Sociological studies reveal that the concept of communities existed right from the prehistoric days when people seem to have organized themselves into families and tribes. As Edward B. Tylor, English anthropologist recorded when speaking about Europe, “mankind can never have lived as a mere struggling crowd, each for himself. Society is always made up of families or households bound together by kindly ties, controlled by rules” (402). In the absence of formal law and justice, prehistoric men followed a set of customs and taboos to keep these tribes together. “Even amongst the rudest of clans, a standard of family morals is known and lived by. Their habits …are hard and coarse, yet the family tie of sympathy and common interest is already formed and the foundations of moral duty already laid, in defence of home, their daily care for the little ones, the affection of brothers and sisters, and the mutual forbearance, helpfulness, and trust of all” (405).

This sense of clan was felt not only in the tribes of Europe but in other parts of the world as well. With religion and magic being potent forces in the life of early man, “there was intense communication, sharing of common values and mores and a compulsory group life” (S. Modi 243). As economy and trade developed, the area of communication widened, leading to the birth of a new civil state governed by a political, social and economic system which brought with it different challenges to the existing social order. Secular values assumed new importance and religion gave way to the pursuit of knowledge and adventure. The moral culture of brotherhood which bound a group
together because of its geographical boundaries changed with the advancement of science and technology, making boundaries imaginary and leading to an “era of abundance” dominated by “affluent societies” and resulting in old social institutions becoming obsolete. The world began to gradually give way to the political and commercial man, a process which appeared to be the cause for the “upset of man’s moral balance, obscuring his human side under the shadow of soul-less organization.” (S. Modi, 246)

On the one hand, the quality of life improved with the contribution made by science and technology but on the other, there seemed to be a deterioration of moral values which had hitherto held society together. People were lured into a vortex which sacrificed values at the altar of ambition. As societies fast became materialistic in nature, crises of different kinds reared their heads as outcomes of greed, envy, jealousy and hatred. Initially simmering in small pockets of the globe, the volcano in the form of the World Wars erupted in the early twentieth century, resulting in unprecedented casualties and destruction across the areas of conflict with the number of people killed, close to a hundred million. Resorting to industrialized weapons for the first time, World War I was the bloodiest event in human history, leaving behind 8-10 million casualties by way of military deaths and 6-7 million due to famine, starvation, disease and genocide. Even before the gruesome images of mass graves, soldiers dead in trenches; and people dying of starvation, famine and disease could be erased from the minds of the living, World War II struck. With about 55 million military and civilian deaths and 20 million by war related disease and famine, World War II was the deadliest military conflict in world history in absolute terms of total dead. The crushing costs of the wars led to the collapse
of great empires and the defeat of some imperial powers. Great cities were reduced to rubble, families torn apart, children orphaned, factories and workshops in ruins, fields and forests ripped to pieces. Pestilence, war, famine and death reigned as people tried to rebuild their shattered lives and societies.

The crisis of the modern age was believed to have its roots in the advancement of science and technology which reduced human beings to mere objects. The bonds between human beings weakened as machines assumed control of their lives and the pursuit of materialistic pleasures seemed to be the order of the day. Edmund Husserl, German philosopher and mathematician, traces the roots of crisis as having been sown “at the beginning of the modern era, in the one sided nature of European science which reduced the world to a mere object of technological and mechanical investigation and put the “concrete world of life, die Lebenswelt,beyond their horizon”. This resulted in man not being able to see clearly either the world as a whole or his own self, and he plunged further into what Heidegger called “the forgetting of being” (qtd. in Kundera 3-4).

On similar lines, Mark Buber, Austrian-born Israeli Jewish philosopher, believes that the deepest reality of human life lies in the relationship between one being and another. In his book Between Man and Man, he attributes the maturity of crisis in the modern age to two factors. The first, which is predominantly sociological in nature, is caused by “the increasing decay of the old organic forms of the direct life of man with man” (192). What previously held man and man together in the form of value bound close knit groups like family, village and town communities started losing out as communities grew larger. This resulted in decay which was “the price that had to be paid for man’s political liberation in the French Revolution” and the “establishment of
bourgeois society” and with it “the sociological security which preserved him from the feeling of being completely exposed” (193). Although outwardly the new organic forms which connected man to man by way of clubs and trade unions seemed to offer solace, inwardly he suffered a sense of solitude when he withdrew from the bustling life and confronted by this uneasy truth, he experienced an existential crisis.

The second factor is “one of the history of the spirit, or of the soul.” Unlike the crisis of flux that is natural to the evolution of a society, this crisis concerns “man’s relation to the new things and connexions which have arisen by his action or with his co-operation” (193). Confronted by a world which was becoming stronger, thanks to his creative efforts, man found himself steadily losing his hold upon it, resulting in an age experiencing “this paralysis and failure of the human soul successively in three realms,” the three being, the technological, the economic and the political. In the first realm, machines invented to be “an extension of man’s arm”, as tools to serve him, changed, with man becoming their extension. In the second realm, production that increased immensely to supply a growing demand “spread out beyond man’s reach and withdrew itself from his command”. In the third or the political realm the experiences of the war made man learn “with ever greater horror how he was in the grip of incomprehensible powers, which seemed to be connected with man’s will but which threw off their bonds … and trampled on all human purposes,” ending in all round destruction (194).

In Europe, the devastating effect of World War II remained long after the war officially ended in May 1945. For the millions displaced because of military action, concentration camps, or the relocation of national borders, it was a living nightmare. Marked by events which had led to mass deaths, executions and the holocaust, the
nuclear war left an indelible scar in the minds of the people. In England and in France, artists and writers adopted different means of artistic expression to recount tales of the harrowing times people had gone through.

A sense of alienation made artists and writers in the turn of the twentieth century look at “art for art’s sake”, shifting from the Victorian belief in art as a vehicle for pleasure and instruction. The optimism and triumph that marked the literature of the early and mid Victorian age became pessimistic and satirical in nature as it portrayed social realism. At the beginning of the century, people had lost faith in institutional, cultural and social foundations. The development of psychoanalysis as a science which challenged traditional ways of understanding human beings as fundamentally rational, decision making individuals also impacted the artists profoundly. The Modern writers, focused, as Stephen Greenblatt (2012) mentions, “on themes like the individual in society and the temporality of human existence”. The Modernists as they were called were preoccupied with the inner self and consciousness, a distinct shift from the Romantic view of beauty and nature of the 19th century. Perceiving the machinery of modern society as impersonal, capitalist and antagonistic to the artistic impulse, the evidence of it being the War, the Modernists were concerned about the destruction caused and the growing alienation of the individual. The alienated experience was evident in the poetry of the Imagists like Ezra Pound who resorted to a direct, blunt style with minimalist language, departing from the dreamy, flowery style of their predecessors. TS Eliot’s Prufrock and Other Observations (1917) and The Waste Land (1922) trace the sickness of modern civilization to the spiritual emptiness and rootlessness of modern existence.
The self-conscious, reflective impulses of the Modern Age also found their way into novels where the omniscient narrator was replaced by the narrator who explored the recesses of the mind to understand the strange pathways of the human consciousness. This came to be known as the “stream of consciousness technique”, best displayed in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Strengthened further by the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud, this technique found favor with other novelists of the time with the main preoccupation being, the self and inwardness. Joseph Conrad, the Polish-born English author’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902) examines man’s moral complexities and capacity for corruption and evil, and the dark depths of the human psyche. Aldous Huxley’s *Point Counter Point* (1928) expresses the sense of disillusionment and hopelessness in the aftermath of World War I. D.H.Lawrence’s novels *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920) blame the maladies of the modern age to the effects of industrialization upon the human psyche.

Among the highly individual novelists of the age were Iris Murdoch, Antony Powel, Richard Hughes and George Orwell. Murdoch’s novels deal with good and evil, morality and the power of the unconscious while Powel is known for his twelve-volume work *A Dance to the Music of Time* published between 1951 and 1975. Hughes’ *The Innocent Voyage* (1929) narrates the accidental capture of a group of English children who turn out to be more amoral than the pirates who captured them, and Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949) depict a totalitarian state. To this array of post war English writers belongs William Golding whose bold visionary fables filled with real time war experiences have a universal appeal, as they go beyond the problem of good and evil.
Early twentieth century French literature was dominated by Marcel Proust with his epic novel, *A la recherche du temps perdu* (Remembrance of Things Past) which nostalgically explores the past. André Gide’s *Les faux-monnayeurs* (The Counterfeiters) (1925) deals with the themes of hypocrisy and insincerity. André Malraux’s *La Condition Humaine* (Man’s Fate) (1933) depicts the misery of life under the Communist uprising in Shanghai. A new literary and philosophical movement termed ‘existentialism’ emerged in the 1940s and 50s. Adopted as a self-description by Jean Paul Sartre, and through the wide dissemination of the postwar and philosophical output of Sartre and his associates, Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Albert Camus, existentialism also became identified with a cultural movement. Dominated by a resistance to political and military activity, existentialism called for a search for meaning in human existence. Sartre’s *Les Mouches* (The Flies) (1943), *Huis Clos* (No Exit) (1944) and the treatise *L’Etreet le Néant* (Being and Nothingness) (1943), all recount the existential crisis that human beings found themselves in, as a fallout of the war. Going beyond expressing the human angst, Camus’ novels centre round the absurdist theory which claims that in a world where God is absent and the end is sure death, man must rebel to give meaning to his existence.

Indian literature underwent a lot of changes from ancient times to the modern age. The literary works of the early writers not only depicted the rich socio-cultural heritage of India, but played an important role in transforming the society and enriching the Indian culture. Beginning with the Vedas which was composed of sacred texts for religious rituals and concepts, Indian literature was enhanced by Sanskrit literature, one of its most prominent writers being Kalidasa. Following the Vedic period, Indian writing was mainly
in the Pali and Prakrit, considered the sacred languages of the Buddhists and the Jains. Among the famous literary works of the period were the Jataka tales relating to the former births of Lord Buddha and the Katha of the Jains.

The early Dravidian literature of India comprised compositions in the four South Indian languages, namely Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil. Prominent literary works of the era were the poems of love or valour of ancient Tamil literature, also referred to as Sangam literature; Vaishnava literature relating to Lord Vishnu, and Bhakti or devotional literature. Variations in the ancient languages and regional and ethnic influences led to the development of modern languages like Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi and Urdu with notable contributions from writers like Tulsidas, Guru Nanak, Namdev and Amir Khusro respectively.

Indian literature in the modern era was influenced by factors like the Indian freedom struggle, effect of western culture and political consciousness. Assuming different forms and ideologies, stemming from an amalgamation of Indian and Western culture, modern Indian literature was reformist, nationalistic and revivalist in nature. Writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, U.Ve. Swaminathalyer, Vivekananda and MahadevGovindRanade gave a new facet to Indian literature. Inspired by T.S. Eliot, Baudelaire and Yeats, writers like Rabindranath Tagore and Jibanananda Das through images, used language not just to communicate but to grasp reality. Bibhuti Bhushan Bandyopadhyay in his novel, Pather Panchali presents the passing away of an unsophisticated and warmhearted village. The despair of man, the result of his helplessness in society and in the larger sphere of history, found expression in the literary works across the country. While the limitations of the West, the degeneration of canons
and the disillusionment of the middle-class psyche characterized Indian modernity, the elements of humanism and hope for a better future were very much present. Unlike in the west where modernism was a breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions, in India, it was a search for alternatives to existing literary models.

The post independence literary scene in India witnessed some changes from the pre-independence era. While the earlier writings reflected a sense of nationalism, the new age writers were influenced by western modernism. Drawing inspiration from Kafka, Sartre and Camus, Indian writers began to experiment with the different forms. Initially driven by a sense of social purpose, Indian writing of the 30s and 40s was marked by disillusionment and apathy. Premchand’s *Godan*, (1936) is about the social and economic independence of a peasant who is hedged in by forces he cannot control. The novel of the 50s reflected the commitment of progressive writers to social change rather than political freedom. Caste-class divisions and the tensions created due to it were some of the major issues dealt with by the novelists of the mid century. The 60s though were termed as a period of dark modernism as tossed between a clash of traditional culture and western modernity, writers were caught in an identity crisis, the scene in Karnataka, notwithstanding.

The disillusionment and the angst of the times were seen in Kannada literature of the 50s through the *Navya* (Modernist) Movement. Initiated by Gopalakrishna Adiga, major exponents of this modernist literary movement were V.K. Gokak, P. Lankesh and U.R. Ananthamurthy. Departing from the earlier *Navodaya* (A new rise or a period of awakening) Movement which was steeped in romanticism, this school explored the relevance of traditional values in the changed context. Since writers of a common era
tend to be shaped by the same historical, political and economic situations, Indian writers were also inspired by their western contemporaries as expressed by Ananthamurthy at a literary seminar in 1974: “…the names and examples that dominated our discussion were different from those fashionable ten years ago. In the place of Eliot and Yeats… we used now the ideas of Camus, Kafka, Sartre and Lukacs…” (qtd. in Mukherjee 431). Dealing with the psychological aspects of people caught in different situations, Ananthamurthy’s literary works deal with the challenges encountered by the Brahmin community in the face of changes brought about by socio-political and economic influences on Hindu societies and the clashes due to such influences.

The impact of the wars in Europe on the human psyche was unimaginable. Writers either through first hand experiences or from what they learnt gave expression to the crisis, its impulses and its disastrous effect on the social order. The pain, the disillusionment, the chaos, the upheaval and the turmoil of the times was explicit. William Golding’s and Albert Camus’s novels are reflections of war and what the respective societies went through when all sanity seemed to be lost in a brutal and animalistic world. Chronicling life in England in the 20th century, Golding’s novels take a pessimistic view of the human race in the face of crisis. Golding’s Lord of the Flies (1954), is a simple adventure tale that is turned into a moral allegory of political power where surfaces the inherent evil nature of man. An escape from the horrors of war reveals that man cannot run away from it as evil is his basic nature. Camus’ La Peste (1947) (The Plague) is a poignant narrative that recounts an outbreak of the bubonic plague in the small port city of Oran. Trapped within the walls of the city, the inhabitants are forced to
draw upon their inner reserves of strength and will, to face the ultimate negative force—death.

Unlike the west, it was turmoil of a different kind in India. After suffering huge losses and untold misery in the freedom struggle, the Indian people were now faced with another dilemma, as they found themselves tossed between their strong rooted tradition and the newfound modernity. Ananthamurthy’s novel *Samskara* (A Rite for a Dead Man) (1965) portrays the spiritual struggle of man in terms of the urgency of life’s demands. Although viewed as dealing with a social problem, *Samskara* is “actually about a man’s disjunction with the reality that he had unthinkingly accepted all his life. The novel is an allegorical expression of the pain and ecstasy of his initiation into another reality” (Mukherjee 425-6).

A study of the different cultures reveals that crisis is a fairly universal phenomenon which cuts across barriers of time and space. Since no society can escape its clutches, it becomes the responsibility of every society to engage with the multiple crises and find means to deal with them. The crisis of twentieth century Europe lay primarily in the turmoil and unrest caused by the World Wars, and in India, due to the difficulties encountered by orthodox Hindu societies, in trying to embrace modern ideas. Through a study of the respective cultures, the thesis aims to look at the nature of the crisis, its origins and how different societies attempted to find solutions to the problems that rose. The scope of the research will be to explore the two cultures, European and Indian through the study of the three novels: William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, Albert Camus’s *The Plague* and U.R. Ananthamurthy’s *Samskara*. All the three texts show
individuals and societies caught in the throes of crises, struggling with internal and external forces and managing to survive. The moral crisis experienced by individuals like Ralph and Piggy in *Lord of the Flies*, Rieux and Tarrou in *The Plague*, and Praneshacharya in *Samkara*, helps them in distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad and finally being true to their convictions. Their heroic attempts to save society and themselves from anarchy, chaos and confusion prove worthwhile as they attempt to instill some sense of meaning and order. What is to be noted is that most of the solutions to problems rest with the individuals and societies themselves. Though the results may not be permanent in an ever evolving society, they nevertheless help in negotiating the crises of the times.

An engagement with the texts throws up several questions like, what is morality and whether morality is determined by the individual or the community; whether moral crisis is more evident among the elite or middle class; whether moral crisis can lead to identity crisis and loss of identity and if so, whether identity consciousness is personal or social. The area of study will include the temporal and spatial aspects of moral crisis and how different cultures cope with it; and if an individual’s experience of a moral crisis is different from that of a society, whether it can lead to a breakdown of social order. The research will also explore how individual authors view and deal with moral crisis, concluding with a comparative framework that examines whether the crisis is unique to these particular societies of the 40s, 50s and 60s and whether they are in any way universal and even relevant across time and space.
1.1 REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY

The social beliefs, values and norms of a culture are conveyed through different forms of artistic and literary expressions like prose, poetry, drama, art, music and painting. Among the varied forms, literature and society seem to share a close relation. Besides serving to instruct or to delight, literature can serve as a medium to record the experiences, myths, ideals, aims, beliefs and sanctions of a society. Milton Albrecht opines that literature not only “reflects society and culture” but “serves as a means of self control” and “influences attitudes and behavior of people” desirable or otherwise. Literature has been known to “reflect cultural norms and values, the ethos and stresses of a society, the process of dialectic materialism and the historical development of a society” (722).

Arising out of the spirit of nationalism which prevailed in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the theory of reflection marked a change in man’s outlook and recorded the evolving character of a society through the nineteenth century. The purpose of the reflection theory was to “explain” the greatness of literature, its content, style and form. With the emphasis on social and cultural determinism, it came to be associated with the arts, assuming varied names such as "expression of society" or "mirror of life" as it reflected almost all the aspects of life – economic, social, cultural and political. Another version of the theory of reflection traces its origin to the dialectical materialism of Marx and his followers according to which, literature and art are determined by "the mode of production in material life," and by the ideas of the ruling class who lay down the rules, but in the dialectical process, due to the struggle between
the classes, "art expresses the tendencies of a rising, and therefore revolutionary class" (425-6).

According to Terry Eagleton, “writing which embodied the values and tastes of a particular social class qualified as literature” in 18th century Europe. In addition to that it embodied social values meant to incorporate the middle class into the world of aristocracy through its language intended to diffuse social etiquette. William Howells is convinced that literary fiction should be written for humanity’s sake because an understanding of an existential experience with all its “injustice and suffering - of greed and selfishness, deprivation, and despair - will produce a desire that things should be different and that such knowledge and desire will produce personal reorientation and will precipitate action, be it at an individual level or a collective one aimed at social reform” (35).

The twentieth century belonged to the movement broadly defined as “modernism”. A movement in visual arts, music, literature and drama, it rejected the old Victorian standards of how art should be. From the literary perspective, modernism laid emphasis on impressionism and subjectivity in writing, with the emphasis on “how” things are perceived rather than “what” is perceived. Another important feature of modernism was the tendency toward reflexivity, or self-consciousness about every piece of work as a unique creation. Since language plays an important role in the production and dissemination of knowledge, it must be rational, transparent and serve to represent the world that the rational mind observes, having a firm connection between the signifier and the signified. It is no wonder that the literature of the post war era found its expression best represented in novels as fictional creation is a “greater intellectualization”
than other forms of art, because it is a medium where “the temptation to explain remains the greatest… in which conclusion is almost inevitable” (Camus 1991a, 99, qtd in Eubanks and Petrakis 302). When compared to painting, sculpture or architecture where there are less chances of finality, a fictional tale is more conclusive as it has a beginning, middle and an end, providing thus a sense of unity to the story and coherence to the world. As Camus said, “here we have an imaginary world, which is created by the rectification of the actual world – a world where suffering can, if it wishes, continue until death, where passions are never distracted, where people are prey to obsessions and are always present to one another” (264).

Robert Wright asserts that “fiction has the power of enabling readers to see what otherwise would be hidden” and that “the novel can accomplish this by uncovering the intricacies of the inner life” (83). When one considers literature as a form of moral discourse, it is to the social novel that one turns as it is known to be the best means of social engagement. Although the social novel cannot be expected to offer remedies to cure social maladies, it can alter perceptions which escape any sense of reasoning, widen the moral landscape and help in creating social conscience. A fictitious world can be said to be the product of a creative imagination with the story ending any which way the author likes. Though many a novelist prefers the message they want to convey over the manner of presentation, there are some who submit to what Wright calls the aesthetic rationale: “many of the incidents are true, a web of romance holding them together as the tapestry weaver ties the cords on which his pictures are designed, so as to harmonize the coloring and combination of materials with the best effects” (83).
Fiction, if convincingly told, has the uncanny power of making an experience a personal one. A novelist choosing to argue from a premise, with which his reader may disagree, may be able to “convincingly validate that premise through the reader's sympathetic involvement with the novel's protagonist” (84). He can also succeed in building a rapport between the characters in his novel and the reader, thereby convincing the reader of his (the novelist’s) views. The novel especially in the conventional sense had to be morally inspiring, showing life as it ought to be rather than what it was. A didactic novel is written with a purpose to instruct, to teach, or to inform; whereas a novel that is written for art’s sake is primarily intended to entertain. According to Milan Kundera, “the novel is not the author’s confession; it is an investigation of human life in the trap the world has become” (26). There are in essence two kinds of novels- “the novel that examines the historical dimension of human existence, and the novel that is the illustration of a historical situation, the description of a society at a given moment, a novelized historiography” (36).

The three novels under study get the reader to virtually experience the trauma their respective cultures went through during a particular point in history. Golding’s Lord of the Flies is a direct reference to the Second World War while Camus’s The Plague has allegorical allusions to the Nazi occupation of France and Ananthamurthy’s Samskara deals with a traditional society struggling to cope with the changes initiated by the forces of modernity in a post independent India. The three novels are important texts in their respective literary traditions and have attracted a lot of critical attention through the years. Much of the work done on them focus on how they have been able to capture the spirit of the times and mirror the angst of the people. The contribution of the three
authors as moralistic writers with a genuine concern for the well being of humanity at large is well known.

Golding is a novelist with the gift of terror, terror that arises out of a primal sense of human evil and mystery. The awe that he had for horror made him delve into the depth of the human psyche. A moralist with a deep sense of religiosity, Golding’s strives to reach out to humanity with the message that in the conflict between the good and the evil, the good can prevail. Stauchly committed to a conception of human dignity and freedom, Camus’s obsession is with the philosophical problems of the meaning of life and man’s search for values in a world where there is no God. What is absurd is the gulf between man’s desire for happiness in a world ruled by reason, justice and order; and the actual world which is chaotic, irrational and inflicts suffering and meaningless death on humanity. Man can find a purpose for living only by challenging the absurd. Living in a culture which holds on strongly to its traditional beliefs and having been exposed to a culture which is based mostly on reason and logic, U.R. Ananthamurthy, a well known writer of the Navya period articulates the dilemma of individuals caught between the call of modernity and the strong roots of tradition. Through his novels, Ananthamurthy attempts to demystify certain traditions and the moral dilemmas of the postcolonial condition.

Review of literature reveals that some relevant studies have been done on the three authors which include the major themes, symbolism and the degeneration of order in *Lord of the Flies*; the themes, the ethics of Camus and Camus as a moralist in *The Plague*; and the clash between tradition and modernity, gender representation and the passing of the Brahmin tradition in *Samskara*. 
Approaching Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* from a moral framework conceived in terms of Christian symbolism, Usha George contends that “there is no salvation in man’s distorted nature, until he recognizes the delusions of his idols and abandons the claim that he is the master of reality. Divine affirmation of man should be preceded by divine negation, destruction of the monstrous image of the self.”(vii) George feels Golding is “convinced that without the restraint of social order, human beings will sink below the level of the beast” (130). In Kinkead-Weekes Mark & Ian Gregor’s view, for Golding, “the Evil tree grows in the human brain; in human consciousness and emblematic and conceptual reduction are dangerous manifestations of the Fall. So in *Lord of the Flies*, it is the way in which the children look for an external manifestation of what is really in themselves that releases the sin of Cain. Evil exists, but not as a Beast” (21).

Referring to Camus’s *The Plague*, Margaret E. Gray feels that “the plague carries out a dismembering of the body, both the body physical and the body politic. Indeed the plague’s histrionic ‘écartèlement,’ or drawing and quartering, of the suffering body become itself emblematic of a dislocated social order. Victims of the disease evoke through their disjointed limbs, ‘une attitude de pantin’(TRN,1230) (‘a clock-work doll’(14); as the disease progresses, however, the various symptoms map an ‘écartèlement intérieur’(TRN,1249)(‘internal dismantling’) (37).Extending the image of ‘écartèlement,’ to the body politic, the plague’s dislocation of social health is noticed in the deterioration of burial decorum imposed by the escalating numbers of plague victims.(169-70). Serge Doubrovsky feels that “*The Plague* presents a perfect situation in which all human beings can unite to fight the inhuman…. If man habitually can and should fight man, it is insofar as man becomes a scourge and assumes the role of the plague” (81).
Presupposing the complementary relationship between moral crisis and social order, Sura P. Rath feels that it is all pervading as in *Samskara* where, “the demon of Naranappa’s spirit has settled in every Brahmin in the agrahara”(112). Looking critically at the complementary relationship, Suresh Raval opines that “the cultural impasse in *Samskara* is born out of the moral crisis undergone by a few individuals and is used as a tool for moral regeneration” (114).

While existing material give enough evidence on the turbulent times the respective cultures have been exposed to, no significant study exists tracing the moral crisis and the social order in the respective cultures. Through a comparative study of the texts, this research will explore the relation between moral crisis and social order and how individuals who experience the moral crisis can be agents of change in a society. Since man is a product of the culture, the rules of which he frames, he is the cause as well as the victim of all the harm and distress caused to society. In other words social order or disorder is the result of man’s making.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is an introduction to the research followed by review of literature and methodology; definitions of the variables – moral crisis, social order and cultures as they are generally understood by society; and finally a study of the authors and their contexts. Chapters II, III and IV follow a sequential order. Beginning with an overview of the texts, each chapter will focus on the themes that relate to moral crisis and social order, the characters and the positions they assume in the texts and the ideology of the respective authors. Chapter V will tie up the threads of similarity in the three texts to show how moral crisis impacts the social order and how culture is determined by man and in turn how man is a product of culture.
Through a comparative framework, how the trajectories of crisis converge and diverge in the three texts will be explored and their relevance in today’s context, examined.

The use of the male centric language throughout the thesis is in no way intended to be gender biased. All the three texts happen to be male centric with women being marginalized. Although women do play some role in Samskara, it is only at a peripheral level. The contexts of the texts also reveal a similar trend. As all the three novels belong to the same period where the language has mostly been male centric, the use has been continued and is meant to encompass the whole of humanity.

1.2 MORAL CRISIS, SOCIAL ORDER AND CULTURES

Moral Crisis

There are three dependent variables, namely, moral crisis, social order and cultures in this research study. After an examination of their possible meanings across the ages, the general understanding of the variables will be adopted in the study.

The word crisis coming from the Latin ‘decision’ and Greek krisis, from krinein ‘to decide’, refers to “an unstable situation of extreme danger or difficulty; a crucial stage or turning point in the course of something,” that affects an individual, group, community or even a whole society. A personal crisis can occur when events of an extraordinary nature trigger extreme tension and stress within an individual which require major decisions or actions to resolve. A society can find itself in a crisis when it needs to find means to cope with the changes when caught unawares by unexpected events.

Psychologists opine that crisis need not necessarily refer to a traumatic situation but to how a person reacts to an event. For instance Gerald Caplan feels that “people are
in a state of crisis when they face an obstacle to important life goals – an obstacle that is, for a time, insurmountable by the use of customary methods of problem solving.” E.M. Lillibridge and P.G.Klukken view crisis as “an upset in equilibrium at the failure of one’s traditional problem-solving approach which results in disorganization, hopelessness, sadness, confusion, and panic.” K.J.James and B.E.Gilliland define crisis as “a perception or experience of an event or situation as an intolerable difficulty that exceeds the person’s current resources and coping mechanisms.”

Man is believed to have the power of reasoning which sets him apart from lesser beings and gives him the ability to discern between good and bad, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly. To enable this judgment, he uses a set of values which define the boundaries of his social conduct. With this power of reasoning, not only is he supposed to be able to perceive the given that governs the lives of a community, group or society but also contribute to social norms. When a man finds himself in turmoil over his judgment of what is good and bad, right and wrong, he is said to be facing a moral crisis. The traditional concept of morality had an ethical connotation to it, meaning that which was right and accepted by the larger community. With education and enlightenment, the perception of what was right and wrong underwent a change. With the scientific revolution, there was a problem in the concept of obligation between what ‘is’ and what ‘ought to be’. From a normative meaning, the term ‘law’ changed to a descriptive one or rather the acceptance of what must occur in the nature of things. Despite the general rule of naturalism which governed the whole animal world being advocated as the basic rule of human conduct, there were counter points that there could be no moral absolutes. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were sure that the rules that one lived by or ought to live by
had to be justified, the foundation of which they did not think it necessary to question. As there was no final agreement on what constituted ethical life, several systems were put forth between the last quarter of the 17th century with Spinoza’s *Ethics* (1678) and Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) with the three major systems of belief being “the rationalist one, the theory of moral sense and its slide into utilitarianism, and the new interpretation of the moral law” (Dupré 113).

According to the Dutch philosopher, Benedict Spinoza (1633-77) “freedom and necessity coincide in the one substance of which all things form part.” In other words, there can be no freedom of choice as far as ethics is concerned, nor can it be forced or be influenced by any external factor. Spinoza’s *Ethica* is a guide which postulates that to understand ethics, what is considered evil is as necessary as what is considered good. As emotions play a vital role in determining freedom, forces that are not understood are opposed and forces that seem to support are accepted without any reasoning. True freedom however lies in the understanding that both depend on the other for its well-being.

In Immanuel Kant’s eyes, only conduct that followed the dictates of reason could be termed ethical. Since feelings, desires, happiness and pleasure rely on the sensuous part of our nature, they are not fit to be the norms of ethical criteria. In his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), he attacks the moral sense theory as “a desire for one’s own happiness.” For Kant, the pursuit of moral perfection can be measured only by the law of reason.

Accepting John Locke’s (1632-1704) view that the concept of good and evil was not inborn, Voltaire (1694-1778) suggested that moral standards vary from place to place
but there are some common principles of conduct that all agree upon. In Diderot’s (1713-1784) opinion, since human nature and its basic needs are at the centre of the distinction of good and evil, moralists think that the idea of nature has some universal principles of moral law that are unchangeable and instead of changing these principles to suit the demands of the times, they have come up with “universal” principles according to western customs. But what is considered universal by a certain society may not be suitable to another.

In the moral system of John Locke (1894) father of British empiricism, happiness resulting from desire is a reward God attaches when the natural law is observed but if inclinations to happiness “were left to their full swing, they would carry men to the overturning of all morality.” (Essay II, 20: 2) Being creatures of God, human beings are subject to this power “to enforce it by rewards and punishments, of infinite weight and duration.” (E II, 28:8). So the experience of pleasure or pain is combined with the positive will of God. But later empiricists based their positions on two different theories, one on the unique intuition of a moral sense and the other to what contributes to general wellbeing, laying the ground for utilitarian ethics.

In modern thought, ethics generally came to mean obedience to laws that were laid down in accordance with human fulfillment bringing together obligation and well being. This gave rise to another problem. “If the ethical obligation rested on a rational apriori, it remained purely formal” but “if ethics was conceived on the basis of experience it could not function as an absolute obligation” and besides, “the modern principles of ethics follows from the fact that the subject as the only source of value
allows no room for genuine otherness” reducing “the other to an extension of itself” (Dupré 146).

A crisis can be an outcome of various factors, social, economic, political etc. The study at hand will focus on the moral crisis and its impact on the social order. Indulging in an act that is not in keeping with the general accepted norms of what is good or bad and which triggers a sense of guilt in the person who commits the act could be termed a moral crisis. The word “moral” is closely related to the word “ethical”. While “moral” refers to the principles of right and wrong, the ability to distinguish between what is good and bad or standards of good behavior, “ethical” refers to the science or rules of conduct as laid down and adhered to by a majority of people.

The moral choices that one makes reflect the sense of who one is in relation to others. Moral choices are generally constrained by identity which influences one’s worldview since it considers the available options not only morally but cognitively as well. Because of this moral viewpoint which is the result of a cognitive process taking ethical perspectives into consideration and one’s worldview in relation to others, the choice made is not only a conscious one but moral as well. Identity plays an important role in the choice one makes as who one is, is determined by one’s being and relation to the community. The choice one makes therefore depends more on the identity one enjoys. Much of moral behavior goes through a psychological process that may appear spontaneous, mirroring the emotions that affect how one sees oneself at the time of the action but moral behavior is not just a result of a conscious deliberation although conscious deliberations may influence one’s moral choices. Therefore one’s act or deed may reflect the person more than whether it is a conscious act based on reasoning. With
identity being central to moral action, to understand the moral choice, one needs to also consider the state of the mind at the moment of action. Ethical considerations form the link between individual and social influences on one’s behavior. Understanding how these influences affect the person in making choices resulting in constructive or destructive action will go a long way in understanding moral and ethical behavior.

The very question of morality may seem ambiguous as the demarcation between what is good or evil, right or wrong is not clear. What may seem right in one culture may be wrong in another and what may be good at one period may not be in another. For instance, in countries like India and China, the moral permissiveness of contemporary liberalism, believed to be the fallout of westernization, is a cause for concern as it seems to be shattering the values that the traditional societies drew their strength from.

When compared with Western philosophy, Indian philosophy has its own understanding of moral behavior. Likewise, Indian moral system or Indian ethics also have their own characteristics. The question “what is morality?” requires the need to distinguish it from non-morality or immorality. The first would distinguish ‘morality’ from other institutions of life such as religion, art etc., making it an institution to be adopted in life and the actions judged as good or bad, right or wrong. In this sense, morality’ means living consciously within the frame of certain principles laid down by accepted authorities. It is this sense of morality that differentiates human beings from animals. The second would make the term ‘moral’ almost synonymous with ‘morally good’ or ‘morally right’. Since this is more to do with the control of the senses, it can be characterized as ‘being of a good character or conduct’. Morality may also be distinguished from amorality, which is the absence of or disregard for morality.
Morality in the Indian context has its origin in the Vedic cosmic principle of *Rta* which implies that there is an eternal moral order involved in the very constitution of the universe and hence man has to adopt a moral point of view. In addition the Indian sense of morality also owes its origin to the concept of *dharma* or the moral law. The Indian outlook is spiritual and the Indian moral system is oriented towards the spiritual goal known as *moksha* or deliverance. The *Dharma –Shastra* is the ‘science of dharma’ and is a set of texts which prescribe rules for good conduct, legal procedure and penance. Practiced by the ancient *Rishis*, the *Manusmrti* or Laws of Manu which describe the creation of the world by Brahma, Manu’s own birth, the sources of dharma and the ceremonies of the four stages of life was the most important of the *dharma -shastras*. The definition of morality in the research study would mean, living consciously within the frame of certain principles considered right and wrong, laid down by the society or community, the non compliance of which can be emotionally disturbing.

The three texts under study deal with the moral and psychological crises that some characters go through because of their strong moral and ethical leanings towards the concept of what is good. In *The Plague*, while the whole community views the plague as an obstruction in their daily activities, only Tarrou goes through the moral crisis. In *Lord of the Flies*, while the question of survival gives rise to a crisis situation, it is Ralph and Piggy who eventually undergo a moral crisis. In *Samskara*, the death of Naranappa causes a functional crisis to the others while only Praneshacharya is troubled by his moral conscience.
Social Order

The word “society” which came into English in the 14th century is derived from the French word société, originating from the Latin societas of which the root word is socius. While the primary meaning of “society” means “companionship or fellowship,” two main ideas co-exist—“as a general term for the body of institutions and relationships within which a relatively large group of people live”; and as an “abstract term for the condition in which such institutions and relationships are formed”. While the word in both senses continued to be in use, the abstract sense “prepared the way for the modern notion, in which the laws of society are not so much laws for getting on with other people but more abstract and more impersonal laws which determine social institutions.” (Williams 291-92)

In an ideal society, an individual should have the right and freedom to act the way he wants so long as his actions do not have any negative bearing on the social order. “The Rawlsian theory of justice brings into focus the political and ethical importance of individual freedom” according to which “a social commitment to individual freedom must involve attaching importance to enhancing the capabilities that different people have, and the choice of social arrangements must be influenced by their role in promoting human capabilities” (Sen 194-5) In other words, in order not to disturb the peace of a society, the action of an individual should be guided by a sense of responsibility and commitment towards society. Although change is part of the process of evolution, “any social change should maintain the unity, harmony and homogeneity of the global human family” just like “the biological mutations, occurring in nature, maintain an intelligent order and harmony among its mutants” (Thakar 34).
According to Hechter and Home (27), “the more that individual behavior is collectively oriented, the higher the level of order.” So, social order is all about cooperation and cooperation can be understood as men behaving in a manner that is beneficial to the community or group. Studies about why individuals behave better in a community trace their roots to two forms – one, to the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes (1651) that collectively beneficial behaviours are possible only through laws backed by negative sanctions; and Hechter (1988); Hechter, Friedman, and Kanazawa (1992)’s’ view that order is possible only through monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms.

The theory of Hobbs propounds that social order is attributed to sanctioning systems, whereas Durkheim (1925) attributes social order to moral restraint which results from a process of self-mastery. Sociologists like Marini (1992) believe that the behavior of individuals can be directed by the internalization of social norms and values. From these views, one can gather that individual preferences and values can influence human behavior.

Norms are unwritten rules shared by a group of individuals that guide them in their everyday interactions with others. Although norms are not the same as formal laws, they nevertheless exercise social control either formally through sanctions or informally. Since individuals derive physical, moral or psychological support from the group or society they belong to, it is not difficult to control member behavior as the more he sees group acceptance as central to his self, the more he is likely to conform. As social norms represent a codification of beliefs, the norms are generally what are important for the existence or survival of the group. Social norms being developed informally, an individual who goes against or challenges these generally accepted norms may face the
wrath of the group or exclusion from the group as his actions may negatively impact the
general functioning of society.

A civilized society is governed by certain norms and values which bind it
together. For an effective functioning of the organization, the members of the society
need to conform to these norms. Unfortunately most of the time, the selfish pursuit for
material gains makes human beings resort to unfair and even unethical means which can
cause undue harm to the social structure. Besides science, various factors like
materialism, loss of faith and failure to negotiate modernity have contributed to the unrest
in society.

The character of modern society reduces man’s life to its social function; the
history of a people to a set of events that are themselves reduced to a tendentious
interpretation. Social life is reduced to a political struggle. Caught in a veritable whirlpool,
man can neither see the world as a whole nor his own self, making him plunge into what
Husserl’s pupil, Heidegger called “the forgetting of being”, resulting in man’s “world of
life” die Lebenswelt, having neither value nor interest. Ironically action as well as
inaction can lead to crises.

In The Plague, Father Paneloux blames the outbreak of the plague and the
destruction caused, to the hedonistic life style led by the people of Oran. In Lord of the
Flies, a simple adventure turns out to be a bloody war with the beastly instinct in man
assuming control of the self and resorting to violence and bloodshed. In Samskara the
Brahmin community is in a dilemma over the disposal of a dead man who had challenged
their orthodox and archaic customs and lived life on his own terms.
Culture

The word *culture* has its origin in the Latin word *culta* or *colère*, meaning to inhabit, cultivate, protect, honour with worship. In the French form, the word was first *couture* and later *culture*. Finding its way into England in the early 15th century, it meant “husbandry” or the “tending of natural growth”, and by analogy, a process of human training. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, *culture* came to mean, first “a general state or habit of the mind,” having close relations with the idea of human perfection. Second, it came to mean “the general state of intellectual development in a society as a whole.” Third it came to mean “the general body of the arts.” Fourth, later in the century it came to mean “a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual” (Williams 16 -17). The term therefore, while very nuanced in its many meanings can in essence include “the organization of production, the structure of the family, and the structure of institutions which express or govern social relationships, the characteristic forms through which members of the society communicate”(Williams 88).

The Marxist theory of culture recognizes “diversity and complexity, takes account of continuity within change, allows for chance and certain autonomies and takes the facts of the economic structure and the consequent social relations as the guiding spirit on which a culture is woven” (Williams 261). Warner (21) believed that “the progress of culture is dependent on the progress of the material conditions for culture; and, in particular, the social organization of any period of history limits the cultural possibilities of that period. Yet all through history there is a constant interaction between culture and social organization.” Rajagopalachari (81) defines it as “the sum total of the way of living built up by groups of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another”
Every culture has a long history. Drawing from their respective histories, people “build up separate patterns of cultures, much in common but also particular to each nation.”

If culture is referred to in terms of a body of intellectual and imaginative work then it can be said that with education, the distribution is becoming even but culture is primarily a way of life which should not be confined to the comforts that have come about with the Industrial Revolution. The important difference between the two rests in “the alternative ideas of the nature of social relationship.” In the light of this, “working class culture is not proletarian art, or council houses, or a particular use of language; it is rather, the basic collective idea, and the institutions, manners, habits of thought, and intentions that proceed from that” (Williams 313).

Culture can be defined as the life of a society as it helps to bind groups and societies together. Man depends on culture as not only the cultural patterns but also his way of life is reflected in the ancient artifacts. Culture is a dynamic force as it is prone to change. In a transitional society, the idea of culture has most often been identified with one or other of the forces that transition contains. Culture tends to change with every age and this change is generally viewed with suspicion by the older class which believes that culture is a product of its age and hence feels the need to defend it from new and destructive forces of a new class which in turn seeks to free it from the restrictions binding it. Some of the products of culture are governments, languages, buildings and manmade things which are essential to hold together a society. Culture undergoes a process of constant struggle as cultures interact with each other and are affected by economic, political and social factors. Since the lives of human beings are
interdependent, it would be beneficial to understand different cultures to avoid conflicts between different classes, nations, regions and ethnic groups.

If World War I brought discontent and disillusionment, leaving the record of it in the annals of history, World War II had an even greater impact on people and their place in the universe. The reality of the atom bomb and the post war threat of Communism made them fear losing their freedom in a totalitarian state. George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1945) is a powerful anti-Communist satire and his *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), a scathing attack on totalitarianism. C.P. Snow’s *Strangers and Brothers* (1940-70) analyses bureaucracy and the corrupting influences of power. Anthony Powell’s *A Dance to the Music of Time* (1951-75) are a satirical survey of British society from the 20s through the 60s. The impact of the Second World War was felt in the personal, social and political life of people almost all over the world. Immediately after the end of the War, Britain underwent enormous social change. Recovering from the war, it was the beginning of an affluent society. On the one hand, there was an economic growth because markets were recovering from the war crisis and there was still a supply of raw materials from former colonies. On the other hand, the employment of women hitherto denied to them, led to an improvement in living standards. Entertainment, especially the cinema and football became a major source of weekend enjoyment as people tried to forget the horrors of the war years. A disturbing trend of the post war era was the distancing of family members due to the weakening of the old strong family structures. One of the fallout of this was the increased independence and freedom of children which had an adverse impact on human relations. It is this unbridled freedom and callous attitude of children to rules and regulations that have been represented in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*. 
In France, the post war economic expansion brought about changes to a rigid social structure, blurring the lines between social groups. Although writing about the great wars, the changes in the political climate and modern culture was great, French writing was more concerned about moral questions, individual liberty and character. Writers like Paul Bourget, Maurice Barrès, Pierre Loti and André Gide explored the psychological behavior of human behavior while the novels of Jules Romain and Roger Martin du Gard comment on society and morality. The novels of André Malraux, *La Condition Humaine* (Man’s Fate) and *L’Espoir de l’Homme* (Man’s Hope) treat humanity’s commitment to action. Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus developed an existentialist philosophy to express the pain of living. Camus’s *La Peste* (The Plague) is an allegorical representation of the times.

It was a different kind of a situation in India. Although India had a rich ancient tradition, modern education was introduced by the British. Besides opening up the doors of knowledge that existed in Europe, modern education highlighted evil practices like the rigidity of social customs and practices; and exposed the harshness of the caste system towards the weaker sections of the society. Influenced by western sensibilities, Indian scholars began to question the Indian way of life. This led to a social awakening, gave way to social progress and paved the way for many reforms. G.S.Shivarudrappa’s *Vimarsheya Purva Paschima* (1961) is a critique on attitudes and *Mumbai Jataka* (1966) about the urbanized society in Mumbai. Poornachandra Tejaswi’s *Swarupa* (1966) is marked by an outsider’s attitude and reflects Camusian existentialism and P.Lankesh’s *Biruku* (1967) is an Absurd novel. Western education also led to a moving away from tradition which caused a rift within the society. Ananthamurthy’s *Samskara* portrays the
clash between traditional cultures and western modernity among the Brahmin community in Karnataka.

1.3 THE AUTHORS AND THEIR CONTEXTS

Location and identity have always had an impact on the literary works of writers. According to Madan Sarup, “identity is a mediating concept between the external and the internal, the individual and society, theory and practice.” It is “a convenient tool through which to try and understand many aspects – personal, philosophical, political of our lives” (28).

While Michel Foucault believes that identity is formed through institutions and institutional practices, Louis Althusser, the French Marxist feels there are three mechanisms through which subjects may be constructed – identification, counter-identification and disidentification. Since identity is a construct fashioned by particular people for particular reasons at a certain periods, the identity of individuals within a nation, the views of the individuals towards the nation in which they live and the identity of the nation itself needs to be seen in relation to history. Identities are therefore “not just expressions of the ideologies of their time” but “transcend the ideological limits of their time, yielding us insight into the realities which ideology hides from view” (Sarup, 141). “New Historicism, enunciated by Stephen Greenblatt and others sees a text as inseparable from the historical and cultural conditions of its production and also its reception in history”. It is not just a study “but a study of a text as a representation of ‘ideological products’ or ‘cultural constructs’ of a particular era. This active interaction between the text and the context means ‘the context embedded in the text’ or ‘the
historicisation of the text’ and ‘the textualisation of history’” (Behera 72-3). In order to understand the texts, the study will explore the world of the three authors, William Golding, Albert Camus and U.R. Ananthamurthy and their world view.

**William Golding (1911-1993)**

The Modernist period in English literature was basically a reaction to the Victorian aesthetic culture which had prevailed during the nineteenth century. Believing the earlier century’s preoccupation with literature to be a cultural impasse, the Modernists broke away from the traditional way of looking at the world and interacting with it, to one of experimentation and individualism. Modernism became more pronounced in the beginning of the twentieth century because of the cultural shocks, the first of which was World War I which ravaged Europe from 1914 through 1918. The brutalities of the war instilled a sense of fear in the people about what the future held for them. Seeing decay and the growing alienation of the individual, the main preoccupation of the Modernists was the inner self and consciousness in contrast to the Romantic world view of beauty and nature.

Due to the educational reforms of the Victorian Age and fed by a popular press which developed to supply the demand, there was increased readership for all kinds of literature marking the beginning of “high” art and “low” art. The Modernists who perceived the modern society as impersonal and looked down upon popular literature found themselves alienated from the mainstream. Though alienation was the universal experience of Modernist poets, their engagement with the world was real, despite it being mediated through poetry. Departing from the ornamental, verbose style of the Victorian
poets, imagist poetry, referred to as mechanized poetics, with minimalist language, flexibility in structural rules and directness was the order of the day. One of the greatest poets of the age was T.S Eliot who added aesthetics to this kind of poetry by moving to a more conversational style with bitter truths hidden beneath deceptive exteriors. His *The Waste Land* is a good example of the preoccupation with the self and inwardness, and the move away from traditional structures.

The novel also underwent a change as it saw a new kind of narration which displayed the self conscious, reflected impulses of the new age. Going on to be known as “stream of consciousness”, this technique chose to trace the strange pathways of the human consciousness beginning with James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. The psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud added to people’s understanding of what constituted truth and reality.

Prominent among the major Modern English novelists are Joseph Conrad, Henry James, D.H. Lawrence, George Bernard Shaw and William Golding. Born on September 19, 1911 in the village of St. Columb Minor in Cornwall, to Alec Golding, a socialist with a strong commitment to scientific rationalism and Mildred, a supporter of the moderate campaigners for female suffrage, William Gerald Golding took to writing from the age of seven. Working as a writer, actor, producer and a settlement house worker, he was a teacher of English and Philosophy when he was called to serve in the Royal Navy in command of a rocket ship during World War II. Having been involved in the sinking of the German battleship *Bismarck* in 1940 and being part of the invasion of Normandy, Golding returned to writing and teaching when he was demobilized in 1945. The horrors of war left an indelible impression in him that he later remarked in *The Hot Gates* that “man produces evil, as a bee produces honey” (88).
Among the books written by Golding feature *Lord of the Flies*, an allegorical adventure tale set in war time, which was turned down by twenty-one publishers before seeing light in 1954. *Lord of the Flies* was followed by *The Inheritors* (1955) which depicts the extermination of Neanderthal man by Homo Sapiens; *Pincher Martin* (1956) which traces the story of a naval officer, Christopher Hadley Martin, who faces death after his ship is torpedoed and who imagines his survival and struggle against the sea and cold; *Free Fall* (1959) which is about an artist, Sammy Mountjoy, who looks back over his past to look for the crossroads of his life when he lost his freedom and *The Spire* (1964) which demonstrates Golding’s skill at transforming what appears to be simple narrative material into a subtle, complicated drama of human conflict. The techniques of *The Spire* as in Golding’s other novels, depends heavily on irony, on intense, poetic language and on the manipulation of point of view. The central symbol of the novel, a four hundred foot church tower constructed upon a weak, corrupt foundation represents the monolithic viewpoint of its obsessed creator, Dean Jocelin. But Golding’s novel is not predictable. Instead it explores the paradoxical interrelationships between good and evil, the ambiguity of society’s moral systems and the self delusions of a totally unreliable narrator. The spire symbolizes not only pride and blinding egotism but also vitality and creativity. This one symbol epitomizes the tragic nature of the human condition. The story of Jocelin’s building the tower is a study in both the construction and destruction of his human resources.

The writings of Golding essentially develops Nietzsche’s proposition that there is “an internal conflict between the theoretic and the tragic world view.” Despite its complexity, Golding’s art is rooted in popular and primitive experience, revealing the
dark places of the human heart, when isolated individuals or small groups are pushed into extreme situations. His works are characterized by the exploration of “the darkness of man’s heart” as well as delving into deep spiritual and ethical questions. _Lord of the Flies_ shows how attempts to maintain social order are likely to fail when unlimited personal freedom leads to a society ruled by hegemonic forces, through violence and bloodshed.

**_Lord of the Flies_ (1954)**

_Lord of the Flies_ shows a bunch of youngsters’ lack of concern for social morals as they find themselves on the border of the social and non-social, history and pre-history. In Golding’s perspective, the Apollonian and the Dionysian (the good and the evil) aspects co-exist in man and since basically man is an animal, the inherent killer instinct emerges at the least provocation. Making broad use of allusions to classical literature, mythology and Christian symbolism, _Lord of the Flies_ reveals an unsuccessful struggle against barbarism and war, thus showing the ambiguity and fragility of civilization. An allegory of World War II, _Lord of the Flies_ was written in response to R.M. Ballantyne’s _The Coral Island_ where three British boys, Jack, Ralph and Peterkin, stranded on an island, manage to overcome all problems, sailing to safety in the end. While all’s well that ends well in _The Coral Island_, an alternate reality is shown in _Lord of the Flies_. Resorting to the same names for the main characters, Golding juxtaposes the two sides of human nature in his narrative. Democracy and dictatorship rear their heads in turns with Ralph symbolizing the ideal of civilization to which part of human nature tends and Jack embodying the instinct of violence and the eventual regression to barbarism that takes place in a society when the ethics of civilization is lost.
Modern French literature includes the literature that prevailed in France from 1900 – 1999. Politics, ideology, and culture have always figured in the history of French literature as the relationship between literature and social and political attitudes have played an important role in shaping French society. The beginning of the century saw the social and political realities of the times reflected in realistic, linear narratives. Breaking away from this mode of naturalist thinking, writers like Marcel Proust chose to examine the nature of literature in the narrative and the themes for the search of permanence and coherence in human identity. His *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1954) (Remembrance of Things Past) published after his death is hailed as great piece of work because of its blend of realism, philosophy, and psychology. The struggle between reality and art is also evident. World War I, and the slaughter of thousands left a negative impact on the culture of rationalism, and the disillusionment led to the creation of the Dadaist movement with writers like André Breton and Louis Aragon being the key exponents. This movement gave way to the Surrealist movement which focused on literary and political revolution. In the 30s however, tensions grew between writers and political leaders, making writers give vent to their frustrations. André Malraux’s *La condition humaine* (1933) (Man’s Fate) is a reflection of the struggle between the opposing forces of the decline of western culture and western bourgeoisie individualism in the French colonies. With World War II, the French literary scene was one of resistance which went on to assume existential tones, one of the main exponents of this movement being Jean-Paul Sartre whose works like *L’Etre et le néant* (1943) (Being and Nothingness) and *L’Age de raison* (1945) (The Age of Reason) called for the need for existential values in a culture of eroding values.
Although French Resistance remained part of French popular literature up to the 60s, writers like Samuel Beckett began to lay more emphasis on language and narrative technique rather than political ideology, giving rise to the *nouveau roman* (new novel) creating a new relationship between author and reader.

Affected by many dominant ideologies, Camus’s literary works are accounts of numerous causes and concerns of the times. Born of a Spanish mother, Catherine Helene Sintes and a French father, Lucien Auguste Camus on November 7, 1913, in the little village of Mondovi, in French Algeria to a settler family, Camus’s life was profoundly affected by the three major tragedies which dominated the history of France: the Great War (1914-18), World War II (1939-45) and the Algerian War of Independence (1954 - 62). Having lost his father, Lucien in the Battle of Marne in 1914, Camus’ childhood was spent in the poverty-stricken sun soaked working class quarter in Belcourt with a partially deaf mother and a brother under the tutelage of a dominating grandmother. Despite living in surroundings of dirt and squalor, his life at Belcourt was etched in his mind as described in his first book *L’Envers et l’Endroit* (*Betwixt and Between*) and expressed at a lecture given at the Algiers Cultural centre on 8th Feb, 1937... *le role essential que pourraient jouer les villes d’Alger et Barcelone, c’est de server pour leur faible part cet aspect de la culture méditerranéenne qui favorisent l’homme au lieu de l’écraser.* (...the cities of Algiers and Barcelona could play a small though essential part in the process of restoring the idea of Mediterranean culture that defends human values, instead of crushing them).

Member of the Algerian Community Party from 1935 till 1937, Camus fell out of it due to the growing tensions between the communists and the nationalists. The humanist
that he was, Camus in *Misère de la Kabylie, (The misery of Kabylie)* criticized the French colonial powers of exploiting the native Algerians. Writing first for *Alger républicain* which later appeared as *Le Soir républicain*, Camus launched a scathing attack on the colonial powers so much so *Le Soir républicain* was suspended. The change in his development of thinking came about with his novel *L’Étranger* (1942) (*The Outsider*), the philosophical essay *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942) (*The Myth of Sisyphus*) and the play *Caligula* (1944) as well as ‘*Lettres à un amiral allemand* (1943) (*Letters to a German friend*). The “images of a physical world that seems absurdly unaffected by the atrocities of war and destruction” made Camus conclude in *La Guerre* (*The War*) that c’est bien là peut-être l’extrême de la revolte que de perdre sa foi dans l’humanité des hommes. (*Essais*, 1377) (losing one’s faith in the humanity of men may perhaps be the ultimate form of revolt). The texts are also reflections of “Camus’s struggle with the absurdity of a world in which God is no longer present”. In Camus’s opinion it is “because we cling to life so much that we find the strength to sacrifice it for a future of which we ourselves will no longer be part”. Solidarity therefore seems to be the only answer in a meaningless world where God is absent.

In 1942, a relapse of tuberculosis that he contacted in his younger days made him retreat to the mountains in France during which time he got involved with the Resistance Movement and became editor in chief of the newspaper *Combat*, the voice of the resistance groups in which he played a major role from 1944-47. In the aftermath of war when François Mauriac, a fellow writer and journalist wrote about “the general climate of hatred and vengeance” meted out to “fellow collaborators”, Camus’ answer was that “justice not Christian charity should guide the French in dealing with the darker side of
their recent history.” It was this same humanist stance that made Camus part ways with Sartre and the rest of the groups which had Marxist leanings, reproaching Marxism “for sacrificing the defense of universal human values to historical relativism”. Totally against the existentialist stand of “making political choices”, to Camus, the “concept of revolution and the bloodshed it implied, even if it was meant to create a better world”, was not acceptable. This was evident in his play *Les Justes* (*The Just*) and his famous novel *La Peste* (*The Plague*). By 1954, the Algerian War of Independence seemed certain but despite his criticism of the French colonial rule in Algeria, Camus was also against an independent, Arab nation and nursed the hope of a federal state even when tensions ran high. In *Le Premier Homme* (*The First Man*) Camus tries to reconstruct the history of his forefathers who had come to Algeria in the 19th century and had undergone untold misery and suffering on the hot African soil. The feeling of “isolation and loneliness” that Camus felt in his last days can be seen in *La Chute* (1956) (*The Fall*). (Ieme Van Der Poel 13-23).

The theme of the absurd also sees a strong presence in *The Rebel* which is a response to the brutality of the Nazi regime, the terror and torture of Soviet Stalinism and the world wide threat of nuclear war that lay at the root of the Cold War. Although the fundamental question is murder, *The Rebel* focuses on the relation of the individual to other individuals. Just as Camus rejected suicide as a way to respond to a sense of individual meaninglessness in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus rejected murder as a vehicle for justice or a way to deal with differences between people or conflicts between nations. *The Rebel* argues for the value of the immediate possibility of the living present, against
sacrificing the present in the name of the future. Instead of submitting to an ‘absurd’ universe, Camus proposes that man should ‘revolt’ against it.

The world of youth, impulsiveness and rebellion; existential angst and the struggle with evil; the impact of social hypocrisy, the dread of conformism, and the individual’s struggle to locate himself in society, all find a place in his writings. Camus’s *La Peste* (The Plague) illustrates how the resilience of a community can instill order in a fragmented society divided by personal conflicts.

*The Plague (1947)*

*The Plague* is set in Oran, an ordinary, ugly, commercially-oriented French port on the Algerian coast in the 40s. The inhabitants of this little port town find themselves rudely shaken out of their hedonistic life style when the plague strikes. Dismissing it at first as a problem of sanitation, they soon comprehend the gravity of the situation as the number of fatalities rise. In this grim scenario, the tireless efforts of Dr Bernard Rieux, the health physician, supported by Jean Tarrou, who chronicles the ordeal; Raymond Rambert, a French journalist, in Oran to cover the condition of the Arabs, and Father Paneloux, the town priest, succeed in containing the disease, but not before losing considerable lives including its prized victims, Father Paneloux and Tarrou.

*The Plague* dramatizes the victory of the human spirit and solidarity over a scourge which threatens to dismember not only the human spirit but the very existence of the citizens of Oran. At the same time, the novel warns of the solitary and scandalous heart that is ready to awaken, to strike and threaten the collective, just like the plague.
Kannada literature saw a change from the overtly Sanskritized version of Kannada as well as Old Kannada, used in the royal courts, to the spoken form or New Kannada in the 12th century. Basavanna, a saint and founder of the Veerashaiva movement used ‘vachanas’ or sayings with metaphysical or mystical messages, to spread social awareness and bring about social reforms.

With the coming of the British in the 17th century, the language of the court documents written for administrative purposes became a functional one. The setting up of printing presses and with it the publication of journals and periodicals by the Christian missionaries in the 18th century and a system of formal education opened up new avenues for Kannada language and literature. With this emerged a new reading public whose appetite had to be whetted and the novel served the purpose best. The Kannada novel had its early forms in the Kannada translations by Venkatacharya and Galaganatha. While the works of Venkatacharya were replete with narratives, tales of everyday life, humour, suspense and adventure; Galaganatha’s showed a nationalistic fervor.

19th century Kannada literature saw a shift from the historical and romantic novels to the realist or social novel under the influence of the social reform movements sweeping across the state in the wake of colonialism, the first being, Gadagakara’s Suryakantha (1892). Influenced by the reforms and progress of the west, Guvadi Venkata Rao’s Indira Bai (1899), a work of realistic social fiction which supported widow remarriage and denounced social evils, showing a society in transition, was the forerunner to many a social play. Following this work, through Bhagirathi (1900), Rao chose to condemn the social evils and frustration associated with the life of a child-
widow, through his protagonist. Kerroru Vasudevacharya’s *Indira* (1908) chose to criticize the so called social reformers. Puttanna’s novel *Madiddunno Maharaya* (1915) (As you sow, so shall you reap), parting ways from the earlier social reform novels set the tone for the new age novels with its depiction of the existing social evils of the time. With this, the *Navodaya* (the period of awakening) phase of literature was set, with pioneers like Shivarama Karanth, Kuvempu and Masti Venkatesha Iyengar. Moving away from archaic forms, the struggle for independence, the building of a new nation as well as the caste and class struggle featured in their works with characters that stood out for their integrity. Kuvempu’s *Kanur Subamma Heggadithi* (1931) (Subamma Heggadathi of Kanur) was the first to herald the regional novel followed by Karanth’s magnum opus, *MaraliMannige* (Back to the Soil) in 1942.

The *Navya* (modernist) phase in Kannada literature chose to question “vague abstractions, sweeping generalizations and lofty and sentimental ideals, that individuals, communities, literary texts, spiritual and philosophical discourses and theories of aesthetics often tend to uphold as ‘values’ of life and rigourously look for ‘authenticity’ in individual and social life” (Chakravarthy 11). The novels of the *Navya* period were bold ventures which not only included characters from all sections of society but questioned caste, class, faith and religion, refraining nevertheless from making it close ended. To this category belong P. Lankesh, Poorna Chandra Tejaswi, Chandrashekara Kambara, Girish Karnad and U.R. Ananthamurthy. Inspired greatly by Sartre, Camus and Kafka, the novels of these post independence writers demonstrated the Indian experience of the existential view of life. Shantinath Desai’s *Mukti* (1961) which traced the protagonist’s quest for identity was the launch pad of the Navya novel.
Wll known among the works of U.R Ananthamurthy, one of the main architects of the Navya movement, are his novels, *Samskara, Bharatipura, Awasthe*and *Bhava*. All the four novels are examples of “individuals struggling for an ethical authenticity of the self by correlating personal dilemmas with social, political and cultural conflicts” (12). *Samskara* traces the metaphysical journey of the protagonist in the quest for the self, fleeing from a community whose lives are steeped in traditional beliefs. *Bhava* is a compelling tale of mystery, passion and spiritual exploration of seventy year old Shastri. In *Bharathipura* (1973) Ananthamurthy contests the caste factor which is deep rooted in the Indian consciousness. In order to establish equality and justice in a caste ridden society, Jagannatha, the western educated liberal who finds himself an alien in his own land tries to desecrate the *shaligrama* (sacred stone) by forcing the untouchables to ‘touch and defile it’. *Awasthe*is an engagement with the modern Indian nation - state, the reality of party politics and the violence unleashed by extremist groups in the name of equality. In the quintessential Navya novel *Samskara*, is seen how the forces of a new social order disrupts a well entrenched traditional society.

**Samskara (1965)**

Situated in the tiny hamlet of Durvasapura, in the Western Ghats of South India, *Samskara* recounts the story of a decadent Brahmin community and their refusal to cremate the body of Naranappa, a heretic, who had openly defied their orthodox practices while alive. The people of Durvasapura, though indifferent to the news of Naranappa’s death, are nevertheless distressed as they are forbidden from eating till the body is cremated. As the Brahmins fight over the jewels given by Chandri, Naranappa’s mistress,
to perform the funeral rites, the corpse is left unattended. For a solution to the crisis, they turn to the learned Praneshacharya, educated in the holy city of Benares. Failing to find an answer in the scriptures, the latter seeks the help of Lord Hanuman in the forest. After a futile attempt, he turns homeward mentally and physically exhausted, only to be waylaid by Chandri. Stirred by the innate desire which the compassionate touch of Chandri evoked, he submits to her. Troubled and filled with a sense of remorse, Praneshacharya decides to return to confess his misdemeanor.

Meanwhile Durvaspura finds itself in the grip of a plague which is claiming its victims. With no solution to Naranappa’ ssamskara in sight, Chandri seeks the help of a Muslim to cremate the body and leaves the village. With his wife dead soon after and desire still alive in him, Praneshacharya leaves Durvasapura, in search of life’s truth, only to return, a man initiated into reality.

1.4 NEED FOR THE STUDY

Of the corpus of the three writers, the texts that have been chosen for this study seem to best represent the moral crisis and social order of their times. A close reading of the novels reveal similar concerns. The existential angst experienced by the main characters as they battle their way through, amidst the chaos, confusion and disorder is explicit in all the three texts. A comparative study of the three works throws up multiple insights into the three cultures –English, French and Kannada and how the crisis and its consequences upsets the social order, spelling doom and destruction, if not for the timely help that comes from different quarters. In Lord of the Flies, despite the advice of Piggy, Ralph and Simon, the social order breaks down completely, because of the callous
attitude of the boys to rules and regulations. Just as the raging fire threatens to consume
the island and its survivors, the boys are rescued by a naval officer. Golding believed that
the seeds of corruption lay in civilization. In the novel, he looks at childhood as the site
where adult civilized values are implanted and is aghast to find sheer brutality there. In
*The Plague*, it is the concerted efforts of the journalist Rambert, Tarrou and Dr. Rieux
that manage to pull the inhabitants through the crisis brought about by the plague. In
*Samskara*, the social order turns awry when Praneshacharya, the learned priest fails to
guide the Brahmin community in the disposal of one of their own who had gone against
their rigid customs and practices in life. Relief comes in the form of the dead man’s
concupine. After a futile attempt to get the Brahmins to perform the funeral rites he had a
right to, she disposes the corpse with the help of a Muslim who was indebted to her
master.

The nature of the crisis, its influence on the characters and in turn the impact of
the crisis on the functioning of society will be explored through a textual interpretation of
the three literary classics.