CHAPTER II
Until the First World War, writers had, for the most part, contented themselves with themes and values familiar to the previous century. The majority continued to write as though theirs was the best of all possible worlds, because it was one in which 'progress' seemed assured. But, the Great war seemed to have produced an unbridgeable chasm between generations. The postwar literature was bound to reflect this chasm, this disorder, which was a sequel to the war, engulfing the whole of Europe. Henceforth, the new writers and artists breathed in an air of cultural and moral disintegration. The pervasive feeling then, certainly is that any material gains, due to the tremendous progress of science and technology in the nineteenth century, must be balanced against a perceptible spiritual loss; and it is this spiritual loss which has received the literary attention in the postwar world of the twentieth century. The writers with a meaning conveyed a doleful lesson and nearly all writers turned against their age. They repudiated it, as far as they could. Hence fear and anxiety, horror and hysteria, anger and exhaustion, boredom and emptiness in the face of imminent death became the dominant theme of literature. It germinated from the notion that "Literature, according to historical convention reflects contemporary life and reveals the spirit."
Contemporary life in the postwar world reflected the breakdown of an established order as the will of the people had exhausted itself on the warfront and the spirit of the age is symbolized by 'inaction' and 'inertness'. Prior to the holocaust of 1914-1918, the people had strode into this great adventure (war) for glory but "the weariness, the fever and the fret of the war", "made men sit and hear each other groan", because the postwar world symbolised a world, "where youth grows pale, and spectre thin and dies", and "where but to think is to be full of sorrow".

The shift in attitudes towards war is obvious. Far from being "an affair of great marches", it forced the lacerated spirit of mankind to adventure this time into a journey into its "injured psyche" to analyse the futility of its action. The void so created could not be filled. This prompted D.H. Lawrence to say; "This place no good".

Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, there had been a literature of social criticism of which G.B. Shaw, H.G. Wells and Galsworthy were the chief exponents. Though these litterateurs were anxious to reform the world, they did not ever question the ultimate possibility of reform, nor postulate the inadequacy of man as an instrument for the good life, nor did they have any conception of a possible disruption of civilization.
Reacting most virulently to this attitude of these writers, Ifor Evans fixes the responsibility for the disruption of civilization (if it ever can be fixed on literary artists), I feel, on Shaw, Wells and Galsworthy when he says:

Wells and Shaw sometimes questioned the inevitability of progress, but never during this earlier period did they explore this idea with any seriousness. Nor were any of them interested profoundly in the nature of human mind itself.

Shaw's characters were too frequently automata, whom he hired to deliver his own brilliant speeches. Wells portrayed characters which were poignant, irrational and inconsequent, but he never bothered to study their incongruities. Galsworthy always portrayed types as he was busy with the upper middleclass society whom he was satirizing. Ifor Evans further laments the negative role of these social critics: "One of the extraordinary phenomenon is that both Wells and Shaw lived on throughout the inter-war period and kept themselves aware of the changing shape of the times..."

and still did not do anything constructive 'to warn' about the impending dangers of the tremendous progress that had been so registered after the Industrial Revolution. Infact, they had been propagating the eradiction of evil human tendencies in the social context, under the influence of education and a civilized environment,
replacing them by good ones. Sigmund Freud says:

Civilized society which demands good conduct and does not trouble itself about the instinctual basis of this conduct has thus won over to obedience a great many people who are not in this following their own natures. Encouraged by this success, society has allowed itself to be misled into tightening the moral standard to the greatest possible degree, and it has then forced its members into a yet greater estrangement from their instinctual disposition. They are consequently subject to an unceasing suppression of instinct, and the resulting tension betrays itself in the most remarkable phenomena of reaction and compensation. In the domain of sexuality, where such suppression is most difficult to carry out, the result is seen in the reactive phenomena of neurotic disorders. Elsewhere the pressure of civilization brings in its train no pathological results it is true, but is shown in malformations of character, and in the perpetual readiness of the inhibited instincts to break through to satisfaction at any suitable opportunity.

Thus, while trying to eradicate the social and human evils, these social critics (Shaw, Wells and Galsworthy) completely failed to study the nature of man "which consists of instinctual impulses" which are of an
elementary nature, which are similar in all men and which aim at the satisfaction of certain primal needs. They failed to highlight the cruelties inherent in man and these ultimately carried the world over to destruction in the 1914-1918 conflagration. Furthermore, if these social critics were only alive to the social, cultural and political implications of the dangers so engineered by this tremendous progress, they would have with their vision, warded off the romantic conception of war into the realities of wars, thereby making people aware of the horror, the disaster and the destruction accompanying it.

In the realm of poetry, matters were still worse since the poets wrote about much of themselves. Moreover, the Georgian anthologies presented "...a dangerous type of surface optimism which seemed deliberately to avoid all the harder things in life. The poets had the appearance of making things too easy for themselves and for their readers."

They presented a great variety of mood of enjoyment in the English countryside since it was a part appreciating life itself. The best example of this almost romantic and idealistic conception of life and death is evinced in the poems of Rupert Brook. His most celebrated poem 'The Soldier' is a "frank and unashamed piece of patriotism", in D.J. Enright's phrase. A careful study of his Sonnet I titled 'Peace', yields the idea that war is clean and cleansing like a jolly good swim and is in fact "a
grand change from all the little emptiness of love", while sonnet II titled 'Safety', testifies in a "cloud of witness to the safeness of war".

Thus we find the eulogisation of war to an almost ecstatic, romantic level in the poems of Rupert Brooke. In doing so these poets pretended to make things very rosy, in utter disregard of the profound problems of the day. This only aided in taking the world near to the threshold of devastation.

But, with the outbreak of the Great war, and its taking heavy toll of human beings, there was a shift in the attitude of the writers. With the passage of time, as the war assumed dangerous dimensions and brought the world on the threshold of a near complete disaster, the idealists in poetry were replaced by satirists and realists such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. Charles Sorley, who was very much uneasy following the outbreak of war, very poignantly observed about the role of Georgian poets: "The voice of our poets and men of letters is finely trained and sweet to hear...it pleases, it flatters, it charms, it soothes, it is a living lie."

Therefore, it became obligatory on the part of the realistic poets to portray the horrors of war in 'Trench warfare', to narrate the anguish, the pain, the torture and last of all, to communicate reality, to convey the truth of modern warfare to those not directly engaged in it. It was out of his deepest concern for the world at large, lest it should be completely annihilated that Wilfred Owen
wrote. "All a poet can do today is warn. That is why the poets must be truthful." This supplements and incorporates my earlier conviction about the role of the literary artist.

Lamenting the negative role of the elders of the day, Owen shows the horror of trench warfare in an almost apocalyptic vision:

They want to call ‘No Man’s Land’ England, because we keep supremacy there. It is like the eternal place of gnashing of teeth... It is pockmarked like a body of foulest disease and its odour is the breath of cancer.

This debilitated the younger generation and left it weak. The predicament of the trench warfare, so generated by the Great War and with its incessant, ever increasing anguish symbolised the decadence of human civilization. Western civilization was doomed to destruction through its own success; and by creating an artificial world, people strangled themselves in mechanical organisation.

Therefore, the frustrated, melancholic, alienated and despair ridden younger generation stretched out its hands, more frankly than its elders, with a desire for sympathy. It had lost all faith both in its elders and itself because it felt that its elders had betrayed it and slaughtered its friends. Hence it came to believe that the world would be better, if all the principles of the elders
were set aside.

This gave rise to a feeling which was both negative and akin to despair. The writers/soldiers, saw no cause to which their energy could be channelised and subsequently they developed a bitter and frustrated spirit. They felt that everything was in a shambles and hence it was the worst of the times. This developed in them a pessimistic attitude which only compounded their fragmentation and segregation. Having lost all faith in the basic goodness of humanity, they lived in bitter isolation. The frustration, so generated in them by the Great War, found its ultimate outlet in their satire and mockery of the modern world.

Siegfried Sassoon is the spokesman of such a generation. He gives the full bitterness of such an experience of the individual soldier who neither remembered the cause, for which he was fighting, nor trusted those who led him, in his poem, 'Counter attack':

Good morning; good morning! The General said,
When we met him last week on our way to the line,
Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of them dead,
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine,
He is a cheery old card grunted Harry to Jack
As they slagged up to Arras with rifle and pack.

Thus Siegfried Sassoon, essentially a poet of war, represents the period of holocaust with great dexterity. There is a mood of great anger in his poetry and he is
concerned with the negative emotions of horror, anger and disgust. He laments the futility of war, as it destroys everything.

Since the writers of the age were affected by the new human experience of the Great war, all were under compulsion to report, to inform and to warn the world about the impending dangers of yet another war. Therefore, it demanded a realistic portrayal of the horrors of war in fiction too. But the larger audience of fiction demanded, in those years immediately after the war, any theme rather than that of the great conflict and its horrors because the general public was not prepared to face the realistic presentation of war in fiction. The dominant tendency of the readers was to forget the evil and brutality in reassuring itself that life was more kindly than the four years of wars had suggested. This desire to regain the illusion that they were civilized people, prompted them to give acceptance to A.S.M. Hutchinson's *If Winter Comes*, which was praised at the time for its 'high' ethical quality, power and beauty. It was commended as the year's 'most arresting achievement in fiction'.

In other writers of the period, the underlying mood was sentimental. *The Constant Nymph* by Margaret Kennedy was about the day-dreaming of an adolescent girl. *The Green Hat* by Michael Arloun was even more unreal. It was the deliberate fabrication of a hard headed Armenian. It was solemnly accepted by social critics as a picture of contemporary manners.
Furthermore, the nightmare of the Great war had inculcated in the people the spirit of escapism. The individuals sought more relief in the adventure stories contained in the novels of P.G. Wodehouse and Agatha Christie. She was accorded a rousing welcome to the literary scene. Her detective stories were "thrillers", as they had the sedative effects on the broken spirit of man. More of a social document, the detective story, in its sober, solid narrative, provided the ordinary people with more extra-ordinary experience.

Later on, the Englishman developed a taste for public entertainments which he pursued very religiously. They ignored the state of the world and the condition of human nature; yet with all its limitations, it was the desire for a kindlier world and a belief that man would be worthy of a finer life, if only his leaders and rulers would give him the chance.

This resulted in glittering cinema houses going up everywhere, even in the most impoverished areas. Still photography and motion pictures, whose basic principles had been developed in the previous century, became major vehicles of expression following World War I. Photographers and film directors explored the unique qualities of their media in pursuit of new and vivid ways of 'seeing'. In 1927, when an American film producer was able to synchronise sound track with the pictures, the break from the realistic world was almost complete. True
photo-reportage had begun in the mid 1920's, when improved equipment and technical facilities enabled fleeting expressions and movements to be caught under varying lighting conditions. The film became the most popular and universal art form of the century. While most movies were made and watched for entertainment, the medium lent itself to the visual description of relationships and issues in contemporary society. Hence the innovation of documentary films and, of course, social commentaries and satire by numerous actors, Charlie Chaplin, the most prominent of them.

Somehow the belief still existed among ordinary men, that the suffering of the individuals had been so profound that its repetition was unthinkable. Perhaps this counts for the hostile reaction to the war books accorded by the public as well as by the fourth estate. The newspapers began to debunk not only the war books, but also the soldiers who had conducted themselves creditably at the warfront. Hardly was the nightmare at the warfront over, when they and their actions in the war came under severe censure at home. They were hurt. The 'earlier cynosures' of the public during the war, came to be censured and condemned. This lacerated their sensibilities. Gradually, they came to brood over the futility of their action and finally inferred that they had been sold. This developed in them a mood of despair, and alienation and expressed itself in war books, the best example being Richard Aldington's Death of a Hero.
The presentation of war in fiction bears little resemblance to that in poetry. Whereas a poet may utilise his memories to write a poem, the novelist must have the leisure to exercise his craft to represent the human situation. This is one of the reasons why the poets received more attention from the public after the war, as it was prepared to endure again the full tragedy in imaginative retrospect.

It was in 1930's that large popular audiences, for the first time, were ready to reconsider the realities of 1914-1918 War as a theme for fiction. It became possible because, "perhaps English people were dreaming less. Perhaps they were trying to catch up with that was going on round them. More probably, the writers changed and not the 13 readers."

Thus the shift is from the poets to the prose writers, from poetry to fiction and from escapism to reality. In fiction, more than in any other form of literature, the writer finds a free and full scope to link the general fate of man to the fate of specific individual characters to illuminate it. Fictional art is more suited to this because the prose narrative takes in part the tradition of the great epics and thus not only recreates historical events and states of society, but also the
dominant mood of alienation and despair which permeates individual psyche in an age of crisis.

This desire to consider the realities of war as a theme for fiction resulted in the exploration of the individual psyche with all its trails and turbulences, through which an individual had gone in the war. Therefore, the novelist, though remaining busy with his social preoccupations, returns to study the nature of man. The literary artist, from now on, would not only explore the causes leading to disruption of civilization, but would at the same time, explore the unconscious psyche of individual men and women - study the dark side of human mind.

This change in attitude of the public came due to the study of social sciences and psychology which had come to play an important active role in the lives of the people. This led people to pursue another field of study - the study of human mind. It resulted in insights into man's conduct and his emotional life. Deriving from Freud's theory of Biological Instincts, a great emphasis was placed over the powers of unconscious to affect the conduct of an individual.

Freud's emphasis upon the unconscious and irrational states of human mind made a strong impact on writers and artists alike. Furthermore, a lot of importance was attached to Freud's concept of infantile sexuality - Libido. Thus, it was through this theory of Biological Instincts that the novelists gained a new
insight into the unexplored psyche of the individual in the following contexts:

(i) That conscious life was only a small part of man's existence.

(ii) Mind, instead of being ordered and logical was like a disordered and misbehaved menagerie.

(iii) That sex played a far larger part in man's life. The writers were encouraged to be both very vocal and frank in the description of sexual experiences and henceforth, were less affronted by sexual abnormalities.

(iv) It also gave the vital clue that human relationships were now based on adjustments and readjustments.

Therefore, in the 1920's, there emerged the writers, the realists, who saw the sub-conscious mind as a vehicle that could free man from the shackles of modern society and lead him to freedom. They felt an affinity with primitive art and its close associations with magical and mythological themes and they exalted the irrational and the violent in human experience. Meanwhile, from a different perspective, the Cubists continued to expand their influences. Abstract, non-representational painting was taken up by young artists all over the world - except in the Soviet Union, where initial experimentation was aborted by ideological insistence upon socialist realism. The interwar years saw Picasso modify his Cubist style. He
developed a neo-classical style in the 1920's, while in the next decade he painted his famous 'Guernica' mural, vividly depicting the destruction of a small Spanish town by fascist air forces in that country's civil war. This painting combines artistic autonomy with a direct relationship to contemporary world events.

In literature, the emphasis on psychoanalysis led to the study of human personality and also brought to light the cruelty and evil inherent in the nature of man. This is amply demonstrated in the works of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, D.H.Lawrence and T.S.Eliot. Initially these writers were condemned for being "difficult, for not being intelligible to the reading public". Reflecting on Ulysses, Arnold Bennet became the spokesman for the general public, when he said that with Ulysses, the art of novel reading has become a form of penal servitude? E.M.Foster, was more ironic and vociferous. He said that no one understood Ulysses, not even the police who prohibited its circulation.

Infact, this showed that there was an unbridgeable chasm between the writer and the reading public. There was no easy communication between society and the artist, hence there was no conception of a homogeneous community. In Ulysses, James Joyce was trying to discover some form, in which the modern consciousness in all its disruption and fragmentation could be represented. The past from which he departed was so compact and consolidated that his rupture
from it left him lacerated and beyond the hope of complete recovery. Therefore, he looked upon the past with strange mixture of nostalgia and contempt.

III

Henceforth, the question of FORM became one of the basic concerns of literary criticism. War which signified a crisis in civilization demanded a new fictional form which will not only detail the causal complexes of socio-political situation but will also explore the consciousness of individuals under the horrifying impact of dreadful events unleashed by war. The old patterns would not suffice, naturalistic emphasis on the merely documentary aspect of life would not do. The novel demanded a form which would recapture not only the full texture of the horror scenario but also present an illuminating exploration of the deeper levels of individual consciousness. The 'new' novel must of necessity yield a dark and disturbing insight which cannot be related to any of the beliefs or rules which make human societies possible.

The modern novelist, therefore, found the traditional form beset with grave limitations. The new reality could not be objectified through a hero-centred compact plot because the social life in the postwar world presented a bewildering spectacle of disintegration and
moral vacuity. Defining the nature of life which the novelist seeks to translate into art, Elizabeth Drew says:

Life never builds itself into the convenient symmetry of a plot. Life is the quality of the immediate present as we live it from moment to moment. Experience is made from the silt of innumerable instants of consciousness, fusing the present with the memories of the past; blending thought and action and sensation; expanding into the widest contemplation of the human situation in its universal aspects or contracting into the observation of some small objects around us, or into fragments of talk, gestures, some fleeting association. It's all discontinuous, inconclusive, fugitive, flickering. This, at last, is life.

According to Holger Klein "fiction here had an immediate factual correlative of which millions were intensely aware." The overriding criterion applied to war fiction is not merely one of verisimilitude, but moral truths as well. Henry James, too, lays it down as a prerequisite for writing a novel. He says, "The only condition that I can think of attaching to the composition of a novel is...that it be sincere." Thus it becomes imperative for the writer to assiduously scrutinise the correctness of detail and accuracy of data. This is necessary to achieve objectivity in detailing, the
The basic problem of composition in war fiction is "how to link the general fate to the fate of particular characters illuminating it." The majority of works achieve it by the demonstration of the impact of war on essentially anonymous, private, but representative individuals, or, small groups, and the concentration on impact rather than events, enables them to make the common soldier, a figure occupying an accidental and peripheral position in the war as history, a figure occupying an essential and central position in war as fiction. The most outstanding examples that can be cited are those of Christopher Tietjens in Parade's End and Ulysses in Ulysses. Ford Madox Ford in Parade's End directs the whole novel sequence at one individual - Christopher Tietjens, who enacts all history, through his experience in the battlefield, his sufferings at the hands of his immediate superiors as well as his lawful wife - Sylvia, his close
friend Macmaster to whom he was all help, thereby, exposing the change that had crept in because of the crumbling of the old order. Whereas the action in Parade's End is externalised, the action in Ulysses is confined to the labyrinthine realms of inner being of the central character. In other words, war is not treated as it is done by books of history, but in terms of its impact on the deeper layers of human psyche. In other words, in terms of everyman's experience of torment, boredom, aloneness and anguish, the permanence of appeal of any war novel does not lie merely in the comprehensive delineation of the social state, but in how it is presented.

To do all this, the old forms of the novel do not suffice because the new cynicism cannot cope with them. Therefore, we notice a fracturing of form in Lawrence, Joyce, Virginia Woolf and others. The novel no longer remained a novel in the traditional sense. Cyril Connolly holds Flaubert, Henry James, Proust and Virginia Woolf having "finished off the novel". Alberto Moravia goes a step further to accuse these writers of being "the grave diggers of the nineteenth century novel."

Infact, the traditional novelists of the nineteenth century, in their endeavour to present a unified vision of social life, deliberately turned a blind eye to the sordid and repellent aspects of their social environment. But the modern novelists with their unflinching loyalty to truth, busied themselves in projecting the socio-cultural
disintegration in postwar society through the medium of their fictional art. The tradition of form of the novel was by no means a rigid mould capable of holding widely different varieties of facts about life. If life was dynamic, art too was equally dynamic and because of its close correspondence with life, it had, of necessity, to undergo alternation in order to meet the new kind of challenge that life posed from time to time. According to C.S. Ferns: "As a form the Novel evolved to deal with a world that was changing more rapidly than ever before, and it was perhaps to its very looseness and flexibility that it owed its success..."

The accelerating pace of the changes in the world, due to the advancement of science and technology, gave new freedom to the bourgeoisie. It was a period of "emancipated modes of an urge to freer behaviour and preoccupation with personal styles and fashions, an appeal to the temporary, the hedonistic and the sensational." Because the novel provided "a way of responding to the world that was timeless and absolute", in the Laurentian sense, the novel therefore: "...is assumed to be intimately related with the rise of the bourgeoisie, with its generally individualistic view of life and other associated values..." But, it is not the exterior crisis that prompts an artist or shapes his art. He is no more interested in the materialistic presentation of the material in his art or "with the revolution in the world, but... he is concerned with revolution in the word".
Enlisting the essential difference between prewar and postwar novelists, C.S. Ferns states:

The difference, however, is that it is not a social totality which they seek to portray, but a totality of individual consciousness. The preoccupation with subjective consciousness necessarily involves a retreat from the depiction of social interaction...

In an age when the disruption of civilization was taking place as a sequel to the Great War, and when society was faced with its fragmentation, the artist was led into strange paths. Since the Great War, the novelistic art has been under constant experimentation with regard to new fictional techniques and procedures, such as the control of the 'point of view', so as to minimise the apparent role of the author-narrator. The use of symbolist and expressionist techniques and of devices adopted from the art of cinema, the dislocation of time sequence, the adaptation of forms and motifs from myths and dreams and the exploitation of the stream of consciousness technique in a way that converts the narrative of the outer action and events into a drama of the life of the mind are all expressions of this. This experimentation has prompted the novelists to leave out such standard novelistic elements as plot, characterization, descriptions of states of mind and normal relation of time and space.
In the multivolumed Remembrance of Things Past, Marcel Proust explored psychological time, human relationships and his own perceptions and mental processes by means of the stream of consciousness technique. This influential work recognised no lasting significance in the external world; one's consciousness alone remains real.

Virginia Woolf urged the writers to register "the myriad impressions" that fall upon the mind in an incessant shower, to be honestly truthful. She says:

...if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he choose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest of catastrophe in the accepted sense...Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semitransparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.

Consequently, there is deliberate indifference to the story element. No logical progression of the story remains possible because life is to be presented in totality— from moment to moment. This enables the novelist to present a total picture of life both in the present and the past, based on memories. David Daiches stresses the importance of memories:

We are memories, and to describe us truthfully at any given moment means to say everything
about our past. Memory is no longer regarded as a device for looking back on what has been left behind, but as an integral part of consciousness and personality.

Because of the fact that the whole human life has to be presented on a small scale in a limited tract of time and space, in a microcosm, this involves the problem of "selection and significance". Employing this technique, Virginia Woolf concentrates on character rather than plot, eliminating description altogether. Characters she brings to life, not through a series of logically ordered incidents, but by touches of detail so that records of thought, association and influences to past and present along with her consciousness of time and movement can all be captured in this technique.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, this is more explicit. Though the time covered by the external action occupies only twelve hours, from the morning when Mrs. Dalloway goes out to buy her flowers for her party, to the evening when the party is over, yet the psychological method permits the whole life to be shown in between.

Her novel *Jacob's Room* is about war of 1914-1918, for the theme centres upon the life of Jacob from his childhood to his days in Cambridge and his youthful years to his death in the war. In *To the Light House*, Virginia Woolf confronts us with a group of characters in close relation to one another, so that the whole novel is a
symbol of time, life and death, thereby minimising action.

Time, therefore, no more remains historical or clocktime. It becomes psychological, fluctuating backwards and forwards, with the inherent desire to probe the consciousness of the individual. Alain Robbe - Grillet very strongly advocates this handling of psychological time in the novels. "Why should we try to reconstitute time that belongs to clocks in a tale that is only concerned with human time? Isn't it wiser to think of our memory which is never chronological?" This time-shift technique is employed by Ford Madox Ford in The Good Soldier, when the narrator unfolds his story in a piece-meal fashion, fragment by fragment, as his memories come back to him. Further the time-shift technique gives the novelist an opportunity to dramatise rather than describe the worlds at play in the novel.

It results in bringing down the old barriers between the reader and the novelist's character. The novelist as a mediator almost disappears, whereas in the past, even James and Conrad figured as reporters or historians recreating a sequence of action in their novels, As Ford puts it, "...The object of the novelist is to keep the reader entirely oblivious of the fact that the author exists - even of the fact that he is reading a book." This absence or distancing of the narrator from the novel enables the novelist to record the impression of a moment during the course of the development of the action. Symbols provide the artist with a rich and powerful medium.
to objectify the complex and subtle realities of modern life.

All through the war novels, the action centres around one main character. This character is not a martial hero of the Renaissance or the middle ages. Consequently he is not endowed with any heroic qualities which might make him a superman. He is a creature of this living world "sodden red", with all the flaws and virtues. He is a person who symbolizes "inaction" and "inertness". He very passionately suffers and is one to whom things happen rather than someone who imposes his will on life. Be he Ulysses of Ulysses, or George Winterbourne of Death of the Hero or Christopher Tietjens of Parade's End or Theodore Gumbril Junior of Antic Hay, his heroism lies in passive suffering. It is a different case that George Winterbourne in Death of a Hero feels that the whole of world war I was declared against his person, thereby viewing life and things from a single consciousness. It provides Richard Aldington an opportunity to condemn the prewar and the postwar worlds en bloc, whereas, according to D.H.Lawrence, "The business of art is to reveal the relations between man and his circumambient universe at the living moment".

The methods of revealing rather than condemning the character as well as the types of the character revealed mark the greatest change in the art of the novel from its beginning to the present day. Instead of the traditional hero we have, "The anti-hero or the fool" who is
isolated from his fellows and is seen struggling towards some individual fulfilment outside his own society. Birkin in *Women in Love* is one such glaring character of the postwar era.

But, Lawrence in *Women in Love* and other novels has two special individuals, through whom he portrays the muddled state of the world. He makes one of them, Birkin, a figure of resurrection, suggesting what might lie beyond or that it could be a social recovery. David Daiches observes:

Lawrence had a powerful original vision of life and that this vision enabled him to use the novel not as the quasi-realistic social-cum-psychological fable it had been for so long but as a symbolic and poetic presentation of the underlining realities of individual life and of human relations is unquestionable.

Aldous Huxley goes a step further than D.H.Lawrence. His cast of characters is usually large enough to follow a multiplicity of stories, sometimes supplemented by stories within stories that recall the past. In fact Huxley attempts to portray the absolute truth in the most degrading form so that his prophetic vision shocks the sensibility of his readers. His characters are always seen mouthing his own ideas. These ideas have the widest possible range which is both serious and solemn and at times even heavy and absolute. This
helps Huxley to expose the follies and frivolities of modern man comically. He neither satirises nor condemns, but reveals these distortions in human beings to portray this absolute decadence in man. This gives rise to what Malcolm Bradbury calls "The Modern Comic Novel". With this the traditional form of Novel disintegrates further. The form that Huxley uses is one of discussion or debate rather than the pleasing dialogue. We have ample evidence of this in *Antic Hay*, *Those Barren Leaves* and *Crome Yellow*. Once again we find the traditional novel structure as an edifice of character and action crumbling and the narration slid into an essay or a pedagogic monologue. But all through the composition the underlying process is one of self-exploration and self-education, which according to Huxley shall help in the mitigation of human suffering.

E.M. Forster very aptly summarises the modern novel in the following words. "...Yes - oh dear yes - the novel tells a story. That is the fundamental aspect without which it could not exist...It runs like a backbone - or may I say, a tape-worm, for its beginning and end are arbitrary." Perhaps this counts for the ending of *Antic Hay*, wherein, the narrator says in the last line, "Tomorrow will be as awful as today". This indeed is a sad commentary on the state of affairs in the modern world.

IV

In poetry, T.S. Eliot felt that there had too often
been a rural self-indulgence that ignored the realities of urban civilization. With him, the shift is from the "village poetry" to the "city poetry". His poetry is conspicuous for drawing the contrast between the magnificent gestures which life was alleged to possess in the past and the dreary emptiness of the contemporary experience: "I have heard the mermaids singing 'each to each' I don't think that they will sing to me." The Waste Land expresses weariness with the ugliness and sterility of industrialized civilization, which epitomised the atmosphere of skepticism and negation pervading in the intellectual world in both Britain and the United States. It also symbolises the mood of a generation which in the early twenties had suffered disillusionment and faced the future without any heroic expectations. Eliot further goes on to lament the spiritual sordidness of the present and the heroic moods which once existed before the Great War. The Waste Land, therefore, is an attempt to diagnose "the disorder" emphasising certain human values on the strength of which the poet can add "Shall I set my lands in order?", a sentiment echoed by Eric Remarque's novel All Quiet On the Western Front.

Sinclair Lewis, in a series of novels, satirized the materialism and shallowness that he saw in much of American life. The novels of F.Scott Fitzgerald, which are associated with the term 'jaaz age', look at problems of wealth and violence in the American scene.
Hemingway rocketed to fame with vivid stories glorifying virility and action for its own sake, though in the crisis torn thirties, he turned to another of his themes—the destructive impact of modern warfare, as in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

These novels portray a decadent world which is the direct outcome of a horrific mechanised warfare. This eventually benumbed the sensibilities of the people of the times and the lacerated spirit of man could not reconcile itself with the brutalities of war, even after it had ceased to be operative in 1918.

In *Her Privates We* Fredrick Manning, makes the self-pitying plea that the soldier is an innocent being called to brutal action which is both degrading and devastating in form because, "war", as Manning wrote, "is waged by men, not by beasts or Gods. It is particularly human activity."

An example of the portrayal of this mood can be seen in George Orwell's *Coming Up for Air*, which tells of an ex-soldier of the war of 1914-1918. This novel is replete with a disdainful, hopeless mockery that arose ultimately from despair. It implied that all that was best in the English tradition had merged with a meaningless succession of Ellesmere Roads, which in a mood of bitter and unrelieved cynicism was contemplated without any vestige of hope remaining.

The *Magic Mountain*, a novel by Thomas Mann appeared 1924. This novel presented a realistic story of
life in a tuberculosis sanatorium in the Alps, and a symbolic evocation of European civilization on the eve of war. In depicting the struggle between the promise of life and the lure of death, Mann was describing a conflict that occupied the spirit of many Germans; in having his hero finally choose life, Mann was reflecting his own personal commitment to the rational values symbolised by the Weimer Republic. Thus, we have the rejection of the romantic concept of war since its aftermath was total disillusionment.

This disillusion with old values that was for many the legacy of the war and its aftermath, together with new perspectives revealed by science and technology, was evident in the paintings of the Expressionists, who employed distortion and clashing colours to break away from surface appearances and attempted to penetrate to the "essence" of things. Wassily Kandinsky devoted his talents to abstract art, allowing viewers to derive their own interpretations and significance from the artist's arrangement of colour and form.

The effect of the horror literature on modern life in England, despite all its sincerity has been, an unhappy one. It bred in its readers, a mood of fear, which was negative, akin to despair, and ineffective. The soldier was too ready to indulge in a mixture of sentiment and hysteria; in order to avenge himself on the civilians, whom he regarded as sheltered against the dangers to which he
This 'horror literature' of the 1914-1918 war helped in changing the attitudes of the people towards man. According to Evans:

(i) It brought about a general consciousness about the growth of Fascism and Nazism and the awareness that these shall have to be checked by military means.

(ii) This also resulted in evoking people's deep sympathy along with the writers, everywhere, for the Republican cause in Spain during the civil war. The premonition that war was inevitable, even if not present among the masses dominated the more imaginative minds and gave to the thirties, a sense of restlessness and frustration. It also increased the seriousness of mood as seen in Huxley's works in the twenties and in the thirties.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES


34. Evans, *Between the Wars*, p. 10.