The page features a large, light gray watermark in the background. It consists of the letters 'L' and 'R' stacked vertically. The 'L' is on the left, and the 'R' is on the right. A vertical line descends from the top of the 'R' and passes through the center of the page. At the bottom of this line, there is a large circle. Inside the circle, a square is inscribed, and a triangle is also inscribed, with its base at the bottom of the circle and its apex at the top of the circle. The word 'INTRODUCTION' is centered over the 'R' and the vertical line.

## INTRODUCTION

The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is himself uncounseled, and cannot counsel others. To write a novel means to carry the incommensurable to extremes in the representation of human life. In the midst of life's fullness, and through the representation of this fullness, the novel gives evidence of the profound perplexity of the living.

Walter Benjamin.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, translated from German by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), p. 87.

The question of individuation and the pursuit of meaning has preoccupied scholars of literature, the social sciences, and philosophy, as well as artists and writers, since the late nineteenth century. The range of approaches to understanding how and why this new interest in existential experiences came about in diverse societies has varied according to different perceptions. These approaches range from those that consider this quest for meaning to be a spiritual one, a socially sanctioned and constrained one, an internal process, or a result of a self-imposed solitude or of an existential crisis generated by the increasing socio-political pluralism of modern societies.

The overarching aim of this study is to link the process of individuation to the novel as a distinct literary genre. In order to identify and locate the shaping of identity that is articulated within the novel, four writers have been selected: Norway's Knut Hamsun, Ireland's James Joyce, Egypt's Naguib Mahfouz, and Tayeb Salih from Sudan. The book attempts to contextualise each writer and to identify the specificity of his literary contribution, in order to make a later comparison meaningful. I will apply modern critical literary theory in an attempt to answer the crucial questions of how and why this new type of literature emerged in various cultures and out of diverse literary traditions at a specific time, and to understand the genesis of individuation and the pursuit of meaning as it developed in all four cases. I will also analyse the social consciousness of the individual, and the shift from collective consciousness to individualism in the four different countries: Norway, Ireland, Egypt and Sudan. The latter two countries were chosen for this study because individuation is not a fully achieved or socially accepted idea in the Arab world today. Such an approach facilitates a comprehension of the pursuit of meaning, of whether this individuation takes the form of a self-imposed isolation and/or an existential crisis, and of how a shift from a strong sense of unity to socio-political pluralism influenced these writers, as well as whether there are any autobiographical parallels between their lives and writings.

The four literary traditions and authors have been selected for several reasons. Firstly, because the authors' works represent a significant break with the literary traditions in which they exist, and should be seen as contributing to the birth of modernist narrative in their local context.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the books selected for this study were published at a time when the respective local societies were experiencing a rapid social and political transformation related to the emergence of modernism.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, they articulate specifically how the new literary character that emerges with the modern novel perceives

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<sup>2</sup> Hamsun is recognised to be representative of modernist narrative together with Joyce, Proust, Kafka, Eliot and Beckett. Mahfouz and Salih occupy the same positions in their own traditions.

<sup>3</sup> I will outline this in the parts elaborating on *The Question of Cultural Identity*, and *The Consequences of Modernity*.

the world around him<sup>4</sup> – not what he sees, but how he sees it, alienated and plagued by anxiety as he is. Fourthly, each represents a milestone in its respective national literature. The validity of western approaches to individuation in both western and non-western literatures is scrutinised, to see how these might be applied to both; or if they are not found to be applicable, to understand what modifications need to be made in the case of Arabic literature. Such an approach gives rise to several questions, and I endeavour to provide sufficient material to question existing theoretical material.

Is the process of individuation reflected in Arabic literature a straightforward import from the western tradition, simply reflecting the fact that the West and western literature have been viewed as a model to imitate? Or has it emerged from a process of internal social, cultural and political change over time? Furthermore, what are the specific dynamics of Arab societies that might represent an obstacle to individuation? To what extent can critical literary theory enable us to read the different layers in the texts selected for this study, and investigate how the genre of the novel transcends cultural peculiarities? Is this quest a spiritual one, or is it socially sanctioned or constrained by forces internal to the local society? Is there a specific goal, and if so, what does it look like? Does it, at some point, come to an end? Does individuation result from a self-imposed isolation, or from an existential crisis on the personal level, which is in turn a product of increasing socio-political pluralism. Can we really isolate these socio-political issues from the literature itself and its development within its context?

This study compares and contrasts the open societies in the West – in this case Norway and Ireland – with the closed and less democratic societies of the Arab world – here, Egypt and Sudan. Chapter 1 analyses the process of individuation in Norwegian literature through the work of Knut Hamsun, and in particular his novels, *Hunger*, *Mysteries*, and *Pan*. Chapter 2 studies the Irish literary perspective through James Joyce's novels *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*. Chapter 3 examines the Arabic–Egyptian literature of Naguib Mahfouz through his novels *The Beggar* and *Respected Sir*. Chapter 4 investigates the work of the Arabic–Sudanese novelist Tayeb Salih in his *Season of Migration to the North*, and *The Wedding of Zein*. The Conclusion brings together the results of the analysis and relates the process of individuation and the shaping of personal identity to the genre of the novel, evaluating the selected novels and highlighting both their individual specificity and their similarities. However, before attempting to answer or even elaborate on these questions, it is necessary to establish a sound theoretical footing. The theoretical frameworks I make use of will therefore be outlined in detail.

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<sup>4</sup> Especially in Hamsun's *Hunger* (but also in all the other novels selected for this study), the protagonist is more concerned about subjective matters and how he perceives the world around him than with what he actually sees.

## The Field of Cultural Production

With the advent of modernism in western literature there arose a need to understand and analyse this new literature, its style, and its mode. Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, a new interest in the writer and artist as a type per se changed the cultural universe. According to Pierre Bourdieu, this was the result of a ‘collective enterprise which is inseparable from (1) the constitution of an autonomous literary field, independent of or even opposite to the economic field (e.g. bohemian vs. bourgeois), and (2) the constitution of a tactical position within the field (e.g. artist vs. bohemian).’<sup>5</sup>

Modern literary criticism as we know it today was established in the first decades of the twentieth century. From about the 1930s<sup>6</sup> until the 1960s, the leading approach was that inspired by the Russian Formalists and Anglo-American New Critics, focusing on the formalist and structuralist nature of language and the literary understanding of literature.<sup>7</sup> These critics believed that a work of art in general, and a literary text in particular, could be read and understood solely on the basis of the text itself.<sup>8</sup> The problem with such an approach, however, is that it relies exclusively on internal analysis, *explication des textes*; that it carries within itself the main obstacle:

[I]t looks for the final explanation of texts either within the texts themselves (the object of analysis, in other words, is its own explanation) or within some sort of a historical ‘essence’ rather than in the complex network of social relations that makes the very existence of the texts possible.<sup>9</sup>

It also does not take into account the creator/writer of the literary work himself, or his relation to other producers and their literary practice: nor does it consider the value – that is, the symbolic capital an author or a literary work might possess – of the work at a given historical moment.<sup>10</sup> Another problem that ‘tautegorical’ reading suffers from is that it ignores the fact that ‘what makes a given work a literary work’ is a complex social and institutional framework which authorizes and sustains literature and literary practice.<sup>11</sup> This idea, that the only purpose of a literary text is as a self-sufficient structure

<sup>5</sup>Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 162.

<sup>6</sup> The very first contribution to this tradition came as early as 1914, with Victor Shklovsky’s *The Resurrection of the Word*.

<sup>7</sup> Such methods replaced the biographical method most common at the beginning of the twentieth century.

<sup>8</sup> For an introduction to Russian Formalism and Anglo-American New Criticism, see Ann Jefferson and David Robey (eds), *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction* (London: Batsford Academic & Educational Ltd, 1982), Chapters 1 and 3.

<sup>9</sup> Randal Johnson, Introduction to Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> This type of symbolic capital might change considerably over time as the field of cultural production changes – in other words, a work can either lose or gain credibility in relation to the established canon.

<sup>11</sup> Johnson, op. cit., p. 11.

of significations,<sup>12</sup> and that ‘[literary approaches to literature] take for granted but fail to take account of the social–historical conditions within which the object of analysis is produced, constructed and received,’<sup>13</sup> prompted Bourdieu to (re)introduce the terms *field* (*champ*) and *habitus* and hence pulling the whole field of literary criticism in a sociological direction, and away from a ‘purely’ aesthetic discourse.

In general, ‘a field is a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning,<sup>14</sup> regulated by its own time and space, by explicit rules and specific logic. At the same time, it is also ‘a space in which a *game* takes place [*espace de jeu*], a field of objective relations between individuals or institutions who are competing for the same stake.’<sup>15</sup> What distinguishes Bourdieu from earlier critics is that he does not, in locating and inventing the writer as such, distinguish between the writer himself and the (literary) field within which he operates, the position he occupies, or his struggle for position: in other words, from the particular social game in which he participates, willingly or not, just by being an author. This happens in the literary field, a field that is being constituted at the same time as its autonomy is being established. Bourdieu acknowledges that there exist many different types of field (literary, economic, political, etc.) that are related to each other within the social space, but he stresses that each field enjoys its own rules on how the game is to be played. To be able to take part in a field’s *game* and be acknowledged as a legitimate player, the *agent* has to possess a minimum of skill, talent and knowledge about the field and how its mechanism functions. Consequently, in any field the ultimate aim is to achieve maximum power and to dominate it, since every field can be seen as a battlefield in which all agents seek to position themselves in such a way as to acquire the most power possible in order to award or withdraw legitimacy from other agents in the game of the field.<sup>16</sup> The agents possessing the most legitimacy are the ones who have acquired the most time- and space-specific *symbolic capital* existing within the field. For the purpose of this study, to understand the concept of ‘field’ is

to recall that literary works are produced in a particular social universe endowed with particular institutions and obeying specific laws. And yet this observation runs counter to both the tradition of internal reading, which considers works in themselves independently from the historical conditions in which they were produced, and the tradition of external explication,

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<sup>12</sup> Examples of this are espoused by critics like John Crowe Ransom, Cleanth Brooks, and Allan Tate, as well as by the Chicago Critics.

<sup>13</sup> John B. Thompson, Introduction to Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1994), pp. 28–9.

<sup>14</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 162.

<sup>15</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Questions de Sociologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1984), p. 197, quoted in Toril Moi, ‘Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist Theory and Pierre Bourdieu’s Sociology of Culture’, in *New Literary History*, 1991 (22), p. 1,021.

<sup>16</sup> In the literary field this means authors, publishers, critics, editors, etc.

which one normally associates with sociology and which relates the works directly to the economic and social conditions of the moment.<sup>17</sup>

In order to locate an author within the field of literary production it is necessary to bear in mind that the field operates as a 'veritable social universe where, in accordance with its particular laws, there accumulates a particular form of capital and where relations of force of a particular type are exerted.'<sup>18</sup> Within this particular universe and the specific struggle taking place, the crucial task is that of deciding, and knowing, who is regarded as part of the universe: who is considered a real writer, and who is not. Bourdieu suggests that 'all critics declare not only their judgement of the work but also their claim to the right to talk about it and judge it. In short they take part in a struggle for the monopoly of legitimate discourse about the work of art, and consequently in the production of the value of a work of art.'<sup>19</sup>

Employing such a method, Bourdieu manages to recognise yet another level on which literature has to be examined to comprehend fully how the structures of the literary field function. He thus avoids the simplistic approach of Marxist literary theory,<sup>20</sup> which revolves around the analysis of literature as a mere reflection of social reality; more specifically, the *superstructure* (cultural activities) develops from the *base* (the economic system) and demonstrates the nature of the base and how it functions.<sup>21</sup> Such a one-dimensional view of the social world is antithetical to Bourdieu's approach,<sup>22</sup> hence his division of the social world into multi-dimensional spaces distinguished as autonomous fields, and not just along lines of class, gender, or race. Bourdieu views literary production not as a reflection of classes in society, but as a refraction; in other words, literature ensures that outside influences entering the literary field are subject to changes in their impact and direction.<sup>23</sup> Another difficulty with Marxist analysis is its tendency to

<sup>17</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 163.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> For an introduction to Marxism and literary theory, see Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1989), especially Chapters 1 and 2, and Terry Eagleton and Drew Milae (eds), *Marxist Literary Theory: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), Chapter 1.

<sup>21</sup> It cannot be denied, though, that Bourdieu was strongly influenced by western traditions of Marxism, due to his theoretical interest in social classes, and in how economic capital functions in the social space, as well as by French ethnology and sociology. But he did not divide social classes by their positions in relation to the means of production, but regarded them as agents who desire more or less the same kind and quantities of money, dispositions, possibilities, and so on.

<sup>22</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>23</sup> In the literary field, money, political power, and so on, will not have a huge influence on an artist's impact within and on the field, compared to most other fields, since symbolic capital determines who has the right and the power to consecrate an author or his work. This is seen especially clearly the more autonomous a sector of the field of cultural production becomes. Where agents produce for other producers, the economy

confuse theoretical classes with real social groups; hence it misconstrues a whole series of questions concerning the ways in which agents mobilise themselves through representation.<sup>24</sup> Bourdieu's main concern is to arrive not at a theory of a series of representations, but rather at a means of comprehending the symbolic mechanisms that produce these effects. In so doing, he will be able to discover the structure of the work, not just its social function – that is, to express the interests and groups it serves. It was against this form of reduction (the short circuit effect) that he developed the theory of the field.<sup>25</sup>

As we have seen, the field of power is a field of latent forces that possess great potential, and it will play upon any particle that might venture into it. It is also a battlefield that can be seen as the setting of a game. In this game, 'the trump cards are the *habitus*, that is to say, the acquirements, the embodied, assimilated properties, such as elegance, ease of manner, beauty and so forth, and capital as such, that is, the inherited assets which define the possibilities inherent in the field.'<sup>26</sup> These trump cards determine the nature of the game, in deciding firstly who will succeed or fail, and secondly in what style the game will be played. All agents have a life-history – to be precise, their trajectory – which is 'determined by the interaction between the forces of the field and his own inertia, that is, the *habitus* as the remanence of a trajectory which tends to orient future trajectory.'<sup>27</sup> As in most other games, which also take place within their specific fields of power, power itself is what the agents are battling for, the stake which has to be won and controlled. In relation to the agents involved in the game, two distinctions have to be made in order to comprehend their actions and positions within the field: firstly, what 'trump cards' or inheritance they possess; secondly, what their attitude and approach is towards this inheritance, particularly whether they possess the essential dimension of the *habitus*; thirdly, what means they have, and whether they hold the requisite determination, to succeed. For Bourdieu it is more interesting to ask 'not how a writer comes to be what he is, in a sort of genetic psycho-sociology, but rather how the position or "post" he occupies – that of a writer of a particular type – became constituted.'<sup>28</sup>

Bourdieu's aim, by introducing the Aristotelian notion of *hexis*, converted by scholastic tradition into *habitus*, was to emphasise the role of the agent and his particularity in the field of cultural production:

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of practices is based on 'loser wins' – that is, the economic world reversed, where an inversion exists of the essential principles of traditional economics, such as business, power and cultural authority. See also Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, especially Part 1, Chapter 1, and Part 2, Chapter 5.

<sup>24</sup> Thompson, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 181.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 148-50.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

I wanted to react against structuralism and its strange philosophy of action which, implicitly in the Levi-Straussian notion of the unconscious and avowedly among the Althusserians, made the agent disappear by reducing it to the role of supporter or bearer (*Träger*) of the structure [...] I wanted to demonstrate the active, inventive and ‘creative’ capacities of the habitus and the agent [...] I intended to indicate that this generative power is not that of a universal nature or of reason [...] (the habitus the word says it – is acquired and it is also a possession which may, in certain cases, function as a form of capital), nor is it that of a transcendental subject in the idealist tradition.<sup>29</sup>

The habitus is a set of *dispositions* which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. John B. Thompson argues in his introduction to Pierre Bourdieu’s *Language and Symbolic Power* that the habitus is constituted by different types of dispositions that are inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable.<sup>30</sup> We acquire our dispositions, especially in our early childhood, through a process of inculcation. This occurs through various everyday events that train and teach us how to perceive our surroundings, and thereby determine our social behaviour; we acquire a specific pattern of thought and behaviour that shapes both our mind and body and becomes second nature. We then structure these dispositions so that they reflect our social background and the social conditions within which they were acquired.<sup>31</sup> This means that the habitus will reflect the differences and resemblances between the social conditions the individuals inhabit. These will, to a large extent, be homogeneous among individuals from similar social and cultural backgrounds. Structured dispositions are also durable: they are so deeply ingrained that they endure through the life-history of the individual, operating in a way that is pre-conscious and hence not readily amenable to conscious reflection and modification.<sup>32</sup> Finally, our dispositions:

are *generative* and *transposable* in the sense that they are capable of generating a multiplicity of practices and perceptions in fields other than those in which they were originally acquired. As a durably installed set of dispositions, the habitus tends to generate practices and perceptions, works and appreciations, which concur with the conditions of existence of which the habitus is itself the product.<sup>33</sup>

The *habitus* endows the agents with some kind of awareness that determines their attitudes and responses to the world around them – a feeling for how to play the game. This ‘practical sense’ (*le sens pratique*) is more a state of mind than of the body, and it directs what is suitable and accepted within the field’s rules, and regulates the agents’

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<sup>29</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, translated by Susan Emanuel (Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 179.

<sup>30</sup> Thompson, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

conduct and behaviour – in other words, it ‘orients’ their actions and inclinations without strictly determining them.<sup>34</sup> Any habitus or disposition, though, has to be fulfilled through – and is defined in its relation and response to – the structure of opportunities that its occupant’s position, and position-takings, open up, as well as to the position occupied in the field that presides over how these opportunities are appreciated and perceived within the field.<sup>35</sup> Such an approach explains the absurdity of trying to link, for example, a literary genre to a specific social group, even if the majority of its defenders, representatives or inventors belong to it. Bourdieu argues that

[t]he interaction between positions and dispositions is clearly reciprocal. Any habitus, as a system of dispositions, is only effectively realized in relation to a determinate structure of socially marked positions (marked among other things by the social properties of its occupants, through which it allows itself to be perceived); but, conversely, it is through dispositions, which are themselves more or less completely adjusted to those positions, that one or another potentiality lying inscribed in the positions is realized.<sup>36</sup>

To grasp and make use of the potential of Bourdieu’s notion of habitus for this study, and to arrive at a practical reading, one must understand and regard habitus as ‘the basis of the social structuration of temporal existence, of all the anticipations and the presuppositions through which we practically construct the sense of the world – its signification, but also, inseparably, its orientation towards the still-to-come.’<sup>37</sup> As for the greater picture, and an understanding of the dynamics between habitus and field, it is important to bear in mind that ‘it is in the relationship between the habituses and the fields to which they are adjusted to a greater or lesser degree that the foundation of all the scales of utility is generated.’<sup>38</sup>

One of the most significant ways of distinguishing oneself and one’s habitus is through language – and deploying language in an effort to gain a position within the literary field is something all the authors discussed here have done to some extent.<sup>39</sup> Bourdieu identifies language as a main determinant in the battles for power, especially symbolic power, that take place in society.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 265.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>39</sup> Hamsun used language to distinguish himself from his contemporaries’, both through writing articles and creating an innovative language for his characters, especially the hero of *Hunger*. Mahfouz was an active writer of articles, and he took every chance to distinguish himself from established writers, as well as dramatically transforming his language in the modern novels of the 1960s, after having fulfilled the language of realism in *The Cairo Trilogy*. Salih’s use of language to distinguish himself was primarily in his novels, and especially in his grotesque and direct descriptions of the violence that takes place in *Season*.

## Language as Symbolic Power

Bourdieu's notions of *field* and *habitus* have helped us to recognise the many facets of literary production within the field of cultural production. This becomes crucially important when locating the processes of individuation and the pursuit of meaning and relating them to the literary genre of the novel, and is essential to locating the authors and their positions in the field of literary production. Language, however, is another way of distinguishing and positioning oneself stylistically from previous or even existing narrative discourse within one's field of power. Thus, in relation to the novel as a genre, a distinct language is important. Since Hamsun, Joyce, Mahfouz and Salih all had to make their names in their respective literary fields, they each needed to create an individual and authentic novelistic voice. As Bakhtin suggests,

The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases) – this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre.<sup>40</sup>

Hence the selected authors' attention to language, because language is how we structure power in society. We use language more to be understood, to be liked, to exert control, or to accept others' control over us, than, as Roman Jacobsen would argue, simply to convey a message. In other words, language structures power in the symbolic form. This is achieved in a variety of ways, and in daily life this power is not exercised as an explicit physical force but is endowed with legitimacy through its transmutation into various symbolic forms. For this process to be successful, the agents in the specific fields have to recognise (*reconnaissance*) and misrecognise (*méconnaissance*) that the exercise of power is dependent on a shared belief among the agents that even those who least benefit will participate in their own subjection by the fact that they are part of the game and play by the rules of the field. The dominated agents are not passive individuals to whom this symbolic power is applied, since the nature of symbolic power requires an active complicity from its participants who believe both in the legitimacy of the power being exercised and the legitimacy of those who exercise it. Applying this to the field of literary production, Bourdieu suggests that

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<sup>40</sup> Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 262–3.

[i]n order fully to understand the structure of this field and, in particular, the existence, within the field of linguistic production, of a sub-field of restricted production which derives its fundamental properties from the fact that the producers within it produce first and foremost for other producers, it is necessary to distinguish between the capital necessary for the simple production of more or less legitimate ordinary speech, on the one hand, and the capital of instruments of expression (presupposing appropriation of the resources deposited in objectified form in libraries – books, and in particular in the ‘classics’, grammars and dictionaries) which is needed to produce a written discourse worthy of being published, that is to say, made official, on the other.<sup>41</sup>

Production in the ‘sub-field of restricted production’ is thus not aimed at a large-scale market, but at other producers – that is, people within the field possessing the necessary cultural and symbolic capital. It is also here that a work of art can have meaning, since its receivers acquire the essential cultural competence and aesthetic dispositions to read the code into which it has been encoded. For this to function, the cultivated habitus and the artistic field that ground each other mutually have, as aspects of the same historical institution, to utilise the harmony that exists between the two of them. In other words, both the work of art and the consecrator of the work are a result of a long collective history that facilitates their existence. In this sense, ‘the struggles among writers over the legitimate art of writing contribute, through their very existence, to producing both the legitimate language, defined by its distance from the “common” language, and belief in its legitimacy.’<sup>42</sup>

### The Rules of Art

As has already been noted, there are certain rules that agents have to recognise in order to be able to play the game in their field, and these rules may differ according to an agent’s symbolic capital in the field of power. This is particularly clear when analysing the way in which authors in general, and the ones selected for this study in particular, enter the field. The structure of the literary field as we know it today was established in the late nineteenth century, so it was during this period that ‘the opposition between art and money, which structures the field of power, [was] reproduced in the literary field in the form of the opposition between “pure” art, symbolically dominant but economically dominated.’<sup>43</sup> Poetry, the incarnation of ‘pure’ art par excellence, is impossible to sell outside the field, in other words to other poets in a process of production for other producers, while commercial art, existing mainly in two forms, the boulevard theatre, and industrial art. The theatre generated huge economic profits, and enjoys bourgeois consecration through the academy, while popular art – vaudeville, the popular or

<sup>41</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1994), p. 57.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>43</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 185.

serialised novel or feuilleton, journalism and cabaret – did not generate as much income. According to Bourdieu, ‘there is thus a chiasmatic structure, homologous with the structure of the field of power, in which, as we know, the intellectuals, rich in cultural capital and relatively poor in economic capital, and the owners of industry and business, rich in economic capital and relatively poor in cultural capital, are in opposition.’<sup>44</sup> Avant-garde<sup>45</sup> authors hoping to enter the literary field will do so with no economic or symbolic capital, and will have to gain symbolic capital gradually; in time they may also gain some economic capital without losing their symbolic capital. If they do start to lose some symbolic capital in exchange for economic capital, they are drifting towards the other part of the existing dualist structure within the field – that is to say, from serious to popular literature. It is thus possible to win in the symbolic arena and at the same time lose in the economic arena, and vice versa – in short, the economic world reversed.<sup>46</sup> In this way, there is a temporal gap between supply and demand, especially in the field of restricted production, which can be said to be economically dominated but symbolically dominant. The struggle to win and maintain a position within the literary field is often carried out by referring to other producers within the field, which thereby becomes a battlefield in which the avant-garde challenges the values of the establishment. Such a challenge materialises in two ways: either by criticism of the establishment for being too old fashioned, or by argument for restoration of the old values that they, the establishment, have left behind. The struggle of a newcomer to make his name (*faire date*) literally involves seeking discontinuity, rupture, difference, and revolution, as opposed to that of the established figures, who desire continuity, identity, and reproduction.<sup>47</sup> Arresting the movement of time is contrary to the aim of the avant-garde, which is to produce time. To emphasise this break with the past in the struggle for recognition and distinction, naming and branding oneself differently is essential,<sup>48</sup> for both the artists themselves and the critics. By effecting a rupture in continuity, or even continuity in rupture – both of which are important in determining the evolution of a field on its way towards autonomy – one has to bring into play the experience of the field’s history on the way to revolutionising it, and this is the trademark of all great heretics.

The object of the science of a cultural work is the correspondence of the composition of the work like form, structure and genre, and the structure of the literary field. Thus ‘the impetus for change in cultural works – language, art, literature, science, etc. – resides in

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> For a detailed discussion of the avant-garde see Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, translated by Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968).

<sup>46</sup> In the cultural field there is no relationship between artistic success and commercial success or vice versa. Most of the times artistic and commercial success contradict each other, while this is not the case in the economic world.

<sup>47</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 106.

<sup>48</sup> In the history of literature and art there are numerous examples of this, including all the various -isms, as well as types of art, like pop art, land art, body art, and so on.

the struggles that take place in the corresponding fields of production. These struggles, whose goal is the preservation or transformation of the established power relationships in the field of production, obviously have as their effect the preservation or transformation of the structure of the field of works, which are the tools and stakes in these struggles.<sup>49</sup> It is also important to stress that, for all the involved agents in the field – writers, critics, publishers, directors, and so on – there is only one legitimate way of accumulating capital, be it symbolic, cultural or economic, and it consists in making a name for oneself, a name that enjoys authority and recognition: in other words, ‘the capital of consecration – implying a power to consecrate objects (this is the effect of a signature or trademark) or people (by publication, exhibition, etc.), and hence of giving them value, and of making profits from this operation.’<sup>50</sup> This is done ‘among artists, obviously, with group exhibitions or prefaces by which consecrated authors consecrate the younger ones, who consecrate them in return as masters or heads of schools; between artists and patrons or collectors; between artists and critics, and in particular avant-garde critics, who consecrate themselves by obtaining the consecration of the artists they champion or by rediscovering or re-evaluating minor artists and thus activating and giving proof of their power of consecration, and so forth.’<sup>51</sup>

If one aims to understand the field of cultural production, how it functions, and what may be produced in it, one cannot ‘separate the expressive drive (which has its source in the very functioning of the field and in the fundamental *illusio* which makes it possible) from the specific logic of the field, pregnant with objective potentialities, and from everything which will simultaneously constrain and authorize the expressive drive to convert itself into a *specific solution*.’<sup>52</sup> Knowledge of the rules of this model allows us to comprehend to what extent a writer or reader (agents) of a text may occupy a position within the field, and possess the dispositions (*habitus*) that they do – in other words, to understand how they are able to do what they do and to be what they are. Accordingly, Bourdieu argues:

All positions depend, in their very existence, and in the determinations they impose in their occupants, on their actual and potential situation in the structure of the field – that is to say, in the structure and distribution of those kinds of capital (or of power) whose possession governs the obtaining of specific profits (such as literary prestige) put into play in the field. To different positions (which, in a universe as little institutionalized as the literary or artistic field, can only be apprehended through the properties of their occupants) correspond homologous position-takings, including literary or artistic works, obviously, but also political acts and discourses, manifestos or polemics, etc. and this obliges us to challenge the alternative between an internal reading of the work and an explanation based on the social conditions of its production or consumption [...]. In the phase of equilibrium, the space of positions tends to

<sup>49</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 183.

<sup>50</sup> Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 148.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

govern the space of position-takings. It is to the specific ‘interests’ associated with different positions in the literary field that one must look for the principle of literary (etc.) position-takings, and even the political position-takings outside the field.<sup>53</sup>

It is also important to consider Stanley Fish’s notion of ‘the informed reader,’<sup>54</sup> a person to whom analysis is of paramount importance; a theoretician and cultivated reader who takes for *his* object his own experience: ‘He does not need to push empirical observation very far to discover that the reader called for by pure works is the product of exceptional social conditions which reproduce (*mutatis mutandis*) the social conditions of their production (in this sense, the author and legitimate reader are interchangeable).’<sup>55</sup> This outlines the historical genesis of the pure aesthetic, and helps us to understand and establish the conditions, in the literary field, for pure reading. As Bourdieu points out,

This once again means that the break with intuitionism and the narcissistic complacency of the hermeneutic tradition can only be achieved in and through a reappropriation of the whole history of the field of production which has produced the producers, the consumers and the products, and hence produced the analysts themselves – that is, in and through a historical and sociological labour which constitutes the only effective form of knowledge of self. It is in this sense, diametrically opposed to that offered by the ‘hermeneutic’ tradition, that one may assert that ‘in the end, all understanding is an understanding of oneself.’<sup>56</sup>

## The Question of Cultural Identity and the Consequences of Modernity

The understanding of the self and the perception of the individual changed dramatically with the emergence of modernism. Anthony Giddens argues in his book, *The Consequences of Modernity*, that the nation-state and systematic capitalist production are of particular significance for the development of modernity, and that they have now, in close conjunction with one another, swept across the world because of the power they have generated.<sup>57</sup> He also identifies what he suggests are the three great forces of modernity: ‘the separation of time and space, disembedding mechanisms and institutional reflexivity.’<sup>58</sup> This is of particular interest for this study, since part of its purpose is to test the validity of western approaches to individuation in western and non-western literatures – to see whether, and in what way, they could be applicable to Arabic literatures; and, if

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>54</sup> See Stanley Fish, ‘Literature in the Reader, Affective Stylistics’, in *New Literary History*, Vol. II, No. 1 (Autumn 1970), pp. 123–2.

<sup>55</sup> Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 302.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 174.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 108. For a detailed discussion, see *The Consequences of Modernity*, especially Chapter 1.

not, to understand what changes and modifications have to be made to these approaches. But it is important and necessary to limit the scope here to the question of individuation – in other words, to describing the concept and process of individuation in society, its inherent cultural production and reconfiguration, and its quest for a new life. It is also important to delineate the dynamics of modernity with an emphasis on the period from the Reformation to the present, stressing the revolutionary concepts of the centrality of man and of humanism, regarded as characteristic of Renaissance thinking in Western Europe.

The novels selected for this study all deal with the protagonist's search for meaning in his own life in particular and in society in general; in other words, 'here we find the figure of the isolated, exiled or estranged individual, framed against the background of the anonymous and impersonal crowd or metropolis.'<sup>59</sup> For the purposes of this study, however, it is essential to establish the way in which the political, social, and cultural changes are articulated in the various traditions, and by the different authors, and how comparable changes have had an impact on the featured authors' styles of writing. Stuart Hall argues that

[t]he old identities which stabilized the social world for so long are in decline, giving rise to new identities and fragmenting the modern individual as a unified subject. This so-called 'crisis of identity' is seen as part of a wider process of change which is dislocating the central structures and processes of modern societies and undermining the frameworks which gave individuals stable anchorage in the social world.<sup>60</sup>

In the late twentieth century a distinctive type of structural change transformed modern societies. Through the fragmentation of the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and nationality, our personal identities changed, and our sense of ourselves as integrated subjects was undermined.<sup>61</sup> Hall claims that '[t]his loss of a stable "sense of self" is sometimes called the dislocation or de-centring of the subject. This set of double displacements – de-centring individuals both from their place in the social and cultural world, and from themselves – constitutes a "crisis of identity" for the individual.'<sup>62</sup> Hall continues: 'It is now a commonplace that the modern age gave rise to a new and decisive form of *individualism*, at the centre of which stood a new conception of the individual subject and its identity. This does not mean that people were not individuals in pre-modern times, but that individuality was both "lived", "experienced"

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<sup>59</sup> Stuart Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity', in *Modernity and its Futures*, Stuart Hall, David Held and Tony McGrew (eds) (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishers Ltd and The Open University, 1992), p. 285.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 274–5.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

and “conceptualized” differently.’<sup>63</sup> Due to all the changes that were brought about by modernity, the individual was now torn away and liberated from his stable moorings in society’s traditions and structures. In general, one can argue that the ‘sovereign individual’ was born between the Renaissance humanism of the sixteenth century and the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, something which represented a momentous break with the past, and that this was the engine which set the whole social system of modernity in motion.<sup>64</sup> Hall distinguishes between three different concepts of identity: the Enlightenment subject, the sociological subject, and the post-modern subject.<sup>65</sup> Raymond Williams supports this view and argues that

The emergence of notions of **individuality**, in the modern sense, can be related to the break-up of the medieval social, economic and religious order. In the general movement against feudalism there was a new stress on a man’s personal existence over and above his place or function in a rigid hierarchical society. There was a related stress [...] on a man’s direct and individual relation to God[...] The modern sense of **individual** is then a result of the development of a certain phase of scientific thought and of a phase of political and economic thought.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 281–2.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> The Enlightenment subject was based on a conception of the human being as a fully centred, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action, whose ‘centre’ consisted of an inner core which first emerged when the subject was born, and unfolded with it while remaining essentially the same – continuous or ‘identical’ with itself – throughout the individual’s existence.

The notion of the sociological subject reflected the growing complexity of the modern world and the awareness that this inner core of the subject was not autonomous and self-sufficient, but was formed in relation to ‘significant others’, who mediated to the subject the values, meanings and symbols – the culture – of the worlds he/she inhabited [...] Identity is formed in the ‘interaction’ between self and society. It also bridges the gap between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ – between the personal and the public worlds. We project ‘ourselves’ into these cultural identities, at the same time internalising their meanings and values, making them ‘part of us.’ The subject, previously experienced as having a unified and stable identity, is becoming fragmented; composed, not of a single, but of several, sometimes contradictory or unresolved, identities.

This produces the post-modern subject, conceptualised as having no fixed, essential or permanent identity. Identity becomes a ‘moveable feast’: formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us. It is historically, not biologically, defined. The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent ‘self.’ Quoted from Hall, ‘Question of Cultural Identity’, pp. 275–7.

<sup>66</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana Press Harper Collins Publishers, 1988), pp. 163–4.

This new *Homo Individucas*<sup>67</sup> suffers from what Hall identified as a ‘de-centring’ of modern identities; that is, a dislocated or fragmented identity.<sup>68</sup> Hall mentions five major de-centrings of the modern Cartesian subject,<sup>69</sup> and he has mapped out some shifts of conceptual character that the ‘subject’ of the Enlightenment, with an identity that was fixed and stable, went through in order to become the de-centred post-modern subject that is identified as more open, contradictory, unresolved and fragmented.

From a general perspective, the Marxist notion will fit both Mahfouz and Salih better than Hamsun, while Hamsun’s work is more amenable to the Freudian de-centring concept. Saussure’s concept of de-centring is applicable to Joyce in particular, but also the other three authors, especially in relation to their use of language to produce meaning, albeit in a new style. Foucault can be considered useful to an understanding of Mahfouz’s heroes, and their struggle to break free from the disciplinary power exercised by the state-run bureaucracy that constrains them in their personal pursuit of meaning and the process of individuation.

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<sup>67</sup> I created this term/definition inspired by Pierre Bourdieu’s desire to name everything *Homo...*, and by his book *Homo Academicus*.

<sup>68</sup> Hall, ‘Question of Cultural Identity’, p. 274.

<sup>69</sup> The first major de-centring is based upon the traditions of Marxist thinking, and especially upon the ways in which Marx’s work was recovered and reread in the 1960s, in the light of Marx’s argument that ‘men (sic) make history, but only on the basis of conditions which are not of their own making.’ Secondly, it is based on Freud’s theory that our identities, our sexuality, and the structure of our desires are formed on the basis of the psychic and symbolic processes of the unconscious, which function according to a ‘logic’ very different from that of reason, playing havoc with the concept of the knowing and rational subject with a fixed and unified identity. It does not grow naturally from inside the core of the infant’s being, but is formed in relation to others; especially in the complex unconscious psychic negotiations in early childhood between the child and the powerful fantasies that it has about its parental figures. Thus, rather than speaking of identity as resolved, we should speak of identification, and see it as an ongoing process. Identity arises not so much from the fullness of identity which is already inside us as individuals, but from a lack of wholeness which is ‘filled’ from outside us by the ways we imagine ourselves to be seen by others. Thirdly, Ferdinand de Saussure argued that we are not in any absolute sense the ‘authors’ of the statements we make or of the meanings we express in language. We can only use language to produce meanings by positioning ourselves within the rules of language and the systems of meaning of our culture. Language is a social, not an individual system: it pre-exists us. We cannot in any simple sense be its authors. Fourthly, Michel Foucault argued that disciplinary power is concerned with the regulation, surveillance and government of, first, the human species or whole populations, and second, the individual and the body. Its sites are those new institutions which developed throughout the nineteenth century and which ‘police’ and discipline modern populations. This is achieved through *collective* institutions of late modernity, and its techniques involve an application of power and knowledge which further ‘individualizes’ the subject and bears down more intensely on his/her body. Finally, the fifth de-centring which proponents of this position cite is the impact of feminism – both as theoretical critique and as social movement. For a detailed outline, see Stuart Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 285–91.

Before determining how the identity of *Homo Individucas* is related to the respective novels, it is important to take a look at what role globalisation played in modernity's expansion throughout the world, and to what degree it transformed society not only globally, but on a local level. Anthony Giddens defines globalisation as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.'<sup>70</sup> Thus we can argue that, in the modern era, distancing in time-space relations is greater than ever before, and all types of relations between events and social formations, local and distant, are stretched correspondingly further from each other. 'Globalisation refers essentially to that stretching process, in so far as the modes of connection between different social contexts or regions become networked across the earth's surface as a whole.'<sup>71</sup> This can be said to be a dialectical process, due to the possibility of local events moving in an opposite direction from the very distanced relations that shape them.<sup>72</sup> Giddens concludes that, 'at the same time as social relations become laterally stretched and as part of the same process, we see the strengthening of pressures for local autonomy and regional cultural identity.'<sup>73</sup>

But all of these developments are part of the disembedding mechanisms that Giddens argues to be of significant importance in the expansion of modernity. 'The disembedding mechanisms lift social relations and the exchange of information out of specific time-space contexts, but at the same time provide new opportunities for their reinsertion.'<sup>74</sup> All disembedding mechanisms depend on trust, which Giddens defines as 'a form of "faith" in which the confidence vested in probable outcomes expresses a commitment to something rather than just a cognitive understanding.'<sup>75</sup> The crucial thing to note, however, is that 'if basic trust is not developed or its inherent ambivalence not contained, the outcome is persistent existential anxiety. In its most profound sense, the antithesis of trust is thus a state of mind which could best be summed up as existential *angst* or *dread*.'<sup>76</sup> As we shall see in the following chapters, this type of angst, which all our 'heroes' struggle with in one way or another, is a direct result of rapid socio-political, economic and cultural transformations. Throughout it will be argued that the process of individuation and the pursuit of meaning are direct consequences of modernity.

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<sup>70</sup> Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, p. 64.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 100. See also pp. 100–11.

## Self, Other and Identity in Literary Structure

How does this new type of identity relate to the aim and scope of this book? The main argument of this study is that the social, economic, political and cultural transformations caused by modernity necessitated a new literary and aesthetic response, which has hitherto not been linked to the literary genre of the novel when analysing the process of individuation and the individual's pursuit of meaning. More precisely, one hopes to demonstrate how this literary-aesthetic response and new type of identity relate to the works selected, and in what way they have been expressed and articulated. The French literary critic René Girard has revealed the relationship between novelistic characters on a socio-psychological level, arguing that desire is the major determinant in mapping and shaping characters' personalities, and in understanding the reasons behind their behaviour on an intra-literary level.

First of all, it is important not to confuse this desire with animalistic, sexually determined and single-minded desire; Girard's desire is more complex. Girard starts by arguing that, in novelistic and romantic<sup>77</sup> works of literature, the characters pursue objects that are determined for them, or at least seem to be determined for them, by the model of all chivalry, and he calls this model the mediator of desire.<sup>78</sup>

When the 'nature' of the object inspiring the passion is not sufficient to account for the desire, one must turn to the impassioned subject. Either his 'psychology' is examined or his 'liberty' invoked. But desire is always spontaneous. It can always be portrayed by a simple straight line which joins subject and object [...] The mediator is there, above that line, radiating toward both the subject and the object. The spatial metaphor which expresses this triple relationship is obviously the triangle. The object changes with each adventure but the triangle remains [...] The triangle is no *Gestalt*. The real structures are intersubjective. They cannot be localized anywhere; the triangle has no reality whatever; it is a systematic metaphor, systematically pursued.<sup>79</sup>

Within the triangle, desire is controlled by the mediator, which can be, but does not have to be, imaginary – unlike the mediation, which cannot be imaginary. 'Chivalric passion defines a desire *according to Another*, opposed to the desire *according to Oneself* that most of us pride ourselves on enjoying.'<sup>80</sup> This suggests that novelistic desire, or our own for that matter, is not genuine, but always borrowed from and dependent on others. This is a disposition that the *vaniteux*, or vain person, has to struggle with. For the subject, the real objective is to reach the mediator, using the object as a means, and 'the desire is

<sup>77</sup> René Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, translated by Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), p. 17.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

aimed at the mediator's *being*.<sup>81</sup> In other words, the hero attempts to rob and strip his mediator of his chivalric persona, to absorb and assimilate his total essence, in order to become the other while remaining himself. This turns out to be impossible as long as the subject does not manage to control his impulse to desire what others desire – that is, *to appropriate the desires of others*':

Not only does the Other and only the Other set desire in motion [...] At its birth, in other words at the very source of the subjectivity, one always finds a victorious Other. It is true that the source of the 'transfiguration' is within us, but the spring gushes forth only when the mediator strikes the rock with his magic wand. Never does the narrator simply wish to play, to read a book, to contemplate a work of art; it is always a pleasure he reads on the faces of the players, a conversation, or a first reading which releases the work of the imagination and provokes desire.<sup>82</sup>

Another significant feature of desire is that its intensity varies according to the position of the mediator; the closer the mediator gets, the more intense the desire becomes. Similarly, the object's role decreases as the mediator's increases. But it is important to be aware that 'it is not physical space that measures the gap between mediator and the desiring subject. Although geographical separation might be one factor, the distance between mediator and subject is primarily spiritual.'<sup>83</sup> This supports Girard's notion of the mediator as imaginary. The mediation can therefore take place on two different strata, depending on the relationship within the triangle of desire: 'We shall speak of *external mediation* when the distance is sufficient to eliminate any contact between the two spheres of *possibilities* of which the mediator and the subject occupy the respective centers. We shall speak of *internal mediation* when this same distance is sufficiently reduced to allow these two spheres to penetrate each other more or less profoundly.'<sup>84</sup> The unity between external and internal mediation is constituted through the transfiguration of the desired object. 'The hero's imagination is the mother of the illusion but the child must still have a father: the mediator.'<sup>85</sup>

In all types of relationship, desire prevails and sets the agenda for the emotional life. No novelistic character, with a very few exceptions, manages to escape imitated desire, to enter relationships and find love without experiencing jealousy, friendship without envy, or attraction without repulsion. Thus the desiring subject suffers feelings of unease and of not being in control of his or her own – that is the other's – desire, which can lead to depression, angst, anger and hatred. This is because the hero condemns himself, and equally because society does not turn him into an untouchable. The hero, in his aim to be

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

vain, sets himself an impossibly high standard, which he then fails to reach, provoking feelings of self-loathing. His demands are impossible to satisfy, and ‘cannot originate in the self. An exigency arises from the self and bearing on the self must be capable of being satisfied by the self.’<sup>86</sup> In other words, the subject has placed his faith in an outside promise that proves to be false. In this sense, ‘the surge of pride breaks against the humanity of the mediator, and the result of this conflict is hatred.’<sup>87</sup> Girard claims that,

[I]t is always his own desire that the subject condemns in the Other without knowing it [...] The subject’s indignant knowledge of the Other returns in a circle to strike him when he least expects it. This psychological circle is inscribed in the triangle of desire. Most of our ethical judgments are rooted in hatred of the mediator, a rival whom we copy.<sup>88</sup>

To comprehend the metaphysical meaning of desire, a study of individual cases is not sufficient – a search beyond them is required to understand its full implications. According to Girard, ‘all the heroes surrender their most fundamental individual prerogative, that of choosing their own desire; we cannot attribute this unanimous abandonment to the always different qualities of the heroes. For a single phenomenon a single cause must be found. All heroes of the novel hate themselves on a more essential level than that of “qualities”.’<sup>89</sup>

Accordingly, any analysis that sets out to disclose the psychological is in reality an analysis of vanity, a revelation of triangular desire. When the hero reveals his psychological circle and exposes his obsession with the object as the mediator comes nearer, ‘the obsessed man astounds us with his clear understanding of those like himself – in other words, his rivals – and his complete inability to see himself. This lucidity and blindness both increase as the mediator becomes nearer.’<sup>90</sup> The object is emptied of its concrete value<sup>91</sup> when the mediator is close by, and passion increases in intensity. The revered object can seem as if it is within reach of the hand, except that one obstacle separates the subject from the object: the mediator. This thwarted desire increases in intensity with the mediator’s presence and approach, and in some cases, as we shall see, issues in such violence that it leads to murder. This is particularly prominent at the stages in a relationships when the ‘physical’ part of desire is dominant, overshadowing the ‘metaphysical’. The ‘physical’ and ‘metaphysical’ in desire always come to the fore at the expense of the other. This law has numerous aspects: it explains, for example, the progressive disappearance of sexual pleasure in the most advanced stages of ontological sickness; in other words, the quest for meaning which every individual who is faced with

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

a pursuit of meaning has to endure. ‘The mediator’s “virtue” acts on the senses like a poison which constantly spreads and slowly paralyses the hero.’<sup>92</sup> No matter how much the hero struggles or wishes, the physical qualities of the object are of subordinate character and are unable to awaken or revive metaphysical desire, nor to protract it. Furthermore, this deficiency of physical enjoyment causes disappointment in the hero when he finally possesses his desired object:

The disappointment is entirely metaphysical. The subject discovers that possession of the object has not changed his being – the expected metamorphosis has not taken place. The greater the apparent ‘virtue’ of the object the more terrible is the disappointment, thus disappointment deepens as the mediator draws closer to the hero [...] The moment the hero takes hold of the desired object its ‘virtue’ disappears like gas from a burst balloon. The object has been suddenly desecrated by possession and reduced to its objective qualities.<sup>93</sup>

This demonstrates the absurdity of triangular desire, of which disappointment is the proof. The hero is now left with no choice but to submit to the substantiation, feeling abject and humiliated, deceived by his desire and stripped of the future fulfilment that the very same desire had appeared to promise him, but somehow concealed behind a mask.

### Dialogism, Heteroglossia and Transparent Minds in the Novel

The task of distinguishing between, on one hand, the crisis the heroes suffer because of their subjectivity, and, on the other, the anguish of the self that is set apart from or against external forces is a difficult one. I will endeavour to show that this task is achieved in the modern novel, which is why it is crucial to understand the role played in it by desire: ‘it is in internal mediation that the profoundest meaning of the *modern* is found.’<sup>94</sup> Moreover, internal mediation only takes place in the novel, as Bakhtin points out, differentiating it from the epic:

The epic was never a poem about the present, about its own time ... [The epic] has been from the beginning a poem about the past, and the authorial position immanent in the epic and constitutive for it [...] is the environment of a man speaking about a past that is to him inaccessible, the reverent point of view of a descendent. In its style, tone and manner of expression, epic discourse is infinitely far removed from discourse of a contemporary about a contemporary addressed to contemporaries.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>95</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 13–14.

The novel was born and nourished in a new era of world history<sup>96</sup> hence its capacity to deal with and articulate the sentiments arising with modernity. According to Bakhtin, The novel is the only developing genre and therefore it reflects more deeply, more essentially, more sensitively and rapidly, reality itself in the process of its unfolding. Only that which is itself developing can comprehend development as a process. The novel has become the leading hero in the drama of literary development in our time precisely because it best of all reflects the tendencies of a new world still in the making; it is, after all, the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it. In many respects the novel has anticipated, and continues to anticipate, the future development of literature as a whole. In the process of becoming the dominant genre, the novel sparks the renovation of all other genres, it infects them with its spirit of process and inconclusiveness. It draws them ineluctably into its orbit precisely because this orbit coincides with the basic direction of the development of literature as a whole. In this lies the exceptional importance of the novel, as an object of study for the theory as well as the history of literature.<sup>97</sup>

In his analysis of the novel, Bakhtin develops two new concepts upon which his importance and success as a literary theorist rely. The first is dialogism/polyphony, which is closely related to heteroglossia.<sup>98</sup> The second is carnivalisation, explored through what he calls ‘chronotope.’<sup>99</sup> Predominantly, it is dialogism and polyphony which can be found

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Dialogism is the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as part of a greater whole – there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others. Which will affect the other, how it will do so and in what degree is what is actually settled at the moment of utterance. This dialogic imperative, mandated by the pre-existence of the language world, relates to any of its current inhabitants and ensures that there can be no actual monologue. One may, like a primitive tribe that knows only its own limits, be deluded into thinking there is one language, or one may, as grammarians, certain political figures and normative framers of ‘literary languages’ do, seek in a sophisticated way to achieve a unitary language. In both cases the unitariness is relative to the overpowering force of heteroglossia, and thus dialogism.’

Heteroglossia is ‘the base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance. It is that which ensures the primacy of context over text. At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions – social, historical, meteorological, physiological – that will ensure that a word uttered in that place and that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve. Heteroglossia is as close a conceptualization as is possible of that locus where centripetal and centrifugal forces collide; as such, it is that which a systematic linguistics must always suppress.’ Quoted from Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 426, 428.

<sup>99</sup> We should understand chronotope to be ‘literary, ‘time-space.’ A unit of analysis for studying texts according to the ratio and nature of the temporal and spatial categories represented. The distinctiveness of this concept, as opposed to most other uses of time and space in literary analysis lies in the fact that neither

within heteroglossia that is essential for relating the process of individuation and the shaping of identity to the novel as a genre, because of their close relationship to socio-political, cultural and economic transformation in and of society. Hence languages – that is, any communication systems employing signs that are ordered in a particular manner – ‘live a real life, they struggle and evolve in an environment of social heteroglossia. Therefore they are all able to enter into the unitary plane of the novel [and] they may all be drawn into the novelist for the orchestration of his themes and for the refracted (indirect) expression of his intention and values.’<sup>100</sup> Literary language, both spoken and written, is thus, for any individual consciousness living in it, ‘not an abstract system of normative forms but rather a concrete heteroglot conception of the world. All words have the “taste” of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions.’<sup>101</sup> Bakhtin suggests that, ‘as a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies in the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes “one’s own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention.’<sup>102</sup> It is this form of dialogue that take place between various speakers, or even the polyphony of voices within one speaker’s mind, upon which Bakhtin builds his theory of the novel. The language we use every day is shaped by and appropriates its meaning in a multiplicity of settings, but it is the heteroglossia – that is, our relations to others, like various groups, political parties and organisations, social movements, different professions, regions, generations and classes, to mention just a few – that determines the meaning of our utterances, not our individual intentions; hence our speech genres are created in spheres of activity.

The novel’s distinctive project draws such speech genres into a dialogue within the text. Its themes orchestrate diverse speech genres, bringing them into dialogic relations with one at different levels of the novel’s organization. The diversity of voices in dialogue is not only in the representation of different voices as speakers in the text, and in reported speech, but in hybrid sentences in which the author’s voice draws in and subdues another’s speech, in irony where the author’s voice reflects on others, in movement

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category is privileged; they are utterly independent. The chronotope is an optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring.’ Quoted from Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 425–6.

<sup>100</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 292.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

between one voice and another in narrative sequences so that one reflects on (is in dialogue with) another.<sup>103</sup>

The modern novel as a literary genre is a result of a rupture in the history of European civilisation, emerging from a socially isolated semi-patriarchal society that was culturally deaf, and later entering into international and interlingual contacts and relationships involving a multitude of languages and cultures.<sup>104</sup> As the dialogism and interaction between these languages resulted in a polyglot world, in which the new cultural and creative consciousness lives, they threw light on each other. Completely new relationships were established between the language and its object, resulting in a mutation from the old literary genres that had been created during eras of closed and deaf monoglossia.<sup>105</sup> ‘The novel could therefore assume a leadership in the process of developing and renewing literature in its linguistic and stylistic dimension.’<sup>106</sup> The novel is able to do so just because it is not, like other genres,

constituted by a set of formal fixtures for fixing language that pre-exist any specific utterance within the genre. Language, in other words, is assimilated to form. The novel by contrast seeks to shape its form to languages; it has a completely different relationship to languages from other genres since it constantly experiments with new shapes in order to display the variety and immediacy of speech diversity.<sup>107</sup>

For Bakhtin, this was possible because the novel as a genre, and its form, result from and exist in a society that produces miscellaneous forms of utterances, whether spoken or written. It is these voices, their polyphony, and society’s dialogism that the authors draw upon in creating a novel. The author relies on these voices and ‘their dialogic forms and relations (tensions, conflicts hierarchies) are at the author’s disposal to be given determinate thematic value in the text created. The text creates a new dialogic ordering among the speech genres of the society.’<sup>108</sup> Therefore one might think that Bakhtin places emphasis on each individual author; but this is not the case, since Bakhtin believes it is the actual speaker, that is the author or some of the texts characters, who is enmeshed in relations of communication with others. Bakhtin’s focus is thus not on the individual author, ‘but on the way that many speakers realize speech genres in the context of their everyday relationships and interactions. Texts are always contextualized in the concrete

<sup>103</sup> Dorothy E. Smith, ‘Bakhtin and the Dialogic of Sociology: An Investigation’, in Michael Mayerfeld Bell and Michael Gardiner (eds), *Bakhtin and the Human Sciences* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1998), p. 65.

<sup>104</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 11.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Michael Holquist, Introduction to Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. xxix.

<sup>108</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

situations that agents find themselves in and utterances are composed by the way the person uses speech genres to give expression to their social positioning.<sup>109</sup>

How, then, is the process of individuation and the pursuit of meaning convincingly advanced in the novel as a genre? ‘Because the heteroglot novel is more open to difference, it could more easily absorb the increasing tide of self-consciousness. In other words, the heteroglot novel was able to accommodate more of the self because it is more sensitive to otherness.’<sup>110</sup> Individuals are not positioned in relations to discourse as such; rather, we use utterances actively to navigate and orientate ourselves in our relationships and interactions with other beings. ‘As we engage in the world as embodied beings, our ability to attribute meaning and significance solely through our own thoughts, deeds and perceptions is subject to certain limitations, particularly with respect to the ‘authoring’ of our own selfhood.’<sup>111</sup> Thus Bakhtin’s emphasis on the phenomenon of *transgression* – a state that lies outside and transcends our immediate subjective existence and cognitive activity, which necessarily partakes of ‘otherness.’<sup>112</sup> The central argument for Bakhtin in relation to the shaping of identity is that,

[j]ust as we are impelled to attribute meaning to the object-world around us, we need to envisage *ourselves* as coherent and meaningful entities. But from our own vantage-point (the ‘I-for-myself’), we are manifestly incapable of envisioning our outward appearance, and of comprehending our place within the ‘plastic-pictorial world’ (that is the lived environment of objects, events and other selves). To be able to conceptualise ourselves as cohesive meaningful wholes, which is fundamental to the process of individuation and self-understanding, we require an additional, external perspective. Hence, the other exists in a relation of externality or ‘exotopy’ vis-à-vis ourselves, in a manner that transcends, or is ‘transgredient’ with respect to, our own perceptual and existential horizon.<sup>113</sup>

Bakhtin welcomed the novel as a genre because the novel, unlike the epic, was able convincingly to portray the modern man and his new consciousness of himself. ‘The epic disintegrates when the search begins for a new point of view on one’s own self [...] and thus the individual is portrayed as a fully finished and complete being.’<sup>114</sup> The hero of the epic has already, in the text, fulfilled his potential, and could not become more than he

<sup>109</sup> Ian Burkitt, ‘The Death and Rebirth of the Author: The Bakhtin Circle and Bourdieu on Individuality, Language and Revolution’, in Bell and Gardiner, op. cit., pp. 165–6.

<sup>110</sup> Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 293.

<sup>111</sup> Michael Gardiner, ‘The Incomparable Monster of Solipsism: Bakhtin and Merleau-Ponty’, in Bell and Gardiner, op. cit., p 137.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 34.

has already become. 'He is entirely externalized in the most elementary, almost literal sense: everything in him is exposed and loudly expressed: his internal world and all his external characteristics, his appearance and his actions all lie on a single plane. His view of himself coincides completely with others' views of him.'<sup>115</sup>

Bakhtin argues that no given word relates to an object in a singular way: in addition to the word the character chooses, there exist several other words describing the same object or theme. It is in the environment and living interaction – namely heteroglossia – that the word is used and becomes individualised. Thus, 'the essence of polyphony lies precisely in the fact that the voices remain independent, and [...] if one is to talk about individual will, then it is precisely in polyphony that a combination of several individual wills takes place, that the boundaries of the individual will can be in principle exceeded.'<sup>116</sup> The essence of polyphony is the nature of what happens between various consciousnesses – explicitly, their interaction and interdependence. In the modern novel the hero becomes especially important from a '*particular point of view on the world and on oneself*, as the position enabling a person to interpret and evaluate his own self and his surrounding reality.'<sup>117</sup> The crucial question is not how the hero appears in the world, but how the world appears to the hero, and how the hero appears to himself. The attempt to comprehend what happens to the hero's consciousness of himself is one of the most significant aspects of the modern novel. Polyphony, dialogism and heteroglossia are some of the literary devices utilised by the novel to grasp not the specific existence of the hero, or his fixed image, but the '*sum total of his consciousness and self-consciousness, ultimately the hero's final word on himself and on his world*.'<sup>118</sup> It is therefore not features of reality from which the hero's image is composed, but features of himself or his everyday surroundings. It is 'rather the *significance* of these features for the *hero himself*, for his self-consciousness.'<sup>119</sup> At this point the author does not retain for his own exclusive field of vision any further information about the hero, all of which is now in the hero's field of vision, so that what is left for the author's field of vision is pure self-consciousness. According to Bakhtin,

All the stable and objective qualities of the hero – his social position, the degree to which he is sociologically or characterologically typical, his habitus, his spiritual profile and even his very physical appearance – that is, everything that usually serves an author in creating a fixed and stable image of the hero, 'who he is,' becomes [...] the object of the hero's own introspection, the subject of his self-consciousness; and the subject of the author's visualization and representation turns out to be in fact a *function* of this self-consciousness. At a time when the

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, edited and translated by Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 21.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

self-consciousness of a character was usually seen merely as an element of his reality, as merely one of the features of his integrated image, here, on the contrary, all of reality becomes an element of the character's self-consciousness.<sup>120</sup>

The advent of polyphony in the novel necessitated getting beneath the surface of the characters as they revealed their inner thoughts and feelings. No hero discloses himself voluntarily, however, and an author must confront his hero with some kind of moral dilemma before he reveals those ultimate words of self-consciousness. Only if the author manages to create within the narrative a complex situation for the hero, one that compels him to reveal and express himself dialogically, and to grasp in others' consciousness essential aspects of himself, then he is allowed to create loopholes in which to escape, and thereby prolonging and laying bare his own final word as it interacts intensely with other consciousnesses.<sup>121</sup> The period following the emergence of dialogism in the novel dramatically changed the artistic position of the author. Bakhtin argues that this is a,

*fully realized and thoroughly consistent dialogic position*, one that affirms the independence, internal freedom, unfinalizability, and indeterminacy of the hero. For the author the hero is not 'he' and not 'I' but a fully valid 'thou,' that is, another and other autonomous 'I' ('thou art'). The hero is the subject of a deeply serious, *real* dialogic mode of address, not the subject of a rhetorically *performed* or *conventionally* literary one. And this dialogue – the 'great dialogue' of the novel as a whole – takes place not in the past, but right now, that is in the *real present* of the creative process.<sup>122</sup>

Everything the hero observes in the novel is projected onto him and dialogically reflected in him, and all his possible evaluations and points of view are extended to his consciousness and addressed to him through dialogue with himself and the other characters in the text. For the process of individuation and the shaping of identity, these dialogues take place within Girard's triangle of desire. Inside the triangle it is the presence of the mediator that determines the essence of the dialogue, since he and his manifestation, physically or not, determine the intensity and scope of the desire, and further regulate the amount of force and pressure the hero is subjected to, in order to benefit from his internal dialogue with his self-consciousness and to reach individuation. A distinguishing factor of the modern novel, regardless of tradition, is the use of interior monologue, more commonly known as stream-of-consciousness. It is a mistake, however, to think that all interior monologue embodies the psychological evolution of an idea within a single consciousness. On the contrary, the consciousness of a solitary hero, be it Nagel,<sup>123</sup> Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom,<sup>124</sup> Omar al-Hamzawi<sup>125</sup> or Mustafa

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 54. It is in such circumstances that the 'hero'/protagonist can begin his desired process of individuation.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>123</sup> Nagel is the hero in Hamsun's *Mysterier*.

Sa'eed,<sup>126</sup> becomes a battlefield for the voices of others, and for daily events, thoughts, and feelings reflected in the hero's own consciousness. In fact there is an intense dialogue with the absent characters' voices, through which the hero battles to order and clarify his thoughts, emotions and desires.

Dorrit Cohn encapsulates how narrative fiction 'is the only literary genre, as well as the only kind of narrative, in which the unspoken thoughts, feelings, perceptions of a person other than the speaker can be portrayed.'<sup>127</sup> Cohn draws upon Käte Hamburger, who argues that 'epic fiction is the sole epistemological instance where the I-originary (or subjectivity) of a third person qua third-person can be portrayed.'<sup>128</sup> Cohn explains how, for Hamburger,

[t]he representation of characters' inner lives is the touchstone that simultaneously sets fiction apart from reality and builds the semblance (*Schein*) of another, non-real reality. She argues this thesis and explores its causes and results in two successive stages: 1) starting out from the Aristotelian mimesis (understood as representation, not as imitation), she arrives at a theoretical differentiation between the language of fiction and the statement-language of reality; and 2) starting out from textual observations, she demonstrates that certain language patterns are unique to fiction, and dependent on the presence of fictional minds within the text. These language patterns are primarily the conveyors or signals of mental activity: verbs of consciousness, interior and narrated monologues, temporal and spatial adverbs referring to the characters' here and now.<sup>129</sup>

Cohn identifies three types of presentation of consciousness in third-person narration: '1. psycho-narration: the narrator's discourse about a character's consciousness; 2. quoted monologue: a character's mental discourse; 3. narrated monologue: a character's mental discourse in the guise of the narrator's discourse.'<sup>130</sup> The novel speculates about what is unknown, employing the surplus knowledge of the author, of which the hero is ignorant. The novel uses this surplus externally to manipulate the narrative, or to complete the image of an individual. One might conclude that 'the condition of our existence is heteroglossia, a conflicting multiplicity of languages; dialogism is the necessary mode of knowledge in such a world, a relationship among the languages. Consciousness is always

<sup>124</sup> Stephen Dedalus is the hero in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and Leopold Bloom is the hero of *Ulysses*.

<sup>125</sup> Omar al-Hamzawi is the protagonist in Mahfouz's *The Beggar*.

<sup>126</sup> Mustafa Sa'eed is one of the characters in Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*.

<sup>127</sup> Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 7.

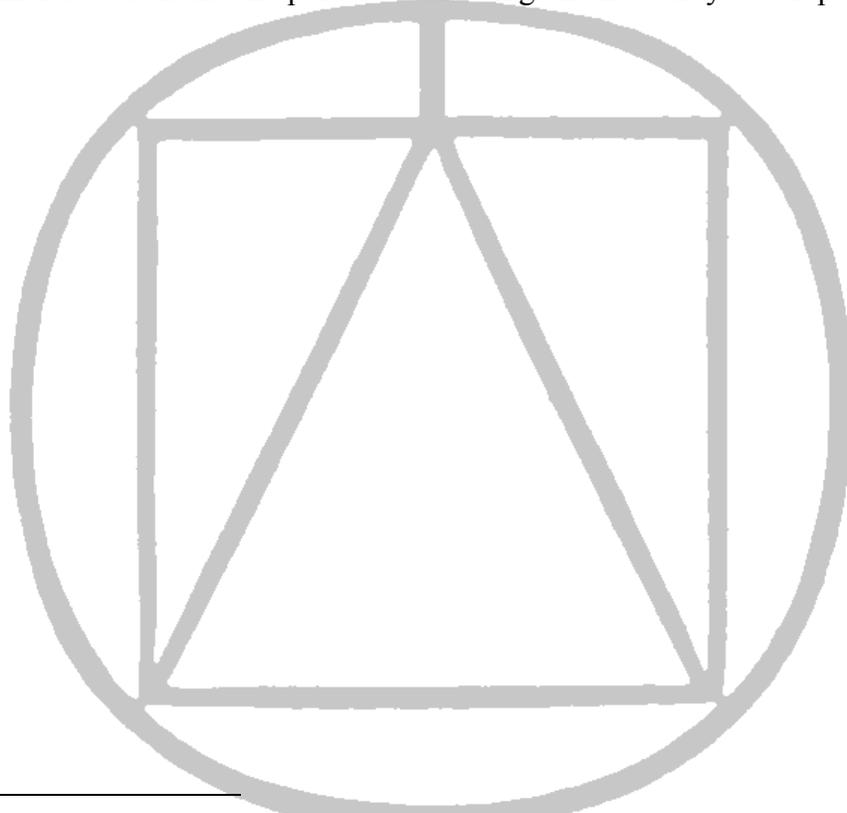
<sup>128</sup> Käte Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature*, translated by Marilyn J. Rose (Indiana University Press, Bloomington London, 1973), p. 83.

<sup>129</sup> Cohn, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

language and thus unavoidably ideological, and the linked processes of perception and interaction with the human world are always dialogical.<sup>131</sup> Further, language today and in all its historical existence ‘is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. These “languages” of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying “languages”.’<sup>132</sup> These languages take the form of a new mode of writing, articulated in the novels selected, as the authors encounter modernity and their heroes become acquainted with their inner polyphonic voices, which enables them to express the emotions and desires that shape the identity of modern man.

All the theories outlined above play a crucial role in the quest for disclosure of the process of individuation and the shaping of individual identity as well as the individuals pursuit of meaning – linking this process to the literary genre of the novel. Moreover, the object of the chapters that follow will be to contextualise each writer and to identify the specificity of his literary contribution, to make a meaningful comparison, to understand the crucial question of how and why this new type of literature emerged in the various cultures and traditions at a specific time, and through this theory to understand the genesis of individuation and the pursuit of meaning and how they developed in all four contexts.



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<sup>131</sup> R. B. Kershner, *Joyce, Bakhtin and Popular Literature: Chronicles of Disorder* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), p. 16.

<sup>132</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 291.