Among the first few questions that need to be resolved about the novel are when, where, why and how the novel came up in history. As we have already gathered, views on this issue vary quite dramatically, both vis-à-vis the temporal dating of the novel as well as the spatial location of its rise. Differences over the dating of the early novel range up to 3000 years, and about its location span practically all continents of the globe. Each critic has a different story to tell on this matter. While most critics share a consensus over dating the beginning of the genre to the modern age, more specifically to the early eighteenth century England, some trace its origin to significantly different times and places in history like ancient Greece, Rome, Arabia, Egypt, to medieval Japan, China, Spain or France. Even those who agree that the main benchmark of the rise of the novel is early eighteenth century England, differ quite significantly over delineating the key characteristics of the novel as well as the factors responsible for its rise. The form of the novel seems to almost lend itself to these multiple, ambiguous and often contradictory explanations. Notwithstanding the entire diversity and nuances of these viewpoints, all the varied positions held by critics on this matter cannot simultaneously be true. It
cannot, at the same time, be true that the novel arose in twelfth century B.C. Egypt as well as in eighteenth century A.D. England. Or that ancient Greek writers like Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius as well as modern English writers like Richardson and Fielding were collectively the innovators of the genre.

What is surprising in the area of novel theory, however, is the fact that not many critics directly engage with these incompatible and irreconcilable opinions in order to resolve this dispute. In this chapter, therefore, while dealing with debates on the rise of the novel, we shall also try to engage with questions arising out of the evident diversity of views on this matter. We shall try, in this process, to understand the generic characteristics of the novel better. We believe that questions relating to the origin as well as the form of the novel are inexorably linked to each other, and improving our understanding about one can serve as a means to refine and fine-tune our understanding about the other. As far as finding answers to questions about the rise of the novel are concerned, in our view a correct method would be one which can simultaneously explain with clarity why the novel arose when it did, how the novel came up where it did, and what the definitional features of the novel are. In our exploration of the rise of the novel, therefore, we shall try to find answers to all these aspects of the novel, i.e., the ‘what’, ‘why’, ‘when’, ‘where’ and ‘how’ of the novel. We also believe that these aspects are related to each other and that it is not possible to throw light on one without simultaneously taking into cognizance all the others.

Towards this end, we shall examine the views of opinion-making critics like Georg Lukács, Mikhail Bakhtin, Ian Watt, Marthe Robert, Lennard J. Davis, Nancy Armstrong, Michael McKeon and Firdaus Azim, all of whom have reflected extensively on the rise of the novel. Among them, Lukács is particularly noteworthy because historically he is the first critic to develop a comprehensive theory about the novel. He studies the novel by contrasting it to the earlier form of the epic. He also studies in detail the historical factors responsible for giving rise to the form of the novel, although, we must mention here, that he analyses the emergence of the novel in highly symbolic terms. Mikhail Bakhtin adopts a somewhat different approach. He does not believe that socio-historical conditions give rise to particular types of literature; rather, the verbal universe or the world of discourses has an autonomous existence and dynamics of its own. Bakhtin, therefore, examines the origin of the novel as part of a long novelistic literary tradition, in existence since ancient times. Ian Watt, studies the emergence of the
novel by adopting another approach. He neither focuses his study upon demarcating the novel from other genres, nor does he study the socio-historical features of earlier times. Rather, he focuses his study entirely upon delineating the literary characteristics of novelists like Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. He then links the characteristics of their works intensively to the socio-historical conditions of those times, and vice-versa.

In the course of our thesis we shall examine these three critics in detail. We shall also examine the opinions of contemporary critics who have emphasized diverse aspects of the rise of the novel. For instance, Marthe Robert employs psychoanalysis and post-structuralism to study the novel. She traces its development to the long line of genres which she calls ‘family romances’. Lennard J. Davis first uses the Foucauldian method of discourse analysis and subsequently shifts to Marxism. He locates the roots of the novel to changes in print technology, and later to conceptual developments associated with capitalism. Nancy Armstrong uses feminism to link the emergence of the novel integrally to changing notions of gender and sexuality during the early eighteenth century. Michael McKeon employs Marxism to describe the novel as a genre which gives voice to the ideological concerns of the English middle classes. Firdaus Azim applies postcolonial theory to insist that it is impossible to understand the rise of the novel without taking into account colonialism.

Among all these critics, Lukács and Bakhtin are particularly noteworthy for adopting a more holistic approach towards the novel’s rise because they link it both to the form as well as the development of the novel. Except Bakhtin, all other critics argue that the novel arose in the modern age in Europe. Only Bakhtin traces the origins of the novel to ancient times. In our study, therefore, we shall particularly engage with the methodological preoccupations of Bakhtin in order to find out why he arrives upon significantly different conclusions regarding the rise of the novel. We shall keep the focus of our investigation upon the modern period in order to examine whether the prose fiction of this period shows elements of real breakthrough vis-à-vis earlier fiction, or whether it is marked more by elements of continuity with the writings of the preceding age. For this purpose, we shall devote a section of our chapter to delineating important social and conceptual shifts involved in the transformation from feudalism to capitalism. We shall also try to argue that the emergence and development of capitalism in England and subsequently in entire Europe resulted in enormous changes in all aspects of the lives of people, including in literature. The emergence of the novel, therefore, can be best
understood if the broadest range of social, intellectual and literary changes involved in this transformation are kept in mind, instead of exclusively focusing upon developments related only to aspects of gender, colonialism, language or print.

We shall also study the rise of the novel by emphasizing an important though theoretically neglected generic aspect of the novel, i.e., its open-ended and all-inclusive form which allows the novel to incorporate a range of themes, techniques and genres within its fold. Early novel theorists like Lukács and Bakhtin made important observations in this regard in their writings. For instance, Lukács argued that the novel is only "half-art" because as "form, the novel establishes a fluctuating yet firm balance between becoming and being." According to him the novel exists in a state of "eternally existent becoming," and is unlike other genres because it is by nature not a "closed" genre. Subsequently, Bakhtin reiterated this point with greater emphasis. Describing the novel he said, "The novel parodies other genres (precisely in their role as genres); it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its own peculiar structure, reformulating and re-accentuating them." After Lukács and Bakhtin, however, no other critic attributed the same characteristic to the genre of the novel. It is only of late that some contemporary critics have started reiterating this significant opinion about the nature of the novel (this development can be attributed to the theoretical popularity of Bakhtin since his translation from Russian into French and English). Nevertheless, to our knowledge, no critic has tried to explain in detail the possible reasons behind the same.

In our study, therefore, we shall try to argue that the novel is the first major literary genre to develop an open, flexible and incorporative form. This aspect of the novel's form is different from the forms of other genres like epics and romances, which were constrained by relatively fixed literary rules and codes about the choice of themes and techniques. For instance, epics could be composed only about gods or demi-gods, not about ordinary people. Similarly, romances could only be about aristocratic or noble characters governed by the codes of chivalry. Mystery, miracle and supernatural elements played an important part in the plots of both genres. Their narratives were

1 Lukács, Theory 73.
2 Lukács, Theory 74.
3 Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel' 51.
necessarily about the past, rather than about contemporary times. ‘Low’ literary genres like lampoon, comedy, burlesque or picaresque were never incorporated into the ‘high’ epics and romances. In the course of this chapter, therefore, we shall try to investigate the reasons behind the emergence of an incorporative and inclusive genre like the novel. We shall try to argue that the roots of this generic feature of the novel can be traced to the emergence of the flexible and incorporative system of capitalism, which in turn, led to associated changes in the value-systems and principles governing literature as well as other cultural forms. The novel, therefore, emerged as the first major literary genre of print to exhibit this tendency in an explicit and pronounced manner.

GEORG LUKÁCS

Let us begin by examining the extremely influential book written by the young, pre-Marxist Georg Lukács, during 1914-15 called The Theory of the Novel. The Theory of the Novel occupies a unique place in the history of the novel, because it is the first critical book of its kind devoted exclusively to analysing the genre of the novel. Before it, no other literary study investigated the genre of the novel on a comparable scale. Let us examine Lukács’s views on the novel and its rise.

Lukács explains the emergence of the novel by pitting it against the ‘totality’ of an earlier form — the epic. Lukács attributes the epic’s totality to the fact that it belongs

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4 This book is a product of the philosophical tradition of pessimism prevalent among many intellectuals and artists of Europe during the war-ravaged years of the First World War. It is apparent from the book that Lukács shares with many of his contemporaries a very poor opinion about the path tread by advanced capitalist nations. He looks towards the past for catching a glimpse of lost civilizational wholeness and unity. In the early twentieth century, many artists and thinkers belonging to various ideological hues were trying to do the same by making an effort to recover a lost ‘completeness’ or ‘wholeness’ through conceptions of cultures other than Europe, or times other than their own. T.S.Eliot looked for it in The Upanishads; W.B.Yeats took refuge in the Celtic legends; E.M.Forster pursued it to an ancient Indian cave; Conrad sought for it in the margins of the colonies; and D.H.Lawrence searched for it in the symbolism of a no longer possible ‘uncorrupted nature’. None of them could pin point the exact nature of this vague ‘wholeness’, but they all bore a sense of a loss with them, as though they had to pay the price for eating the apple of knowledge. For Lukács, the ‘epic’ symbolizes a similar lost wholeness.

5 We must keep in mind that this book was translated into French only in 1963 and into English in 1971. Thus, it took a long time for Lukács early views on the novel to be known across the entire European literary scene. Today, this book has become an essential part of all reading lists on the theory of the novel.

6 Lukács borrows heavily from Hegel’s landmark work Aesthetics (1842), where Hegel argues that the epic is an expression of an early stage of the history of consciousness in which only minimal separation exists between mind and things, or thought and matter. The epic for Hegel characterizes the unorganized, heroic age, symbolizing an organic unity between people, nature and society. Next comes the middle stage, symbolizing harmony and a visible balance between things and activities of
to an earlier 'integrated civilization' where there is no difference between the self and the world, there is no interiority or exteriority, and there is no sense of otherness. The soul completely lacks self-consciousness and reflexivity and does not require it either, because it is at once one with the world: "Such an age is the age of the epic." Unlike in the older world of the epic, in the new world of the novel, man is solitary and the old totality or natural unity is exhausted. The modern world of the novel is much larger and richer than the rounded epic world of the Greeks, but there is no transcendental essence present to guide life anymore. Therefore, both the world as well as its forms, most notably the novel, becomes fragmentary in nature.

Lukács argues that in spite of being new, the form of the novel is not fundamentally different from the earlier form of the epic because the intention of both their authors is the same, that is, to capture totality. However, the novel is somewhat different from the epic because, "The novel is the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality." No matter how hard the author of the novel tries, Lukács argues that it is pre-given that he/she would never be able to capture the elusive totality of the new world within the bounds of a novel. Thus, the novel for Lukács is only a "half-art" which does not have a finished form and always "appears as something in the process of becoming." Its form is problematic and is an expression of "transcendental homelessness". Unlike the "organic totality" of the world of the epic, the totality of the world of the novel is a "concealed totality" which the author as well as the hero creatively seeks to uncover. The fragmentary nature of this world is carried into the world of the novel and its form. In this new world it is no longer possible to write epics anymore, because the intention of capturing totality can no longer be realized. Thus, the epic disappears to give way to the new form of the novel.

Lukács discusses several important generic characteristics of the novel. He says that the heroes of novels are always seekers. Unlike epic heroes they have an interiority

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5 Lukács, Theory 30.
6 Lukács, Theory 56.
7 Lukács, Theory 72-3 (emphasis added).
and are problematic. This is because they belong to a world which has been abandoned by God. They have no assurance from God unlike the completely sure heroes of the epic. They have to always find themselves on their own. Lukács also argues that the heroes of novels are "problematic individuals" who represent personal destinies, while epic heroes represent the destiny of communities. This is the reason why epic heroes are kings whose individual destinies are linked to a totality, while the heroes of novels are common men whose actions do not have a necessary bearing upon the rest of the world. The experiences of these individuals are important because they become the means through which the author tries to organize the world. That is why the outward form of the novel is usually biographical. It gives a sense of unity and roundedness to the world, where there is none. The subjectivity or "ethical intention" of the author of a novel to organize the concealed totality of the world gives shape to the content of the novel. It penetrates the very form of the novel. Lukács also argues that the individuality of the heroes of novels is a product of "estrangement" or "alienation" from the outside world, i.e. the contemporary world of man-made constructs. The second nature or nature of man-made structures is not homogenous and lacks real substance since it only represents senseless necessities. Lukács argues, "Estrangement from nature (the first nature), the modern sentimental attitude to nature, is only a projection of man's experience of his self-made environment as a prison instead of as a parental home."  

In such a world, irony, or what Lukács calls "...the normative mentality of the novel" becomes the means through which the author of a novel tries to impart self-correction on a fragmented world. Irony acts as a kind of 'tact' to achieve balance in the content of the novel. "Irony, the self-surmounting of a subjectivity that has gone as far as it was possible to go, is the highest freedom that can be achieved in a world without God." Lukács argues that in this new world, ideas no longer 'penetrate' reality. Systems of ideas only 'regulate' reality. That is why reality in novels is never immanently obvious but always strained. Linking this to the question of whether prose is the most important signifier of the novel form, he says that "...in verse, everything hidden becomes manifest..." while in prose meaning appears naked because prose is more deliberate. Therefore, verse and prose suit the forms of the epic end the novel, respectively. However, he also clarifies that verse and prose are not very important

10 Lukács, Theory 64.
11 Lukács, Theory 84.
12 Lukács, Theory 93.
13 Lukács, Theory 56.
factors for determining the differences between the epic and the novel. Lukács further elaborates that in the novel, time is dealt with as 'duration' or 'real time', while in the epic, time is static and inevitably the action is located in the past. Moreover, in the epic 'memory' does not have the power to change the past, while in the novel, memory acts as a creative and transformative force, which can transform the past.

In the process of outlining such characteristics of the novel, Lukács also deals with the development of the novel and tries to build a typology of the novel form. He asserts that the key impulse behind the emergence of the novel is the "abandonment of the world by God." This in turn leads to two types of distortions in the world - the world of the novel either becomes "narrower" than the outside world; or it becomes "wider" than the outside world. This is a consequence of the soul itself becoming narrow or wide. The soul becomes narrow when the problematic individual of the novel believes in the idea of a rounded and ideal reality with an authentic and unshakable faith, when he underestimates its problematic nature. But upon finding that reality is contrary to his beliefs, he decides to redeem it by fighting evil forces, which he thinks have created this incommensuration. Such a novel is the novel of "abstract idealism" and its best example is Don Quixote by Cervantes. In such a novel the hero's interiority does not have an inner problematic or conflict. An unquestioning interiority projects its own version of reality on to the real world, which in turn leads to novelistic action. Elaborating upon the nature of such a world that brings into being a novel like Don Quixote, Lukács says:

Thus the first great novel of world literature stands at the beginning of the time when the Christian God began to forsake the world... Cervantes lived in the period of the last, great and desperate mysticism, the period of a fanatical attempt to renew the dying religion from within; a period of a new view of the world rising up in mystical forms; the last period of truly lived but already disoriented, tentative, sophisticated, occult aspirations.

Lukács argues that Don Quixote represents the battle between an unblemished interiority, and a prosaic and vulgar outward world. He also argues that the world becomes more and more prosaic with time and different writers employ different tactics to come to terms with it. Dickens, for instance, seems flat and moralistic because he makes his heroes come to terms with a prosaic bourgeois society by creating a false, artificial and

14 Lukács, Theory 97.
15 Lukács, Theory 103-04.
inadequate poetic effect. Balzac, on the other hand, manages to attain a genuine epic significance, by situating the subjective-psychologism of the hero within a world peopled by similar subjective-psychologist human beings, thereby, obtaining a strange, boundless and immeasurable essence of reality.

By the nineteenth century, another type of disproportion between the soul and the world becomes manifest. Now, the soul becomes larger than life and interiority gets transformed into a self-sufficient cosmos, at rest with itself. As a consequence, the form of the novel disintegrates into a random reflection of moods, and the novel's action gets replaced by psychological analysis. Reflexion and mood become an end in themselves, and lead to the destruction of form. Unlike the earlier novel in which interiority was rounded and the outward world failed to correspond to its idea of a rounded world, now "[a]n interiority denied the possibility of fulfilling itself in action turns inwards, yet cannot finally renounce what it had lost forever; even if it wanted to do so, life would deny it such a satisfaction; life forces it to continue the struggle and to suffer defeats which the artist anticipates and the hero apprehends". Lukács says that an example of such a novel is Flaubert's *L'Education sentimentale*, where "the hero's inner life is as fragmentary as the outside world." Yet, the novel manages to attain true epic objectivity by using real-life time to bring order to chaos. Such a novel is the novel of "disillusionment" which reflects impotent sorrow and a process of decomposition. He says that no innovations take place in the novel after the novel of "disillusionment", and that there seem to be no signs of that happening either because contemporary literature is just an imitation of earlier works. Although there is a requirement to renew the form of the epic, art will never be able to restore the lost totality of the epic on its own, because the limits of art are always defined by the limits of the existing world. Art will, therefore, only 'reflect' the world, but never 'change' it. Emphasizing the difference between the novel and the epic, Lukács says that unlike in the novel, in the epic man is neither just a social being nor just an isolated interiority.

Lukács also argues that the paradoxical form of the novel borders on certain inherent dangers. On the one hand it has a tendency to overlap with the epic, on the other hand it can also get reduced to mere entertainment. It might also disintegrate and become formless due to continuous fragmentations. "The novel," he says, "remains a beautiful yet unreal mixture of voluptuousness and bitterness, sorrow and scorn, but not a unity; a

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16 Lukács, *Theory* 118.
series of images and aspects, but not a life totality."\(^{18}\) He also says that, "[t]he novel is
the form of the epoch of absolute sinfulness, as Fichte said, and it must remain the
dominant form so long as the world is ruled by the same stars."\(^{19}\) Lukács also argues that
after Homer only a few authors manage to retain a sense of epic totality and roundedness
in the new world. They are: Giotto and Dante, Wolfram von Eschenbach and Pisano, St.
Thomas and St. Francis. Lukács, however, does not offer any explanations for why these
authors could do so in times which did not essentially merit the creation of epics.

The overall method of young Georg Lukács in this formative work remains
completely ambiguous. He lacks an obvious or clear methodology, and draws his
conclusions mainly on the basis of what he himself later called – ‘intuition’\(^{20}\) Lukács
betrays different theoretical tendencies in the course of this book. Sometimes he is an
idealist, sometimes a materialist; sometimes he argues like a historicist and mostly he
remains an a-historicist. Betraying his essentialist and a-historical
tendencies, Lukács
argues that the main task of true philosophy is to draw the “archetypal map” of the world
and discern the impulse of “eternity” in literature. Explaining how new literary genres
come into being from older ones, he asserts that there exist three “timeless paradigmatic
forms of world literature: epic, tragedy, philosophy.” \(^{21}\) Each of these genres has a
“home” or an a-priori origin. Most of the time superficial changes take place in these
genres, while their “original form-giving principle”\(^{22}\) remains the same. Sometimes,
however, their all-determining genre creating principle itself undergoes a change. Lukács
does not answer why this ‘sometimes’ occurs. But according to him it is at such times
that the development of new genres, whose intention and aim is different from the earlier
genres, takes place. The novel, according to him, is a product of such an overall
transformation.

On the whole, the nodal points of the theory of the novel for Lukács in this book
are: fragmentation as opposed to totality, emergence of the problematic individual,
absence of god, depletion of nature, increasing subjectivity tending towards complete
interiority, alienation, irony, depiction of the common man as subject, use of real-life
and contemporary time, a state of “eternally existent becoming”\(^{23}\) and most important of

\(^{18}\) Lukács, *Theory* 120.

\(^{19}\) Lukács, *Theory* 152.


\(^{21}\) Lukács, *Theory* 35.

\(^{22}\) Lukács, *Theory* 40.

\(^{23}\) Lukács, *Theory* 82.
all, the transformation of the real world into a prosaic world. Lukács suggests that most of the features of the form of the novel are linked to the condition of the new world, i.e. the nature of the material world decides the nature of the literary form practiced in it. However, in the course of his study the explanations for the same remain obscure and difficult to grasp. For instance — Why does the world lose its ‘totality’ at about a certain point of time? Why does God abandon the world at the same point in time? Does God abandon the entire world simultaneously or is Lukács referring to changes associated with the process of secularization taking place in Europe, particularly in England, France and Germany? What are the factors responsible for making the world more prosaic? What exact changes take place in the real world that give rise to alienation and acute subjectivity? Was the world of Homer as unified as Lukács says it was? Do concepts, like the soul becoming narrower or wider, hold water as valid concepts to model the typology of the novel on? The answers to many such questions remain completely elusive and are shrouded in a complex symbolism invoked by Lukács.

In spite of stating the contrary, Lukács dwells mostly in the ‘idealist’ realm and only occasionally ventures to draw ‘material’ links between the world and literature. He does not, therefore, overtly draw any connections between the emergence of the novel in the ‘new world’ and major historical transformations that were taking place in Europe at the same time; i.e. a transformation from feudalism to capitalism, the advent of the industrial revolution, the ideas of rationality, secularism, equality, democracy and liberty associated with the Enlightenment, growing nationalism, individualism etc. Almost forty years later, reviewing *The Theory of the Novel* as a Marxist, Georg Lukács criticized his work for the lack of any coherent theoretical principle. In the course of our study, we shall examine the usefulness and validity of his important work in the light of what other critics of the novel have to say about the nature of the form.

An important observation made by Lukács’ about the novel is that it progressively loses its grip on totality and becomes more and more fragmented. We shall examine this opinion in a subsequent chapter about the development of the novel. In this chapter, we shall devote our attention to examining Lukács’ definition of the novel as a form which is always in a state of “eternally existent becoming”, i.e. getting formed but never quite complete. We shall examine what the possible reasons behind the emergence of such a form can be, and why this definition of the novel seems to fit the bill better than most other common definitions of the novel. For the time being, however,
let us just underline the fact that Lukács, one of the earliest scholars of the novel, characterizes the novel as an open-ended form.

**MIKHAIL BAKHTIN**

Another important critic who has inspired and fascinated generations of novel critics through his remarkable insights is Mikhail Bakhtin.4 Here, we shall examine three important essays written by Bakhtin on the novel, namely - 'Discourse in the Novel' (1934-35), 'Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel' (1937-38), and 'Epic and Novel' (1941). Bakhtin’s crucial difference from Lukács is that he traces the origin of the novel to the ‘folklore’ rather than to the ‘epic’. As far as we are concerned, the most notable aspect of Bakhtin’s views on the novel is that he defines the novel as a hybrid, ever regenerative and all-inclusive genre, which refuses to get canonized or establish fixed rules of writing. We shall explore this view in greater detail later. First, let us begin by examining all his key opinions on the novel.

In ‘Discourse in the Novel’ Bakhtin distinguishes the novel from other literary genres by arguing that the novel has a predominantly verbal genealogy and must be studied as a “verbal art”. Unlike other genres it exists outside the scope of the artist’s study in the context of “open public spaces of public squares, streets, cities and villages”25 because its development involves many extra-artistic dimensions. The discourse of the novel is unique because it is “multiform in style and variform in speech and voice.”26 That is why the novel must not be approached in some abstract “formal” or “ideological” way. Rather its form and content must be studied in an integrated manner. According to Bakhtin, “diversity of voices”, “heteroglossia” or “simultaneity in dialogues”, are the distinguishing features of the novel. These features are evident from the diverse compositional unity of the novel, which can be broken down into the following:

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24 Bakhtin has had a remarkable history as a philosopher. He remained in obscurity for several decades in the Soviet Union due to ideological-political reasons. He suddenly emerged on the European intellectual scene after his discovery by a group of young students. He was translated from Russian into French during the late 60’s when structuralism was at its peak within the academia, and into English by the early 1980s. Bakhtin became an immediate sensation in Europe due to his affinity to the philosophical fundamentals of structuralism. Today, in spite of being methodologically difficult to pin down, Bakhtin enjoys tremendous popularity with literary critics and theorists, and his essays on the novel have become practically impossible for anyone to ignore. Many of his works, however, remain disputed on the authorship question because of theoretical discrepancies and inconsistencies.


26 Bakhtin, ‘Discourse’ 261.
1. Direct authorial literary-artistic narration (in all its diverse variants);
2. Stylization of the various forms of oral everyday narration (skaz);
3. Stylization of various forms of semiliterary (written) everyday narration (the letter, the diary, etc.);
4. Various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech (moral, philosophical or scientific statements, oratory, ethnographic descriptions, memoranda and so forth);
5. The stylistically individualized speech of characters.

Bakhtin argues that in ancient times, too, certain double-voiced prose genres had come into being, but they could not achieve the status that the novel has achieved today. Earlier, only single voiced or monologic narratives were dominant. Multi-voiced elements remained scattered and occasional, and they were viewed as belonging to "low" rather than to "acceptable" genres. No ancient genre could ever become completely hybrid or dialogic in nature, and dialogism could offer no challenge to the prevalence of monologism. Explaining this phenomenon, Bakhtin argues that over time discourse has undergone many changes and its "dialogic" essence has deepened. This growing dialogism is an outcome of the tussle between two kinds of forces. On the one hand are "the forces that serve to unify and centralize the verbal-ideological world," on the other are the forces that seek to decentralize and disunify the world. The development of the novel in history is a function of this deepening dialogic essence wherein decentralizing forces seek to destabilize the centralizing forces.

Bakhtin argues that the novel is fundamentally different from genres that are "poetic" in nature. Poetic genres require a pre-requisite "unity" of the language system and of the poet's individuality. Novelistic genres on the other hand make the most of "the internal stratification of language, of its social heteroglossia and the variety of individual voices in it." The novel does not spring from "poetic activity" but emanates from pure "rhetoric". It has an orientation towards the listener. In the novel, the forces of centralization and decentralization or unification and disunification, which Bakhtin calls "centrifugal" and "centripetal" forces respectively, intersect in the utterance of the speaking subject. The representation of the unique discourse of each speaking subject criss-crossing with those of others, distinguishes the novel from other genres. There are two stylistic lines of development in the novel - one that approaches heteroglossia from

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27 Bakhtin, 'Discourse' 262.
28 Bakhtin, 'Discourse' 270.
29 Bakhtin, 'Discourse' 264.
above, while the other approaches it from below. The novel is engaged in an uninterrupted relationship with both living "rhetorical" genres, which are journalistic, moral, and philosophical, as well as with "artistic" genres like the epic, drama or lyric. This finds reflection in the genre of the novel in the tendency of "hybridity":

The novel permits the incorporation of various genres, both artistic (inserted short stories, lyrical songs, poems, dramatic scenes, etc.) and extra-artistic (everyday, rhetorical, scholarly, religious genres and others). In principle, any genre could be included in the construction of the novel, and infact it is difficult to find any genres that have not at some point been incorporated into the novel by someone.30

Thus, hybridity or mixture of styles and heteroglossia or mixture of discourses are the distinctive features of the genre of the novel. The printing of books, too, plays a decisive role in the history of the novel. It serves "to shift discourse into a mute mode of perception"31 and turns the novel into the folk literature of the reading public. Distinguishing the novel from the epic, Bakhtin says that it is the idea of "testing the hero" that radically distinguishes the novel from the epic. In the epic world "an atmosphere of doubt surrounding the hero's heroism is unthinkable"32 whereas in the novel the heroism of the hero is mostly yet to be seen.

Bakhtin develops the concept of "novelness" in this essay. He explains novelness as a combination of dialogism, heteroglossia and hybridity. He uses novelness as a value loaded concept to distinguish the novel from all other genres which have more "centralizing" tendencies. He argues that novelness has existed in literature since ancient times, but has taken time to come into its own in order to become the "novel". He does not demarcate clearly the works that belong or do not belong to the novel genre. He vaguely calls different works "more" or "less" novelistic, since all literary works are to some extent dialogic or hybrid. He also accuses earlier scholars of having deliberately ignored verbal and rhetorical genres as well as the concept of "novelness" while developing their theories about different genres. In our view, Bakhtin's concept of "novelness" effectively ends up having a wide range of connotations, and contrary to his claim, can be applied to all kinds of genres – poetic and prosaic, literary as well as non-literary, because many literary as well as non-literary genres show the tendency of

30 Bakhtin, 'Discourse' 320-21.
31 Bakhtin, 'Discourse' 379.
32 Bakhtin, 'Discourse' 388.
hybridity, i.e. a tendency to mix various forms and discourses within their fold, for instance, newspapers, magazines, cinema etc. Bakhtin does not explain why the progressive mixture of styles and discourses starts taking place in the form of the novel, and why this hybridity eludes other literary genres.

Bakhtin views the novel as having a distinct democratic essence. His emphasis remains upon discourse, which is the key concept through which he understands the form of the novel. He does not, however, outline concrete or material reasons for changes that take place in the discursive universe. While implying a progressive democratisation of the world of discourses, Bakhtin does not draw any links between changing material historical forces and the corresponding democratisation of society. It has been argued by many historians, particularly Marxist historians, that the development of human society across history is one of increasing freedom, in which 'slave' society gave way to a relatively better condition for 'serfs' under feudalism, which paved way for a relatively better situation for 'workers' under capitalism. Bakhtin, however, does not link the two processes of democratisation - in society and in the realm of discourses. Unlike Lukács, Bakhtin does not bear a gloomy picture about his contemporary times; rather he sees his present as relatively free from “top-heavy ideologies”, as having a space for the clown, the buffoon, folksayings and anecdotes.

Bakhtin’s characterization of the novel as folk art of the reading public remains highly problematic. If Bakhtin is actually celebrating the novel for its increased readership as compared to the restricted readerships of manuscripts, then the novel can only be dated to the period after the print revolution in Europe, i.e., only after the fifteenth century. However, if Bakhtin is arguing that unlike the ‘high’ form of the epic, the novel is characterized more by its generic affinity to folk forms of art, particularly oral narrative forms, then the association of the novel to the reading public becomes difficult to understand. In short, if the novel is about folk forms, then it cannot be associated with the reading public, because the development of print culture in history was simultaneously accompanied by the destruction of folk and oral forms of art. However, if the novel is more about its popularity with the reading public, then it becomes difficult to understand what Bakhtin exactly means by ‘folk’.

In his essay ‘Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel’, Bakhtin develops another concept or parameter to examine all novels. He borrows from Einstein’s concept of the “chronotope”, which denotes both time and space. Bakhtin argues that chronotoposes can be used to define as well as differentiate between different genres. In
this essay, Bakhtin traces the beginnings of the novel to ancient times. He studies a
variety of ‘novels’ ranging from *Aethiopica* (second century A.D.) by Heliodorus, to
works by Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert and Tolstoy, in order to elaborate upon his theory of
the chronotope. He bypasses “all questions dealing with the origin of these types [of
novels] in history”33, and provisionally calls the first type of ancient novel - *adventure
novel of ordeal*. Doing so, he outlines what he calls various novelistic chronotopes like -
“adventure chronotope”, “chronotope of the road”, “chronotope of the Greek Romance”
etc. He calls the second type of ancient novel - *adventure novel of everyday life*, and
includes ancient Roman works like *Satyricon* and *The Golden Ass* in it. He examines
these works through what he calls the chronotope of the “path of life”. He calls the third
and last type of ancient novel - *ancient biography and autobiography*, and examines it
through the “folkloric chronotope”.

Bakhtin outlines a typology of the novel in this essay based upon an irregular
notion of the chronotope, which for him denotes a kind of transhistorical and
transcultural category. For instance, he argues that the “chronotope of the Greek
Romance” occurs not merely in ancient works like *Daphnis and Chloe*, but also in the
novels of Sir Walter Scott. Chance plays an important role in these works wherein things
happen suddenly, coincidences occur and the resolution of the plot depends upon the
vagaries of destiny. Similarly, “whole” individuals who are fully exteriorized and lack
interiority are represented in the works of Plato, Socrates, and St. Augustine, and also in
the works of Rabelais and Goethe. Bakhtin makes scores of such observations about
different ‘chronotopes’ and ‘novels’ in this essay.

At this juncture, perhaps it is useful to consider what Bakhtin says in another
book, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, about the development of literary genres:

... a literary genre, by its very nature, reflects the most stable ...

tendencies in literature’s development. Always preserved in a genre are
undying elements of the archaic. True these archaic elements are preserved
in it only thanks to their constant renewal, which is to say, their
contemporization. A genre is always the same and yet not the same, always
old and new simultaneously.34

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33 Bakhtin, ‘Chronotope’ 86.
34 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 1929, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Manchester
With this complicated understanding about literary history, Bakhtin opines that literary phenomenon from widely separate periods of time tend to simultaneously coexist in literature. Taking “time” as the primary category of literature he outlines various characteristics of different types of novels. He argues that in the “adventure novel of ordeal” time is static and immobile. In spite of many adventures, no individual undergoes any change. In the “adventure novel of everyday life” some changes or transformations in the individual take place. However, the world remains unchanged. Such novels depict exceptional or unusual moments of crisis or change. In “ancient biography or autobiography” the individual passes through biographical time and shows signs of a public self-consciousness. After the Renaissance, time starts developing a sense of moving forward, especially in the novels of Rabelais, although it does not yet get divided into a distinct past, present and future. Time becomes irreversible and realistic, and individualism starts coming into being. Bakhtin also says that in the epic “time” always exists in the absolute past, never in the present day. He expresses his distinct preference for “folkloric time” because in it the individual is truly integrated with his present.

In our view the inconsistency in Bakhtin’s argument is that on the one hand he proposes that the notions of time change with history. He associates different notions of time with different types of novels. Yet, on the other hand, he does not argue that these types of novels also change with history. On the contrary, he proposes that all types of novels have existed in the realm of literature since ancient times, irrespective of post- or pre-Renaissance developments in time. Although Bakhtin elucidates in great detail how the treatment of time and individual subjectivity varies in different works of literature, he does not provide explanations for ‘why’ the notions of time or individualism change in the first place. Moreover, he does not explain why the changing treatment of time is exclusively linked only to the novel as a genre and not to other genres. In the course of our study, we shall try to argue that the notions of time and individual subjectivity in fact underwent radical changes during the modern age. And therefore, it makes more sense to associate particular types of narratives as novels, rather than all types of fictional narratives as novels.

Yet, Bakhtin’s essay is remarkable for its broad sweep of literary history, in which Bakhtin actually manages to explicate how literary works develop over earlier works and change into more sophisticated and complex forms. However, even after many readings, Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope remains undefined and difficult to grasp. As Michael Holquist says in Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world, “at the conclusion
of the 200-page monograph on the chronotope - a small book really - many readers will find themselves hard pressed to answer the question, ‘What exactly is the chronotope?’ Is it a motif, a symbol, a type of plot, a notion of time or a kind of subjectivity? In 1971, over thirty years after writing this essay, Bakhtin said that contrary to his proposition, he had “by and large” studied only temporal relationships in novelistic chronotopes, therefore, a study of the spatial aspects of novelistic chronotopes still remained to be conducted. However, without going into further discussions about this essay, let us just state that this essay is significant for us because Bakhtin traces the origin of the novel to ancient times in it. This essay is also significant because like Lukács, Bakhtin too argues that the concept of subjectivity is an important notion for understanding the development of the novel. We shall follow this lead later in our subsequent chapter on the development of the novel. However, what exactly Bakhtin means by the novel remains difficult to understand. For the time being, however, let us get on with the task of examining his next essay on the novel.

Bakhtin wrote the essay, ‘Epic and Novel’ under the distinct influence of Georg Lukács’ Theory of the Novel. His obvious distinction from Lukács, however, is that he traces the origin of the novel to the ‘folklore’ as a form instead of to the epic. This is his most comprehensive essay on the genre of the novel, which includes many points from his earlier essays. Many of his arguments in this essay also contradict his earlier observations.

In this essay, Bakhtin argues that the genre of the epic is an antiquated genre that has completed its development, unlike the genre of the novel which is a still developing genre. The novel gets along poorly with other genres. It has a tendency to parody other genres, especially dominant or fashionable genres; “it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its own peculiar structure, reformulating and reaccentuating them.” “Whenever” the novel becomes dominant, it “novelizes” all remaining genres. The novel also has a remarkable ability to parody its own popular types, and thereby, criticize itself. Therefore, no novel emerges as a model for other novels, and the novel as a genre never gets antiquated or canonized. Bakhtin calls the novel the only genre born out of this new world, having a deep affinity with it, which reflects its reality more integrally, rapidly and sensitively in its process of unfolding. The novel exists “in the zone of direct contact

36 Bakhtin, ‘Epic and Novel’ 51.
with inconclusive present-day reality." It has an integral relationship with ideological genres, and genres of everyday life, so its boundaries fluctuate between fiction and nonfiction, literature and nonliterature. The novel also marks "a radical re-structuring of the image of the individual," who instead of becoming a whole finished man, develops endless possibilities and potentials. The individual in the novel develops a tension between the external and internal man, and his destiny or future opens up. Bakhtin argues that the emergence of the "present, in all its open-endedness ... is an enormous revolution in the creative consciousness of man." The novel finds expression due to the destruction of older hierarchical temporalities. This happens "on the boundary between classic antiquity and Hellenism, and in the new world during the late Middle ages and Renaissance." The Renaissance is important because it marks a very specific rupture in the history of Europe. It is during the Renaissance that Europe emerges "from a socially isolated and culturally deaf semipatriarchal society ... [and enters] into international and interlingual contacts and relationships." The availability of a multitude of different cultures, times and languages creates the ground for "polyglossia" or multilingualism, which, thereby, further develops the form of the novel. The Renaissance is also important because for the first time in history a concept of the future comes in; a new heroic beginning is made in which greater kinship develops to the future than to the past.

Bakhtin criticizes the comparison of the novel to the epic by saying that this comparison is a means of falsely elevating the status of a self-conscious genre like the novel by linking it to an elevated genre like the epic. In ancient times, too, the novel had existed unofficially, outside the order of 'high' literature, but ancient genre theorists like Aristotle, Horace or Boileau ignored it because they only took into cognizance those genres which could be organized into a harmonious whole. It was only during the nineteenth century that scholars started taking the novel into cognizance. They gave it recognition, however, without having a proper understanding about the philosophy of the novel. They just included the novel into the formal list of genres with a view to completing a maximal anthology. Bakhtin states, "the novel’s roots must ultimately be

37 Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel' 66.
38 Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel' 62.
39 Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel' 65.
40 Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel' 65.
41 Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel' 57.
sought in folklore\textsuperscript{42} and not in the epic. However, as we have argued before, Bakhtin does not clearly explicate the reasons behind this loaded observation.

On the whole, the nodal points of Bakhtin's theory of the novel are: heteroglossia, dialogism, hybridity, novelness, print, parody, polyglot discourse, folklore, decentralizing tendency in discourse, changing individuality, use of present day inconclusive time, orientation towards the future and an ever-regenerative all-inclusive form. The basic philosophy of Bakhtin remains rooted in the idea that "discourse" is the primary motor-force behind the movement of history. He elucidates at length 'how' discourses change in history, but does not explain 'why' discourses change in the first place. He painstakingly details changes that lead to the true blooming of the genre of the novel, but argues that the novel had always existed in time and its emergence after the Renaissance has got as much to do with its 'discovery' as with the actual revolutionizing of discourse by writers like Rabelais etc. On the whole, Bakhtin sets out to classify 'types' in literature, but ultimately takes recourse to the a-historical argument of 'eternity'. In our view, he does so because even while recording changes in the realm of discourses in the course of history, his a-historical outlook makes it difficult for him to demarcate and distinguish differences. Thus, in spite of repeatedly attributing immense importance to the Renaissance, he again and again goes back in time while tracing individual aspects of the novel. His most significant observation about the novel undoubtedly is about its plastic and elastic nature. Let us, however, postpone any further debate on this view till we find out more about the opinion of others on the origin of the novel. We shall make a final appraisal of all views once we cover the main areas of debate.

\textbf{IAN WATT}

Let us now examine The Rise of the Novel (1957) by Ian Watt, a book that occupies perhaps the most prominent place in the rise of the novel debates. Since its publication, no critic has been able to sidestep it in dealing with the origin of the novel. Ian Watt begins his investigation by first identifying three novelists of the early eighteenth century, that is, Defoe, Richardson and Fielding as the earliest innovators of the novel. He argues that the key to comprehending the emergence of the novel can be found only in a proper understanding of the favourable literary and social conditions responsible for the emergence of these three talented writers simultaneously. In the course of this book

\textsuperscript{42} Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel' 65.
he examines and outlines the main characteristics of their works in detail in order to answer questions regarding the form of the novel.

Watt begins his study by first trying to establish a working definition of the characteristics of the novel. This working definition, he argues, must be "sufficiently narrow to exclude previous types of narrative and yet broad enough to apply to whatever is usually put in the novel category." He argues that establishing such a working definition is difficult because writers like Defoe, Richardson and Fielding are very different from each other. They do not view themselves as similar to each other; rather their only similarity is that they write their works in opposition to earlier genres and possess a sense of creating something new.

Watt focuses upon "formal realism" as the defining characteristic of the novel and elaborates upon it. He argues that realism in the novel is characterized not by its predominant treatment of "low" subjects as is commonly perceived, but by the "way" in which novels present life. He says that the earlier realists of the Middle Ages believed in finding realities in universal abstractions, whereas, the realists of the modern age, that is, novelists, believe that realities reside in particular concrete objects of sense perception, which individuals discover through their senses. The novel borrows this "provisional" temper or method of investigation from the "philosophical realism" of Descartes and Locke. Watt argues that philosophers like Descartes and Locke develop wholly new conceptions of the individual. They do not accept anything on trust, and emphasize the importance of finding out everything on one's own. Instead of conforming to tradition they believe in having a distinct break from the past. Their philosophy is anti-traditional, critical and innovating. They argue that an individual investigator is more likely to arrive upon the truth if he chooses to consciously depart from previous assumptions. "Individualism" and "innovation" are the benchmarks of "philosophical realism". Watt argues that this individualist and innovating tendency of philosophy is best reflected in literature in the form of the novel.

Distinguishing the novel from earlier literary forms, he says that the plots of classical or Renaissance epics are based upon past history or fable, and their writers are judged on the basis of their adherence to received literary decorum. However, the novel as a form challenges this logic by placing unprecedented value on originality and novelty. It becomes a vehicle for a cultural tendency that believes in the uniqueness of

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43 Watt, 9.
each individual experience. Watt notes that “critical tradition in the early eighteenth century was still governed by the strong classical preference for the general and universal.”

The emergence of the novel marks a rejection of this classical past that seeks to universalize reality. The novel now resorts to “particularity of description.” Novels like *Robinson Crusoe* by Defoe and *Pamela* by Richardson are good examples of this type of narrative. The novel focuses upon characterisation and the presentation of background for achieving this particularity of description. The link between proper names and individual identity becomes very important. Early novelists devote a lot of their attention to naming their characters appropriately. They give proper names and surnames to all their major as well as minor characters. Defoe, Richardson and Fielding, all do so in their own unique styles.

Watt points out that “time” is an essential and important category for the novel. Time in novels is always treated as “duration” linked to the flow of experience. He argues that in earlier literary genres, timeless stories were told to mirror unchanging moral values. Now, novels show a distinct logic of cause and effect, wherein the past feeds into the future for developing novelistic action. Novelists reject the outlook of earlier fiction which was based on an “abstract continuum of time and space.”

He draws parallels between the “principal of individuation” put forward by John Locke and the creation of characters by novelists. Watt says that Locke argued that an object could become individualized only if it was placed against a backdrop, which was particular, both in time as well as in space. “Particular space”, therefore, becomes an important factor in the narrative of novels, in contrast to earlier tragedies, comedies and romances in which “place” was represented as something general and vague. Watt further explains that “space is the necessary correlative of time”, so along with time, it’s detailed description becomes essential for creating a picturesque and vivid social setting. Therefore, along with a more serious treatment of time, the novels of Defoe like *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* also start depicting some of the most visual scenes in all literature.

Watt argues that another common factor between the novelists and the philosophers of the early eighteenth century is the question of “language or semantics”. They both seek to find links between words and real objects. Novelists depict this link by
following styles of representation in accordance with their subject. Augustan prose traditions are completely rejected by them in order to create an easy and realistic prose style appropriate for the natural diction of under-educated characters like Moll Flanders or Pamela Andrews. Thus, novelists become the pioneers of a new and different kind of literary prose. Their language becomes more referential than the language of other literary forms and it “works by exhaustive presentation rather than by elegant concentration.”

Watt also points out that writers like Defoe and Richardson criticized many of their well-educated colleagues for indiscriminately using highly polished prose, which was often completely inappropriate for their subjects.

Watt argues, however, that it should not be assumed that realism in philosophy directly leads to realism in the novel. The relationship between the two is not very overt because “philosophy is one thing and literature is another.” They should at best be viewed as “parallel manifestations of larger change.” This larger change is the transformation of the Western civilization after the Renaissance, wherein a unified world picture of the Middle Ages is replaced by an aggregate picture “of particular individuals having particular experiences at particular times and at particular places.”

Watt argues that apart from philosophy and literature, other fields of thought also start displaying this tendency. For instance, the jury in law courts starts taking into account the “circumstantial view of life.” The novel takes on an air of authenticity and aims for depicting “a close correspondence between life and art.” However, it is this claim to authenticity which creates maximum controversies for the novel with many critics arguing that the novel does not produce endearing realities.

On the whole, Watt says that “formal realism” is the most distinctive characteristic of the genre of the novel constituted by a combination of many elements. Formal realism, however, is not the invention of eighteenth-century novelists. Traces of formal realism can also be found in the works of Homer, in works like The Golden Ass, and in the writings of Chaucer and Bunyan. But unlike modern novelists, they do not assimilate the aim of verisimilitude very deeply in their works. The novel is noteworthy because it is the first literary genre that fully rejects all non-realist conventions in order

47 Watt, 31.
48 Watt, 31.
49 Watt, 32.
50 Watt, 32.
51 Watt, 32.
52 Watt, 34.
to embrace realism completely. Writers ranging from Richardson to James Joyce, all use formal realism in their novels.

Watt goes on to give reasons for why the novel arises first of all in England. He attributes its rise to the rise in the reading public. He attributes this rise to the fact that the ability to read becomes a necessary accomplishment for the rapidly rising middle classes in eighteenth century England. The rural and urban poor also start getting access to education, although they face many social impediments, the most important one being the fact that they were poor. In spite of rapid increase, however, the size of the reading public largely remains restricted. Watt states that the most substantial additions to the buying-public were drawn, from well to do merchants, shopkeepers, and important tradesmen, “rather than from the impoverished majority of the population.”

Although a variety of printed materials became available in the market, the cost of books remained very high. Cheap forms of printed entertainment like ballads, chapbooks containing abbreviated versions of chivalric romances, stories of criminals’ etc. became the most popular. Some newspapers started carrying short stories or novels in serialized form. But in terms of sales and accessibility, the novel, a medium-price range literature, did not become the most popular form of literary entertainment.

By the 1740’s circulating libraries became very popular whose main attraction were the novels, especially among women. In a context where the nobility and the gentry faced a steady cultural retreat, the women from the upper and middle classes witnessed an increased participation in the field of literature. The availability of a great deal of leisure time played a key role in making women “omnivorous” readers. Even less well-to-do women ended up having more leisure time than before, because traditional household duties like “spinning and weaving, making bread, beer, candles, and soap, and many others, were no longer necessary, since most necessities were now manufactured and could be bought at shops and markets.”

Watt also says that this ongoing process of social change was not a very smooth one. The upper classes actively opposed the spread of education among the poor. They also sought to deny access to cheap literary entertainment to them. Many advocated that leisurely pursuits were the prerogative of only the leisured classes and the labouring classes must not be distracted from their labour. Measures were taken by employers to deny leisure time to their employees by increasing their working hours and duties. The

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53 Watt, 42.
54 Watt, 46.
scarcity of private space for reading also became another reason that made reading a difficult activity. Even leading writers of the day could not boast of a private writing place due to over-crowding in London. However, in spite of all this, for the first time in the history of literature “the centre of gravity of the reading public” started shifting towards the middle classes. This sparked off debates of all kinds, for instance, between “critical reading” and “reading for pleasure”, wherein many classicists argued in favour of the former. The changing composition of the reading public directly impacted the “content” of novels. Popular periodical essays, newspapers and journals also made their own contribution in shaping up the novel. A new public taste which preferred informative literature, improvement literature, and entertainment literature in the form of easy reading, came into being. Watt writes that the biggest volume of books published during the eighteenth century were religious books. Novelists like Richardson and Defoe carried the piety of religious tracts into the field of fiction. Simultaneously, an increased tendency towards secular tastes and values also became notable.

Elaborating further, Watt says that the decline of patronage by the court and the nobility led to many serious changes in the establishment of literature. An important place between the author and the reader now came to be occupied by middlemen. These middlemen primarily engaged in the trade of “manufacturing and selling the products of the printing press.” The Gentleman’s Magazine, whose main contributors were hacks and armatures, replaced periodicals like the Spectator and the Tatler, which had writers like Steele and Addison writing for them. Booksellers now achieved a financial and social standing as never before, and became important determinants of literary taste and public opinion. These powerful booksellers influenced both the authors and the readers. Many writers started complaining about “the effect of turning literature itself into a mere market commodity.” Watt quotes Defoe on this matter – “Writing...is become a very considerable Branch of the English Commerce. The Booksellers are the Master Manufacturers or Employers. The several Writers, Authors, Copyers, Sub-writers, and all other Operators with Pen and Ink are the workmen employed by the said Master Manufacturers.” Watt also quotes complaints by writers like Goldsmith, Pope and Fielding about this growing mechanization and commodification of literature at the hands of traders.

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55 Watt, 49.
56 Watt, 54.
57 Watt, 55.
58 Watt, 55.
Thus, the novel as a form came to be especially associated with the debased considerations of booksellers. However, writing as a profession became lucrative in this bargain. Richardson, Fielding, Johnson and many other writers were able to earn a lot of money through writing. Watt argues that a major technical innovation of "particularity of description and explanation" in the novel, was possibly a contribution of the laws of the market place that required writers to write books that were easy to understand for the reading public. In this new milieu, a writer's success started depending upon his ability to please the readership rather than a patron or the literary elite. In this competitive milieu, writers also start accusing each other of writing for economic rather than artistic reasons.

On the question of prose and poetry, Watt argues that the "economic" criterion was the primary reason behind an increased favour towards prose instead of verse. Instead of wasting time on creating "verbal grace, complication of structure, concentration of effect" of verse, writers now preferred to write verbose prose, because they got paid on the basis of "per sheet", the more the pages, the higher the wage. In this new era of writing, writers without any formal training in classical rules of literature became major writers, Defoe and Richardson being the best examples of this type. Watt says that their lack of familiarity with the baggage of past literature was a major reason responsible for the "originality" of their writings. Because of this unique social position, early novelists were able to respond to the needs of their audiences better.

On the whole, the nodal points of the theory of the novel for Ian Watt are: formal realism, individualism, novelty, anti-traditionalism, description, characterisation, representation of background, proper names, time and space, prose, rise in the reading public in England, growing literacy, leisure time among women, growth of the middle classes, increasing secularization, decline of feudal patronage, emergence of the marketplace, proliferation of entertainment literature, and professionalism among writers. Watt primarily attributes two types of reasons for the rise of the novel: literary and philosophical, and social and economic. In this book he outlines structural parallels between the two. The remarkable thing about Ian Watt is his ability to sift out and link the details of the specific conditions prevailing in eighteenth century England to the rise of the novel. His was the first major study in English literature that attributed changes in the literary realm directly to specific developments in the socio-historical realm. Unlike

59 Watt, 59.
Lukács or Bakhtin, however, Watt does not seek to understand the novel in terms of its core ‘genre giving’ principle. He looks more at the surface of discernable change. That is why, in spite of many useful insights which accurately describe the process of the rise of the novel, Watt does not to capture or identify enduring characteristics of the novel. He focuses upon “formal realism” as the main genre giving principle of the novel, but it is easy to say today that if it were indeed the main feature of the novel as a genre, then either the novel has become a marginal genre for the last century or so, or Ian Watt is not right in making this observation. We shall discuss his specific views on realism in the next chapter. At this juncture we can safely say that the three critics, whom we have studied so far, are the tallest theorists of the rise of the novel because they all seek to understand the novel as a genre in its entirety. Subsequent critics devote their attention only to certain aspects of the development of the novel, and more or less revolve within the parameters set down by them. Without any further ado, however, let us move on to examining some influential views on this issue.

**CONTEMPORARY OPINIONS**

In this section we shall examine important works by Marthe Robert, Lennard J. Davis, Nancy Armstrong, Michael McKeon and Firdaus Azim on the rise of the novel. These critics employ different methodologies and hence theorize the novel in different ways.

An important critic who approaches the question of the rise of the novel by combining psychoanalysis with literature is the French critic Marthe Robert. In typical post-structuralist style, she argues that the ultimate origin of the novel lies in the essential impulse of “storytelling”. Her book called *Origins of the Novel* (1980) generated considerable interest in the literary world upon its publication. Robert states that the modern novel “is a newcomer to the literary scene.” It was held in such so much disrepute during its early years that writers like Defoe and Diderot took take pains to argue that they were not novelists. However, the “devastating success” of the novel is based upon its basic parasitic nature wherein it appropriates all modes of writing in order to “monopolize” the entire literary heritage. Encroaching upon other literary forms, it gradually infiltrates and colonizes almost all other literature. Robert states that, “With the freedom of a conqueror who knows no law other than that of his unlimited expansion,
the novel has abolished every literary caste and traditional form.  

She argues that the novel is able to draw upon all kinds of subjects and styles. It borrows from drama, essay, commentary, monologue, conversation, fable, history, parable, romance, chronicle, story, or epic. It even includes poetry in it by sometimes being simply poetic. Unlike traditional genres, the novel has no "prescriptions or proscriptions". It mirrors the "inventiveness, restlessness and vitality" of modern societies in its form. It follows no rules, and its power lies in its total freedom.

Robert argues that "realism" can never be the criteria for classifying the novel, as many critics have wrongly argued. She says that writers of novels necessarily seek to invoke or activate some degree of illusion through their writings. For a writer to be successful with this illusion, he/she inevitably requires the complicity of the reader. While some writers try to create an illusion of reality, many also emphasise the fictive nature of their writings. They either choose to "ring true" or they choose to flout reality. They create delusions in the name of truth. She particularly outlines Swift, Hoffmann and Kafka for this, and infers, "the genre's originality and paradox consist in thus 'trying to make us believe'...for the sole purpose of deceiving." The plea for sincerity employed by many novelists is not born out of a desire for clarity but from an uneasy desire for self-justification. Thus, she argues, "The novel's truth is never more than its greater ability to delude." Although, the novel merely seems to imitate reality, its effort to do so is not entirely without meaning. The novel's basic impulse lies in trying to transform reality. In order to draw the links between this transformative desire and the novel, Robert digs into Freud's classical definition of "the family romance." Each child, when he is born starts idolizing his parents. However, with time the child realizes that he is no longer the object of their undivided attention. He also comes to realize that there are many other parents in the world. He wishes for the eternity of his outgrown beliefs, and upon finding that it is not possible, takes refuge in a world of imaginary parental idyll. Feeling estranged from his parents he nurtures a feeling of rebellion and dissent. With time this feeling changes into a vague desire for freedom. It is this basic conflict and crisis of humanity that manifests itself in the novel: "During the whole of its history the

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61 Robert, 4.
62 Robert, 5.
63 Robert, 15.
64 Robert, 16.
The rise of the novel has derived the violence of its desires and its irrepressible freedom from the Family Romance.65 Providing a definition for the form of the novel she says:

...it is the genre, with all its, inexhaustible possibilities and congenital childishness, the faults, frivolous, grandiose, mean, subversive and gossipy genre of which each of us is indeed the issue (to his shame, say the philosophers; to his delight, say the novelist, speaking for himself and for his readers) and which, moreover, recreates for each of us a remnant of our primal love and primal reality.66

The novel, for Robert, simply has its own psychology. She says that it is only one Oedipal genre among many others. However, it is different from other genres because it does not have any fixed codes or directions. It follows no hard and fast rules, neither classical nor modern. The novel has “a compulsory content and an optional form.”67 The content of the novel is necessarily that of the family romance, while its form is ambiguous and elastic. The shortcoming in the analysis of Marthe Robert is that she does not explain reasons for the elastic nature of the novel. She could have done so by linking the form of the novel to the conditions generated by colonialism. However, colonialism is used by Robert, more as a metaphor than as an actual historical factor responsible for the rise of the novel. She does not offer any concrete reasons for why the novel, in the long history of storytelling, with its plastic form comes into existence at a particular point of time.

Unlike Robert who links the origin of the novel to the romances, Lennard J. Davis in his book called Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel (1983) links the roots of the form to journalism and history. A student of Edward Said, Davis adopts Foucault’s method of “discourse analysis”. He argues that the emergence of any new phenomena in history is linked to particular power relations and the propagation of certain ideologies. Therefore, the novel, too, must be having certain ideological ends. All early novelists claimed to be writing factual accounts rather than fictional ones. Therefore, the key to the mystery of the form of the novel must lie in this paradox of fact and fiction.

65 Robert, 31.
67 Robert, 32.
He first of all advocates that *Don Quixote* must not be considered as a novel because it has a crucial deficiency, that it is not self-conscious. It does not involve the reader actively into its craft. In Cervantes' work, characters are involved in fabrications or are duped by other people’s fabrications, but the reader is never involved in such an activity. In the works of novelists like Defoe or Fielding, the reader is “him-or herself involved in the con game ostensibly perpetrated by the author who maintains that the novel is not fiction but fact.” Distinguishing the novel from the romance, he says that the romance necessarily has a backward glance which links it with the classical tradition. It is targeted at the wealthy and aristocratic readership. It uses the authority of “history” in its narrative, but does not invoke the authority of “fact”. Romance adheres to the codes of decorum and good manners, wherein nothing vulgar finds mention. Its action is set in the distant past rather than in more recent times. Its location is exotic and its protagonist aristocratic. It values the preservation of virtue and chastity, while the novel in contrast has no hesitation in dealing with illegal and forbidden activities. Unlike the novel, the romance is much longer in length and is never written in the first person or epistolary form. Davis says that, “The recurrent code embedded in the novelistic prestructure is one of rupture with the past, with the romance tradition, with stories about the distant past.” This discontinuity, however, is not simply one of reaction against the romance, but its reasons lie primarily in the non-literary realm. He argues that the emergence of the novel must be studied in the context of micro developments in the particular national context of England. Its emergence must also be studied in the context of the discourse of prose narratives in print. Davis argues that the technology of print plays a crucial role in deciding and shaping up the content of the novel, not because print changes the kind of literature that is written, but because it makes circulation of literature much faster. As a result, content based on more immediate happenings or seemingly immediate happenings, slowly becomes preferred. The main feature of prose narrative in print is that it develops a journalistic character, that is, a tendency to report things immediately. Forms like periodicals, newspapers and novels share this common function and basis.

However, Davis also argues that the trajectories of the development of the newspaper and the novel do not exactly overlap. This is due to the specific nature of the laws regarding licensing in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Licensing Act lapsed in 1695, but due to a lot of political controversies associated with

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69 Davis, *Factual Fictions* 38.
"news"; in 1712 the government decided to impose a kind of censorship on news by making it taxable through the Stamp Act. This became a major turning point in the history of the discourse of prose narrative. A "previously intact discourse - narrative-[got divided] into the taxable (news) and the untaxable (fiction, history)." \(^{70}\) On the whole, Davis argues that the novel is characterized by an ambivalent attitude towards fact and fiction. It comes "into being as a form of defence against censorship, power, and authority." \(^{71}\) However, it also helps to support and establish the very same power relations. It conveys its meaning to the reader through a relationship of voyeurism between the reader and the text. He also argues that the emergence of the novel should not be linked to the rise of the middle classes. "The weakness of the middle-class hypothesis is not that it is incorrect but only that it is incomplete. Why should a rising middle class necessarily lead to a 250-page book about a man on an island or a young girl who resists the seduction of her master?" \(^{72}\)

Four years after writing this book, Lennard J. Davis wrote another book on the origin of the novel called *Resisting Novels: Ideology and Fiction* (1987). Through this book he rejected the methodologies of new criticism and post-structuralism. He rebelled against his teacher Edward Said, to come closer to Marxism. In this book Davis changes most of his earlier conclusions about the novel. He changes the entire parameter of the discussion on the novel to argue that the novel is based upon four major components - location, character, dialogue and plot. He says that a combination of these components comes into being in the form of the novel due to changing political and economic relations in Europe heralded by emergent capitalism and colonialism.

Under capitalism, all relationships start getting defined in terms of exchange value. This leads to a social and cultural obsession with "descriptions of all objects", since everything gets objectified. The new form of the novel becomes a cultural bearer of this ideology wherein questions of "space" as well as "property" become more important than ever before. This results in unprecedented importance being given to the description of location in each novel.

Davis differentiates between the characters of epics and the characters of novels. He argues that the former exist without subjectivity, while the latter exist as individuals with subjectivity. This development takes place in the context of a world plagued by

\(^{70}\) Davis, *Factual Fictions* 97.  
\(^{71}\) Davis, *Factual Fictions* 222.  
\(^{72}\) Davis, *Factual Fictions* 43.
“alienation”. “Characters” of novels always fit into a pattern of behavior that makes sense, while in the real world personalities of living people can be quite arbitrary and strange. By becoming familiar with the decodable characters of novels it becomes possible for the readers of novels to “feel that we know a particular character in a novel better than we know some of our own friends or acquaintances.” Davis argues that “the coherence of character can be a kind of substitute for the formlessness or irrational nature of modern consciousness and culture.” The novel, therefore, becomes a means of conditioning individual social beings into devoting their attention to understanding other individuals instead of the mechanisms of the entire society.

Davis argues that contrary to the claims made by Bakhtin, conversations and dialogues in novels represent forces of centralization rather than the forces of decentralization. The persona of the author always tells his tale in a civilized, literate and cultured language. As a consequence, the language that is closer to the actual speech of speaking subjects becomes deviant or unusual because of its representation on the printed page of the novel through abbreviations or contractions.

He also argues that the emergence of thick plots in novels reflects the objectification and commodification of “lived experience and daily life” in which the lives of people work themselves out in front of the reader’s eyes. Thus, the action of the novel is separated from life itself. Davis, therefore, argues that contrary to general assumptions about the democratic and universal appeal of the novel, the novel actually serves the purpose of preparing the reading public to adjust to regressive political ideologies and reinforced property relations.

Along with Davis, critics like Nancy Armstrong and Michael McKeon also brought out their influential studies on the rise of the novel in the same year of 1987. Nancy Armstrong changed the entire parameter of the debate on the rise of the novel as well as the understanding about European history itself through her book Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel. She says that during the early eighteenth century an important change starts taking place in society with regard to women. Slowly a modern individual comes into existence. This individual is first and foremost a woman. Unlike men she is not known by her birth, title or status, rather, she becomes known in terms of the qualities of the mind, or the more subtle nuances of behavior indicating what one is “really” worth. It is the emergence of such an individual;

73 Davis, Resisting Novels 114.
74 Davis, Resisting Novels 202.
which gives rise to individualism of the modern variety. Armstrong argues that domestic fiction becomes the main form of the novel and functions as a means of reordering society: "My study of the novel will demonstrate that, with the formation of a modern institutional culture, gender differences - though one of the many possible functions of sexuality - came to dominate the functions of generation and genealogy, which organized an earlier culture."\textsuperscript{75} The nature of language itself changes. Instead of signifying history in terms of older kinship relations, now, a new feminine discourse comes into being which divides the universe into the masculine and feminine spheres. This discourse gives rise to the first comprehensive theory of psychology. The details of "what it means to be a woman" get written about in novel after novel. Armstrong argues "the rise of the novel hinged upon a struggle to say what made a woman desirable."\textsuperscript{76} The novel became a site of silent and covert struggle for more power for women. In the times when intense social upheavals were taking place and a class conscious society was coming into being, the proliferation of personal histories or stories about courtship and marriage became a manifestation of displacing an entire body of political fiction. Important drama gets enacted within the domestic realm by the obliteration of class identity through the institution of marriage wherein women marry into wealth. Conduct books and an obsession with sexual purity feed into the content of the novel because of a social conviction that women’s leisure activities require supervision. Therefore, the form of the novel comes up in times when gender differences come to the forefront of social discourse. They give rise to individualism based upon different natures of women, and reflect an intense power struggle about gender equations.

Michael McKeon in his book \textit{The Origins of the English Novel: 1600-1740}, begins by proposing "that genre theory cannot be divorced from the history of genres, from the understanding of genres in history ...that the theory of genre must be a dialectical theory of genre."\textsuperscript{77} He uses Marx’s concept of "simple abstraction" to arrive upon an approximate time for the origin of the novel:

\begin{quote}
By the middle of the eighteenth century, the stabilizing of terminology - the increasing acceptance of "the novel" as a canonic term, so that contemporaries can "speak of it as such" - signals the stability of the conceptual category and of the class of literary products that it encloses. My
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{75} Armstrong, 12.  \\
\textsuperscript{76} Armstrong, 4.  \\
\textsuperscript{77} McKeon, \textit{Origins} 1.
\end{flushright}
procedure in this study will be to work back from that point of origin to disclose the immediate history of its "pre-givenness." 78

Unlike some of his colleagues, McKeon argues that the novel as a form bears the unique distinction of being the genre that "internalizes the emergence of the middle class" 79 and its concerns. The early eighteenth century is the time when Europe as a whole, and England in particular, faces a simultaneous social and intellectual crisis due to intense class struggles within its societies. In such a context, the novel becomes an "early modern cultural instrument" to confront this crisis. Instead of focusing upon the similarities between early English novelists, McKeon emphasizes the differences between writers like Richardson and Fielding who bear completely different ideological views on their preceding literary genres as well as on their contemporary times. Yet they become the innovators of the same genre. He argues that in this period various important transformations in social values were taking place. One important transformation is the move towards secularization, wherein society starts facing a crisis of faith and begins looking for alternate secular sources of spiritual and moral authority. Against this backdrop, art begins to replace religion, and narrative begins to replace drama. The criterion of class also begins to gradually replace the status criteria. The notion of social hierarchy having a basis in "Natural" laws takes a serious drubbing. In such fluid times two distinct ideological orientations come into being. McKeon calls these the "progressive" and "conservative" ideologies, respectively, that is, ideologies that support the commoner as opposed to those ideologies, which support the aristocracy. This crisis emerges from "the reality of a long-term transition" 80 from feudalism to capitalism. Fictions of earlier times do not encounter such problems and are not equipped to engage with these social and ethical problems. The novel as a new genre arising out of this antithesis seeks to "mediate - to represent as well as contain" 81 this conflict. Therefore, its most frequented theme becomes that of "questions of virtue" 82 through which both sides seek to claim virtuosity and superiority. These virtues, their identification and definitions become a site for continuous conflict, and gradually envelope in an allegorical way the questions of politics, gender, class, history, and language etc. Unlike Davis, McKeon argues that the novel is not an outcome of an insulated national culture

78 McKeon, Origins 19.
79 McKeon, Origins 22.
80 McKeon, Origins 176.
81 McKeon, Origins 173.
82 McKeon, Origins 174.
but a composite culture of print wherein different types of fiction translated from French or Spanish contribute to shaping up the style of the English novel.

Another critic who throws some fresh light on the rise of the novel debate, is Firdaus Azim, whose book *The Colonial Rise Of The Novel* (1993) draws attention to the links between novel and colonialism. Azim argues that eighteenth century England is deeply engaged with questions of human subjectivity. The search for understanding subjectivity takes English narrative forms into the terrain of travel narratives or to exiled or ostracized human beings. Cultural encounters become the recurrent theme of the novel right from its inception, be it with Man Friday in *Robinson Crusoe* or adventures in different travel tales. Thus, Aphra Behn's novel *Oroonoko* becomes a means of defining, as well as, differentiating the identity of a white prosperous English woman from that of a black Surinamese prince/slave. Azim argues that the "central narrating subject" is the main formal property of the novel. This narrating subject comes into existence in the backdrop of the discourse of Western Enlightenment in which philosophers seek to create "citizens". This narrating subject is rooted in the "inauguration of the bourgeois democratic order, based on the notion of the rights and sovereignty of the human individual." The novel occupies an ambiguous and anomalous place in this project. On the one hand, it wages struggle against the master narratives of other genres, on the other, it tries to get recognition from the very culture that scorns it. Azim argues that it is significant to note that the novel is given a "very reluctant status as literature, and was not even included in the Oxbridge literature syllabus until the 1930s."

Dichotomy or paradox is the key characteristic of the novel, where the encounter of the self with the other becomes extremely important. The birth of realism in the novel is linked to this subject – object dichotomy, as reality is "something external to the narrating subject." The question of gender and female subjectivity also becomes important. Females or feminine viewpoints within the novel, confront or bring within their ambit the brutality and violence accompanying the process of colonialism, and, thereby, highlight the question of subjectivity, because women view their times in ways significantly different from men. The novel, therefore, becomes the key genre through which many of these subject positions are worked out.

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85 Azim, 20.
Thus, we can observe that many different versions and explanations exist about the rise of the novel. For Lukács the main reason for the rise of the novel lies in the emergence of a new world in which an earlier totality and wholesomeness are lost. In this new world the harmonious epic gives way to the “transcendental homelessness” of the novel. For Bakhtin the main motor force behind the rise of the novel is the ever-increasing dialogism and hybridity of the verbal – discursive universe, which progressively finds true expression in the polyglot or multilingual form of the novel. For Ian Watt the most important factor is that an aggregate view of the world, comprising of particular experiences of particular individuals at particular places in particular times replaces the unified worldview of the Middle Ages. The novel, for Watt, is the best exponent of this provisional, critical and anti-traditional temper represented through the technique of “formal realism”. Marthe Robert argues that the elastic and ambiguous form of the novel mirrors the “inventiveness, restlessness and vitality” of modern colonial societies, even while its content continues to reflect the primordial essence of “family romances”. In his two separate explanations, Lennard J Davis first argues that the novel is a product of an express print culture which overhauls and updates all literary themes, especially in opposition to the romances. He later argues that the novel is a deeply ideological form which reinforces the new capitalist order by propagating notions of private property through its narratives and themes. For Nancy Armstrong the most important factor behind the rise of the novel is the emergent primacy of individualism, propelled by the modern emphasis on the social category of gender, which shifts the focus of the middle classes away from class to domesticity. For Michael McKeon the novel is the literary form of the emergent middle classes, which represents progressive as well as conservative ideological concerns involved in the transformation of society from feudalism to capitalism, especially those associated with ‘virtue’. Firdaus Azim argues that the novel is the product of a new colonial world which encounters several ‘others’ as opposed to the ‘self’. In such a context, the novel provides a narrative site where questions of identity and subjectivity are resolved.

Let us mention here that there exist many more subtle nuances to the rise-of-the-novel debate. However, we will restrict ourselves to the critics we have studied so far, because to our knowledge they represent the key aspects involved in this debate. As we have mentioned before, we would follow a method which is both historicist as well as materialist. Let us devote our attention to the main questions that remain unanswered or remain shrouded in ambiguity:
1. Why does an 'elastic', 'plastic', 'parasitic', 'hybrid', 'inventive' or 'unfinished' genre like the novel come up in literature? What are the historical factors that explain the rise of such a form?

2. Why does 'totality' in literature collapse at the turn of the modern age, and why does god abandon the world at about the same point of time? What is the link between these developments and the emergence of fragmented and subjective narratives?

3. Is the democratization of discourse an automatic, teleological process, or can larger historical processes explain it? What is its special link to the novel?

4. Which factors explain the emergence of the technique of 'formal realism' in the novel, i.e. a critical, anti-traditional and provisional way of looking at the world?

5. What is the link between capitalism, individualism and the middle classes? What is their link to the novel?

6. Why do questions of subjectivity and gender become so important in the novel?

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS**

Let us try to find answers to these questions. It is important to state at this juncture that, in our view, changes in the literary world take place because the real, material and historical worlds undergo changes. Saying so, let us take a fresh look at a major turning point in history, i.e., a time when the transformation from feudalism to capitalism was taking place in Europe. Before this time, both the epic and particularly the romances were widely prevalent in Europe. However, slowly with the emergence of the novel, these genres got marginalized. *Our main proposition is that the rise of a plastic, elastic, inventive, parasitic, unfinished and ever-regenerative form like the novel, which has shown tremendous adaptability vis-à-vis different themes as well as techniques, is rooted in the emergence of a system which is also plastic, elastic, inventive, parasitic, unfinished and regenerative, i.e., capitalism. We would also argue that those who say that the novel had existed before the advent of capitalism are making a serious error of judgment.*

To make our point, let us digress a bit and devote our attention to studying the basic characteristics of the historical transformation from feudalism to capitalism, and the accompanying shifts in the intellectual, moral and conceptual worlds. Under
feudalism, the main backbone of the economy was the agricultural produce from land. The peasants did the main labour, but they were completely dependent upon the landlords, who not only owned the lands but also very often the serfs who worked on it. Landlords maximized their profits by squeezing more work out of the peasants. A share of their profits always went to the king or to a superior nobleman as tax or rent. The landlords, with their standing armies, owed allegiance in a tier system right up to the king. This grid was networked through inviolable kinship relations based on birth. Technically the king owned all the lands (apart form the land owned by the church). The rate of economic growth under feudalism was very slow since there was no incentive to invest any surplus back into the same system. The main motivation of the landlord was to extract maximum profits, with the least amount of investment on his part. A serf or agricultural worker also did not have any extra incentive for a better produce because his share of earning was already earmarked and he owned neither the land that he worked on, nor its produce. Feudalism, therefore, was basically a stagnant system with no pressing needs for innovation or dynamism. That is why feudalism sustained in the same mould for hundreds of years, resisting any major changes in its basic structure. The feudal society was organized on the logic of a ‘chain of being’. Its extremely hierarchical and status-quoist social order meant that an individual, more often than not, died in the same social position that he/she was born into, very often in the same village or parish as well. There existed hardly any scope for anyone to substantially alter his or her social position.

Art or literature under feudalism was based upon a system of patronage extended by the nobility or the king/queen. Art was circulated and consumed by the same class, because any artist who sought to sustain himself needed to please this class of men and women. The subject matter of art was also largely restricted to gods and goddesses in epics, or to kings, queens, noblemen and noblewomen in the romances. The art commissioned by the church was at times somewhat different. Other forms of art like the folk etc. were created and consumed in distinctly different social circles. There existed with very little overlap or interface between the two. On a few occasions, if the peasantry were made the subject of ‘elite’ arts, their representation was either in a negative light with peasants being shown as low people, or in the sense of the exotic or pastoral where the peasants were valorized as innocent and virtuous people. Very often the pastoral

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served as an allegory for representing something entirely different. The forms of literature were based on strict rules of writing as well as a hierarchical system of genres. Adhering to decorum, conventions and literary rules was important. In fact, historically, a literary and academic interest in ‘folk’ literature or art forms created or composed by the common people about themselves, began only in the eighteenth century when feudalism was already on its way out. Before that, a largely rigid division existed between different arts based on their social origins. This rigidity was broken perhaps only during fairs or religious pageants when some ground was created for an interface between different social classes. Otherwise people as well as literatures existed in fairly insulated environments and cultures.

The slow and passionately resisted transformation to a capitalist mode of production basically meant a fundamental change in this entire logic of social organization. The existing pyramidal structure of society based on birth received a major blow. This was because capitalism as a system was substantially different in its economic and social logic. Instead of a fixed piece of land, capitalism was based upon an economic system that thrived upon continuous accumulation and circulation of capital. Unlike feudalism, wherein, landlords hoarded huge sums of money, now the capitalists concentrated upon reinvesting their earnings to devise more means to further increase their profits. As a result, right from its inception, capitalism was a growth-oriented system. Hoarding money under capitalism was always discouraged. Everybody under capitalism was expected to keep capital in flow. The new ethic of Protestantism also taught that wealth should not be dissipated but should be ploughed back into business. However, this did not mean that capitalism was based only upon the flow of capital. In fact, the main motor force behind capitalism was the incentive of accumulating unprecedented private profits. These profits could be accumulated through private ownership of the means of production, i.e. anybody who owned the means to produce certain goods could employ a wage labourer to do the work, and without doing any actual physical labour, accumulate all the profits arising out of its sales within a market.

87 See Raymond Williams, 'Pastoral and Counter-Pastoral,' The Country and the City (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) 13-34.
setup. Those who owned private property enjoyed an automatic edge under capitalism in gaining ownership of the new means of production.

Growth within capitalism was premised upon technological changes, innovations and risk-taking entrepreneurship, with the market emerging as the centre of the economy. One of the main impacts of emergent capitalism was to completely smash the old order based on kinship ties. Now, being born a noble was of no use unless one was a good entrepreneur as well, because income generated in the new economy through the market was far more than all the wealth accumulated over generations. Moreover, capitalism necessarily entailed the development of a new migrant workforce that was not tied down to one place through rigid kinship or other such ties. The ‘ideology’ propagated under capitalism was that any Tom, Dick or Harry could now become wealthy through innovative enterprise. Many people, in fact, substantially altered their social positions, but the dice was always systemically tilted in the favour of those who were already rich. All this created a new flexible social order. Upward mobility, instead of an old rigid social hierarchy, now became possible. A new class of people like “…the mercantile circles and economically enlightened landlords, financiers, scientifically-minded economic and social administrators, the educated middle class, manufacturers and entrepreneurs”90 made the most in the new system. The old feudal form of small-scale subsistence agriculture gave way to a large-scale capitalist mode, in which land became a commodity like any other.91 Religious institutions, which were deeply entrenched in feudal social codes and hierarchical social order, also started facing a crisis of legitimacy.

Capitalism made a huge impact on all walks of life - religion, art, literature, science, agriculture, politics, state, family, marriage etc, and led to significant shifts in worldview. With social mobility, the ideas of freedom, equality and fraternity emerged on the European social scene in a major way. Large-scale questioning of social hierarchies took place not merely among educated or intellectual circles, but also at the popular level. New ideas of equality found their most powerful exposition in the French Revolution (with the ‘Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen’), although revolutions, both before and after, kept on taking place in different countries of Europe. Powerful arguments for the equality of women in society were also articulated. Philosophers and thinkers like Mary Astell, who wrote *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*
for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest (1694), and later, Mary Wollstonecraft, with her A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792), broke new grounds for the cause of women. These were also times when large-scale colonial encounters as part of capitalist expansion were taking place. Slave trade became a major occupation. Many anti-slavery tracts were written as part of the anti-slavery movements. ‘Citizenship’, a new idea in which each individual was seen to be equal before the state evolved and was popularly embraced both by the French and the American Revolutions. The concept of a ‘democratic’ form of government now challenged the older ‘aristocratic’ form of government. The first major example of this change, although partial, took place in England through the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when the powers of the parliament over the monarchy were ensured.

Another major change brought about by this new mode of production based on technological innovations and enterprise, was the Industrial Revolution. Within a short span of time, various path-breaking and dramatic advancements took place. Britain was the first country where many new productive forces were unleashed. It is important to delineate here that the industrial revolution was not a product of path breaking technological advances, as is popularly thought, but that path breaking technological advances were an outcome of the capitalist mode of production, wherein profits were reinvested to devise means for making greater profits. This has been argued deftly by Eric Hobsbawm who says, “Whatever the British advance was due to, it was not scientific and technological superiority.” France was far ahead of England in the natural sciences and produced more original inventions, and Germany, by far, excelled Great Britain in technical knowledge: “But the right conditions were visibly present in Britain, where more than a century had passed since the first king had been formally tried and executed by his people, and since private profit and economic development had become accepted as the supreme objects of government policy.”

A major impact of the industrial revolution and the rapid advancement of technology was an accompanying sense of ‘progress’ over the past. A sense that the new was better than the old, that the earlier times were not the most venerable, and that it was the future which was worth looking forward to. Value came to be invested in innovation

92 Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce were two outstanding English figures who campaigned against slavery during the late eighteenth century. Anti-slavery campaigns also received a major fillip from Evangelicalism, an Anglican revivalist movement.
93 Hobsbawm, Revolution 45.
94 Hobsbawm, Revolution 46.
and novelty, instead of that which was ancient or traditional. Innovation became the ideology of the new market. The entire way of looking at earlier times changed. The past became more removed from the present. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that 'history' as a serious and important discipline of study also developed at the same point of time.

Along with the newfound power of technology and an unprecedented confidence in the future, came a new sense of control over 'nature'. For the first time in history, human beings came to enjoy a sense of dominance over nature. Before this time, right from pre-agrarian hunter-gatherer communes to feudalism, nature was always perceived as a formidable force. Now, people came to enjoy a sense of confidence in dealing with the challenges thrown by nature, be it bad weather, storm, disease or illness. It is significant that the ideas of secularism also gained ground in European societies at about the same point of time. As sociologists and theologians like Max Weber and P. Tillich have argued, the origin of religion in society lay in the sense of powerlessness and inability of people to explain natural phenomenon, particularly those related to birth, sickness or death.95 Now instead of blaming the vagaries of nature upon the supernatural force of 'God', there was an effort to discern and understand the underlying principles of nature. These times also saw an unprecedented enthusiasm over the power of science. It is not a coincidence that England, the first European country to separate religion from the state as well as the first to form the Royal Society96 of London in 1660, was also the first to develop capitalism, the first to have a democratically elected government, the first to have a major revolution in 1688, as well as the first to have the industrial revolution. Although the Royal Society failed to do much of what it had set out to do, i.e. fulfill the purpose of unraveling all the laws of nature, their initial confidence in fulfilling these lofty goals is particularly noteworthy. It is important to note that though all these changes took place in England over a prolonged period of time in history, they were closely and dialectically linked to each other.

A significant outcome of the new historical sense of progress, the delegitimisation of religious authority, the accompanying technological advancement, and vice versa, was the popular emergence of reason and rationality as an ethic as well as a governing principle for capitalist societies. The logic of 'cause and effect' came to


96 The Royal Society was dedicated to Baconianism, i.e., a disregard for tradition, emphasis on empiricism, on humanistic belief in progress, on improvement of human life through scientific control of nature. The presidentship of Newton signified its most eminent phase.
dominate thought and philosophical systems. A new belief developed in the agency or will of human beings. Descartes in Meditaciones de prima Philosophia (1641) and Regulae ad directionem ingenii (1684), Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole in Logic, or The Art of Thinking (1662), Baruch Spinoza in Ethics (1677), John Locke in An Essay concerning Human Understanding (1689) and Hume in Treatise of Human Nature (1739) argued for the primacy of reason, logic and rationality as supreme social virtues. In fact, the social vacuum created by the absence of religion in governance, was filled by a new secular code of reason. It became important to discern what was reasonable. Rationality emerged in a significant way as an important human faculty as opposed to emotion. However, for a society or a nation to be rational, it was also important for its constituent individuals to be rational and reasonable. It became important that an individual negotiate his/her own relationship with god based upon what was reasonable, instead of depending upon the church, as per the new doctrine of Protestantism.

Individualism, too, emerged as an important ideology. It became economically important for an individual to make maximum profits on the basis of individual enterprise. For this, it became equally important to rise above the constraints of community and kinship ties, to maximize individually owned private property. Nationalism emerged in place of the older authority of religion and kinship ties. For the first time in history, the view of society as an aggregate of individuals got evolved. It slowly became important for the state to work for the benefit and development of individual citizens. The new political theory of 'liberalism' came about, which sought to protect the rights and liberties of individuals vis-à-vis governments. Individualism became an important ethic as well as virtue under capitalism, wherein if an individual made profits then it reflected his inner virtue and the nation and people as a whole benefited from him. Another reason for the development of individualism was the collapse of old community ties. As Ian Watt says:

For those fully exposed to the new economic order, the effective entity on which social arrangements were now based was no longer the family, nor the church, nor the township, nor any other collective unit, but the individual: he alone was primarily responsible for determining his own economic, social, political and religious roles.

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97 See 'Rational,' Williams, Keywords 252-256
98 See 'Society,' Williams, Keywords 291-295.
99 Watt, 63.
The old joint family setup started breaking up in order to make way for the new nuclear family. The nuclear family was "free of wider kinship ties, ...more geographically and socially mobile, ...[gave] greater emotional support via the unconstrained choice of marriage partners, and ...[permitted] occupational roles to be filled by achievement criteria, all requirements of industrial society." The notion of love marriage as opposed to arranged marriage started gaining popularity. Apart from its progressive aspect, the lofty notion of free choice in marriage went hand in hand with the aspiration for improving one's social standing by marrying money. In fact, making a good/profitable match through individual merit became the dominant means of social mobility for women in the new world.

In this ethos of individualism, a new kind of subjectivism developed. Individuals became more self-conscious about others as well as themselves. Questions of subjectivity became more important. Lives of individuals got sharply divided between the hierarchically rated private and public realms, with a new work ethic expecting minimum overlapping and interference between the two. Multiple subjective selves of individuals started getting discussed by leading philosophers of these times, Diderot talked about the ‘complexity of personhood’ while Adam Smith discussed the ‘nature of sympathy’. The faculties of feeling and thinking within the same being were slowly separated. This new subjective consciousness was intensified due to the expanding colonial project, which brought European people into contact with people unlike their own and made them acutely conscious about their own identities.

The colonial project was integrally tied up with the development of capitalism. Capitalism explored new worlds in search of more lands, new markets as well as cheap labour. As a system it was antithetical to the existence of autonomous, insulated or self-sustaining economic units, as under feudalism. Its predatory nature required the engulfing of all economies of the world into its own. Capitalism as an economic system showed tremendous flexibility and adaptability when brought into contact with other modes of production. While its history in Europe involved the complete smashing of the old feudal system, its trajectory in the colonies displayed a profit based reconciliation with, and appropriation of all other pre-capitalist modes of production. As Prabhat Patnaik argues:

100 See 'Nuclear Family,' Dictionary of Sociology 288-289.
See also Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800 (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977) and 'Family,' Williams, Keywords 131-134.
[Capitalism breaks] down the insulation of existing pre-capitalist societies, it does ruthlessly draw them into the vortex of its own accumulation process, but not necessarily by creating within them, in dominant form, the structures of the bourgeois mode of production itself. They are transformed by, and hegemonized by, metropolitan capitalism, but they themselves never get transformed into bourgeois societies.101

Thus, capitalism, while trying to gain a foothold as a new system in Europe, displayed outright intolerance, certain radicalism and a critical-oppositional approach towards all aspects of the existing feudal setup. But simultaneously, while branching off into the colonies, it showed the remarkable quality of making everything a part of its own without confronting all reminiscent features of other modes of production. Unlike in Europe, the domination of capitalism in the colonies existed in places where there was no secularism, no democracy, extreme social disparity, prevalence of racism, patriarchy or casteism, technological backwardness, even the existence of primitive or tribal societies. While it promoted nationalism on the one hand, it remained international in its character on the other. As Eric Hobsbawm says, "...it was easier to link distant capitals than country and city." 102 Urban centres slowly became the locus of all activities, political, economic, artistic and scientific.

The shift from feudalism to capitalism led to the emergence of another key factor, i.e. the middle classes. The middle classes made profits out of transactions, in which they were neither the producer/worker nor the buyer/consumer nor the owner of the means of production. Instead they occupied an intermediary position and performed all kinds of specialized as well as odd jobs. The growing members of this upwardly mobile class thronged to the urban centres. With the development of capitalism, this class grew on a global scale. In the emergent phase, it was this class that provided the key ideological, moral and intellectual impetus to the rise of capitalism. However, the role played by this class was most unusual. Neither did it bear the political and economic power of the capitalist class to pioneer capitalism, nor did it bear the democratic power of the workers

101 Prabhat Patnaik, 'The Concept of The Mode Of Production And The Theory Of Imperialism' (Forthcoming).

See also Paul Sweezy and Paul Baran, Monopoly Capital. "...only a few countries – most of Western Europe (including Britain), Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, possibly South Africa – can conceivably follow in the footsteps of the United States. In the rest of the capitalist world scores of colonies, neo-colonies, and semi-colonies are doomed to remain in their degraded condition of underdevelopment and misery." (Calcutta: K.P Bagchi & Company, 1994), 12.

102 Hobsbawm, Revolutions 22.
and peasants, who with their aspiration to break free from feudal exploitation delivered the deathblow to feudalism through popular uprisings and continuous revolutions. The middle classes were influential or decisive in neither of these ways, yet it was always they who bore the entire moral and ethical burden of change. Historically, they always sided with the powerful. If revolution were imminent, they would talk about equality, democracy and freedom, if it were crushed they would talk about the inevitability of inequality and exploitation. On their own, they were not powerful enough to decide the course of history, but they always pretended as though they were.

All these changes, however, did not happen unproblematically. Capitalism did not emerge unchallenged; rather its rise was fiercely contested and resisted. There were two kinds of debates and oppositions to the spread of capitalism. On the one hand, there was stiff resistance from the old feudal and monarchical order, which lost out on its old privileges and fought with all its might against capitalism based on the ideological use of 'convention' and 'tradition'. On the other hand, was criticism against the glaring shortcomings of capitalism like its overcrowded cities, brutality toward the working classes, cruelty toward child workers and slaves, breakdown of social cohesion, lack of community feeling, cold materialism, profit or money becoming the new god, increased alienation and fragmentation, commodification of everything, destruction of nature; aimed at transcending capitalism without returning to the old system. Thus, the critique of capitalism happened from two different quarters, the conservative and the progressive.

This critique became manifest in the dominant debates of those times. The 'ancients' clashed with the 'modems', arguing that value was invested in the old instead of in the new. 'The battle of the books' happened, in which thinkers either sided with modernity arguing that it entailed progress, or they went against it arguing that the future signified deterioration. The literary and philosophical worlds saw a return to classicism or neoclassicism, in which ancient forms and thought were revived. Decorum became an important ingredient of literature, i.e., a belief that "literary genres, characters and styles were all ordered in hierarchies, or 'levels', from high through middle to low, and had to be matched to one another." The 'cult of antiquity' in which "classical manuscripts were collected and printed ...and ... [t]he study of Greek and Latin

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103 William Temple in Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning (1690) argued for the superiority of Greek philosophy and science, while William Wotton in Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning (1694) argued that the moderns were superior to the Greeks in at least the sciences. Francis Bacon (1561-1626), a major philosophical figure, stood clearly in favour of modernity.

...entrenched as the essential of polite learning in schools and universities"\textsuperscript{105} was established. English literature of the eighteenth century witnessed a domination by the ‘Augustans’, i.e. writers like Oliver Goldsmith, Dryden, Johnson, Pope and Swift, who resurrected and reinvented the writing styles of Roman writers like Virgil, Ovid and Horace. Considerable lament was expressed over the decline of the nobility and monarchy. A lot of hue and cry about growing immorality and licentiousness in society was also voiced. This was partly due to the marginalisation of the church as the main source of moral authority, and partly because of increased social mobility, especially that of women. The need for following strict moral codes became a social obsession. Chapbooks, sermons and instruction-books providing guidance and advice about right virtues became the most widely circulated forms of literature.

New literary forms like the essay and the satire came into being for carrying out many of these debates. Popular forms like newspapers, pamphlets, periodicals and ballads, popularized these debates. University ‘wits’ carried the limits of reason and rationality to new heights. Disagreements regarding the relative values of intuitive knowledge as opposed to rationalist knowledge also took place. Debates revolving around the theme of ‘nature’ became central to much of literature. A return to nature through the gothic emphasized the dark yet powerful side of nature. On the one hand, the gothic became a means to critique the dangers involved in trying to control nature, on the other, the uncontrolled wilderness of nature only made the requirement for pruning and careful cultivation all the more urgent. Nature also became a means to argue for the equality of all beings and the artificiality and falsity of social hierarchy. The inherent harmony, order and intelligibility of nature were emphasized. The notions of ‘natural law’ and ‘natural religion’ came up. The cult of the ‘noble savage’ or the natural man provided another argument for the universality of all human beings\textsuperscript{106}.

The new persona of the genius, romantic artist, who created spontaneous/natural art, without bothering for money, payment, publication or fame, emerged powerfully. This was in complete contradiction to the emergence of professionalism among artists who made a living by selling their artistic goods in the new literary market. By the time

\textsuperscript{105} See ‘Cult of Antiquity,’ Black and Porter eds., 31.

\textsuperscript{106} A new social fascination with the ‘child’ also developed during the same times. The inherent goodness, sensitivity and innocence of children were emphasized in order to prove the equality of all human beings by birth. Many also argued the contrary by opining that some children were in fact ‘special’ and not like others. The importance of imparting suitable education in order to build good citizens was debated, especially with path-breaking though different works by John Locke and later Jean Jacques Rousseau.
the Romantic persona of the anguished artist developed, the Grub Street had been already operating in full force for nearly a century, both as a metaphor as well as an actual hub of commercial writers. Most trends within Romanticism, which were coterminous with the French Revolution, became part of the progressive critique of capitalism. The search for utopias or new perfect societies became important. However, the fact that the objectives of the French Revolution were not carried to their logical conclusion led to widespread disillusionment among many Romantic artists who vacillated from extreme left to extreme right positions within their lifetimes, some prominent examples being - Wordsworth, Coleridge and Victor Hugo\textsuperscript{107}.

Ethnographies and travelogues that provided a window to new places and people became popular. Stories of common people became the subject of many new genres. New literary forms exploded on the European scene like the essay, newspapers, periodicals, dictionaries, encyclopedias, letters, characters, travelogues, utopias, ballads, sermons, diaries etc. The most important factor about all these genres was that they were not rule bound or code bound. They did not follow any old convention or decorum. Infact their entire rhetoric was that of the new. Most of these genres were aimed at the new middle class readership, made possible by the expansion of literacy and print. Many such forms intentionally focused upon ‘low’ subjects and themes for their content.

It is only if we take into account this entire backdrop of changes involved in the transformation from feudalism to capitalism, that we would be able to understand the emergence of the novel better. Obviously, this shift took place over a prolonged period of time, starting from the sixteenth century and continuing well into the nineteenth century. Many of the trends and tendencies that we have outlined in our account did not become evident simultaneously, infact their moments of eminence varied over several decades. Some became manifest earlier and some later. Today we are able to appreciate the links between them only because of the advantage of hindsight. But as we have tried to argue, they were all deeply and intrinsically related to each other and symptomatic of the same essential transformation, i.e. from feudalism to capitalism.

CONCLUSION

Here, we would agree with most critics that the emergence of the novel was crucially linked to individualism, democratization, anti-traditionalism, and subjectivity. It also involved a greater participation of women, as well as that of the colonial and racial

\textsuperscript{107} Hobsbawm, Revolutions 307-335.
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‘other’. Moreover, the novel was integrally tied up to the emerging middle classes. However, to argue that the changing role of women, or the development of individualism was singularly the most important factor responsible for the emergence of the novel, would, in our view be reductive. We would also argue that the emergence of these factors, in turn, can be understood if we look at an entire and interlinked process of historical change. Therefore, that the emergence of the novel can be best understood if the total process of tranformation from feudalism to capitalism is kept in mind. Infact, if we take a look at a few early novels, it immediately becomes evident that the novel as a genre displays an exhaustive range, both in its choice of themes, as well as in its choice of forms. It cannot, therefore, be restricted or tied down only to one or the other factor. And these factors, themselves cannot be understood unless the changes accompanying the emergence of capitalism are understood.

For instance, if we look at Aphra Behn’s Oroonoko (1688), we would find that its form is a combination of the medieval romance, ethnographies, travel tales and allegories. It is located in the ‘exoticized’ locales of Africa and South America. Oroonoko, the black price/slave is excessively sentimentalized and his representation is almost like that of a gallant and his main virtues are that of ‘true honour’, ‘wit’, ‘sweet and diverting conversation’, ‘civility of well-bred man’ etc, which are all Restoration virtues. His impossible tale of love with Immoinda is full of unbelievable extremes of feelings and accidents, replete with both friends as well as foes. The novel contains ethnographic, though wrong, details about Africans and Americans, their appearances and ways of life. It is an allegory of the fate of the royalty, particularly the Stuart Kings, in Restoration England. It has all the ingredients of travel tales with the female narrator/author narrating her peculiar adventures during travel. It is located against the backdrop of colonialism and contains the entire range of debates about colonialism. It represents the brutality of colonialism, the process of psychological colonization, the workings of plantation economies, the clash between British and Dutch colonizers, the cult of the noble savage, and mirrors or perhaps, predates anti-slavery tracts. It engages with debates about religion and the true meaning of ‘virtue’, since the pagan Oroonoko is any day better than Christian brutes like Byam and company. But Oroonoko is the only humanized slave among a big mass of slaves, so it is never easy to understand if his virtues lie in his royal origins or if he seems royal because of his virtues. The novel invokes the new discourse of history writing, with the subtitle of the novel itself being The History of The Royal Slave. It is also a discourse about nationalism defined through
competitive colonial expansion. Definite characterisation of certain individuals is evident, with the narrator as well as the narration being deliberately subjectivized and dramatized.

Another early novel, Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) borrows extensively from genres like *travel tales, church sermons, letter writing and journals*. It contains painfully long descriptions of Crusoe’s travels and adventures. The action of the novel is justified through Crusoe’s rationalizations through religion. However, Crusoe never actually requires the church or any other institution to do so. He interprets the will of god all by himself. The story itself is like an allegorical rendition of the civilizational progress of man starting from the original sin to contemporary modernization. Robinson Crusoe keeps a journal during his long stay at the island, so some parts of the novel are narrated through journal entries. He represents the *homo economicus* and accomplishes all his deals through contracts and extensive bookkeeping. The novel represents the development of a nationalist discourse through the clash between different national interests over colonization and slave trade. It also reflects the new Calvinist ethic, with an emphasis on predestination and bourgeois profit. It also embodies the new individualistic ethic of capitalism and demonstrates a complex definition of selfhood through commodity value as well as in contrast to the racial and colonial ‘other’ - Man Friday. The novel is an early and remarkably vibrant story about the essential capitalist logic, i.e. how to make crass profits without disturbing the conscience. This novel clearly encourages enterprise and risk taking.

Another early novel, Jonathan Swifts’ *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) is a *mock-travel tale and a mock-utopia*. It dwells deep into the debate between the ancients and the moderns, and engages with questions of rationality, logic, science, liberty, two party parliamentary systems, anti-colonialism, building empires etc. Thus, it touches upon all the major historical debates of its age. It uses the techniques of *satire* and displays the celebrated wit and rationality of the Augustan age. *Gulliver’s Travels* also borrows form from the narrative techniques of *ethnography, journal, fantasy, allegory, adventure tale, letter writing and history witting*.

Samuel Richardson in *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) borrows extensively from *letter writing* techniques to evolve the epistolary form of the novel, giving day-by-day, minute-by-minute account of Pamela’s life through her letters to her parents describing how she resists the advances of her master Mr. B till he ultimately surrenders before her superior virtue and proposes marriage to her. Like the famous Cinderella story
(usually dated to 1697), this novel provides one of the first versions of the new myth of social mobility for women under capitalism, i.e. through love marriage in which a rich man marries a poor but virtuous and really worthy woman in spite of her poverty and low social origins. This modern myth, like the Robinson Crusoe myth for men, has seen innumerable adaptations and reworkings in modern literature, particularly romances.

Henry Fielding in *Joseph Andrews* (1742) lampoons Richardson’s novels using the techniques of *burlesque* and the *picaresque*. In this novel it is Joseph Andrews who suffers assaults on his virtue by Lady Booby. The plot is full of chance elements from the *romance* tradition. Fielding borrows extensively from *drama*, wherein his narrator makes interludes in the narration through the figures of the chorus, the curtain raiser and a member of the audience. He calls his novel a “comic epic poem in prose” seeking to recreate adventures parallel to those in the Homeric and Virgilian *epics*. It is also significant that Fielding calls himself “the founder of a new province of writing”\(^{108}\).

Lawrence Sterne’s *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767) is a remarkably different and whimsical novel, which “exploits typographical tricks like asterisks, dashes, expurgations, catalogues, blank chapters and even a blank page.”\(^{109}\) It is full of bizarre action and is an emphatic statement against the logic of cause and effect, the notion of rationality and reasonability, and the sense of historical progress. It defies all these concepts by constantly being random and deliberately unintelligible, both in form as well as in content.

Even a cursory look at these early novels reveals how they are all deeply embedded in the debates of their times, i.e., debates that particularly engaged the educated/literate middle classes. The common factor in their themes is the rejection of older kinds of protagonists, that is, those coming from the nobility or the aristocracy in favour of upwardly mobile men and women from humble origins. All these novels include fleshed out individual characters as well as dramatized narrators. Action is always located in present-day, contemporary, inconclusive time, instead of in the past. But the most remarkable thing is that even authors like Fielding, who claim to be following conventions, flout all acceptable and known rules of writing, that too, in so many different ways that no set pattern or formula can be attributed to the novel. The novel’s ethos is undoubtedly in opposition to the fixed and rigid codes of content and

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form of the epic as well as the romances. Novels borrow from every conceivable genre in sight, particularly contemporary genres. However, as a major literary genre of print, the novel takes time to come into its own. It takes over two hundred years of innovations in new genres of print literature to finally give birth to the novel. We shall discuss this particular link of the novel to the print medium in a subsequent chapter. We shall also discuss the link of the novel to the loss of totality and growing fragmentation in modern times in the subsequent chapter on the development of the novel.

Right now, without discounting many of the things that different critics of the novel have argued, we would only like to emphasize an important but neglected aspect of the rise-of-the-novel debate, that is, its plastic, elastic, inventive, parasitic, unfinished and ever-regenerative nature, both in terms of form as well as theme. This aspect of the novel, to our view, is essential for developing any theory of the rise of the novel. As we have mentioned before, important novel critics like Lukács and Bakhtin made this significant observation about the nature of the genre, but subsequently it was largely ignored by novel theorists till recent times. The emergence of this flexible aspect of the novel can be attributed to the fact that an entire literary ethos that preferred the creation of genres on the basis of rules and decorum disappeared with the decline of feudalism. Under capitalist times, the new form of the novel emerged to give expression to the diverse imaginative concerns of the people, particularly the educated middle classes. The flexible form of the novel came up with the rise of the flexible and dynamic form of capitalism itself, which advocated against the rigidity of fixed rules, especially during its early phase. Obviously there exist some elements of continuity in the novel with past genres, but the elements of difference and distinction both in terms of form, themes or the treatment of themes are much greater. It is also significant that before this time, no other literary genre displayed this same flexibility in form. It is only by this anti-traditional logic that a much earlier work of literature, i.e., Cervantes' Don Quixote (1605) that borrows from the romances but essentially lampoons their entire universe, can be called a novel.

However, if the roots of 'flexibility' in form lie in the essence of capitalism, then an obvious question also arises. Why do flexibility in form and complete breakdown of rule-bound writing affect only the novel, and not other genres as well? Obviously this question merits further study and exploration vis-à-vis transformations in drama, poetry and other non-literary genres. It is common knowledge, however, that radical changes in drama and poetry through the emergence of 'realist drama' or 'free verse' happened only
at the turn of the twentieth century. Perhaps, being older forms steeped in tradition, they took their own time to change and imbibe the new ethos within them. That is why it is all the more relevant to say that instead of seeking the roots of the novel in forms like the epic or the romances, it is more appropriate to view the novel as a new genre. The emergence of the novel lies in the genesis of capitalism itself wherein the inherent referential character of prose helps to concretize an ethos of making sense through the logic of cause and effect. As Philip Henderson says "Prose, we may say... is primarily an instrument of the rational intelligence"110. It is through prose that greater objectivity and particularity of description become the dominant mode of these times instead of the concentrated and covert meanings hidden in verse.

Getting back to the main task that we had set out to accomplish, let us now try to answer the basic questions about the rise of the novel. 'Why', 'where', 'when' and 'how' did the novel come up in history? The novel arose because of the historical transformation from feudalism to capitalism. It emerged first of all in England because it was the first nation to develop capitalism. Although this transformation was spread over several centuries in Europe, the tide started turning in England during the late seventeenth century when the dominance of capitalism over feudalism seemed imminent. The new form of the novel came up by embodying in its content and form, the key tendencies and trends involved in this transformation. Views that attribute the rise of the novel only to the questions of gender, otherness, individualism, or discourse undoubtedly represent only partial truths about the rise of the novel, as many of these changes were inter-related and caused by the more enduring transformation to a capitalist mode of production. The nature of the genre of the novel is best represented by its nomenclature itself, i.e., the 'new' or the 'novel'. The novel is aimed at a new class of people, i.e. the middle classes and it is one of the first few important genres of a new medium of print as opposed to the old manuscript. Therefore, tracing the beginnings of the genre of the novel to ancient or medieval times or to non-European societies, which did not witness the same breakdown of social codes and rigidities required to pave way for an incorporative and flexible genre like the novel, would be, in our view erroneous and incorrect.