CHAPTER 1

NATIONALISM: THE RELIGION, NARRATOR: THE PRIEST

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CHAPTER 1

NATIONALISM: THE RELIGION, NARRATOR: THE PRIEST

From new transmitters came the old stupidities. Wisdom was passed on from mouth to mouth.

~ Bertolt Brecht

The question of Indian modern cultural revivalism cannot be divested of the related topics such as empire, colony, nation and the post colonial experience which are part of the debates that are constitutive of contemporary theory and practice. What needs to be interrogated is whether the many moorings that tread the path of 'cultural revivalism' in the name of nationalism are progressive or regressive.

This thesis attempts to look into the novels of Shivarama Karanth and U R Ananthamurthy who have had seminal influence on the making of Kannada modernity. The responses of these two novelists to the challenges emanating from cultural revivalism especially during pre and post independent era of Indian history did have an impact on the upper caste Indian elites. They needed 'the other' to construct their modern identity in tune with the requirements of modernity that was presented to them. Construction of Dalit identity was a move in the direction of creating an alternative identity of the self that was liberal in its outlook.

The major purpose of the thesis is to examine if the defining features of the alternative identity, construed by the upper-caste Indian elites – for themselves and the Dalits – during the colonial period has been totally given up in favour of a modern and egalitarian identities or if the remnants of the false and regressive elements of this modern cultural revivalist process are present even in the supposedly 'regional discourses' constructed in the selected novels of the upper-caste writers like Shivarama Karanth and U R Ananthamurthy.

This chapter, being introductory in nature, attempts to provide the contours of pre-
modern and modern worldviews of nation and nationalism by delineating the evolution of
the concept of nationhood along with the development in the ideas of various thinkers in
these stages. Subsequently, in keeping with the major thrust of the present study, it tries
to contextualize the question of culture and identity within the context of modern nation-
state. As the focus of the study is on the construction of identity in certain literary works,
the chapter also strives to explore the role of text, author and discourse as well as the
influence of ideology on the formation of various types of identities as argued by different
thinkers. Finally, it strives to contextualize the role of narration in the grand setting of modern
nation-state by showing how the act of narration is bound up with the idea of nation at
two levels – (i) narration as, in some way, giving shape to the conceptualization and evolution
of nation states, and (ii) the ideal of nation, in turn, impacting the process of narration.

Scholarship has well-established by now that even the most creative and cerebral
works of the past century have not escaped the influence of nation and nationalism. On
the other hand, the modern nation state – as an idea, ideal and reality – has provided
the canvas as well as the content for their creative moorings. The writings of Shivarama
Karanth and U R Ananthamurthy are no exception to this. They were written on and, in
some way, were preoccupied with the idea of ‘nation building’. Hence, it seems appropriate
here, first and foremost, to interrogate the idea of nation and nationalism – the two important
terms related to the process of nation-building.

Nation and Nationalism – Concepts and Contestations

The term ‘nation’ is used to refer to a variety of things. It is employed to refer
to a unit, which in turn, is part of the complex concept of ‘nation-state’ or to a community
striving for independent statehood, or to the presumed relationship between different
individuals and groups based on some assumed political unity amongst them (Aloysius: 1993,
11). Thus, the concept ‘nation’ with its related terms such as nation-formation or nation-building, is multifarious. It predominantly, refers either to the intricate process of the emergence of meta-local cultural homogeneity or to the politicization of such a cultural community.

Nationalism too has been one of the highly discussed and contested terms. Even to this day it continues to be a compound amalgam of an ideology of a class of people, policy-orientation of a state, ‘noble’ sentiment of pride and commitment to one’s state, and a socio-political movement for nation-building, along with many more interpretations. This being the reality it is but natural that the questions of nationalism are highly value-laden. It is because they are nothing but expressions of interests and power positions of individuals, groups and even nation-states (Aloysius: 1993).

Motyl (1992) has argued that all the sub-concepts of nationalism too are highly value-laden and that they say more about the person defining them than the term itself. Also the interrelation among them is constantly changing and this ambivalence is utilized to the maximum by the groups and forces which seek to establish their hegemony over others from time to time.

It needs to be noted that there has also been much confusion in understanding the nature of the interrelationship between ‘nationalism’ and ‘nation’. In the clamor of the political discourses on nationalism and its related concepts what is often forgotten is that the idea of ‘nation’ always precedes the concept of ‘nationalism’ (Gellner: 1983). Also, the ideological base of nationalism is generally in the sectarian interests while the primary orientation of a nation as a socio-political entity is to surpass these sectarian orientations. It is this awareness that made Ostrogorcki remark, “The best kind of party is in some sort of a conspiracy against the nation.” (Quoted in Misra: 1976, 1)

Despite the long history of metropolitan world, theories of nation-building and nationalism are of relatively recent origin (Bkaut: 1987; Breully: 1982; Davis: 1978; Gellner:
Many of the sociological studies on nationalism have tried to explain the transition from state, ideology and movement to nation as a distinct social category through history by situating this complex phenomenon within the overall context of social change. The trend began when writers like Ernest Gellner (1983) looked at sociology of nationalism as movements of power and power positions within societies affecting its structure and culture. It needs to be acknowledged that both consensus and conflicts have contributed to this process of nation-building (Smith: 1983).

Smith (1983) argues that all nationalisms have a strong tendency to look for a ‘persistent cultural core’ in terms of an ethnicity. This trend is doubly present in the poly-ethnic nation-states whose boundaries are determined largely through accidents of modern history. Thus, ethnicity turning political is the major orientation observable in almost all the discourses of nation and nationalism today (Armstrong: 1982). A similar view is expressed by Gellner (1983) who states that nationalism is the congruence between culture and power. Then, the obvious question that one might ask is if culture was apolitical in the pre-nation phase of history. As an answer to this question we need to acknowledge that certain amount of blend of culture and power could be identified even in pre-modern period. However, with the idea of nation the congruence between culture and power is thought to be a definite necessity.

The fusion of culture and power, in the context of nationalism, takes shape in its reference to internal and external cultures (Smith: 1981). Internal culture here used as the reference point is one’s own pre-nation culture which is generally perceived to be unequal and hierarchical. Nationalism seeks to invent or construct a modern culture which is equal and homogenous one. The external culture that is used as another reference point in the process of nation-building is the culture of other nation-states. Their influence is perceived to be intrusive and destructive.
In this way, the nationalist process of politicization in modernity intends to uphold a culture that is total, dispensing equal rights and responsibilities to all its citizens, and distancing itself from the shadows of foreign cultures. Along with using certain historic affinity in culture as the basis of this homogenization process, the commonality of political purpose and destiny too is regarded as the foundation for the emergence of a socio-political community called the nation. These nation-states, at least ideologically, open out the space of public power to the excluded masses of the pre-modern society for the formation of a new politico-civil society of equal rights and duties. Thus, modern nationalism is the place where culture and power find a perfect congruence (Mac Laughlin: 2001).

Gellner (1983) christened this process of nation-building, characterized by the process of universalization of literacy, functional diversification, social mobility, formal equality and anonymity of membership as the creation of a meta-local homogenous culture. Similar ideas could be found in the thoughts of Anderson where he argues that nations are imagined communities constructed through the emergence of print capitalism on the basis of a ‘new found deep, horizontal comradeship’ (1983, 40). This explains why a political process such as nationalism takes place within a relatively homogenous cultural entity described problematically as ethnicity.

Mac Laughlin has opined that nations are socio-cultural and geographical constructs that are the handiworks of certain elites. He argues that ‘before nations can be built from the ground up they have to be lodged in the hearts and minds of people’ (2001, 2). It is for this reason that he says that we have to analyze the contextual setting of nation-building and nationalism and explain how nationalist ideology contributed to the development of bourgeois hegemony. Thus, in his opinion, it is important to relate the nation-centered socio-economic and territorial environments within which the concepts of nation and nationalism evolved (Mac Laughlin: 2001, 13).
Smith and others have identified two major schools of thought on nation-building and nationalism. To one belong the nationalists, and what he terms the ‘primordialists’, those who insist upon the ‘naturalness’ of the nation as a territorial unit, including those who stress the ‘naturalness’ of nationalism as a political ideology. To the other school of thought belong the modernists and non-nationalists, those who look upon the nation as a social and territorial construct, which emerged in the western world at least chiefly in the course of the nineteenth century (Smith: 1986, 7).

The latter school of thought also stresses the historical and spatial contingency of coarse and ‘banal’ nationalism. Mac Laughlin (2001, 6), for example, argues that modern nation-states were never the ‘natural’ homelands of ‘peoples’ as they insist. They entailed tremendous amounts of social and environmental engineering from a very early stage in the evolution of national modernities. They authenticated themselves, or rather had structures of authenticity imposed on them. Thus, in his opinion, unionist nationalists invented tradition, ethicized historical records, claimed territory for the powerful nation, dismissed the demands of minority peoples and rival nationalists, and marginalized the interests of the socially subordinate.

Thus, despite the claims of nationalities, and social Darwinists to the contrary, modernists insist that nation-building never was the product of primordial forces. Neither was it inspired by pure altruism or is the product of autonomous social forces operating independently of time and place (Agnew: 1987, 167-93; Mac Laughlin: 1987, 1-17). It was instead the outcome of a whole range of socio-economic and political forces across space.

Referring to the philosophical poverty within nation-states Anderson argues that unlike other items nationalism has never produced its great thinkers. It has produced instead bands of followers led by passionate leaders without any clear-cut social or political philosophy beyond that of ‘national liberation’. Thus nationalism has produced no Hobbes, no
Tocquevilles or no Webers. Instead the relative ‘emptiness’ or shallowness of its ideology has caused Nairn (1977, 329-34) to argue that nationalism has been the pathology of modern developmental history. Taking this a step forward Ignatieff (1998) states that rooted in dilemmas of helplessness and modernity in the nineteenth century, the nation-state possessed almost the same capacity for converting mass descent into dementia as neurosis does in individuals. That is why to its skeptical opponents at least it appears at once as irrational, irreversible and ‘incurable’ social force.

To resolve the paradoxes of nationalism Anderson (1983) suggests that we treat it less as a political ideology comparable to other ideologies. We must equate it instead with much deeper and more integrative belief systems. We must treat it, in other words, as a form of national ‘kinship’ which has its own belief systems or ‘religion’. Historically at least nationalism was never simply an ideology in the way that liberalism, socialism or conservatism were ideologies. It was always much deeper than these. It was something that aimed to create a state-centered creed which had as its goal the construction or defense of something as sacred as the nation state. This meant that nineteenth century nation builders recognized the significance of territory not only in symbolic terms, but also as a national and ideological resource. They saw nation-building as a way of interpreting, exploiting and reorganizing social space (Williams and Smith: Vol. 7, 502-8). Similarly, they interpreted nationalism as an ideology which in the widest possible sense was more akin to a religion than a state ideology (Mac Laughlin: 2001, 97).

Hobsbawm joins Benedict Anderson and Anthony Smith in arguing that the progress of nationalism was intimately bound up with the emergence of a secularized middle-class intelligentsia. By and large, he argues, its progress was marked also by that of print capitalism, specifically by the output of textbooks and newspapers preaching the gospel of nationalism and written, usually in standardized vernaculars. These vernaculars subsequently became the
official national languages of European nations. Thus, in the opinion of Hobsbawm, the great proponents of nation building were 'the lower and middle professional, administrative and intellectual strata, in other words, the educated strata' (1962, 170).

**Position of Culture and Identity within Modern Nation-State**

Having tried to provide an overview of the concepts of nation and nationalism it seems appropriate here to discuss the ideas of *culture* and *identity* in the context of modern nation-state. It is because, first, both these terms are central to the present study and, more importantly, literature in general and the novel in particular (the subject matter of our study) are shaped by and in turn attempt to shape these phenomenon.

*Culture* derives from the Latin word *cultura*, the past participle of *colere*, meaning to inhabit, cultivate, protect and honor with worship. Its early, primarily agricultural, use designated 'tending', 'growth' or 'cultivation'. Its gradual shift to the particular and the personal (cultivating one's mind, oneself), and, later (late eighteenth and early nineteenth century), its generalized application to a process or to the product of a process, set the word off on its complicated, conflicting, and plural career. In the opinion of Tejaswini, Sudhir, and Dhareshwar (1993, 2-3) the career of culture is inextricably linked to the career of modernity itself, if we use the latter as shorthand for industrialization, expansion and consolidation of colonialism, the institution of democracy and post-colonial nation-states. Seen in this perspective, it becomes possible to delineate the dominant senses and uses of the word 'culture'; to understand its affinities or alliances with other loaded terms such as 'tradition', 'Art and Literature' and also to understand the distinctions like 'high' and 'low' culture, that the term institutes.

Raymond Williams (1976, 76) informs us that culture is one of the most complex words in the English language. It includes both material things and symbols. In the words
of Nayar, 'Culture can be defined as ideas, knowledge and modes of doing things' (2006, 15). Said, on the other hand, (1993, xiv) says that culture is a sort of theatre where various political and ideological causes engage one another. It is because of this reason that the concept 'culture' at once fuses and confuses the radically different experiences and tendencies of its formation. Hence, it is very important for us to develop some historical consciousness of any culture before engaging in its analysis (Williams: 1977, 11).

As Said (1994) explains, "Far from being unitary or monolithic or autonomous things cultures actually assume more 'foreign' elements, alterities, differences, than they can consciously exclude" (p. 15). Concurrently, for Bhabha, cultures cannot be self-contained and hermetically sealed from one another, nor can they be united by universalist claims. No culture is full unto itself. Thus, he goes on to argue that,

no culture is plainly plenitudinous, not only because there are other cultures which contradict its authority, but also because its own symbol-forming activity, its own interpellation in the process of representation, language, signification and meaning-making always underscores the claim to an originary, holistic, organic identity (1990, 210).

Two of the significant senses of culture that developed in the late nineteenth century, and to some extent still current, are: i) Matthew Arnold's conception of culture as a domain of human values, of what is most essential, authentic, elevated, the highest creations of 'Mankind', something that is opposed to 'anarchy', 'mass' and 'philistinism', and ii) E. B. Tylor's anthropological conception of culture as 'a complex whole'. The two conceptions, though obviously distinct, did, however, share the same assumptions: of organic wholeness, continuity and growth. James Clifford spells out these assumptions in the following words:
‘A powerful structure of feeling continues to see culture, wherever it is found, as a coherent body that lives and dies. Culture is enduring, traditional, structural (rather than contingent, syncretic, historical). Culture is a process of ordering, not of disruption. It changes and develops like a living organism’ (1988, 235).

This organic, even transcendental, notion of culture, later elaborated by T. S. Eliot and F. R. Leavis, finds its powerful institutional embodiment in disciplines such as English Literature, and underlies modern concepts such as ‘tradition’ and the related notion of ‘canon’ (i.e. a collection of texts that supposedly preserve universal human values). The anthropological conception of culture, on the other hand, tries to extend and pluralize the Arnoldian notion and regards all cultures as equal or equally valuable. In the opinion of Tejaswini, Sudhir, and Dhareshwar (1993, 3) however, this cultural relativism which flourished in the first half of the twentieth century is in effect a refusal as well as a masking of the violence of colonialism. Espoused most staunchly by anthropology—a discipline made possible by colonial conquest—cultural relativism obscured the complicity, even collusion, of scholarship with the project of colonial domination.

Seen from another perspective, Arnoldian notion of culture in the past was in reality ‘unifying’ societies to the extent that it was believed to palliate, if not altogether neutralize, the ravages of a modern, aggressive, mercantile, and brutalizing urban existence (Arnold: 1980, 469-573). The purpose of Dante or Shakespeare was not just to keep up with the best that was thought and known, but also to see yourself, your people, society, and tradition in their best lights. In time, culture came to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state; and this differentiated ‘us’ from ‘them’, almost always with some degree of xenophobia. Said explains this saying,

‘Culture in this sense came to be recognized as a source of identity, and a rather combative one at that, as we tend to see in recent ‘returns’ to culture and tradition.
These 'returns' accompany rigorous codes of intellectual and moral behaviour that are opposed to the permissiveness associated with such relatively liberal philosophies as multiculturalism and hybridity. In the formerly colonized world, these 'returns' have produced varieties of religious and nationalist fundamentalism' (1993, xiii-xiv).

Gramsci (1971) brings out another important function of culture within the modern nation-state. He shows how cultural mechanisms of the arts, religion and education are used as the means through which 'consent' is secured and power is effected by bourgeois class in the modern state for governing the masses. For this consent to 'happen', the class becomes an 'educator', as it seeks to raise the mass of the population to a moral-cultural level that suits its own interests (1971, 258-60).

In the words of Stuart Hall (1986), culture is 'a site of convergent interests rather than a logically or conceptually clarified idea.' (p. 35). It is seen as 'a constant battlefield' where there are no victories to be gained, only 'strategic positions to be won and lost' (Hall: 1981, 233). In a similar vein, Tejaswini, Sudhir, and Dhareshwar (1993, 6) opine that the dominant ideology attempts to freeze the conflictual and contestatory process of meaning production in order to consolidate its own hegemony, which is in a way nothing but social meaning presenting itself as shared and binding.

Thus, today the questions of identity, either individual or communal, cannot be discussed without reference to the concept of culture as existent in the modern nation-state. This is because, in the opinion of Kraft (1981) humans are understood to be totally, inextricably immersed in culture. Each human individual is born into a particular socio-cultural context. From that point on persons are conditioned by the members of their society in countless, largely unconscious ways to accept as natural and to follow rather uncritically the cultural
patterns of that society. Hence, we cannot discuss the question of ‘identity’ without first placing it within the fleeting context of ‘culture’.

It is important to first clarify the concept of ‘identity’ before taking up the task of understanding the interrelationship between identity and culture in the context of the modern nation-states. In the words of Kakar,

'[Identity] is meant to convey the process of synthesis between inner life and outer social reality as well as the feeling of personal continuity and consistency within oneself. It refers to the sense of having a stake in oneself, and at the same time in some kind of confirming community. Identity has other connotations, perspectives which extend beyond the individual and the social to include the historical and the cultural.' (2009, 2).

For Venn (2006, 79) identity refers to the relational aspects that qualify subjects in terms of categories such as race, gender, class, nation, sexuality, work and occupation, and thus in terms of acknowledged social relations, and affiliations to groups such as teachers, parents, and aliens. These categories are correlated to particular performative practices and routines of action, for instance, regarding parenting or masculinity, in which identities are instantiated.

Identity as a concept thus always directs attention to the relational aspect of subjectivity. Subjectivity and identity are necessarily inter-related when it is a matter of analyzing conduct or beliefs, as in the case of the perspectives of ideology in accounting for the normative content of specific identities, such as gender (Venn: 2006, 80).

In theorizing subjectivity, Lacan brings into the forefront the mechanism of recognition, and the gaze, through the trope of the mirror phase or stage. This phase describes the process whereby an infant, not yet able to speak though clearly able to communicate —
the not-yet-subject or subject-in process – first recognizes itself as if in a mirror. This spectacular mechanism takes place in the imagination. The mirror stands in for the place from which the other appears to look at the infant as another, so that by reflection the infant can imagine itself as another subject (Raman, 1988).

**Interrelations between Culture and Identity**

Gudavarthy (The Identity Question [http://courses.cscsarchive.org/courses/ugdps05/paper1/mod7]) argues that identity formation is a complex process. It calls for the sharing of a common culture on the one hand, and harps on separateness from others, on the other. Identities take shape over a period of time for varied ends and through varied means. Each culture has handled the crisis within in different way depending on their concerns. Therefore, where the European intellectual, though comfortable inside his culture and tradition, might have an image of himself as an outsider, the African intellectual could be an uncomfortable outsider, seeking to develop his culture in the directions that will give him a role. It is because where the European may feel that the problem of who he is his private problem, the African is likely to ask not “who am I” but “who are we”, his problem being not his own, but his people’s.

According to Hall, identity is constructed at the point of intersection (‘suture’) between external Discourses and practices and the internal psychic processes that produce subjectivities. Hence, identity (or more accurately identities) is/are simply “points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us” (1996, 6). The subject can choose (within certain parameters) to identify partly, wholly, or not at all with the ‘positions to which they are summoned’ (Ibid, 14). “[T]he question, and the theorisation, of identity”, Hall concludes, “... is only likely to be advanced when ... the suturing of the psychic and the discursive in their constitution, are fully and unambiguously acknowledged.” (Ibid, 16).
Hall (1996, 4-5) further argues that "[I]dentities can function as points of identification and attachment, only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render outside". Thus, as Said (1978) has argued that the Self is defined less by what one is and more by what one is not, through a process of ‘Othering’. Both Derrida’s ‘violent hierarchy’ (such as man vs. woman) and Foucault’s ‘dividing practices’ (such as the mad vs. the sane) depend on the idea that one’s identity is based on negating or excluding something.

As Butler (1993: 22) argues, all identities operate through exclusion - through the construction of marginalised subjects. The marginalisation and exclusion of the latter is crucial to the self-identity of the former (Creighton: 1997, 212).

The cultural part of our personal identity, modern neuroscience tells us, is wired into our brains. The culture in which an infant grows up constitutes the software of the brain, much of which is already in place by the end of childhood. Not that the brain, a social and cultural organ as much as a biological one, does not keep changing with interactions with the environment in later life. Like the proverbial river one never steps into twice, one also never uses the same brain twice. Even if our genetic endowment were to determine fifty per cent of our psyche and early childhood experiences another thirty per cent, there is still a remaining twenty per cent that changes through the rest of our lives. Yet, as the neurologist and philosopher Gerhard Roth (2006) observes, ‘Irrespective of its genetic endowment, a human baby growing up in Africa, Europe or Japan will become an African, a European or a Japanese. And once someone has grown up in a particular culture and, let us say, is twenty years old, he will never acquire a full understanding of other cultures since the brain has passed through the narrow bottleneck of “culturalization”.’ (p. 26). In other words, the possibilities of ‘fluid’ and changing identities in adulthood are rather limited and, moreover, rarely touch the deeper layers of the psyche. So, in a sense, we are Spanish or Korean-or Indian – much before we make the choice or identify this as an essential part of our identity. (Kakar and Kakar: 2007, 2).
Continuing the argument, Kakar and Kakar assert that (2007, 1-2) identity is not a role, or a succession of roles, with which it is often confused. It is not a garment that can be put on or taken off according to the weather outside; it is not ‘fluid’, but marked by a sense of continuity and sameness irrespective of where the person finds himself during the course of his life. A man’s identity - of which the culture that he has grown up in is a vital part - is what makes him recognize himself and be recognized by the people who constitute his world. It is not something he has chosen, but something that has seized him. It can hurt, be cursed or bemoaned but cannot be discarded, though it can always be concealed from others or, more tragic, from one’s own self.

However, since identities are not unified or fixed but constantly in the process of change and transformation, individuals push against and attempt to disturb such binaries while at the same time being pulled back into place. There is a dynamic and ongoing power-play. Hall (1996: 5), drawing on Laclau, notes how ‘the constitution of a social identity is an act of power’ since ‘if an objectivity manages to partially affirm itself it is only by repressing that which threatens it.’ Representations of difference are central to the exercise of power. In the opinion of Breger and Hill (1998, 7-8), the concept of insider (Self) - and their position in the social hierarchy that gives access to wealth and power - can only continue to exist by maintaining a strict definition of who is an outsider (Other).

In the opinion of Kakar (2009, 9) culture is so pervasive that even when an individual seems to break away from it, as in states of insanity, the ‘madness’ is still influenced by its norms and rituals. Even in a condition of extreme stress, the individual takes from his culture its conventions or traditions in implementing and giving form to an idiosyncratic disorder, the culture providing, as it were, the patterns of misconduct.

Different cultures, argues Kakar (2009, 9), shape the development of their members in different ways, ‘choosing’ whether childhood, youth or adulthood is to be a period of
maximum or minimum stress. He further states that in India, in contrast with Germany or France, it is early childhood rather than adulthood which is the 'golden age' of individual life history. Such preferential imagery influences a culture's perspective on the different stages of the human life cycle as well as the intensity of individual nostalgia for the 'lost paradise' of childhood.

Cultural traditions, as Freud recognized long ago, are internalized during childhood in the individual's superego, the categorical conscience which represents the rights and wrongs, the prohibitions and mores, of a given social milieu: 'The superego of the child is not really built up on the model of the parents, but on that of the parents' superego; it takes over the same contents, it becomes the vehicle of tradition and of all the age-long values which have been handed down in this way from generation to generation. The ideologies of the superego perpetuate the past, the traditions of the race and the people, which yield but slowly to the influences of the present and to new developments, and, as long as they work through the superego, play an important part in man's life (Freud: 1933, 67). But the roots of culture in the psyche penetrate below the crusty layer of the superego. Mediated through persons responsible for the infant's earliest care, cultural values are, from the beginning, an intimate and inextricable part of the ego. As the organizing principle of the personality, the ego is, of course, that which differentiates and mediates between 'I' and 'you', between what is 'inside' and what is 'outside'. The development of the ego, as many psycho-analytic writers have systematically pointed out, cannot be comprehended except in its interdependence with the society into which an individual child is born, a society represented in the beginning by the mother and other culturally-sanctioned caretakers. (Kakar: 2009, 11).

Discussing the role and dynamics of 'identity' in the present times, Rajalakshmi (2004, 38-41) asserts that with the emergence of the modern nation-state, there was a change
in the imagination of people about their belonging or identity. Modern nation-state forced a common culture, designed through mass media and the system of education. This resulted in the decline in the earlier ‘network’ identities, linked to family, clan, and region. The situation resulted in new ‘categorical’ identities, linking them to profession and citizenship gained importance. Thus, while the formation of the nation-state widened the political and cultural space of an individual, the smaller community to which an individual once belonged lost much of its identity in this wider ‘civic’ space.

This kind of re-construction of individual identity can have profound and real consequences for national identity. The push and pull of identity is not ‘some sort of surface froth that floats around on top of more important social processes’. (Keith: 1993, 31) Rather, as Harvey puts it, the way individuals negotiate representations of Self and Other ‘constitutes an important mapping of the basic contours of politics and struggle within the social body.’ (2000, 119)

One question that arises here concerns the effects of power on the social relations, and the mobility of these effects according to circumstances, illustrating the performativity of power for subject positions. Identity, it can be seen, is not simply a matter of personal choice from a range of already-labelled options, nor is it independent of political field and the variable stakes in it (Venn: 2006, 81).

This process of seeking for or striving to hold on to one’s ‘primary’ identity within the larger identity of the nation-states often results in identity politics. The proponents of identity politics argue that the rhetoric of universality and equality has masked the persistent actuality of marginalized groups subordinated on the basis of their race, class, gender, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexuality, etc. However, it needs to be realized that the political articulation of identities is motivated not just by an awareness of oppression but by the perception that the oppression is because of a certain identity. In other words, to simply
say ‘I am oppressed’ is not much of a political statement. To say, however, ‘If I am oppressed it is because I am a woman/a dalit/a Christian/a dalit woman/a Christian dalit woman’, is to make a statement that falls in the realm of identity politics. Hence, in the context of modern nation states the questions of ‘identity’ have become highly complex and politicized for varied purposes.

For Foucault (1983, 212-3), modern day power-plays revolve around the question, ‘Who are we?’. As the pace of globalisation increases, these questions of identity become even more pressing. In his opinion, contemporary power-plays are less likely to be ‘struggles’ against forms of domination or exploitation and more likely to be attempts to loosen and transform the ties that attach individuals to their own identities in constraining ways and make them subject to someone else by control and dependence.

There is also a loosening of the extent individuals identify with the nation which, according to Stuart Hall, results in stronger and new identities ‘above and below the level of the nation-state’ (1992, 302). On the other hand, these processes of detachment are often counter-acted by ‘tradition’ (Robins: 1991) or ‘Discourses of place’, parallel processes that attempt to ‘solidify porous borders, bolster breached containments, arrest the erosion of identities, and revitalize faded essences’ (Luke and Tuathail: 1998, 73).

Sen (2006, xii) opines that many contemporary political and social issues revolve around conflicting claims of disparate identities involving different groups, since the conception of identity influences, in many different ways, our thought and actions. He (2006, 5) further argues that we are all constantly making choices, if only implicitly, about the priorities to be attached to our different affiliations and associations. In his opinion, the freedom to determine our loyalties and priorities between the different groups to all of which we may belong is a peculiarly important liberty which we have reason to recognize, value, and defend.

However, Sen (2006, 5) maintains that the existence of choice does not, of course,
indicate that there are no constraints restricting choice. Indeed, choices are always made within the limits of what are seen as feasible. The feasibilities in the case of identities will depend on individual characteristics and circumstances that determine the alternative possibilities open to us. Hence, even when one is inescapably seen – by oneself as well as by others – as French, or Jewish, or Brazilian, or African-American, or (particularly in the context of the present-day turmoil) as an Arab or as a Muslim, one still has to decide what exact importance to attach to that identity over the relevance of other categories to which one also belongs.

Even when we are clear about how we want to see ourselves, we may still have difficulty in being able to persuade others to see us in just that way. Our freedom to assert our personal identities can sometimes be extraordinarily limited in the eyes of others, no matter how we see ourselves. Charged attributions can incorporate two distinct but interrelate distortions: misdescription of people belonging to a targeted category, and an insistence that the misdescribed characteristics are the only relevant features of the targeted person's identity. In opposing external imposition, a person can both try to resist the ascription of particular characteristics and point to other identities a person has (Sen: 2006, 6-7).

Sen goes on to argue that communitarian thinking has been in the ascendancy over the last few decades in contemporary social, political, and moral theorizing, and the dominant and compelling role of social identity in governing behavior as well as knowledge has been widely investigated and championed. In some versions of communitarian thinking, it is presumed explicitly or by implication that one's identity with one's community must be the principal or dominant (perhaps even the only significant) identity a person has (Sen: 2006, 33). There can be little doubt that our cultural background can have quite a major influence on our behavior and thinking. Also, the quality of life we enjoy cannot but be influenced by our cultural background. It certainly can also influence our sense of identity and our
perception of affiliation with groups of which we see ourselves as members. However, our cultural identities do not stand starkly alone and aloof from other influences on our understanding and priorities. There are a number of qualifications that have to be made while acknowledging the influence of culture on human lives and actions. First, important as culture is, it is not uniquely significant in determining our lives and identities. Other things, such as class, race, gender, profession, politics, also matter, and can matter powerfully (Sen: 2006, 112).

Question of Identity in Literature

Literature has always been concerned with questions of identity and literary works sketch answers, implicitly or explicitly, to these questions. Narrative literature especially has followed the fortunes of characters as they define themselves and are defined by various combinations of their past, the choices they make, and the social forces that act upon them. Do characters make their fate or suffer it? Stories give different and complex answers.

The dominant tradition in the study of literature has treated the individuality of the individual as something given, a core which is expressed in word and deed and which can therefore be used to explain action: I did what I did because of who I am, and to explain what I did or said you should look back at the “I”, (whether conscious or unconscious) that my words and acts express.

However, we need to realize that if the possibilities of thought and action are determined by a series of systems which the subject does not control or even understand, then the subject is ‘decentred’ in the sense that it is not a source or centre to which one refers to explain events. It is something formed by these forces. As argued by Hall, “identities actually come from outside, they are the way in which we are recognised and then come to step into the place of the recognitions which others give us. Without the others there is no self. There is no self-recognition” (1995, 8).
Thus, psychoanalysis treats the subject not as a unique essence but as the product of intersecting psychic, sexual, and linguistic mechanisms. Marxist theory sees the subject as determined by class position: it either profits from others' labour or labours for others' profit. Feminist theory stresses the impact of socially constructed gender roles on making the subject on what he or she is. Queer theory has argued that the heterosexual subject is constructed through the repression of the possibility of homosexuality.

Literary works offer a range of implicit models of how identify is formed. There are narratives where identity is essentially determined by birth: the son of a king raised by fishermen (Karna) is still fundamentally a king and rightfully becomes a king when his identity is discovered. In other narratives characters change according to the changes in their fortunes, or else identity is based on qualities that get revealed during the tribulations of a life. There is also the question of group identity – What is to be a woman, to be a Black, a Dalit, to be a Brahmin.

The concept of narrative identity is today readily associated with the work of Paul Ricoeur. At different points in his analysis, he has pointed to the idea of a self as a storied self, as an entity made up of stories told, indeed, entangled in the stories that a person tells, or that are told about him or her. Yet, this very mundane aspect of human beings is also a profoundly enigmatic element. We could say that human beings are characterized precisely by this fact that they invented stories, or rather narrative, as the form in which the events of a life and of a community can be figured and communicated and, importantly, kept as a memory and so transmitted across generations (Ricoeur: 1991, 21).

In Ricoeur's approach, the term narrative identity seems to join up two problematics, one which is about subjective identity, and a second problematic concerning the relation of history and fiction in the process of the figuration of temporality. It does so by establishing that time, and the way it is lived, provide the common ground for their co-articulation.
the elaboration of his position, Ricoeur draws a distinction between identity as sameness (idem) and identity as selfhood (ipse), that is to say, on the one hand, identity as something that remains identical to itself over time and, on the other, an entity that considers itself to remain the same in spite of changes over time, for example, in a person's biographical history. Identity is not the sameness of a permanent, continuous, immutable, fixed entity; it is instead the mode of relating to being that can be characterized as selfhood. Self is not a fact or an event; it is not reducible to the facticity of things-in-themselves. The identity of a person, or a group or a people, takes the form of stories told (Ricoeur: 1991, 54).

Now, although '[L.]ife is woven of stories told' (Ricoeur: 1988, 246), these stories are not purely imaginary or fictional, for they make reference to a domain of reality that can be verified. On the one hand, the stories we tell about ourselves are segments of other people's stories about themselves and us, so that a self 'happens' at the point of intersection of many real lives, confirming the polysemy of otherness and selfhood. On the other hand, some of these narratives tell of events involving — indeed, constituting — a whole community or period of time, that is, they inscribe a history and a memory, so that every self occurs 'at a point of intersection between fictive and historical narratives' (Ricoeur: 1991, 186). The process whereby biographical accounts include narratives of the nation would be a case in point. They invest concepts like the nation with an experiential thickness that unites self-identity and national identity in the imaginary.

Narrative identity, however, should not be understood simply as another name for biography or limited to the description of the process whereby the storied events of a life are interiorized to constitute personal identity. Indeed, Ricoeur's analysis is not primarily located on the terrain of a psychology but on that of the theory of being or ontology. Narrative identity appears in his discourse of being as the concept that enables one to think of the mediation between the phenomenological and the cosmological apprehension of time, that
is to say, the mediation between time as lived, inscribed in activities in the world, pluralized in its dispersion among events and places, and time in the singular, the intuition of a, dimension that cannot be derived from the experiential but encompasses and transcends it. As Ricoeur (1992) put it, narrative is the way of joining up the ‘time of the soul’ with the ‘time of the world’. In a sense, the ‘self’ as a meaningful and meaning-making entity appears at the point of intersection of two kinds of reflection on our being-ness or existence. On the one hand, one finds the stories and memories that express the time of being-in-the-world and of being-with, the duration of events and experiences in the everyday: the time we reckon as we watch our children grow into adults, the time of birthdays, commemorations, the scansion of the temporal flow in each life that we keep and memorialize because they involve our ‘care’. On the other hand, bound up with phenomenal time, are the questions which surface about time in the singular, thus about finitude and death, and about what gives meaning to life at the general, cosmological level.

According to Ricoeur the models for the emplotment of experience already exist in the culture, inscribed in the practices of the everyday, dispersed in tales, novels, films, parables, stereotypes, and so on. That is to say, the models or plots or scripts that one uses to make sense of one’s experiences exist as a given in the culture; we do not invent them from scratch or choose them as ‘free’ autonomous agents, though clearly new models and emplotments are constantly generated, especially in modernity. They include narratives that construct the horizon of expectation, instructing the subject about what he or she is meant to anticipate and desire, for instance, in the discourse of modernity about the autonomy of the subject as a desired goal. Culture, therefore, delimits the space of experience and the horizon of expectation; reconfiguration takes place within these parameters. The plots or scripts in discourses of ‘identity’ provide the elements for the figuration and the reconfiguration of experience, so that every named subject is not only a figured self, but
one who is constantly reconfigured in the light of the narratives that all human beings apply to themselves in the process of self-questioning by reference to acts and deeds. Venn (2006, 111-2) sums up the arguments of Ricoeur on the above-discussed dynamics by stating that the process of reconfiguration and mimesis rectifies previous identities as a result of a self instructed by the norms and values that are constructed in discourses of identity. A ‘self’ happens at the point of intersection or relay where the history of a culture, sedimented and transmitted as part of its stock of knowledge - its memories and memorials, its sayings, parables, songs, myths, and so on, that is, the narratives and ‘texts’ in a broad sense that constitute and inscribe a ‘structure of feeling’ is intertwined with the history of a named subject, constituting a particular consciousness. This is the mechanism by which we are, so to speak, sutured in history. But this suturing, which is more of a folding, requires the participation of others: as interlocutors, imagined or not, as models or ideal egos, as those in the gaze of whom recognition is bestowed or refused; they are the social elements of the lifeworld that validate particular selves.

Theories that Enable an Appropriate Literary Criticism for the Present Study

The complex inter-relatedness of ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ is uniquely explored in literature is discussed by in the preceding section. This in turn requires us to understand the interrelatedness of relevant concepts like the author, text and discourse in order to be able to fully appreciate the process and dynamics of identity formation and identity ascription in the literary context. Hence, this section of the chapter dwells on these intricacies by attempting to capture the relevant theoretical positions and also by assessing the possible influence of one’s culture (within the context of nation-state) in the form of ‘ideology’ on each of these (i.e. the text, author and discourse) as argued by some eminent theorists.
I propose to do this by providing an “overview” of the relevant ideas and theories, but will focus more on the twentieth century as this period has given birth to most of the formal theories arguing in favor of certain forms of literary criticism. In carrying out this survey I shall, by and large, stick to the chronological sequence of the major movements or shifts, but wherever inevitable will allow overlapping too as the idea here is to focus more on topics and themes rather than their sequence.

Most prominent names in ancient Western theory on literature are those of Plato and Aristotle. We find both these philosophers taking very opposing views on the nature and utility of literature. According to Plato literary texts either tell the truth or they lie: we judge them as right or wrong because they offer propositions, ethical postulates, and political ideologies. Plato does not conceive of a separate fictional sphere that deals with alternative, imaginary worlds operating according to their own logic. Far from seeing the artist as a visionary genius who transcends society and its norms – an idea espoused by the romantics in the nineteenth century – Plato claims that literary writers actually replicate the dominant ideologies of their own cultures. A literary author works within this ideological framework, in part because he has no conception of alternative perspectives, but also because he believes that writing about traditional and familiar ideas will gain him a large, admiring audience. The author, then, purveys pleasure by replicating the false and self-deceptive ideas that characterize popular culture (Nightingale: 2006, 41).

In contrast to Plato’s ideas, Aristotle suggests that literary discourse occupies a special realm – that of fiction – which cannot be analyzed in terms of truth or falsehood. Fictional literature offers its readers a unique and valuable experience, allowing its readers to explore alternative and possible lives from a position of aesthetic distance. For Aristotle, mimesis is a fictional representation that, when composed correctly, improves its readers, both intellectually and emotionally (rather than offering a false image of the world that harms
its audience as Plato argued). A fictional *mimesis*, in short, cannot be judged as right or wrong, and hence art and life occupy separate realms (Onega: 2006. 273).

From the time of Aristotle to the period of Enlightenment very little happened in the West as far as “doing” theory on literature is concerned. The ground for the formulation of theory on literature in the West was prepared when in the second quarter of the 19th century the monopolistic grip of the Church of England was loosened in the area of higher education. The decisive change came about with the inclusion of literature (in the place of ‘English language’) in 1840 when F. D. Morris was appointed professor at King’s College. Morris, Matthew Arnold and many others became the champions of liberal humanism. They sought to make ‘English’ a substitute for religion, now that faith had given way to doubt, and religion had all but lost credibility.

“Liberal humanism” propounded by Morris, Arnold, and some others had some basic tenets. Peter Barry (2002) in his book *Beginning Theory* lists some of these tenets as: i) that literary value is transcendental; i.e., good literature is of timeless significance; ii) that a literary text contains its own meanings within itself and it does not require any elaborate process of placing it within a context; iii) that to understand the text well it must be detached from these contexts and studied in isolation; iv) that human nature is essentially unchanging; v) that individuality is something securely possessed within each of us as our unique “essence”; vi) that the purpose of literature is specially the enchantment of life and the propagation of humane values; vii) that form and content in literature must be fused in an organic way, so that one grows inevitably from the other; viii) that sincerity (comprising truthfulness towards experience, honesty towards the self, and the capacity for human empathy and compassion) is a quality which inheres in the language with which literature is made; ix) that what is valued in literature is the “silent” showing and demonstrating of something, rather than the explaining, or saying, of it; x) that the job of criticism is to interpret the text, and to mediate between it and the reader.
These tenets of liberal humanism were radically challenged in the wake of the modernist movement. The resistance to such exclusivist and technicist criticism developed in England first, where there was an older tradition of socially conscious literary study. F.R. Leavis instituted and led the Scrutiny group by assimilating some of the pedagogical strategies of practical criticism; just as this later, developed and sponsored by I.A. Richards, had made special attempts to make a science of literary criticism, and a strong plea for eliminating subjective appreciation of literature/poetry. Leavis’s close reading also made an attempt to define objective criteria for literary analysis to displace the aristocratic notions of literary “taste”, while trying to locate the new texts of English literature in the larger story of English social life (Suprenant: 2006).

At this point it is worth recounting the debate between Leavis and Wellek regarding the necessity for theory of criticism. In 1936 Wellek made his plea concerning the need for a theory of criticism in a context in which New Criticism in the USA and Leavisism in England were poised to become the dominant modes of critical practice. The following year, tension between conceptions of criticism and theory erupted after the publication of Leavis’s Revaluation and Wellek’s review of the book, which, though largely admiring, also voiced a stringent critique of Leavis’s critical method and practices which were in opposition to abstraction, theory, and discursive ideas. The debate flagged up fundamental tensions within the practices of literary studies. Wellek’s review (published in Scrutiny) represented the first important plea for the integration of theory into critical practice as part of the proper professionalization of literary studies. Wellek pointed out to Leavis his dissatisfaction with the position of literary criticism being carried out without taking account of larger philosophical arguments and thus in a “theoretical vacuum”. What he actually complained of Leavis’s reading of the romantics was that Leavis had not stated his “assumption more explicitly” and “defended them substantially” (Waugh: 2006, 23).
Leavis’s written response to Wellek’s accusations (also appearing in Scrutiny) represented a determination to consign all theoretical reflection to the discipline of philosophy and a concern to protect the practice of a non-theorizable close reading as the definitive activity of the literature department. In the opinion of Waugh (2006, 24), looking back on the debate, one can immediately see the sleight of hand whereby Leavis refutes his opponent’s charges by conflating two stages of the argument – the first, about the desirability of declaring prejudices and presuppositions, with the second, about the supplementary usefulness of philosophical information in literary criticism – so that any theoretical or more abstract critical reflection is consigned to the field of philosophy, which is then regarded as the disciplinary enemy of literary criticism.

Whereas the New Critics concentrated on the text as an autonomous entity, the new opposition tried to absorb the isolated text into large mythic structures. Northrop Frye in his Anatomy of Criticism (1957) made the decisive break with the New Critical past absorbing scattered dissidence. While carrying out his critical-theoretical mission, Frye made a series of anti-New-Critical remarks, and called the New Criticism “the aestheticist view”. He attacked the idea of “the uniquely differentiated, isolate self who creates the isolate ‘romantic image’.” He also attacked the romantic-symbolist notion of originality. The New Critics, he said, behaved as if they were in possession of special techniques, which enabled them to engage in vaguely sacramental activity. Against the “romantic image” which celebrated the unique text authored and authorized by the isolated subject, Frye proposed his mythic conception of a largely unconscious self, a sort of communal subject, as the origin and authority for a text whose identify is not different. Frye’s purpose was, as Geoffrey Hartman (1999) was to say, to democratize criticism, and demystify the muse.

Just as psychoanalytic theory has infiltrated the whole of culture and decisively marked our mode of thinking in many domains, so psychoanalysis has impacted on literary
studies in a diffuse manner. However, all variants endorse, at least to a certain degree, the idea that literature (and what closely relates to it: language, rhetoric, style, story-telling, poetry) is fundamentally intertwined with the psyche (Suprenant: 2006, 200).

The earliest attempts at psychoanalytic literary criticism consisted in the application of psychoanalysis to literary works. Mostly inspired by Freud’s essays on art and literature, these studies assumed that psychoanalysis dispenses a method for understanding art and literature, and that what call for elucidation are not the artistic and literary works themselves, but rather the psychopathology and biography of the artist, the writer, or fictional characters. However, psychoanalysis is not concerned only with psycho-biographical contents of works of art or literature; but just as crucially with the mechanisms of their fabrication. The development of psychoanalytic literary criticism is marked by a shift of emphasis from contents to formal aspects of texts. This shift from content to text is indebted to, among others, the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, who proposed a linguistic interpretation of the unconscious. The question of what constitutes the proper object of analysis (authors, readers, characters, texts), which permeates all psychoanalytic approaches to literature, has come to include Freud’s theories themselves. Freud encouraged this development by associating scientific research with fiction (Suprenant: 2006, 202).

Jacques Lacan’s reading of Freud developed the concept of the primacy of language over subjectivity. Lacan’s theory of the subject as constructed in language confirms the decentring of the individual consciousness so that it can no longer be seen as the origin of meaning, knowledge and action. Instead, Lacan proposes that the infant is initially an ‘hommelette’ — ‘a little man and also like a broken egg spreading without hindrance in all directions’ (Coward and Ellis: 1977, 101).

According to the Lacanian theory of subject (as discussed in the section on ‘identity’) the child has no sense of identity, no way of conceiving of itself as a unity, distinct from
what is ‘other’, exterior to it. During the ‘mirror-phase’ of its development, however, it ‘recognizes’ itself in the mirror as a unit distinct from the outside world. This ‘recognition’ is an identification with an ‘imaginary’ (because imaged) unitary and autonomous self. But it is only with its entry into language that the child becomes a full subject. If it is to participate in the society into which it is born, to be able to act deliberately within the social formation, the child must enter into the symbolic order, the set of signifying systems of culture of which the supreme example is language. The child who refuses to learn the language is ‘sick’, unable to become a full member of the family and of society (Belsey: 1987, 60).

In Lacan’s theory entry into the symbolic order liberates the child into the possibility of social relationship; it also reduces its helplessness to the extent that it is now able to articulate its needs in the form of demands. But at the same time a division within the self is constructed. In offering the child the possibility of formulating its desires the symbolic order also betrays them, since it cannot by definition formulate those elements of desire which remain unconscious. Demand is always only a metonymy of desire (Lemaire: 1977, 64). The subject is thus the site of contradiction, and is consequently perpetually in the process of construction, thrown into crisis by alterations in language and in the social formation, capable of change. And in the fact that the subject is a process lies the possibility of transformation (Belsey: 1987, 64-65).

Marx’s dialectical materialism proposes that the world as we know it is the product of a dialectical process which proceeds by means of thesis and antithesis leading to synthesis, which in turn becomes a new thesis, leading to an antithesis, etc. This dialectical process leads to an infinitely rich sensuous manifestation, out of which human beings abstract experience. In fact, what we call ‘thinking’ is simply this process of abstraction. According to this, then, all ideas exist only insofar as they are abstractions from objective experiences. How these ideas are arrived at is historically determined by the time period in which they
arise, socially determined by the society out of which they come, and economically determined according to what resources the person generating the ideas comes from (Marx and Engels: 1976).

One example of this, according to Marx, is Law, which is always determined by certain phenomena and by the society, time period, and economic class it deals with. It is easy to see from this that the production of every work of art must also be determined by the circumstances surrounding its birth. It is in this sense that Marx wrote in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, that “Men make their own history but not of their own free will; not under circumstances they themselves have chosen but under the given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted.” (Marx: 1973, 146).

The theoretical and political formulation of Marxism posed a distinct set of problems for literary criticism. First, there was a felt need for a reformulation of the status of all symbolic activity such as language, law, politics, religion, and so on. These were accorded a secondary and supplementary status in relation to the primary domain of economic structures, the material base of the mode of production. The structure of layering and relationships are pyramidal. The base of the pyramid represents the basic socio-economic relations on which rests the “superstructure” comprising further layering of politics, law, art, etc. Depending on the structure of the base the superstructural relationships are built (Eagleton: 1976).

This metaphorical representation of the socio-material reality has been widely disputed. Beginning with the contradiction between Marx’s and Engels’ views on the question of a “relative autonomy” of art and literature, questions have been asked and doubts raised about the dialectical mediation or interchange between the different “levels” of multiple and uneven structures of causality, and of the relative autonomy of some areas. Also, the metaphor is too simple to explain the complex interrelationships. Marxist theory has often presupposed
a methodological separation between the two domains at the level of investigation. At the same time, it assumes a correlation between the values produced in symbolic processes and the values arising from or serving the relations of material production. Thus there has been a moving away from a theory of social domains to a theory of the class agents who live in the social domains. This moving away has entailed a moving away from a theory of superstructures to a theory of ideology (Belsey: 1987).

Marx denounced/dismissed [as ideology] the self-serving world-view of the middle class (which he believed the bourgeoisie had foisted on the proletariat). Ideology, for Marx, meant "false consciousness": a system of beliefs about the world and one's own relation to it that represented the interests of the dominant social class. Marxist works set to expose the misinterpretations of "ideology", its false ideals, to strip away the lie and expose the liar. For a literary critic to do this would imply that he is an adversary of the work. Hence, as long as ideology meant "false consciousness", its relationship to reading and criticism remained problematic.

Though neither Kant nor Hegel claimed that "consciousness" led to any complete knowledge of the thing in itself or the Absolute, Marx's theory of false consciousness implied the possibility of an objective knowledge of reality, for he modeled his scientific analysis of the society on the mechanistic and deterministic science of the 19th century. The objective impact of ideology, Marxism sought to understand, in shaping social laws of causality. Yet as subjectivity "ideology" was only an obstacle to be removed – an opiate. Scientists then claimed the absolute objectivity of its methods and interferences free from any subjectivity whatsoever. The Marxists of the "Frankfurt Institute of Social Research" founded in 1923, tried to recast Marxism from a science into a social philosophy. This disengaged or at least tried to disengage a cultural and philosophical Marxism with its own problems and possibly its own laws. The result of this became evident much later, after World War II. Now instead
of warning us of false consciousness Marxists concentrate on consciousness per se. Ideology thus became a terminus under scrutiny rather than a see through, displacing which reality was to be examined (Macherey: 1978).

Althusser pioneered a new tradition of Marxist criticism. This is because Althusser stresses the materialist economist Marx over the social historian. For Althusser, ideology is real, though a non-historical reality. By this latter he means that ideology is "omnipresent, transhistorical", not composed of any particular context but rather the constant structure of social knowledge. Just as Freud meant that the conscious is internal, Althusser proposes that "ideology is external", that is always there as the "representation" of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real condition of existence." Althusser effects a radical transformation in conception of reality. It is not so much dependent "on the real conditions of existence" as more potently another account of it (Althusser: 1971, 169).

The ideology, assumed by Althusser is not an optional extra which is deliberately adopted by self-conscious individuals. It is the experience of the world. It is unquestioned precisely because it is assumed unconscious and, therefore, it is taken for granted. Ideology, in Althusser's use of the term, works in conjunction with political practice and economic practice to constitute the social formation, a formulation which promotes a more complex and radical analysis of social relations than the familiar term, "society", which often evokes either a single homogeneous mass, or alternatively a loosely connected group of autonomous individuals (Belsey: 1987-6).

Althusser (1971) in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus", groups literature with other productive activities. Also, as discussed regarding Althusser's definition of ideology, the imaginary world is not an expression of representation of the real realm. The conception of literature as a production implies that on the one hand, as a produced object, the text is seen as a component of the general system of social production. On
the other, the same text, as a productive activity, is seen as a distinct practice of signification (i.e. the act of producing signs) which is related to other practices of signification (such as religion, law etc.). In both cases literary discourse is treated as a reality in its own right. The significance of the term discourse is to be noticed here. Since the representations worked by texts belong to the realm of ideology, literary discourse is both of the same order as the ideological and yet is capable of a reflexive, self-distancing relation to it (Eagleton: 1976).

Ideology is in no sense a set of deliberate distortions foisted upon a helpless working class by a corrupt and cynical bourgeoisie. If there are groups of sinister men in shirt-sleeves purveying illusions to the public these are not the real makers of ideology (Belsey: 1987, 57-58). But according to Althusser ideological practices are supported and reproduced by Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). The central ISA is the educational system, which prepares children to act consistently with the values of society by inculcating in them the dominant versions of appropriate behaviour as well as history, social studies and, of course, literature, the others being the family, the law, the media and the arts (Jordan and Weedon: 2006, 247). All these Apparatuses help represent and reproduce the myths and beliefs necessary to enable people to work within the existing social formation (Macherey: 1978).

According to Althusser the destination of all ideology is the subject. The subject is none other than the individual in society. The role of ideology is to construct people as subjects.

I say: the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but at the same time and immediately I add that the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology in so far as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects. (Althusser: 1971, 160)
Within the existing ideology it appears 'obvious' that people are autonomous individuals, possessed of subjectivity or consciousness which is the source of their beliefs and actions. That people are unique, distinguishable, irreplaceable identities is 'the elementary ideological effect' (*Ibid*, 161).

Nonetheless, Althusser argues that there is a form of knowledge which is 'outside' ideology in the sense that it is subjectless, which knows ideology for what it is and knows the mechanisms of ideology. Science is a mode of knowing by concepts, knowing theoretically, and Althusser urges that it is necessary to try to grasp this knowledge: 'while speaking in ideology, and from within ideology we have to outline a discourse which tries to break with ideology, in order to dare to be the beginning of a scientific (i.e. subjectless) discourse on ideology (*Ibid*, 162). So while no society can exist without ideology (Althusser 1969, 232), and while it is impossible to break with ideology in the general sense, nonetheless it is possible to constitute a discourse which breaks with the specific ideology (or ideologies) of the contemporary social formation (Belsey: 1987, 62-63).

In the post-structurist phase Marxist literary theory has assimilated diverse influences such as those of deconstruction, and Lacanian psychoanalysis, and Foucault. Also its use, particularly Althusser's theory of ideology has penetrated literary critic theories as diverse as feminism, postcolonialism, and discourse analysis, and of course the new historian (Raman: 1988).

The structuralists drew an analogy between language systems and social systems. Following Ferdinand de Saussure's principle that language has a systematic (synchronous) as well as a historical (diachronic) form, they defined societies as complex systems ruled by a social contract, of which the participants are not always conscious, so that the contract is latent rather than manifest. Their aim was to gain a comprehensive view of the social and institutional relations existing between individuals and between individuals and institutions,
with a view to establishing the overall structure of society at large. In this sense, structuralism
is a unified field theory, since its subject is not a given culture (a corpus of texts, a
geographically or historically delimited area), but the study of how rites, values, meanings,
and all such recurrent currencies structure society in all its manifestations (Belsey: 1987).

In the field of literature, the structuralists asked themselves questions such as: What
is the status of words in society? Is literature to be compared to ritual, or does it work
pointed out, the attempts to answer these questions led them to make two important
discoveries. The first is that myths and art, as models productive of social cohesion, have
an exemplary role in society. The second, that all myths are homologous in structure as
well as analogous in function, enabled structuralism to become a science of all social-
systematic behavior (quoted in Onega: 2006, 259-60).

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) revolutionised linguistics by declaring that the
way language functions is quite arbitrary in the sense that there is no obvious correlation
between a linguistic or phonetic utterance/unit and the idea or thing it tries to refer to/convey
(Saussure: 1959, 9).

Levi-Strauss, looked at mythology in terms of structural units, called mythemes, and
at the relationships between these mythemes. Basically, he says that we can look at any
myth as a whole bunch of mythemes tagged together. So, the Oedipus myth contains
mythemes of “The Young Man with Mysterious Origins,” “The Encounter on the Road,”
“Self-Mutilation,” and a whole bunch of others, depending on which particular telling of
the tale we are dealing with (Belsey: 1987).

According to Levi-Strauss, we can look at a whole bunch of different tellings and
put together a pretty good idea of what the whole myth really says, and that by looking
at how all these mythemes go together, we can also understand a lot about mythology,
since the same mythemes keep showing up in different cultures all over the world. Applied
to literature, Saussure's or Levis-Strauss's theory would mean that we study not individual poems and plays (paroles) but the system (langue) which produces them (Onega: 2006, 259).

It is Barthes's *Mythologies* (1972) which demonstrated how forms of close reading within a semiological framework could be applied to a wide range of cultural texts and practices and point to the broader ideological formations within which they are located (Jordan and Weedon: 2006, 247-48). Sartre (1947) defends committed literature (*literature engagée*), and contends that the only kind of literature capable of addressing the ideological controversies of the historical present is the realist novel. Barthes (1953) endorses Sartre's contention that writing is never innocent: that, whether consciously or unconsciously, writing is an ideological act. He then goes on to argue that literature, like all forms of communication, is a sign system, and, drawing a parallel with the Saussurean distinction between language, speech, and speaking, he differentiates between language, style, and writing (Belsey: 1987).

Barthes defines language as a natural order of meanings unified by tradition – that is, as a social norm imposed on the individual while style is the mark of individuality. Style, however, is not the product of the individual writer's free will, since it stems from the unconscious and is the result of the writer's biological conditioning. Thus, neither language nor style allows the writer any choice. By contrast, writing (*écriture*), defined as language endowed with a social finality and thus linked to the great crises of history, is wholly the product of human intention. It is in writing, then, that the individual writer can achieve freedom and moral purpose, even if the writer's freedom lasts only for a mere moment, since it is constantly threatened by the pressures of history and tradition as well as by the fact that language is never transparent. Barthes's claim is that it is part of a writer's moral responsibility to be aware that even realist writing is far from being neutral, and that perfect stylistic innocence – a degree zero of writing – is an unreachable ideal (Onega: 2006, 267-8).
In S/Z Barthes distinguishes two main types of literature roughly corresponding to nineteenth-century realism (such as Balzac, Dickens, and Tolstoy) and twentieth-century experimentalism (such as Russian futurism, Anglo-Saxon Modernism, and the French *nouveau roman*). Traditionally, the realist text, called by Barthes the *readerly text*, was thought to be transparent: that is, it was thought to have a seemingly unitary meaning, immediately accessible to the reader, consisting of the unique expression of the writer's individual genius. Thus considered, the reader's role *vis-à-vis* a realist text can only be that of an impotent and inert consumer of the author's product. By contrast, the experimental text — what Barthes calls *writerly text* — requires the active participation of the reader in the establishment of the text's meaning (Onega: 2006, 271).

Barthes's theory of reading comes full circle in *The Death of the Author* (1977), where he takes to its ultimate conclusion the attack on the unitary and all-controlling godlike author of realist fiction. In contrast to the traditional author, who is thought to nourish the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child, Barthes postulates the figure of the modern sceptor, someone born simultaneously with the text, whose existence does not precede or exceed the writing. Barthes's essay is devoted to undermining the idea that a text is a line of words releasing a single theological meaning (the message of the Author-God), and to demonstrating that the literary text is a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. Echoing Kristeva's notion of intertext, Barthes defines the text as a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. Confronted with this polyphonic and all-encompassing text, the writer can only imitate a gesture that is, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on anyone of them. The centrality granted to the text deprives the reader of any individuality prior to it: the reader is without
history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted. Needless to say, from Barthes's perspective, the critics claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile, since the text has no limit; no final signified which the critic can aspire to explain. (Barthes: 1979, 146, 148, 147)

The Bakhtin School comprising Bakhtin, Pavel Medvedev and Valentin Voloshinov believed 'words' to be active, dynamic, that had several connotations and would mean something different to a different person or social hierarchy or whose meaning would differ according to time and place. Earlier linguist patronized the view that language was 'isolated . . . divorced from its verbal and actual context'. Bakhtin, however, was concerned with language or discourse as a social activity (Suprenant: 2006).

Bakhtin considered the novel to be such a dynamic genre that would eventually take over, many other genres. For instance, Epic, which was characterized (according to Bakhtin) by an uncrossable gulf separating the characters and events from the audience was eventually subsumed by the novel, in such a way that a separation would be unthinkable. Such an understanding would explain ancient writers like Euripides (480-406BC), who wrote about Epic characters in a novelized manner. It could also be used to explain newer genres, such as Magic Realism, which seems to demonstrate a blending of the novel with the fairy tale (Lamarque: 2006, 178)

In theoretical/political terms what is crucial about Bakhtin’s invocation of heteroglossia, is the notion that the multiplication of voices alone cannot be seen as the mark of a dialogic text. For a text to be truly worthy of the description, multiplicity has to be accompanied by diversity and difference. In particular, the voices of the ruling, educated, middle class must not be the only voices heard. The central argument here - that authors, narrators, and characters function merely as the means by which social diversity enters the novel -
is one of the more radical conditions of Bakhtins dialogism, and also one of those most consistently overlooked (Pearce: 2006, 230).

Bakhtin looked upon language as an instrument and an area of class struggle (Morson: 2006, 220). Volosinov, a prominent member of the Bakhtin school, rejected Saussure’s static view of language, and argued that all utterances must be seen in their dynamic social contexts. Words are always the arena of ideological struggle, and are never passive univocal counters. In times of social unrest the ‘multi-accentual’ nature of language comes to the fore (Raman: 1988, 290-1).

Post Structural critics, says Peter Barry (1995), read the text against itself. In doing so, they uncover various layers of meaning embedded in the text. They analyse the text semantically looking for ‘similarities in sound’, the origin and root meanings of words, metaphors and highlight these in such a way, that their analysis become extremely crucial to the meaning of the text. Their analysis is so intense that it generally leads to an explosion of the language into ‘multiplicities of meaning’. In their search for disunities they also locate shifts and gaps of different kinds in the text and utilise these ‘fissures’ as evidence of what may be ‘repressed’ or merely ‘glossed over or passed over in silence by the text’ (Ibid, 73). They tend to explore the disunities rather than the unity or continuity of a text.

In contrast to Claude Levi-Strauss’s understanding that a ‘scientific’ account of culture could be reached by identifying the system that underlines the infinite manifestations of any form of cultural production, Jacques Derrida argued that such an analysis would imply a secure position, a ‘centre’ or ‘transcental signified’, which is outside the system that is being analyzed, which in reality does not exist.

Derrida (1977a, 1977b) himself was a willing supporter of the fact that there is ‘a world of signs without fault, without truth and without origin, which is offered to an active interpretation’. This belief led to the establishing of a new school of criticism based on
deconstruction (Maclean: 1988, 71). What deconstruction stands for is essentially taken from Derrida’s essay, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” wherein he states that “language bears within itself the necessity of its own critique.” What deconstruction does is offer the readers a chance to produce/create their own meanings out of the text by an activity of semantic ‘freeplay’. Underlying this license is the belief that a text inevitably undermines its own claim as possessing a determinate meaning (Johnson: 1980, 52-6).

Derrida takes a good look at semantics and finds that it really does not make any sense. The basic idea is that every word contains and evokes every other word by association, and beyond that, that the meaning of every word is always deferred by circumstances. Because of this, ambiguity is always present, and we can never tell exactly what someone else means. Most semanticists have had to acknowledge the ambiguity of language, but they maintained that, eventually, you could get at the meaning. However, according to Derrida, there is always a tension between opposites, and there is no central meaning holding it all together. Therefore, any unit of language could, potentially, mean just about anything. Without meaning, then there can be no Truth and no Authority, and so power relations in our entire culture more or less fall apart. This is the beginning of deconstruction (Derrida 1973).

Just like it sounds, deconstruction revolves around taking things apart. In that respect, however, it is no different from traditional analysis. Deconstruction, however, does more than take a thing apart to see how it works. Rather, it takes a thing apart in order to see how it was put together in the first place, why it was put together like that, and whether it makes any real difference (Belsey: 1987).

According to Derrida, even if we accept that it is only the signifying system which makes possible the speaking subject, the signifying subject, we cannot nonetheless conceive of a non-speaking, non-signifying subjectivity, ‘a silent and intuitive consciousness’ (Derrida
1973, 146). The problem here, he concludes, is to define consciousness-in-itself as distinct from consciousness of something and ultimately as distinct from consciousness of self. If consciousness is finally consciousness of self, this in turn implies that consciousness depends on differentiation, and specifically on Benveniste's differentiation between 'I' and 'you', a process made possible by language (Belsey: 1987).

When Derrida was first writing, he was deconstructing philosophy, showing how it failed as a system of thought because of its dependence on an inherently flawed tool: language. However, later deconstructionists have turned to literature, which is, of course, a completely different situation. Where many people get fed up with Deconstructionism is when the Deconstructionists say that, given the ambiguity in our language, communication is impossible (Maclean: 1988).

The note of caution sounded by James E.B. Breslin in his work *From Modern to Contemporary* is still quite relevant. Breslin stated:

Drinking from the heady waters of the Derridean critique, a literary critic, now empowered with the means of revealing the limits not just of the language of competing critical schools but of the language of western thought itself might well feel elated until he remembers that his method, breeding suspicion of all systems, leaves him disillusioned, impotent and empty within the present form of a structure he himself has characterized as totalitarian (1965, 260).

Also under attack from post-structuralism and post-modernism has been the liberal humanist tradition as a whole. Again one rejoinder to deconstruction is worth reproducing. In his book, *Counter-Modernism in Current Critical Theory*, Geoffrey Thurley states:

The deconstructionist who tries to show that a text is in contradiction with itself and thus, in some way, demonstrating the necessary failure of discourse to achieve 'closure' or definite meaning is likely to forget that no matter what meanings the
text juxtaposes, aligns or harmonizes, they constitute a whole which requires interpretation and which is, in a serious sense, as incapable of contradicting itself as of referring to itself (1983, 157).

Like Derrida, Michel Foucault did not believe that there was a central meaning that held a word together, nor did he believe in absolute knowledge. Rather, meaning and knowledge existed, not in language, but in society, and are inextricably tied up with power relations. He went to the extent of saying that what we understand or accept as "knowledge" is a construct. "Truth" is constructed — even law and medicine (Raman: 1988).

If we start with Marx and Heidegger, we get the idea that all knowledge is contingent upon a certain set of circumstances, and that those circumstances are affected by socio-economic and cultural factors. For those individuals who have been labeled the bearers and determiners of knowledge, then, life is good. However, since knowledge is always power, then the knowledge you have must be guarded carefully. Therefore, we have elaborate institutions set up to guard knowledge, and we only let individuals have access to knowledge after they have been properly indoctrinated (Belsey: 1987).

While considering discourse as a crucial human activity, Foucault does not believe it to be universal or general. He is more keen on the historical dimension of change in the discourse. When writing *Madness and Civilization* (1961) Foucault realized that what is considered normal or rational, in fact shuts out/silences what these two terms exclude. In such a situation individuals must obey the unwritten/unspoken rules and observe them, failing which they could be condemned to silence (Maclean: 1988).

Work influenced by Foucault looks at cultural texts and practices as discursive practices that shape individuals and produce forms of subjectivity within specific discursive fields. A discursive field refers to a set of discourses, many of which are located in institutions that both constitute and define a particular area, such as, for example, sexuality. From this
perspective, literature and the institutions that produce and define it are regarded as a specific discursive field in which power relations promote particular meanings, interests, and forms of resistance. (Jordan and Weedon: 2006, 249)

According to Foucault, every discipline is designed to allow new propositions to come into being while situated within given discourse communities. Because the will to power is diffused throughout language, then the discourse of the community revolves around that will to power, and can actually hijack our use of language, so that the discourse writes us, rather than the other way around (Raman Seldon and Peter Widdowson: 1993, 159).

One example of how socially determined the power of language is, is in dealing with the role of the author. In ancient times, Foucault argues, writing was a way of defeating death. Achilles chose a violent death because he knew that he would be immortalized. Shakespeare wrote so that he and his loved ones might never die. Contemporary writers, on the other hand, are always writing their own deaths. The minute a writer publishes, s/he has immediately eclipsed him/herself with a doppelganger (Alatas: 2006, 154).

In his *The History of Sexuality* (1980a) Foucault builds an argument grounded in a historical analysis of the word “sexuality” against the common thesis that sexuality always has been repressed in western society. His analysis is based on the power relations in our society. According to him the concept “sexuality” can only exist in a social context; it is not a natural category. In the West, the past was seen as a dark age where sexuality had been something forbidden. Foucault, on the other hand, states that western culture has long been fixated on sexuality. We call it a repression. Rather, the social convention not to mention sexuality has created a discourse around it, thereby making sexuality ubiquitous. This would not have been the case, had it been thought of as something quite natural. The concept “sexuality” itself is a result of this discourse. And the interdictions also have constructive power: they have created sexual identities and a multiplicity of sexualities that would not have existed otherwise (Onega: 2006).
Cultural Studies and New Historicism mark a ‘sociological turn’ in literary studies. Sociological concerns were never absent from literary studies but these two trends bring them to the foreground. The Birmingham Centre of Cultural Studies concerned itself with contemporary English reality and cultural forms (including film and mass media). New Historicism focused more on the Renaissance with special attention to drama. Matthew Arnold in the Victorian period and T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis in the twentieth century have also been ‘culture critics’ but our focus here is on cultural materialism as inaugurated by Raymond Williams.

What is it that cultural critics wanted to achieve? The cultural critics wanted to break the boundary between high and popular culture and the hierarchy that this implies. The cultural critics are also critical of the idea of a “canon”. Instead of evaluating what is “great”, the cultural critics wished to relate a literary text to its cultural context. As such cultural criticism is interdisciplinary for it involves studying a whole way of life – which includes the social, the political, the economic, etc. (Dollimore and Sinfield: 1985).

Williams’ endeavor was to describe a form of critical activity in the Marxist tradition that remains materialist but avoids the trap of attempting to understand all cultural activities as mere effects of the economic ‘base’. He was able to move beyond the reductive base-superstructure relations which saw literature as an effect of an already existing economic reality. Michel Foucault was a strong influence on cultural critics and the new historicists. Unlike the Marxists, he refused to see power as something exercised by the oppressor on the oppressed. He did not see power simply as something repressive or oppressive of one against another. He saw it as a complex of forces – ways of thinking, speaking etc. Foucault is also important for focusing on the histories of women, the minorities and other marginalized persons in the study of culture (Lamarque: 2006).

New Historicism, specifically, was more concerned with the interaction between state
power and cultural forms in the Renaissance. Theatre came to be seen as a prime location for the representation and legitimation of power. Lately 'New Historicism' has come to cover a wide range of approaches to the study of literature and history. New Historicism was a reaction to the excesses of deconstruction and brought back the focus from the vagaries of the free-floating signifier to the dynamics of power within cultural formations (Alatas: 2006).

There is considerable overlap between the concerns of the cultural critics and the New Historicists. According to Greenblatt (1980), New Historicism involves "an intensified willingness to read all of the textual traces of the past with the attention traditionally conferred only on literary texts." The area of study goes beyond the literary to the non-literary of the same historical period and provides useful insights.

New Historicism presents a de-centered history of cultural diversity. The only trouble is that it has also inherited Foucault's skeptical outlook on possibilities of social change which literature participates in, forming the dominant ideological assumptions of a particular time. The main trouble with this tendency as a whole has been that texts could be subjected to the most superficial and generalized readings as a result of an interest in the function rather than the interpretability of texts. There is the danger of not having enough sensitivity of the complexity of literary texts. On the side of activism, the problem with New Historicism is that even when presenting a de-centered history open to cultural diversity it tends to inherit Foucault's more pessimistic idiom where questions of agency (the ability to bring about change) are not fore-grounded sufficiently (Maclean: 1988).

Discourse analysis has now become a very diverse area of study, with a variety of approaches in each of a number of disciplines. The approaches surveyed can be divided into groups according to the nature of their social orientation to discourse, distinguishing 'non-critical' and 'critical' approaches. Such a division is not absolute. Critical approaches
differ from non-critical approaches in not just describing discursive practices, but also showing how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief, neither of which is normally apparent to discourse participants (Fairclough: 2000, 12).

Discourse analysis should focus upon structuring or 'articulatory' processes in the construction of the texts, and in the longer-term constitution of 'order of discourse' (that is, total configurations of discursive practices in particular institutions, or indeed in a whole society). On the level of texts, these processes could be seen in terms of 'intertextuality': texts are constructed through other texts being articulated in particular ways, ways which depend upon and change with social circumstances. On the level of orders of discourse, relationships among the boundaries between discourse practices in an institution or the wider society are progressively shifted in ways which accord with directions of social change. The analysis produces an 'expansion' of each cross-section, a formulation of the text which makes explicit what was implicit, by providing references for pronouns, verbalizing the implicit meanings of the paralinguistic cues, introducing relevant factual material from other parts of the data, and making explicit some of the shared knowledge of the participants. Expansions are open-ended, and can be elaborated indefinitely (Fairclough: 2000, 20-21).

Marxist philosophical anthropology assigns to labour the role of the foundation of humanity. A postmodernist position would be to assign this role to language. The logic of political economy is the cultural logic of capitalism and its analysis requires attention to the concept of the sign and the production of symbols (Baudrillard, 1975). This suggests specific ways in which language and power are linked. The analysis of power can no longer take law, prohibition, and state power as the model. Power is not to be understood in terms of prohibition, that is, in negative terms. In its positive forms, power is also wielded discursively, and this takes place not 'apart from or against power, but in the very space
and as a means of its exercise’ (Foucault: 1980a, 32). The understanding of power cannot be restricted to prohibition, restriction, punishment, and blockage (Alatas: 2006, 100).

In his *The Order of Discourse* (1781) Foucault proposes four methodological requirements that must be fulfilled if the analysis of the conditions and effects of the control, limitation, and rarefaction of discourses is to be carried out (Foucault: 1981, 66-67). First of all, there is the principle of reversal, requiring us to look at the ‘negative action of a cutting up and a rarefaction of discourses’ (rather than at the positive action of creation) by such figures and systems as the author, the discipline, and the will to truth (Foucault: 1981, 67). Putting the principle of reversal into practice constitutes what Foucault called the critical set of analysis (Foucault: 1981, 70). The critical set has the task of analyzing the instances of discursive control and the procedures involved. As we have seen, Foucault rejected the designative theory of language and criticized the control and limitations that it brings about. But he offered more by way of the analysis of several procedures of the exclusion, limitation and the control of discourses (Alatas: 2006, 154).

The Post-Sassurean discourse takes an attitude that a text betrays its own inadequacy by its incoherences, contradictions and silences. If a text is presumed as ‘obvious’ which means non-theoretical, then it automatically gets assumed that the text is not called on to demonstrate that it is internally consistent because an account of the world finally proves to be incoherent or non-explanatory. This is an unsatisfactory foundation for the practice of reading or criticism.

The problem is effaced by the Empiricists by pointing out that the real task of the critic is not to worry about the lack of any systematic approach or procedure or niceties of theories. They called upon the readers and critics not to assume that the niceties of the theory itself as ‘eclecticism’ which would guarantee objectivity. The Empiricists showed the way to respond to the text directly with the reading process. As a result, empiricism fails to confront with its own presuppositions. Furthermore, it protects whatever procedures
and methods are currently dominant. As a result, it guarantees the very opposite of objectivity, the perpetuation of unquestioned assumptions.

Even if it is unspoken, we presuppose a whole theoretical discourse about language and about meaning. The completeness to the theoretical discourse presupposed is attained by making candid the relationships between meaning and the world, meaning and people, finally about people themselves and their place in the world. With these presuppositions writing and reading takes place. Therefore, the above presuppositions lead to come to a conclusion that the creation of the text that is writing of a text and recreation of the same text by reading it is not an innocent act, however ‘natural’ our reading and writing might seem.

Catherine Belsey takes a very positive stance in favour of the reading the text with a theoretical framework to apply to the text. She snubs of the entire idea of the practice of reading a text without a theory by merely responding to the text by only reading the text. She says ‘there is no practice without theory, however much that theory is suppressed, unformulated or perceived as ‘obvious’.’ (Belsey: 1987-3). Post-Saussurean theory, therefore, starts from an analysis of language, proposing that language is not transparent, not merely the medium in which autonomous individuals transmit messages to each other about an independently constituted world of things. On the contrary, it is language which offers the possibility of constructing a world of individuals and things, and of differentiating between them. The transparency of language is an illusion (Belsey: 1987- 4).

Ideology is inscribed in specific discourses. A discourse is a domain of language use, a particular way of talking (writing and thinking). A discourse involves certain shared assumptions which appear in the formulations that characterize it. Ideology is inscribed in discourse in the sense that it is literally written or spoken in it; it is not a separate element which exists independently in some free-floating realm of ‘ideas’ and is subsequently embodied
in words, but a way of thinking, speaking, experiencing. Hence, no linguistic forms are ideologically innocent or neutral (Belsey: 1987-6).

**Reader theory** opens up possibilities for two extreme positions. At its best, interest in the reader is entirely liberating, a rejection of authorial tyranny in favour of the participation of readers in the production of a plurality of meanings; at its worst, reader-theory merely constructs a new authority figure as guarantor of a single meaning, a timeless, transcendent, highly trained model reader who cannot be wrong. In reality most practising reader-theorists operate between these extremes and encounter, implicitly or explicitly, a number of theoretical problems in the process (Belsey: 1987, 29).

Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) originally invoked the concept of the implied author as a concession to the arguments against the quest for the intentions of the empirical author. In fact, it is an extremely useful instrument in the formal analysis of narrative texts. It designates the implicit 'speaker' in the novel, for instance, the teller of the story as a whole, who is different from the implied authors of other stories (Booth 1961, 70-1).

The distinction between the implied narrator of the discourse as a whole, the 'subject of the enunciation', and the 'subjects of the enonce', who are characters (including fictional narrators) with their own subordinate is common in recent French criticism. Todorov makes this point clear when he writes:

> The narrator is the subject of the enunciation represented by a book. . . . It is he or she who places certain descriptions before others, although these preceded them in the chronology of the story. It is he or she who makes us see the action through the eyes of this or that character, or indeed through his or her own eyes. . . . (1966, 146)
It is very clear that a formal distinction is insisted by Todorov (1970):

The two aspects of the *enonce* which are always present: its double nature of *enonce* and *enonciation*. These two aspects give life to two equally linguistic realities, that of the characters and that of the narrator-listener duality. . . . The individual who says *I* in a novel is not the *I* of the discourse, otherwise called the subject of the *enonciation*. He is only a character. . . . But there exists another *I*, an *I* for the most part invisible, which refers to the narrator, the 'poetic personality' which we apprehend through the discourse (1970: 132).

For Stanley Fish reading is an activity, a process; meanings are events in the reader's consciousness; the important question to ask of a text is what it does; and the proper procedure of the critic is 'an analysis of the developing responses of the reader in relation to the words as they succeed one another in time' (Fish 1972, 387-8). Fish does not ignore language. He analyses the text as discourse. He is interested in the disruptive text. In his case the disruptive text is understood as a text which is ordered in such a way that the discursive sequence fails to fulfil the expectations it generates. And this challenges the reader to confront problems, difficulties and questions which cannot readily be resolved into an easy and reassuring harmony. He defines this mode of presentation as 'dialectical', in opposition to the 'rhetorical' text which 'satisfies' its readers. In his own words:

A dialectical presentation. . . is disturbing, for it requires of its readers a searching and rigorous scrutiny of every thing they believe in and live by. It is didactic in a special sense; it does not preach the truth, but asks that its readers discover the truth for themselves, and this discovery is often made at the expense not only of a reader's opinions and values, but of his self-esteem. . . . For the end of a dialectical experience is (or should be) nothing less than a *conversion*, not only a changing, but an exchanging of minds. (*Ibid*, 1-2)
Fish connects literature directly with truth, even though the truth in question is 'discovered' by the reader. His model of the text is not precisely expressive, though it is implicit throughout that the author as dialectician is in control of the discourse which constitutes the text. But what has to be given credit is the position attributed to the readers by Fish in the construction of meaning, and it therefore provides a possible basis for a genuinely radical and productive critical practice.

What it fails to recognize is the plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings. Fish's reader is disarmingly singular, an 'informed reader, neither an abstraction, nor an actual living reader, but a hybrid - a real reader (me) who does everything within his power to make himself informed' (Ibid, 407).

On the other hand, German reception theory, (Rezeptionsästhetik, the Aesthetics of Reception), adopts a more sophisticated attitude to theory and to history. As Hans Robert Jauss (1974) insists, 'a literary work is not an object which stands by itself and which offers the same face to each reader in each period. It is not a monument which reveals its timeless essence in a monologue' (p. 14). It concerns itself precisely with the problem of how we can account for differences of reading in terms of the intertextual and historical expectations of readers. According to Jauss (1974):

It is a procedure which, 'brings out the hermeneutic difference between past and present ways of understanding a work' in terms of literary and historical contexts, and which 'thereby challenges as platonizing dogma the apparently self-evident dictum of philological metaphysics that literature is timelessly present and that it has objective meaning, determined once and for all and directly open to the interpreter at any time' (Ibid, 23).

Truth to life, for instance, is not a universal criterion of greatness in literature, but
a value which characterizes the period of humanism, seen as historically determinate, distinct from both the Middle Ages and the modern period, when the mimetic theory is without authority (Ibid. 26).

Jauss, however, is concerned primarily with literary history, with the analysis of the process by which the new and challenging becomes familiar and effortless. For a theory of the reading process itself we need to turn to Wolfgang Iser, probably the leading current exponent of the Aesthetics of Reception. Iser is fully aware of the theoretical problems involved in discussing ‘the reader’ as authority for a single mode of reading. (Belsey: 1987, 35) Empirical readers whose responses are documented impose one kind of limitation on the possibilities of interpretation, and hypothetical readers, whether ideal figures or contemporaries of the author, inevitably impose others, different in each case. He himself settles for the concept of the ‘implied reader’, a figure who is constructed by the text in the sense that ‘he embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect- predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself’ (Iser: 1978, 34).

However, Iser’s theory suppresses the relationship between language and experience. He argues that the words of the text stimulate ‘mental images’ which are the ‘basic feature of ideation’ (Ibid. 135 ff). The text is thus ‘translated’ into the reader’s consciousness where it becomes part of his or her personal experience. Reading is an educative process in which the reader assimilates unfamiliar experience, or lives for a time an alien life (Ibid, 155-6).

Thus, the basic model is the familiar concept of communication between individual subjects. Recognizing the theoretical problems both of the expressive theory and of the concept of a single model reader, Iser replaces the empirical author and the ideal reader with an implied author and an implied reader, and he probably arrives at as sophisticated an analysis of the relationship between them as the communication model allows (Belsey: 1987, 36).
Implications of Literary Theories to the Present Study

The most pertinent question that we need to ask at this point from the perspective of the study at hand is, 'what are the implications of the major strands of the literary theory and criticism that we surveyed so far on the theoretical positions that we wish to adopt for this study?' In the pages that ensue, an attempt is made to paraphrase the ideas that are seen as very relevant for the meaningful analysis of the novels chosen for the study.

In an effort to make a brief appraisal of the key formulations from the modernists down to the postmodernists and poststructuralists, it is realised how from the earlier stages of language, or text-oriented criticism, later day criticism and theory have either, like some structuralists and Derrida became radically text-centered, or contextual (i.e. the author's or reader's contexts). Similarly, recent literary theory has opened up new spaces for readers as well as writers. 'Meaning', 'reading', 'representation', 'identity', 'subjectivity', 'authorship' have all been questioned by contemporary theory. Deconstruction, in conjunction with some other strands of post-structuralism, along with the skepticism that goes into postmodernism, has led to a climate where 'logics of disintegration' have dominated. Thus, context is again getting as much attention as text did during the heyday of New Criticism (Fuller: 2006, 153).

There is now greater awareness of the way discursive formations are constructed and how they operate in the world at large. 'Politics' of various kinds of writing and various critical stances is sought to be singled out. Reading itself is no longer a simple straightforward thing. Literature is not simply an innocent account of pink sunsets and yellow roses. It is also about politics and hidden agendas. One is on the lookout for a number of things one did not bother too much about a few decades ago. At the same time greater openness should be there to take in issues related to gender, race and ethnicity.
With its analytical, speculative and interdisciplinary perspectives, literary theory has opened up the field and has made it much more self-reflexive than it was before. These are positive gains. The debate over the nature and function of reading and writing that came on the heels of structural linguistics and cultural analysis has coincided with a desire to understand how other systems of signs offer frameworks which determine how we read and make sense of our experience and how we produce meaning ‘in the world’ and construct our own identity. There has also been a general thrust in the direction of ‘demystification’ of various kinds. Canon-formations of earlier times are either giving way or allowing room for considerable decontextualising. This means that the awe with which certain writers and their works were looked at is no longer there in the same way. ‘Literariness’ as such (the notion that the literary or the ‘poetic’ function of language has some special status) is also losing ground.

In spite of Barthes’s much publicized essay (1977, 142-8) on the death of the author, the genus survives. It is just that we now realize that the author, like the reader, is a product of language, ideology, and context. The author’s text, like all our texts, creates him or her, just as much as he or she creates it. An author, in fact, is a paradigm of virtual authors, from which the author of any given text is chosen (Maclean: 1988, 27). Indeed, if it is the case that narrative is bound up with the establishment of identities associated with nationality, class, gender, occupation, or even a sense of opinions or one’s place in the world in relation to others, then the novel, as a ‘dialogic’ form, cannot escape an orientation to the ‘historical’. It cannot avoid recording the relations of signs to other signs or voices to other voices, rather than simply depicting individuals. (Cobley: 2001, 107).

Belsey asserts that literature, dealing in the great (discursive) ambiguities of love and death, sacrifice and revenge, and traditionally believed to be rich in connotation and elusive
in its nuances, is surely all the more susceptible of a plurality of interpretations than a crude and commonplace political slogan (1987, 54). It is the recurrent suppression of the role of language which has limited plurality, and suppression is in turn ideological. But the task is to identify the effects of the limitation which confines ‘correct’ reading to an acceptance of the position from which the text is most ‘obviously’ intelligible, the position of a transcendent subject addressed by an autonomous and authoritative author. Thereafter, according to Belsey, it becomes possible to refuse this limitation, to liberate the plurality of the text, to reject the ‘obvious’ and to produce meaning (Ibid.).

As Barthes proposed ‘the goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text.’ (1975, 4) In the opinion of Belsey if readers often did not identify the repressed in the text, if they did not recognize the silence with which the work finally confronts its own ideological project, it was because they read from within the same ideological framework, shared the same repressions and took for granted the same silences. Indeed, it is still only by distancing ourselves from the familiar modes of representation that we can expect to identify the areas on which ideology is silent (1987, 137).

However, it should also be remembered that despite using the theory to make us more alert to the nuances of various kinds of texts and even of ‘agendas’ (hidden or otherwise) accompanying them, some room for openness must remain. Hence, the critic and the reader should at no point of time allow theory to become more important than the creative text itself. Otherwise we are likely to land up in the problematic sphere where all of the creative work is labeled as a pre-determined and self-centered exercise.
Role of Narration in a Nation

Stanley Payne (1974) has argued that nationalism was born out of the ‘intersection of traditionalism with modernity’ (131). Like all modern ideologies Payne added that it was a creation of the intelligentsia which was subsequently imposed upon the masses. Anthony Smith (1981), one of the leading theorists of nation-building and nationalism, has suggested that nationalism’s primary function is ‘the resolution of the crisis of the intelligentsia’ (p. 15). In this context, we can recall how at the time of the creation of the novels chosen for the study, the major preoccupation of majority of Indians was either the creation or the sustenance of the great exercise and experiment of nation-building. Hence, it needs no effort to conclude that there is no way the novelists and the novels chosen for the study would have escaped the influence of these processes at two levels: (i) their narration, directly or indirectly, giving shape to the idea of a certain kind of a nation, and (ii) the apparatus and processes of nation impacting the process of their narration. Having surveyed the major theoretical positions on literary criticism and also having learnt their implications for our study, it seems appropriate here to attempt an understanding of the interrelationships of the processes of narration with that of nation-building and nationalism in order to complete the theoretical background needed for the present study.

The idea here is not to sideline or contradict Aijaz Ahmad’s essay Jameson’s Rhetoric of Otherness and the ‘National Allegory’, which he wrote in response to Frederic Jameson’s Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital in an attempt to challenge the latter’s assertion that “all third-world texts are necessarily ... national allegories” (original emphasis). It is well known that the boundaries drawn by colonial powers that define postcolonial nations cannot be unquestioningly accepted as unitary identities for all its peoples. It is also quite known that there are innumerable writers who write texts...
that are not straightforwardly realist, and are not national allegories. There is a multiplicity of nationalisms today and not all of them are progressive. Hence, it is not right to attempt a homogenization of nationalism. Also, it is also understood that the fact that by insisting on the common experience of national oppression due to colonialism and imperialism we would only be suppressing the “multiplicities of intersecting conflicts based upon class, gender, nation, race, region, and so on...” (Ahmed: 1994, 102).

However, the argument here is that of Ahmed's: that literary texts are produced in the context of competing ideological and cultural clusters, and in analyzing the guiding force behind the production of the text it will first have to be placed in the context of the cluster that gives it energy and form. In the case of the novels chosen for the study, therefore, we can persuasively argue that the preoccupations with the reality and 'isms' related to the nation-building could not have been avoided by their authors. This fact warrants us to understand the role of narration in nation-building. This section of the chapter is an effort in this direction.

It is expected that a story should obey the basic conditions, the 'logic', of narrative (Bremond 1973; Prince: 1973a). These conditions in natural narrative are perhaps best summed up by Labov: 'A complete; narrative begins with an orientation, proceeds to the complicating action, is suspended at the focus of evaluation before the resolution, and returns the listener to the present time with the coda' (Labov: 1972, 369).

A feature of narrative is that it enacts and it represents. 'Hence any speech acts within the story itself are' relayed as second-order speech acts with a different status from those of everyday transactions. For instance, any direct speech incorporated in narrative is a form of mime, a plot, the narrator, an overlap of fiction and non-fiction (Pratt: 1977, 142).
Cobley has argued that ‘narrative is just a sequence which starts and moves inexorably to its end’ (2001, 9). For Ricoeur (1981) too, time is not just a part of the narrative apparatus; in fact, he understands time and narrative as being on intimate terms precisely because narrative is the human relation to time (Cobley: 2001, 17).

Ricoeur (1981, 170) stresses the importance of the end point of a narrative, arguing that the understanding of successive actions, thoughts and feelings in a narrative is dictated by anticipation of the conclusion, and also, that reaching the conclusion enables a backward glance at the actions that led up to it. Narrative is therefore not just a matter of paying attention to individual incidents on the time-line; it is most importantly about ‘expectation’ and ‘memory’: reading the end in the beginning and reading the beginning in the end (Cobley: 2001, 19).

It follows from this recognition, then, that the cornerstone of narrative structure is the plot, or what Ricoeur, borrowing from Aristotle and, presumably, to avoid plot/sujzet/discourse difficulties, calls ‘muthos’ or ‘emplotment’. Emplotment is the intelligible whole which governs the succession of events in a story and thus “places us at the crossing point of temporality and narrative” (1981, 167). Moreover, this is so for both fictional narrative and historical narrative, according to Ricoeur, and for three basic reasons. First, humans’ knowledge of the world is largely framed by narrative. Ricoeur is keen to point out that “we are not born into a world of children..., as unspeaking children, we come into a world already full of our predecessors’ narratives” (Ricoeur:1981,181-2), that “The largest part of our information about events in the world is, in fact, owing to knowledge through hearsay” (Ricoeur: 1985,156) and that “action is already symbolically mediated; literature, in the largest sense of the word, including history as well as fiction, tends to reinforce a process of symbolization already at work” (Ricoeur: 1991, 182). Second, history is as shot
through with emplotment as fiction, based as it is on a conception of time as ‘expectation - attention - memory’ rather than simple linear sequence. Third, historical narrative, like fictional narrative, strongly seems to invite these ‘narrative-time’ conceptions of readers in which movement’ through the narrative is guided by anticipation, focus and retrospection.

Fundamentally, history can be conceived both as an “extra-textual real” and as a set of signs which make up a discourse (Bennett: 1990, 53). That is to say, history as extra-textual real entails actual events that really happened irrespective of what has been recorded about them; in addition, though, there is also a practice of writing history which relies not on objective knowable truth but on a representation of “what can be derived from the historical record or archive” (Bennett: 1990, 49). That the historical record is itself a discursive entity made up of signs means that it offers a re-presented, thoroughly selective account of what actually happened (Cobley: 2001, 30).

In the cases of both fiction and historical non-fiction there is always a re-presentation of some prior events, a ‘fabula’ as the Russian Formalists describe it in relation to fictional narrative. Consequently, argues Hayden White, Kuvempu University Library Jnana Sahvadri, Shankaradhatta

All written discourse is cognitive in its aims and mimetic in its means. And this is true even of the most ludic and seemingly expressivist discourse, of poetry no less than of prose, and even of those forms of poetry which seem to illuminate only ‘writing itself’. In this respect, history is no less a form of fiction than the novel is a form of historical representation (1987, 122)

For White, then, fictional and factual representation, both partake of the same rhetorical devices or tropes. It therefore follows that the devices of narrativity play a large part in facilitating human apprehension of the world.
Narration and Identity-formation

The key 'use' of narrative concerns identity. It is fairly well known in the modern world that social circumstances, and the existence of the self within them, are to a large extent socially constructed by texts and the narratives they frequently contain (Shotter and Gergen 1989). Yet it seems that narrative has played an important role in identity-formation for a long time. (Cobley: 2001, 37)

Memory embodied in narrative made a significant contribution to the formation and maintenance of the self-image of peoples, especially when writing may not have been available physically to store records of past events and details of a people's most cherished ideals. Narrative is therefore also bound with the notion of large-scale identities such as nation (Ibid, 38).

Novel is a particular form of narrative (Butor: 1968, 45). It was not a simple outgrowth or 'technical' response to the epic and the romance, even though these last two were important forms of narrative. Indeed, the novel had existed in embryonic form as a long and highly organized fictional narrative focusing on multiple characters even in the first century (Doody: 1998, 15-172). Its major resurgence in the eighteenth century coincided with the growth of a milieu in which those who did read consumed a variety of reading matter: the Bible, religious tracts and sermons, ballads, Newgate confessional accounts of criminals’ lives, 'picaresque' tales (narratives which first developed in Picardie and which dealt with the exploits of rogues), 'chapbooks' (collections which included ballads and romances), histories and chronicles, biographies, accounts of travel, magazines, periodicals and journalism of all kinds. Hence, it needs to be understood that novel as a narrative form evolved out of the turmoil of ideas that came in the wake of the old feudal world order coming to terms with new thoughts, new technicalities, new language patterns — newer social forms (Hunter 1990; Barron and Nokes 1993).
From the start there was a question over the character of the novel: was it a predominantly realistic, reportorial genre, a form of biography, history and reportage, or was it essentially a form dedicated to its own discovery, a self-sceptical species of art? These two functions have always both consorted and contested with each other. In the nineteenth century much of the major fiction inclined toward the realistic, or what Henry James called 'solidity of specification'. In the early twentieth century much of it was predominantly experimental and self-questioning, a development that Henry James was also to celebrate. ‘It has arrived, in truth, the novel, late at self-consciousness, but it has done its utmost ever since to make up for lost opportunities,’ he wrote in an essay called ‘The Future of Fiction’, written exactly as the twentieth century came into existence. The self-consciousness James was pointing to the growing of a split between the novel as popular form or merchandise, and the novel as art. It also marked the emergence of a new experimental avantgarde, for whom the established traditions of art were over, the forms exhausted, and the age demanded something new. So there seemed to be an Old Novel, moral, realistic and bourgeois, and a New Novel, exploring the mythic and symbolic sources of fiction, its creative nature (Bradbury: 1977, 3-4).

The Modern Novel or the New Novel, thus began to dispense with much of the novel’s familiar realism and its dense and habitual sense of character and plot; setting and atmosphere, chronological and historical time. It probed deeper into consciousness, individual and collective, looked outward at a world that seemed less a clear material substance than a place of random time and chaotic history, and it pluralized awareness, multiplied perception, ironized narrative, and looked directly into its own formal nature as art. Thus, the novel, once thought as a lower form, took on the character of a major literary genre, a true companion to poetry and drama (Bradbury: 1977, 4-5).
In the opinion of Mitra (2005, 183), the novel is the most powerful literary form the present or the last century has seen. One major adjunct of the rise of the novel is the embedding of ‘individualism’ in its very form (Hunter: 1990, 66). The notion of the ‘sovereign rights of the individual’ is a central product of both the Enlightenment and the middle-class capitalism which succeeded the feudal system of social stratification (see, for example, Ray 1990: 93-104, 188-96 and Lovell 1987: 15-17, 153-5). It was part and parcel of the new middle class whose mercantile interests were to be furthered in a system which, at least in theory, favored individual industry over inherited wealth. It was also integral to the revolutionary movements in France and America which would have such an explosive impact later in the century. Yet, more broadly still, the sense of the individual was an important product of literate culture (Cobley: 2001: 76-77).

Lodge (1969, 89) opines that novel stands to modern, post-Renaissance civilization as the epic did to ancient civilization. Perhaps more important, by suggesting that the novel is a new synthesis of pre-existing narrative traditions, rather than a continuation of one of them or an entirely unprecedented phenomenon, it accounts for the great variety and inclusiveness of the novel form: its capacity for being pushed, by different authors, in the directions of history (including autobiography), allegory or romance while still remaining somehow ‘the novel’. Thus, the novel, supremely among literary forms, has satisfied our hunger for the meaningful ordering of experience without denying our empirical observation of its randomness and particularity.

Not only in form and style but in theme and content, novel-writing has reckoned with crucial issues in an open-ended way. Looking as much to ethos as experience, it rests content with neither of them. Though the charm that storytelling may hold, for it is eternal, it cannot do without the amplitude of life. Proceeding through polyphonic collusion of several
worlds in Mikhail Bakhtin’s sense of the word, it is disposed to mould its representation into a trajectory (Bakhtin: 1981, 160). Thus representing human life, it carries ‘the incommensurable to extremes’ which further to put in Walter Benjamin’s syntax ‘gives evidence of the profound perplexity of living.’ (Benjamin: 1970, 158). Credited with the complexion of experience and complexity of feeling as this perplexity of living is, it awards to novel-writing an aura that is reflective and eloquent at the same time (Gill: 2005, 158-9).

In the words of Said (1993, 87), for all their social presence, novels are not reducible to a sociological current and cannot be done justice to aesthetically, culturally, and politically as subsidiary forms of class, ideology, or interest. Equally, however, novels are not simply the product of lonely genius (as a school of modern interpreters like Helen Vendler try to suggest), to be regarded only as manifestations of unconditioned creativity. Some of the most exciting recent criticism Fredric Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious* and David Miller’s *The Novel and the Police* are two celebrated examples – shows the novel generally, and narrative in particular, to have a sort of regulatory social presence in West European societies. Yet missing from these otherwise valuable descriptions are adumbrations of the actual world in which the novels and narratives take place.

Like all knowledge, the novel changes with history and its own environment. It depends on its own relation to other discovering languages – those of science, philosophy, history, journalism, travel-writing, autobiography. It is altered by historical events and shifts in ideology and social and gender relations. At the same time it fights its own case for the fictional and discovering imagination amongst the ideas, the politics, the social emphases, and the world-views of its times (Bradbury: 1977, 3).
Need of Narration for a Nation

A sustainable notion of nation requires a historic territory or homeland for a people, a common public culture, common legal rights and duties for all members, and a common economy; but, as Smith (1991, 14) argues, it also requires common myths and historical memories. The main vehicle for these latter is frequently narrative, although there are others such as monuments and statues. As narrative is closely associated with human action rather than abstract principles, it is particularly suited to the memorializing of that staple of peoples' self-determination, national or folk heroes (Lord: 2000, 7).

Indeed, it is not just heroic figures in epics whose national status is facilitated by narrative; one of the most cited theorists of nationalism suggests that narrative also helps to bind individuals in a nation by offering the concept of a 'meanwhile'. Benedict Anderson argues that the narrative structure whereby characters' lives might be narrated such that some of them are intimately known to each other, and others are not, is analogous to the 'imagined community' of a nation. In modernity, all of the characters inhabit the same landscape, even to the extent that, unknowingly, characters might pass each other in the street (Anderson: 1991, 24-33; Bhabha: 1990a, 308-10).

Thus, in contrast to Lévi-Strauss' position, narrative does not reveal universality; it has been instrumental in the promotion of difference, helping to preserve some memories and not others, and helping to bind some people into a given community and not others. In fact, narrative has sometimes assisted in upholding an absolutist conception of cultural difference, especially in its contribution to the concept of tradition (Cobley: 2001, 38-39).

As discussed in the section on culture and identity, the issue to be addressed here is not how narrative might be used to promote absolute distinctions between peoples but how it might represent 'cultural difference' and 'hybridity'.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, nation, as a political and social entity, is a recent
phenomenon; a historical process of national struggles and the formation of nation-states, in which particular groups or classes of people participate, actively or as intellectuals; a process involving changes, however uneven, in the social and material conditions of the people. It is an understanding of the complex nature of these changes that can enable us to see whether a particular nationalism or nation, is an emancipatory or retrogressive political phenomenon. Literature contributes, in a fundamental way, to the making of a nation in that it articulates, shapes and consolidates these changes. (Joshi: 2005, 209)

In the words of Said (1993, xiii), narration helps people overcome colonial conquest and fight for their freedom. He opines that just as stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history. The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative. As one critic has suggested, nations themselves are narrations. The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them. Most important, the grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment mobilized people in the colonial world to rise up and throw off imperial subjection.

In Hobsbawm’s words, ‘the “nation” as conceived by nationalism can be recognised prospectively; the real “nation” can only be recognised a posteriori.’ (Hobsbawm: 1990, 9) The pulls of inclusion and exclusion are never, and indeed, can never, be evenly balanced. Given these differential and contrary pulls, therefore, it becomes entirely possible for more than one form of nationalism to arise from the same source (Zutshi: 1993, 84). In the opinion of Kapur (1993, 20), with the rising tide of nationalism there is a tendency to bring myths
and legends, structures of feeling embodied in symbols, all revelatory icons, to the surface; to make them come up front and take on new or newly adapted forms in the various arts. Tradition thus shows itself as living tradition.

This 'National' feeling is, most of the time, created or 'manufactured' by works of art and literature. The idea of a 'Nation' is very closely associated with patriotism. This popular sentiment is built and sustained by songs and literature. (Mitra: 2005, 183). Moreover, if their ideas are to spread nationalists cannot afford to let their debates remain framed by the parameters of abstract criteria, be they language, ethnicity, religion or whatever. Images, symbols, must be appropriated and put to use to give this abstraction (nation), based on further abstractions (language, ethnicity, etc.), a feeling of reality. Due to the basic nature of the exercise, however, it becomes possible for various nationalisms to use the same image differentially, as well as for a single image to have various meanings within the same nationalism (Zutshi: 1993, 84-85).

The Nation, the moral set up of the state, proceeds more and more towards centralisation of social and cultural forms. Traditionally, the novel has centred on the narrative of an individual quest -- whether a search for identity, or a place in life. Even when larger national issues have provided a frame of reference, it is the individual's relationship to them that has been the point of departure for the novel (Mitra: 2005, 185).

In the words of Ramakrishnan (2005) the novel becomes the site where multiple discourses of nationhood become visible for examination. He opines that the novel's symbiotic relationship with nation and nationalism has been the subject of intensive critical enquiries for more than two decades. During this period, narrative theories have also broken new ground, enabling us to reconsider the form and function of the novel from an interdisciplinary perspective. Narratives are attempts to make sense of the world. We need fictions to discover others as well as ourselves. Indian novels, seen from this point of view, offer much material
for investigating the inner dynamics of the Indian nation. The origin of the Indian novel in
the second half of the nineteenth century coincided with the rise of nationalism as an ideology
in the public sphere. The two discourses intermingled and, to some extent, even reinforced
each other (Ramakrishnan: 2005, 12).

Perspectives on Methodological Issues

The present study hopes to make a departure of a major kind from the usual
methodological confines within which research in humanities is generally pursued. This is
because the research efforts within the humanistic disciplines have very often resulted in
disengaged critique and supercilious inaction; political confrontation without systematic
empirical foundation; ideological fractiousness without apparent need for compromise, among
other things. Hence, this study strives to break away from these limitations by adopting
a multi-disciplinary approach in its very theoretical framework, attempting to make it holistic
and avoiding the occlusions of narrow methodological approaches. Although this would seem
very ambitious – both intellectually and practically – the focus is on avoiding the pit-falls
of a fragmentary approach. Effort has also been made to set aside all tendencies towards
being judgmental and ideologically-driven.

The strength of the study is in its attempt to capture all the complex dynamics –
psychological, historical, religious, cultural, etc – that would have been operative in the creative
process of the writing of the chosen novels. The focus is on reading of the subtext to capture
the connotative level of meaning rather than the surface-level or denotative meaning, i.e.
what is read at first sight – style, genre, narrative, plot, subplot, etc. Sources for the study
include the literary criticism by various writers, biographies, cultural and sociological writings
and literature of the related interest. Discussions held with various experts in the area of
study too have contributed to the findings of the study.
Research Questions and their Relevance

As Said (1993) has shown us, it is impossible for any individual to produce 'pure' knowledge. However, the foregrounding of one's politics instead of taking away from the argument opens out many other possibilities for discussion. Hence, an attempt is made here to put down the 'agenda' in the form of certain research questions to which answers are sought through this study.

First and foremost, the study attempts to analyze the novels chosen for the study, finding them estimable and admirable works of art and learning, in which many other readers take pleasure. Secondly, the challenge is to connect them not only with that pleasure but also with the modern cultural revivalist process which they were manifestly and unconcealedly a part. Rather than condemning or ignoring their participation in what was an unquestioned reality in their societies, believing what we learn about this hitherto ignored aspect actually and truly enhances our reading and understanding of them.

The project of independence in India with its efforts towards building a unique nationalism in the background of Western enlightenment and modernism has definitely been a major influence on the psyche of Indian writers. Along with these, there have also been the concrete influences of the tangible effects of major happenings such as Western education, women's liberation, Dalit movements, conversions to Christianity, Hindu revivalist efforts and Muslim estrangement. How have the Indian writers, hailing from the upper-caste background and writing during such a tumultuous and transitional period handled the issue of Dalit consciousness and liberation? What have been their major preoccupations? What have been the alternatives, if any, provided for the question of Dalit liberation in their writing? All these questions are taken up by the present study for a closer, broader and deeper reading of the novels selected for the study.
It is against the backdrop discussed so far that the present study assumes great significance. The identity ascribed to the Dalits in the works of the two novelists chosen for the study – Shivarama Karanth and U R Ananthamurthy – assumes great relevance. Both of them were very important figures in the public as well as the intellectual life of Karnataka. They wrote copiously on crucial political, social and cultural themes. The novels that have been written by these novelists have their baggage of the cultural moorings of the time. Hence, the study of the novels of these writers would certainly contribute to the understanding of the nature and structure of the cultural discourse that dominated the intellectual history of Karnataka.

The major focus is to find the ‘politics’ of construing an alternative identity for the Dalits as a continuation of the modern cultural revivalist agenda as observed from the analysis of the novels. Karanth’s novels such as Chomana Dudi, Kudiyara Koosu and Marali Mannige would be taken up for the study. Samskara and Bharathipura are taken up for analyses in order to explore the role of Ananthamurthy as a modern cultural revivalist. Both the novels primarily deal with identity concerns. The search for an individual identity or an identity of a group or of a community in these novels is basically driven by the cultural notion that has molded the psyche of the narrator. A lot of bias towards the Dalits becomes glaringly evident in the construction of their identity in these novels.

The selected novels illuminate not only on the pre-independence but also the post independence situation of both the Dalits and the others. Hence, it is important that concerted efforts are made to study the novels of these kinds of writers to examine and theorize to offer at least a clue to understanding the present predicament of the Dalits.
Structure of the Study

This chapter has made an earnest attempt to provide a broad conceptual framework for the elucidation of the specific arguments demanded by the study. The second chapter of this study focuses on Indian nationalism by tracing the various Brahmanic and anti-vedic movements in the pre-colonial and colonial India; creation of Orientalism; birth of Indian Renaissance; and the attempts at creating a pan-Indian culture.

The third chapter focuses on the dynamics of the caste system down the centuries. It focuses specially on the stand taken by social reformers and nationalists on the issue of caste system. It also tries to investigate the role of modern cultural revivalists in the process of creating an alternative identity for Dalits by examining the contradictions borrowed by them due to their engagement with colonialism, Orientalism, Western enlightenment project and nationalist movements in India and abroad.

The fourth and the fifth chapters take up the selected novels of Shivaram Karanth and U.R. Ananthamurthy for an examination of the alternate identity of Dalits construed in them and how this politics happens to be a continuation of the modern cultural revivalist process instantiated and sustained by the thinkers or/and leaders.

The sixth and the final chapter intends to ‘encounter’ the politics of this revivalist process operative in the selected novels by summing up the major arguments, working out the multi-dimensional significance of the study, and also by identifying the changes required in the area of literary production and criticism.