CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.............
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Walter Allen, in TRADITION AND DREAM, states:

"After the First World War, the age that had ended in July 1914 seemed as remote as the far side of the moon. The war had speeded up social change as it had never been speeded up before. It emancipated women. It affected everything. Nothing was as it was before." 1

The Great War unsettled society in many ways. It hastened the emancipation of women and promoted a temporary merging of the social classes. The effects of the First World War can be easily seen in the literature of the twenties. The writers of this period recognized that our high civilization, built on oppression and social and moral injustice, is not stable. They realized that we are living in a time of rapid and disturbing change.

The marks of our time are uncertainty and anxiety and also a certain fatalism and apathy, resulting

from the helplessness of the individual in the highly industrialised and mechanised world of to-day. The age we live in is one of disillusionment, cynicism, and agnosticism and "the disillusionment of our age has resulted in a marked decline of spiritual quality in contemporary fiction".\(^2\). The average modern man drifts through life without any sense of purpose. One of the greatest modern novels in English, James Joyce's *ULYSSES* (1922), is concerned with this drift.

In the twenties, the British people as a whole were recovering from the shock of the first World War and hoping desperately that things would get back to normal. But the thirties constituted a period which forced the writer's attention on the social and political issues. It was the period of "The Great Slump and the unemployment it brought, the rise of the Nazis, the Spanish Civil War and terrible approach of World War II."\(^3\) The Wall Street crash set off a chain reaction of disasters everywhere which culminated in the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

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The thirties were a decade of fear, misery, and panic. It was a time when the spectacle of poverty and the ever-increasing danger of war compelled even the common man in the street to consider the nature of economic power, and think about political issues. There was a general feeling that Western civilization was doomed and that "only the violent extremities, Left or Right, who had rejected any idea of liberal democracy and gradual progress, could save Western civilization. Or, if they could not, if it were inevitably doomed, then why still attempt any restraint and balance, why not recklessly indulge every passion and prejudice?" 4. This mood helped to shape and colour the Thirties. It was only natural in such an age for writers, and young writers particularly, to deal with the social and economic malaise of the time in their works. We find this spectacle of human misery and the mood of the times vividly depicted in the early novels of Graham Greene.

Greene's novels of the thirties have an immediate

topical reference; they have a contemporary atmosphere. When we read them we feel that they could not have been written at any other time. These novels, superficially at least, deal with the great thirties themes: " Strikes and political murder in It's a Battlefield, the irresponsible power of international finance in England Made Me, the machinations of armament manufacturers in A Gun for Sale, the Spanish Civil War in The Confidential Agent, culminating in The Power and the Glory with the confrontation of Marxism and religion." 5. The "uprooted man adrift in urban society" may be taken as a symbol of man's essential situation on earth. Greene deals with this phenomenon of the displaced person in many of his novels.

We feel while reading Greene's works that "the outer violence mirrors, as it were, the violence within the characters." 6. We feel that though his characters are placed in a contemporary setting, he always sees them in the fundamental human situation. In novel after novel, he points out the meaninglessness, the seediness, and the vulgarity of a society living without a sense of

God, as a Christian, he sees his characters, even in the less serious novels he calls entertainments, always under the aspect of eternity. He makes use of the apparatus of the spy story to deal with major situations, in a style that is both topical and original. 7.

In his essay entitled, "Religion and Literature", T.S. Eliot observes that the whole of modern literature is corrupted by Secularism and that it is simply unaware of the primacy of the supernatural over the natural life. 8. He adds that there are a very large number of people in the world today who believe that all ills are fundamentally economic. Some believe that various specific economic changes alone would be enough to set the world right; others demand more or less drastic changes in the social as well. But these people are alike in holding the assumptions of Secularism. They concern themselves only with changes of a temporal, material, and external nature; they concern themselves with morals only of a collective nature. 9.

The idea that there is neither good nor evil in any absolute moral or religious sense - is widespread in our times. But we cannot have a vital literature if we ignore evil. It is in the introduction of this religious conception of evil into his works that Greene differs from most of the modern English Writers.

In an essay on François Mauriac, Greene says:

"With the death of James the religious sense was lost to the English novel, and with the religious sense went the sense of the importance of the human act." 10. Greene has brought back to the English novel this religious sense, and what is more, he presents it more effectively than Henry James. Greene is not only a marvellous story-teller and a master of suspense, but he has also dealt with such soul-searching problems as faith, salvation, and damnation in his major novels.

We thus find a theological dimension in his works and this is certainly a significant contribution of Graham Greene to English fiction. "Greene has brought to the English novel a metaphysical dimension that is integrated into the themes of his books in a positive way

and is not just a vague conventional background.\textsuperscript{11} By incorporating the concepts of the Catholic faith in the English novel, Greene "has expanded the boundaries of the English novel".\textsuperscript{12}

Over and above the great changes in social life brought about by the scientific and technological progress and the first World War, another important development in the beginning of the century was the emergence of new ideas in the field of psychology and psycho-analysis which had far-reaching influences on the development of all Art including Literature.

In "The Criterion", July 1924, Virginia Woolf attempted an assessment of the novel under the heading, "Character in Fiction". In that essay, she made the statement: "On or about December 1910 human nature changed."\textsuperscript{13} In these rather startling words Virginia Woolf pointed out the revolution in human thinking which

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\textsuperscript{12} Sister Mariella Gable, THIS IS CATHOLIC FICTION (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1948), p.33.

\textsuperscript{13} Quoted on page 32 of THE TECHNIQUE OF THE MODERN ENGLISH NOVEL by Sisir Chattopadhyaya (Firma K.L.Mukhopadhyay, India, 1959).
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was brought about by the advances made in the field of psychology and also the resultant changes in the field of Art and Literature. Freud had lectured with Jung on psycho-analysis in America in 1909. The Interpretation of Dreams appeared in English four years later. As a result of these discoveries of modern psychology, the old simple account of man's character as governed by his conscious thought has been discredited. "It has been superseded by a new conception of the conscious mind as the waving sunlit surface of a tropical forest, beneath which lie the unseen depths of twisted roots and tangled undergrowth. Our flitting dreams, once a subject for idle gossip, we now read as indicative of impulses and tensions in this half discovered country." 14.

The new psychology emphasizes the irrational and the unconscious and points out the reality lies beneath the surface of things, and that to be content with the surface of things is to be content with unreality.

Vienna, in the early twenties, saw the depth psychologists at work, probing deep into the human mind.

Sigmund Freud was the pioneer and leader of the earliest group. By the Twenties, writers who made no pretence of being psycho-analysts began to refer to Freud's "Oedipus Complex", Adler's "Inferiority Complex" and "Over-Compensation", Jung's "Introversion" and "Extroversion" and his "Collective unconscious" and "Archetypes". Of these three, it was undoubtedly Freud, with his emphasis on the parent-child relationship and the unconscious sexual desires behind it, who had the greatest influence upon the writers in this period ending with the Second World War.

Freud's concepts made a very great impact on the literary mind and his influence is partly responsible for the frankness about family relationships and the sexual realism of much modern fiction. Freud and Jung pointed out the presence in the given consciousness of all it had ever experienced and perhaps also of all that the race had experienced. "The past exists always in the present, colouring and determining the nature of the present response, and to tell the truth about a character's reaction to any situation we must tell the whole truth about everything that has ever happened to him." 16.

The modern novelists have realized that a psychologically accurate account of what a man is at any given moment cannot be given either in terms of a static description of his character or in terms of a group of chronologically arranged reactions to a series of circumstances. "The present moment is specious; it denotes the ever fluid passing of the 'already' into the 'not yet' and therefore retrospect and anticipation constitute the very essence of consciousness at any specified time." 17.

Bergsonian ideas about time as a continuous flow rather than as a series of separate points were in the air in the twenties and influenced even those writers who had not read Bergson. The novelists who were influenced by this view of time and consciousness realized that the whole truth about a mature person could be told only by probing into his past and presenting the full texture of his consciousness. They began to show in their characters states of mind being modified by associations and recollections deriving from the present situation by referring to a constantly shifting series of events in the past. This resulted in new kinds

of fictional technique like the "Stream of Consciousness" practised by Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Those novelists who became familiar with modern psychology also became aware of the fact that "it is not only in distant memories that the past impinges on the present, but also in much vaguer and more subtle ways, our mind floating off down some channel superficially irrelevant but really having a definite starting - off place from the initial situation." 18.

James Joyce, who used the stream-of-consciousness technique most thoroughly in his treatment of Marion Bloom in ULYSSES, had a great influence on the novelists who came to consciousness of their craft in the twenties and the early thirties. Graham Greene reveals very great familiarity with these developments of modern psychology and the technique of the psychological novel in his works. What Greene does in his novels may be characterised as psychological probing at its best. Though Greene has used the stream-of-consciousness method in one or two of his early novels, what we generally see in his fiction is merely the unspoken speech of the characters.

and that it is Greene, the novelist, who gives the reflections of his characters. We have here the narrator's report of what is happening in the mind of his character and not the flowing stream of consciousness itself.

The modern age is "an age of deepening inner despair and of appalling catastrophies, an age when society says one thing and then does something entirely different, when everybody talks about peace and prepares for more and worse wars. Western man is now schizophrenic." Graham Greene repeatedly calls attention to the curious "malaise" of modern Western man. Like T.S. Eliot in "The Waste Land", Greene emphasizes the seediness, the sterility, and despair of modern civilization. Greene, however, is not content to give merely a picture of the frustration and rootlessness of modern man. In his serious novels he repeatedly points out that this cannot but be the condition of a society which has lost its religious foundation and framework. He emphasizes in his specifically religious novels that religion alone can give us relief from our increasing dissatisfactions and despair and help us to defend ourselves against the dehumanising collectives, and restore our true personality. It is doubtful if our society

can last much longer without religion. Man will lose his human qualities unless he holds on to faith in religion. Only religious faith can help him to feel at home in the universe and challenge the whole de-humanizing, de-personalising process of the modern age.

Graham Greene's is certainly one of the genuine voices of the age, proclaiming its disgust and despair, its guilt and 'angst', and its struggle to find faith. He is preoccupied with faith and religion in many of his serious novels. At the same time he never loses sight of the facts discovered by modern psychology. For instance, in BRIGHTON ROCK, while showing that Pinkie is a product of his social environment and childhood experiences, Greene also goes on to interpret his condition theologically. Similarly, in The Heart of the Matter, while giving a subtle psychological analysis of Scobie's pity, Greene tries to point out how far Scobie's actions based on pity can be justified from the point of view of Christian religion. In the same way, while The End of the Affair contains a masterly study of possessive love and sexual jealousy which reveals Greene's very deep psychological insight into the human mind, we realize at the end that the real theme of the novel is the working of divine grace rather than sexual jealousy.

Like the modern psychological novelists, Graham
Greene describes the intricate workings of the human mind with its noble and base motives, and lays bare the human heart in a new and frightening way. He deserves credit for his analysis of character and motive, and for his careful exploration of the inner world of his characters, and for his successful use of the various subjective-narrative techniques known as stream-of-consciousness, free association, and interior monologue etc. At the same time, his works are also important for their insistence that man's life will lose all meaning and significance if it is not based on a foundation of faith and religion. It is thus in the blending of religion and modern psychology that Greene's achievement lies. This blending of religion and psychology is the significant contribution of Graham Greene to the modern English novel.

In his essay, "Walter De La Mare's Short Stories", Greene states: "Every creative writer worth our consideration, every writer who can be called in the wide eighteenth century use of the term a poet, is a victim: a man given over to an obsession." 20.

Greene's obsession is with sin and the seediness of our civilization. Greene not only points out how sin and suffering are inevitable in this world from the point of view of the Christian religion, but he also presents man's sense of guilt and his impotence to prevent a repetition of the sinful act with great psychological insight. The main interest of Greene's novels lies in this.

Greene's views on the human situation have some similarities with those of T.S. Eliot and the Danish thinker, Kierkegaard. Like T.S. Eliot, Greene believes that this world is a fallen world and man a fallen creature. Like Kierkegaard, he is especially aware of the burden and the mystery, the anxiety and dread felt by the individual regarding his existence. Like Kierkegaard, Greene also points out that ours is not a world of tendencies and ideas, but of men, each of whom is a mystery both in and to himself. Like Kierkegaard, Greene insists on the unique significance of each individual life. "Metaphysical anxiety and Catholicism have stamped his work to such an extent that it is now accepted practice, especially in France, to class Greene among such Catholic writers as François Mauriac, Paul Claudel, or Georges Bernanos". 21.

Graham Greene's novels and, particularly his Catholic novels, deal with the nature of sin, or guilt, and the nature of the authority that might redeem or absolve us from it. His novels arouse a profound sympathy for the bewildered victim or the suffering seeker. He points out that the most important thing in life is man's relationship to God. Reason cannot prove either God's existence or his goodness. Faith is a leap in the dark to which men are driven by awe and dread and anxiety.

His novels, however, are not allegories or fables constructed to expound a previously determined scheme of ideas. "The true novel rests on no such scheme; it is an exploration, not an exposition and the true novelist arrives at his sense of life through his story, he does not construct his story to illustrate that sense." 22. Greene's novels do not impose a pattern in advance. They are an exploration of the variety of life in the hope of finding a pattern.

Greene makes us aware of the fact that there is a dimension to human personality that cannot be explained.

solely on scientific evidence and that only a sound religious faith can rehabilitate the whole man, supporting him in crisis, and giving meaning and purpose to his life. Greene has made use of the concepts of religion and modern psychology to penetrate to the root causes of man's distress and has achieved something unique in English literature by this blending of religion and modern psychology in his works.