bakhtin 250).
that became one of the defining features of the novels of the 18th century. However, Chaucer used the verse form rhyme royal for his narrative and his subject matter was a story from the classical epic.

Philip Sidney’s *The Arcadia* (1590), John Lyly’s *Euphues* (1578) and Robert Greene’s *Menaphon* (1589) belong in the category of romances which follow the narrative style of the ancient Greek romances.

If realism is the defining characteristic of the modern novel, then there is reason to argue that the novelistic spirit is indeed present in the picaresque tales of Thomas Deloney (1543–1600) and Thomas Dekker’s (1570–1632) tales of London life.

Thomas Nashe (1567–1601) wrote “what might fairly be called the first English novel” (Rees111) entitled *The Unfortunate Traveller or, The Life of Jack Wilton* (1594) in the picaresque tradition which contains hints of realism describing contemporary historical situations and characters.

Romance in the common notion is a tale of exotic nature, love, strange happenings, remote settings and highly idealized characters. The ancient romances such as Longus’s *Daphnis and Chloe* and Heliodorus’s *Aethiopica* and even the Roman satire Apulieus’s *The Golden Ass* (in its plot and structure) can be classed together in terms of their narrative structure, though the last mentioned work is a satire. E.M. Forster’s designation of “life in time” (41) would fit their plots. These works differ in many respects from the modern novel. Mikhail Bakhtin distinguishes them in terms of their “Chronotopology” (time-space dimensions).

In his *Dialogic Imagination* Bakhtin studies the Greek romances in some detail. The purpose of his study is to make a note of the kind of chronotopology that
existed in the romances. We easily notice that it is different from the realist fiction of the modern era. The classical articulation of time is to be found in the romances. Long periods of time did not change the characters. The hero and the heroine remained more or less the same; the episodic nature of the plot with its innumerable twists and turns ended on a happy note of reunion. Time was cyclical. The passage of time was not registered in the physical or mental world. Space was neutral; though particular geographical locations were mentioned as the settings, they were not characterized by realistic details so as to convey a “sense of place” and had no influence on the events.

The structure of the Greek romances was thus. This structure had its variants in later periods, in the Roman, and later renaissance prose narratives with their familiar pattern of coincidences and final happy endings.

In such narratives, the past did not stretch backwards in an infinite line. Things came back to where they started and without much change. The geographical details were of little consequence. The young lovers remained forever young. For the Greeks, time in the modern sense – historical, linear or progressive – did not exist. Hence its passage is not registered in their tales. The mythical heroes seldom grew old, existing in a timeless fictional dimension.

The chronotope of the Greek romances held sway throughout the later centuries, down to the time of Chaucer and Shakespeare when a new sense of history began to develop. Chaucer did have a distinct sense of the past, present and future but he still shared the medieval notions as central and did not care too much about historical accuracy. Shakespeare never bothered about anachronisms. Clocks could strike in Julius Caesar’s Rome though the Romans in Caesar’s time had only the sundial to measure time! The transition from the classical to the modern realist mode
can be traced in the narratives from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment period, running parallel to the changing world views. They demonstrate the shifting sands of human perception of time, space and human destiny.

**Realism – the Age of the Clock**

The second distinctive stage in the evolution of prose fiction is the 18\(^{th}\) and 19\(^{th}\) centuries, when modern philosophical realism overturned the old world view. The Copernican revolution and the new science which resulted from it provided a new cosmology to Europe. The formulation of the Newtonian universe marked a definite break away from the ancient world views. Rationalism and Empiricism displaced the Platonic notions in philosophy giving rise to modern realism. Time began to be conceived differently, becoming more “historical” or linear, conditioned by the clock and calendar. This began to be reflected in the novels of the period, among other things. Time was ripe for the modern (realist) novel. Defoe, Richardson and Fielding were its pioneers.

Henry Fielding added a preface to his *Joseph Andrews*, in which he noted the fact that he was engaged in creating “a species of writing hitherto unattempted in our language” (Preface xi). This may be the first critical writing on the novel form. In the preface, he provided an apology for his work which he calls a “comic romance” (vi), invoking its relation to the familiar classical romances and distinguishing it as “comic epic poem in prose differing from comedy as the serious epic from tragedy, its action being more extended and comprehensive, containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters” (vi). His invocation of Cervantes in his subtitle, calling it as “written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes” (vi), displays the influence of the Spanish master.
Ian Watt notes how the concern with historical time is one crucial structural peculiarity that differentiates the narratives of the pre-novel period. He argues that the novel arose at a time when the classical and medieval notion of time had been changed by the impact of the new world picture of the Enlightenment realism. History became linear, and progressive; watches and clocks began to be developed to measure time. This signified the arrival of the notion of universal time or public time. This “modern sense of time began to permeate many areas of thought. The Seventeenth century witnessed the rise of a more objective study of history and therefore of a deeper sense of the difference between the past and the present” (Watt 25–26). Coupled with this, there was the impact of scientific thinking, which emphasised the notion of causality.

We can think of the novel as a literary form that articulates time better than any other form. Any art form has its implied coordinates of time and space. The modern novel from the beginning had sought the pretence of historical narratives to give it a legitimacy that the classical canons had refused to give, readily following the principle of causality and realist philosophical approach. The way it articulates time is different from that of the classical world. Watt cites the example of this new historical sense in the pioneering novelist Daniel Defoe’s method: “At his best, he convinces us completely that his narrative is occurring at a particular place and at a particular time, and our memory of his novels consists largely of these vividly realised moments which are loosely strung together to form a convincing biographical perspective” (26). So with Richardson who “was very careful to locate all his events of his (sic) narrative in an unprecedentedly detailed time scheme” (26).
The realist form that Richardson and his contemporaries – with the exception of Laurence Sterne of course – initiated, developed through a century to dominate the literary world throughout the 19th century, manifesting a rich diversity of themes, settings and occasional attempts at structural innovations. It became the most inclusive and versatile literary form in the hands of Eliot, Austen, Thackeray, Dickens, Gaskell, the Brontes, Hardy, Trollope, Bennet and Galsworthy in England, Melville, Hawthorne, Cooper, Howells, Crane and Twain in the U.S.A, apart from a host of continental Europeans. It marched with the cosmology of the times characterized by rationalism, materialism and empiricism supported by what was claimed to be the “scientific approach” embodied by the Enlightenment. If we look at the most popular genre of 19th century fiction namely the “adventure” fiction exemplified in a novel like David Copperfield we can see how deeply entrenched the “one-after-anotherness of outer time” (linear chronology) was (Goldberg 21). The lengthy title of the work “points with clarity to this assumption, that the human personality and the varied adventures it undergoes between birth and death are best understood through chronological arrangements” (Goldberg 14).

But changes began to appear in the literary horizon as the 19th century drew to a close, and the old certainties began to be undermined by new developments in every walk of human life and finally marked by the World War I which dramatically opened up a deep chasm in Western history and psyche in the second decade of the 20th century. The novel now entered unfamiliar territories of philosophical exploration. This was marked by the rejection of the old notions of absolute time and space. The clock becomes the writer’s enemy.
Modernism and Experiential Time

The third stage of the evolution of the novel is what we call the age of modernism. It begins towards the end of the 19th century when the new developments in science, psychology and philosophy, changes in the techniques of painting and music along with the arrival of new art forms such as cinema began to influence all literary forms. Joseph Conrad, Henry James, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence began to depict life in a different way. At the beginning of modernism, novelists after Hardy, Bennet, Wells and Galsworthy (the latter three whom Woolf described as “Edwardians”), there is a shift away from the old character centred narratives. This shift is signified by Woolf’s assertion that “in or about December, 1910, human character changed” (Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown 320). She was responding to Arnold Bennett’s complaint that there were “no young novelists of first-rate importance”, “because they are unable to create characters that are real, true, and convincing” (319). Woolf identified the reason for such a change in method and outlook as the result of profound changes in human relations; something which Bennett probably did not understand. This change was contingent upon the changed world of the modern era; the age of Freud, Marx, Einstein, Planck and Bergson, the age of wars and revolutions, of machine guns and aerial bombing. Woolf observes: “And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature” (321). Woolf puts 1910 as an arbitrary date to signify the change that had been in the making for sometime.

It is at this period of time that there is a conscious attempt on the part of narrative fiction writers to incorporate philosophical and scientific ideas into their
writing, giving birth to high modernism. The form of the novel becomes self-conscious and difficult for the common reader. It is a form that Joseph Frank described later as the “spatial form”. The innovation in narrative form was an attempt to express the complexity and confusions of the modernist outlook. It took the form of ‘stream of consciousness’, shifting points of view, syntactic and stylistic innovations with language and adaptation of narrative methods from other art forms – cubist and collage techniques from painting, musical structures such as the sonata.

Behind such experiments lay the modern man’s epistemological and ontological concerns, seeking answers to the dilemmas of modern existence. Time and space form central concerns in these. Time moves into the inner consciousness creating the modernist experimental novels where “all of one’s own time is forever present, yesterdays are never lost, just as tomorrows are always embedded in the seeds of today. The outermost limits of clock-time are melted and diffused there, just as the outermost boundaries of people and things vanish, losing their identity within relativism and the all embracing self” (Goldberg 20 – 21).

In the world of English letters, James Joyce, Virginia Wolf, Dorothy Richardson, Conrad Aiken and Gertrude Stein led the movement. They displayed a tendency to break away from the basic philosophical and aesthetic assumptions underlying the realist narration. “The extraordinary discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind” (Orlando 61) begins to preoccupy them. Time becomes a thematic as well as a structural concern. “They are typical of modernism’s concern about the reification and mechanization of ‘the modern industrial and financial world’: they also introduce a particular – possibly related – dislike of time on the clock” (Stevenson 84).
In the early stages of the modernist novel, the time consciousness appears more as a thematic concern, expressed through the presence of clocks, chiming bells or watches and such other mechanical devices standing for the oppressive mechanization of life regulated by the industrial time. The stories still retain the vestiges of realist narratives posing little difficulties for the reader. The experimentations with structure, or what is today referred to as ‘spatialised narratives’ began to appear as a result of the artist’s “hostility to clocks, within modernist texts” (87). This “is matched by novelists’ reluctance to rely on chronological sequence as the basis of their construction” (87). However, such radical approach to the structure was not appreciated by some of their peers. E.M. Forster, for example – despite his being a member of the ‘Bloomsbury School’ presided over by Woolf – “was on the whole a traditional rather than a modernist writer, relying on conventional rather than innovative forms: he therefore found the new, clock-pulverizing attitudes potentially dangerous, as he considered the structure of the novel to depend, at least to some extent, on what he calls ‘sequence in chronology’” (87).

Wyndham Lewis derided and condemned the experimentalists, referring to Gertrude Stein and Anita Loos as “time Children” (55) linked by “time trouble” (67). He correctly identifies the modernist obsession with time as engendered by the school of Bergson and Einstein. Apart from these, he refers to Samuel Alexander, A.N. Whitehead, Herman Minkowski, Oswald Spengler and Marcel Proust among others for foregrounding the problem of time-space. His analysis of the contemporary scientific and cultural scene is trenchant, though not systematic or deeply analytical. He comes down heavily on Joyce: “Ulysses, on the technical side, is an immense exercise in style, an orgy of ‘apeishness,’” decidedly ‘sedulous.’ It is an encyclopaedia
of English (sic) literary technique, as well as a general knowledge paper. The schoolmaster in Joyce is in great evidence throughout its pages” (76).

Joyce’s *Ulysses* which marked the coming of age of English modernism is regarded by Lewis as “a *time–book*” by which he meant that it “lays its emphasis upon, for choice manipulates, and in a doctrinaire manner, the self–conscious time–sense, that has now been erected into a universal philosophy” (84).

Lewis must have failed to understand and appreciate the efforts of these writers to encompass the new philosophy. As a modernist critic he may even be faulted for not being able to interpret Joyce and his contemporaries to the common readers. But his observations regarding the influence of modern philosophy on the novelist’s art is correct in spite of his disapproval. He comments:

But on the whole the reader is conscious that he is beneath intensive dictatorship of Space–time–the god of Professor (Samuel) Alexander and such a great number of people, in fact, that we can almost be said to be treading on holy ground when we compose ourselves to read a work dedicated to that deity, either in philosophy or fiction. (84)

Lewis also notes that “both Proust and Joyce exhibit . . . the exasperated time–sense of the contemporary man of the industrial age; which is undeniable, if the outward form of their respective work is alone considered” (84). Like many of his contemporaries, Lewis failed to notice the evolving modernist temporality which attempted to highlight a new notion of time and space. Randall Stevenson gives a more balanced view: “Modernist fiction rarely abandons the story altogether, or smashes up the clock entirely, but it does resist as far as possible the arrangement of
“events in their time sequence”— the kind of “mechanical succession of day following day . . . the ‘terrible bondage’” to the clock” (87).

The modernist experimental novels of the 20th century were the culmination of the innovations in chronology and structure that were evolving during the two or three decades before World War I. The “modernist techniques for suppressing time are not necessarily new inventions, but often extensions or adaptations of characteristics already existing in the novel form. Discussing the historical origins of the form itself, Mikhail Bakhtin suggests that “The novel, from the very beginning, developed as a genre that had at its core a new way of conceptualizing time”(38).

Marcel Proust is often credited as the pioneer of the modernist stream of consciousness novel. His extensive use of innovative temporality with its frequent use of anachronies to subvert the realist structure did set him up as a model for the modernists. However, the use of anachrony in narrative structure is not original to him. As Stevenson points out, “Proust did not discover this capacity. His status as a precursor of modernism’s escape from ‘life as a series’ is owed to the scale and dexterity, rather than any absolute novelty, with which this capacity is exploited” (88). Apart from that, he was using “the perfectly traditional device of the first-person narrative” (88). This provided the “central basis for his anachronic tactics” (88).

There is no distancing between the narrator and the narration in such case, which compared to the omniscient narrator (External Narrator) structures the narrative in such a way that it “may plausibly be arranged more idiosyncratically, particularly since most first person narrators retain an awareness of two strands of time rather than one— of the time lived through while events are narrated, as well as of the time during which these events were experienced” (88– 89).This focus on the first person narrator
who is usually a young artist) is a narrative device that became an effective tool in the hands of many a twentieth century novelist. Proust’s *À la recherché du temps perdu* (In Search of Lost Time), despite its originality of subject matter (it tells the story cast in the form of a voluminous memoir, of an aristocratic Parisian named Marcel who grows up and finally becomes a writer), “moves towards modernism’s characteristic commitment to change and innovation in form” (92) through its innovative treatment.

Part of the modernist project comprised the attempt to reject the realist epistemology and the materialism of the modern industrial world. This is marked by a volte-face in the subject matter. The writers turned away from the objective world to the subjective which also provided a kind of fluidity of movement through time. This was possible for the modernist narrative because it placed “everything in the mind” and relied on the devices of memory which offered “a means of including in it past as well as present experience” (92). Thus modernist fiction can be described as the fiction of memory.

As modernist fiction, in the early years of the twentieth century, moves further within the consciousness of characters, and even towards their unconsciousness, the rope of memory is increasingly employed to hold past and present together. Memory becomes for modernist narrative a central, structuring device in the creation of a ‘time in the mind’ which moves through the randomness of recollection, away from ‘mechanical succession’ and the control of the clock. (92 – 93)

Virginia Woolf explains the fluid nature of memory in a passage in her novel *Orlando*: “Memory is the seamstress, and a capricious one at that. Memory runs her
needle in and out, up and down, hither and thither. We know not what comes next, or what follows after” (99).

There were innovations in the use of the narrative voice also. Whereas the 19th century novel was generally dominated by the omniscient external narrator, the modernist’s attempt to discard the omniscient narrator is a sign of the attempt to ‘naturalize’ the new temporality since the flitting back and forth in time “are sanctioned as natural, even conventional aspects of oral narrative; a legitimate, plausible source of such effects”(Stevenson 96). In its attempt to capture the essence of lived reality, the modern novel was attempting to be more realistic than realism. This essence of lived reality is expressed in Woolf’s famous remark that “life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end” (Modern Fiction 189).

Linearity or serial chronology and causality (the idea of plot exemplified by Forster) is gradually suppressed or entirely discarded as the novelist became more and more interested in the mind and its workings. Initially the obsession with time was expressed within realistic structures. For example Thomas Mann, the German novelist, uses direct commentary or broad symbolization with regard to the sense of time in his Der Zauberberg (The Magic Mountain) (1924).

James, Proust, Conrad and Woolf made use of new structural devices and symbols but seldom tried syntactic experiments. The language structure remained more or less transparent and naturalistic retaining the referential use of language. With Joyce, this also changed. The novelistic narrative took a new turn, focusing on the problem of language itself.
Proust’s novel liberated the novelist from the structural straitjackets of realism. This was to influence the future course of the novelist’s art like no other. “Proust made clear, more than anyone had done before him and better than they had, narrative’s capacity for temporal autonomy” (Genette 85). In Joyce’s Ulysses the modernist novel came of age, celebrating its freedom from both time and syntax. It reflected the modernist desire to burst the clock and the watch.

Molly Bloom’s soliloquy (in Ulysses) consummates the modernist desire . . . to ‘look within’ at inner consciousness: it also realizes as fully as possible the disposition . . . to rule rather than be ruled by the hours, to rely on the timepiece of the mind rather than the mechanism of the clock. Obviously, the two movements, towards inner consciousness and away from clocks and mechanical succession, are related. (Stevenson 102)

The phenomenon of modernism has to be understood not only in the European context, because America had a lion’s share of modernists. This is natural since both sides of the Atlantic share the same cultural values. “American literature is contemporary with European phenomenology and existentialism. Modern Phenomenology has broken with the 19th century pre-occupation with scientific method; insists on original visions of many essential structures from many points of view; and correlates subjects viewing their world, and the worlds viewed as they become evident to the viewer’s vision”( Mueller 167–68). In other words, the American novelist was very much on the forefront of the modernist movement.

William Faulkner is the quintessence of this experimentalism in fiction. Faulkner, writing his masterpieces in the first half of the 20th century, was writing
about the decline of the American South, but the treatment of his subjects is by no means conventional. Exposed to the modernist movement that swept Europe, he displays a keen sense of the changing world of fiction and became one of the master exponents of the craft of modernist fiction. His so called Yoknapatawpha novels, especially The Sound and the Fury , Absalom Absalom, Light in August, and As I Lay Dying, present an American variation of the Bergsonian durée and the stream of consciousness. Faulkner adapted the methods of the European novelists to his own purpose, examining the history and ethos of the deep south of America with its unique history, with dazzling results.

**Postmodernism – the Age of Relativity**

But within a few decades of the modernist heyday the face of the novel changed further. It may be argued that this is the ‘fourth stage’ of the novel’s evolution, when more radical forms began to appear. The nature of the distinction between these two phases (modernism and postmodernism) is characterised by a shift from epistemological to ontological questions. Postmodernism is envisioned by some as an extension of modernism.

The epistemological shift and other general changes in world outlook at the end of the nineteenth century led, in modernism, to questioning and experiment which reflect uncertainty about how reality can be known or assimilated by mind or text. Postmodernism radically extends such uncertainty, often assuming reality – if it exists at all – to quite unknowable, or inaccessible through a language grown detached from it. (Stevenson 196)
This time the novelists begin to absorb new influences and express a new general outlook which some historians of the novel tend to characterize as ‘metafiction’. This tendency is described by some as a reaction to and a rejection of the high modernist ideals, and by some others as simply an extension of the modernist tendencies. This is a dispute which can perhaps never be resolved. But one thing is certain; that after the middle of the 20th century, the boundaries of novelistic experience are much more expanded, and the concern with form is a central preoccupation with most of the serious novelists. This may be seen as partly an attempt to adapt the cosmology of Planck, Einstein, and Heisenberg. Lawrence Durrell’s novel tetralogy, *The Alexandria Quartet* marks a turning point in structural innovations that characterize postmodernism.

Durrell is temperamentally much removed from the mainstream British and American novelists. He considered himself an outsider as far as European civilization is concerned, and sought to bring about a synchronization of the West and the East. His aesthetic methods are certainly inspired by Proust, Eliot and the rest. But he goes beyond them to bring about a form of the novel that would embody the essential cosmology of modern physics – Einsteinian Relativity, Heisenberg’s Uncertainty and Planck’s Quantum theory – like none of the modernists had attempted.

**The Methodology**

The method of analysis of the above writers’ novels is based on the structuralist approaches developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, Miecke Bal, Gerard Genette and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan and the philosophical formulations of Paul Ricoeur. These theoreticians take off from the structuralist theoretical foundations. Though Bakhtin worked almost isolated and independently, and comparatively unknown
during his lifetime, his methods are very close to those of the structuralists in so far as he is focused on the form of the novel.

A comparison of the time structures of the works of William Faulkner and Lawrence Durrell would help towards an understanding of the evolving cosmology of our modern world as it is articulated in literary works in general. But to understand this evolution in cultural and aesthetic values, we need first to understand the evolution of ideas in philosophy, science and literature howbeit briefly. Hence the first chapter of the thesis is a rapid survey of the evolution of time concepts as expressed in philosophy, science and art through the ages.

The second chapter of the thesis is a critical evaluation of the discipline of novelistic narratology as it developed from the pioneering works of early critics and practitioners of the genre down to the present. The approach to prose fictional narratives has had different phases in their evolution. The central concern of the work is the temporality of the novel. The temporal structures of modernist and postmodernist fictional narratives could be understood in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin’s theorizations. His concept of ‘chronotope’ is a key term in discussions on time and narrative today. A proper understanding of this term helps us to discover the conceptual complexities of the modern novel and differentiate it from the classical and realist forms. Bakhtin is a pioneering figure in charting the changing concepts about time and space that conditioned the structural concepts of fiction from its prehistoric forms. He showed how narratives reconstructed experience and the temporality of the characters constituted their perceptions, and how a single text could offer a multiplicity of time perceptions and how temporality affected the very process of the reading of such texts. He also provides insight into the deep lying relationship
between time, human perception and the very nature of language. Literary forms like the novel provide insight into the very philosophy of the cultures that shaped them. According to the Bakhtinian concept, the changing temporalities of the novel form created different chronotopes. It is in fact this difference in the chronotopology that demarcates the different historical forms of prose fiction.

A comparison is made between the high modernist and late (post)modernist approaches as exemplified by Faulkner and Durrell respectively, based on their major works. A detailed analysis of the structures of each of the novels selected for analysis would help us understand the attitude towards time and temporality in each case. In Chapter three, the focus is entirely on William Faulkner’s four novels of the Yoknapatawpha series, in which he presents the quintessence of modernist chronotopology. In each of these, the structural devices vary. Faulkner’s method and outlook anticipate the post modernists.

In the fourth chapter, Lawrence Durrell’s *The Alexandria Quartet* is critically examined for its structural peculiarities, particularly in view of his claims to embody the space-time continuum idea derived from Einstein’s theory. Between the two novelists, there are similarities as well as differences. These are summarized in the concluding section titled ‘The Confluence’. Faulkner wrote mostly under the influence of Bergson. Durrell was consciously trying to assimilate Einsteinian notions of space and time into fiction and displays a marked tendency towards Eastern mysticism which seemed to agree with this idea. This analysis would help to demonstrate how the work of a great creative artist “marches by intention with the cosmology of the age” (*AQ* 385).