PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to study the effects of the First World War on the literature of the third decade of the twentieth century—1921 to 1930—the immediate period succeeding War, and also how the writers presented in fictional form the total disorder that had been spelt both in the world of history and the mind of men. Further, I intend tracing how the 'novel form' disintegrated and the novel no longer remained a novel in the traditional sense.

For this study I have selected four British novelists viz. D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Ford Madox Ford and Richard Aldington and have taken up only those novels which bear testimony to the horrifying impact of the War. As such Women in Love (1921), Antic Hay (1923), Parade's End (1924) and Death of a Hero (1929) are central to my argument.

I have divided my dissertation into the following Chapters:

Chapter I deals with the socio-historical-cultural aspects and impact of the First World War on Great Britain. It also traces how the tremendous progress, registered with the advent of science and technology, resulted in the ultimate doom of traditional values. Further, it shows how the romantic conception of war advocating adventure into distant lands becomes an illusion.

Chapter II demonstrates how the literature of the
Georgian period stands exposed and why the literary artist returns to study the nature of man, the unconscious psyche of the individual in particular. This resulted, in considering the realities of war, as a theme for literature and it aided in changing the attitudes of the people. This chapter also details how the writers tried to achieve their goal in fictional form and why the novel demanded a form which would not recapture the full texture of the horror scenario but also present an illuminating exploration of the deeper levels of individual consciousness.

Chapter III deals with Ford Madox Ford's tetralogy *Parade's End*. Ford in these novels offers a profound imaginative grasp of the effects of war on the traditional patterns of English life. Several dominant themes which characterize the literature of Great War are brought together in this tetralogy. No doubt, Ford offers little concrete documentation, but he provides us with a great deal of insight into the prewar and the postwar worlds, thereby becoming the social historian of his time.

In Chapter IV, I have attempted a comparison of D.H. Lawrence and Richard Aldington because the war experiences of these writers are more or less of the same magnitude and it is their agony that is aired in these two autobiographical novels - *Women in Love* and *Death of a Hero*. No doubt, Aldington, because of his personal experiences as a soldier during the war, is more a realist.
yet his novel fails as work of art whereas *Women in Love*, which does not contain war as such, is fictional in character and qualifies to become a work of art. While the vision is hallucinatory in both the novels, Lawrence is not devoid of hope, but Aldington advances a thesis that the War was wholly pointless and fraudulent, and those who took part in it were wantonly robbed of life and its possibilities.

Consequently it is a fractured culture in the postwar world which is highlighted by Aldous Huxley in *Antic Hay*. This Huxleyan disillusionment of the postwar England is discussed in Chapter V.