In this Chapter I shall try to evaluate pessimism already discussed in the foregoing pages. By "pessimism" in literature I here mean a preoccupation with the dark aspects of human life. It includes conflict, murder, hopelessness, anxiety, disillusionment, disgust, suffering, treachery, loss of values etc. that seriously affect our life and society. Somerset Maugham says: "Evils are there omnipresent; pain and disease, the death of those we love, poverty, crime, sin, frustrated hope; the list is interminable".

In our everyday life we experience them, and the author presents them in his works.

Literature presents life. It is a mingled yarn of joy and pain. A work of pessimism deals with pain, the dark, dismal side of life and pessimism has an abiding place in literature and is one of its inspirations. Pessimism often gives profundity to literature. And the outstanding literary works are mostly concerned with the sadness and suffering, conflict and frustration in human life. For instance, the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, The Iliad, the Divine Comedy, the Faust, the Paradise Lost, Shakuntalam, Meghdutam and other such classics of literature of the world, deal
mainly with pain and anguish, suffering and conflict. And the pain and suffering of individuals assume the status of universality, which is the subject-matter of great literature.

Realism is present in all literatures—ancient, mediæval and modern. In fact, it is persistent in literature, and it is as old as literature itself. Deeper thinking is born out of an awareness of deeper pain in life. In fact, deeper truths of life are realized through the deeper experiences of suffering and sorrow, and man thus becomes better & nobler in mind as well as in wisdom. He thereby becomes sober and serious about life. He becomes deeply reflective and out of his reflections on life and the world he tries to evolve a philosophy of life. He is then free from all restlessness, shallowness, frivolities and superficialities. Deep sorrow thus leads to a serene wisdom and a search for spiritual truths. Indeed, suffering awakens our sense of greatness and it chastens our being. It is true that literature dealing with pain and sadness deeply touches our mind and moves our heart. In Aldous Huxley's novel *Eyeless in Gaza*, one of the characters expresses a point of view which may be taken as that of the novelist himself: "You must not be afraid of suffering...that's inevitable... Sadness is necessary sometimes — like an operation; you can't be well without it." (P 72). This reminds us of Proust's statement that there can be no
wisdom without suffering. Graham Greene says that unhappiness is to be found everywhere and his remark reminds us of Keats' view of life as a 'vale of soul-making' where through sorrow and unhappiness each man acquires a distinct identity and ethical character. He writes in his novel The End of the Affair: "In misery we seem aware of our own existence,... But happiness annihilates us: We lose our identity" (P 47). We cannot deny sorrows and sufferings in life, and we cannot but respond to them either. They beset us from the cradle to the grave. It is true that human life is not a process of unalloyed happiness. Life involves both happiness and sorrow, pleasure and pain, good and evil, light and darkness. One who does not experience pain and sorrow cannot feel the excitement of pleasure and joy. Oscar Wilde's celebrated story The Happy Prince is an instance in point.

It should be noted that man has more sorrow than joy in life, and experience of sorrow seems to linger more than that of joy. Everyone of us has got some problems and sorrows in life. When we read of them in literature we feel a little relieved at the thought that others have also sorrows and sufferings as we have in our lives. We identify ourselves with the sufferers and thus we derive a kind of aesthetic pleasure. On the otherhand, the writer
achieves calm of mind by expressing the pent-up emotions caused by his sorrows and sufferings. A work of tragedy gives us pleasure due to catharsis of pity and fear, to use Aristotle's terms. In the words of Shelley: "our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought". [To a Skylark]

But pessimism is not the final word about life. There is hope, happiness and light too. We are happy and unhappy in accordance with our way of life. It may be said, however, that the influence of pessimism is more wholesome than that of uncritical optimism. George Herbert Palmer rightly points out: "Optimism seems to be more immoral than pessimism for pessimism warns us of danger while optimism lulls into false security". [Contemporary American Philosophy. P 164]

Through suffering and pain we can attain our summum bonum. Aldous Huxley in his novel *Time Must Have Stop* says: "Suffering may and often does produce a kind of emotional uplift and a temporary increase in courage, tolerance, patience and altruism. But if the pressure of suffering is too much prolonged, there comes a break down into apathy, despair or violent selfishness". (P 296)

We fully endorse this statement of Huxley.

Literature speaks of human sorrows and sufferings but it does not stop with them. It also suggests
ways and means to remove or alleviate them. We can have better life if we can follow their directives set forth in their works. Thus, we can have better society. Indeed, the authors adumbrate a picture of good and happy social life. Out of their writings we can have vital teachings about life and the world.

Why does man suffer at all? In the ultimate analysis suffering seems to be a mystery. Somerset Maugham in his celebrated novel *The Razor's Edge* puts forward his own suggestion in his own way: "The best I can suggest is that when the Absolute manifested itself in the world evil was the natural correlation of good. You could never have had the stupendous beauty of the Himalayas without the unimaginable horror of a convulsion of the earth's crust." (P 280).

Again Maugham says: "There is no explanation for evil. It must be looked upon as a necessary part of the order of the universe. To ignore it is childish; to bewail it senseless." (The Summing Up. P 176 - '77).

Rabindranath Tagore also discusses the problem of evil in his *Sadhana*. He writes: "The question why there is evil in existence is the same why there is imperfection, or, in other words, why there is creation at all. We must take it for granted that it could not be otherwise; that creation must be imperfect, must be gradual, and that it is futile..."
to ask the question, why are we?" Page 47. Is the imperfection the final truth? Is evil absolute and ultimate? Tagore's reply is an emphatic "No." In one of his essays Dohsho (Sorrow) he writes that sorrow and happiness constitute Truth. Indeed, sorrow is an aspect of the Perfection of Reality. We must accept both in calm resignation and if we leave out sorrow, truth will fall short of perfection.

Now the question is: How can we get rid of suffering and pain? Complete cure of human sorrows and sufferings is well-nigh impossible. A better social order, however, can act as a prevention against them. Some novelists (for instance, D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, H.G. Wells, Galsworthy and others) suggest a better order to cure man's pain and suffering. Social order should be such that everyman will enjoy full freedom and that there will be equal opportunity and equal distribution of wealth among the people to develop their personality. The sufferings - economic, political and social - for which society is responsible, may be done away with by a social change.

In this connexion it is worthwhile to quote from Bertrand Russell's essay "The World as It Could Be Made": "When we consider the evils we know of, we find
that they may be roughly divided into three classes. There are, first, those due to physical nature: among these are death, pain and the difficulty of making the soil yield a subsistence. These we will call "Physical evils". Second we may put those that spring from defects in the character or aptitudes of the sufferers among these are ignorance, lack of will, and violent passions. These we will call "evils of character". Third come those that depend upon the power of one individual or group over another: these comprise, not only obvious tyranny but also interference with free development, whether by force or by excessive mental influence such as may occur in education. These we will call "evils of power". A social system may be judged by its bearing upon these three kinds of evils.

In this context he goes on to say that to combat these evils we must have recourse to science, the method of character-building and the reform of organisations, political and economic, respectively. It may be noted that in modern times fear and anxiety are man's worst enemies. They are, as it were, 'Fifth Columnists' living within us and are eating into our vitals. They are more dangerous than our external enemies. These two internal enemies are closely associated with our social system. If we can change it we may get rid of these worst enemies.

But there are sufferings beyond the control of man.
What is to be done in that case? In that case sufferings cannot be removed but one can achieve the power to endure them. Indeed 'what cannot be cured must be endured'. One's outlook towards pain and evil has to be changed.

The four novelists in my study have offered suggestions to remove these evils, though differently. To Maugham characters and their inordinate desires and frailties are responsible for sad events and sufferings that follow from them as corollaries. Maugham is assuaged of Vedantic spiritual ideas wherein he finds the meaning of life. His own varied experience had great impact on his novel The Razor's Edge. Indeed we may hope for a better life and a better order of society on the basis of spiritual nature of man and consciousness within. This is spiritualism. The change of heart or consciousness is no doubt hard, but nothing worthwhile is easy. He seems to suggest that the ultimate solution of man's problems and sufferings lies in the spirituality and mysticism of the Indian religion - the religion of the Vedanta of the Hindus. This is what he clearly implies in his novel The Razor's Edge.

Thus we see that Maugham is not a pessimist in the true sense of the term. He is also conscious of the happy and peaceful life of man. In fact, he experienced both bitter and happy days.

In Lawrence's pessimism the prominent element is the
unhappy relationships of life in their various manifestations. These unhappy human relationships are closely related to Lawrence's hatred for modern mechanical civilization. Unlike Maugham, Lawrence attributes some undesirable and conflicting experiences of man to contemporary industrial society. With Lawrence, man's most vital instinct (sex) is thwarted and so the relation between man and woman becomes unhappy. Besides, mechanical civilization destroys man's emotional life and his vital passions do not find suitable environment, and hence there are miseries in man's life. Lawrence does not like the customs and conventions of social life that bind man and woman and thus they cannot enjoy freedom in life. Lawrence wants the change of the social system. He also advocates primitive life, pure & serene, for man's development and true happiness. It is true that if we can change society we may get rid of some social evils, no doubt. But there is limitation to this change. Society cannot be wholly changed. And it is impossible to go back to the primitive society as Lawrence advocates. So, evil remains.

Huxley also hates the modern mechanical society and, like Lawrence, he shows the dark side of social life in his novels. He finely portrays the post-war disillusionment and social sickness and debased, immoral, irresponsible characters. He does not even believe in the progress of
science. According to him, too much scientific advancement makes man quite mechanical and devoid of feelings and self
initiation (e.g. The New Brave World). Huxley paints the
picture of the "Salt that hath lost its flavour".

As a remedy of these evils Aldous Huxley, like
Somerset Kaugham, suggests the spiritual ideals of the
Upanishads. In this connexion the author preaches the ideal
of pacifism and non-attachment embodied in Buddhism and
Hinduism. As a believer in mysticism Huxley also advocates
the attainment of the unity of the world in the state of
divine realization. Thus non-attachment and spiritual rea-
realization are Huxley’s panacea for all forms of pessimism.
But how many people are able to become non-attached and
spiritual?

Graham Greene’s novels abound in murder, bloodshed, con-
flict, suicide, betrayal, adultery, intrigue and the like.
Greene portrays the dark and evil aspect of man and corrupt
society. He also gives us a picture of man’s sorrows and
sufferings. Why does he choose these themes? As a Roman
Catholic Greene believes in the Original Sin and he holds
that due to original sin inherent in man he is prompted
to commit all sorts of crime and evil deeds. Secondly, it
may be said that modern industrial society based on eco-
nomic relationship has become selfish to the core and
thus man has lost his moral sense. And human values have
come to their lowest ebb. He has indeed lost his deeper sense of life and therefore man has been bent upon sex and money, the two evils of modern industrial civilization. Further, it may be pointed out that the upbringing in bad environment and bad training, can permanently corrupt and impair an individual's character.

Does Greene offer any solution to the problems and evils stated above? Yes. He is of the religious temperament, a Roman Catholic convert. He suggests faith in the Divine and in religion and in his opinion Catholic Christian religion will better our society and immoral man will be absolved of corruptions if, however, he takes recourse to it and follows the teachings of the Saviour.

In connexion with the themes of pessimism of the four novelists in my study I note that the function of literature is to record our highest efforts at understanding the meaning of life and it unites the world of mankind by showing commonality of ideals. Miseries and sufferings are universal irrespective of national and geographical limits of this globe. Human nature is one and the same all the world over. Thus the pessimistic writers intensify our consciousness of human unity, giving coherence and meaning to our scattered experiences of pessimism. Thus they show in their writings one side of life. This is also true of the novels of Maugham, Lawrence, Huxley and Greene.
It may be noted that Maugham's fiction has become interesting and absorbing because of the elements of pessimism. The same is true of the other novelists of my study. Besides, the pessimistic themes and contents of sorrows and sufferings in a book serve as a warning to the readers so that they may not step into similar kinds of events that most likely to take place in their lives. Thus their literatures gain some values in life and society. Lastly, the manner of these novelists pleases our artistic sense of beauty. They have written beautiful novels though their themes are pessimistic.
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II

Now a few words may be said about the art of the pessimistic novelists under discussion. We should remember that modern literature after Balzac (1821 - 1867) lays emphasis on two things: first, it stresses the pessimistic note in life - suffering, pain, evil - which is the predominant note in most modern authors; and secondly, it focuses its deep attention on the form and language. We may note in this connexion Edwin Muir's statement: "Structure is the key to the novelist's success or failure."

The pessimistic novels discussed above assume realistic form. The elements of pessimism as themes in the novels already considered are facts of life. Thus the pessimist authors have the 'sense of fact' which is a mark of fine art. Their novels contain 'human interest stories'. It is not possible to evaluate in the abstract; ...Literature... Can be judged only in its relevance to life. [Kettle p. 12] Indeed art cannot thrive in abstraction. The artist seeks to represent his 'sense of fact' in his art. As a matter of fact, every art has its roots in reality and it seeks objective expression (Pater). In this sense the novels of pessimism discussed in the foregoing chapter [II, III, IV, V] have quality of realism because of their subject-matter. Realism ...

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comprehends life in its totality which is blending of joy and sorrow. The novelists mainly deal with the elements - instinct, emotion, motives, ambition, passions - and these are real and universal in man. The beauty of literature depends on the perfect portrayal or imitation of the artist's imaginative impression of some phase of life. The impression, the mood of the writer must come between life and its imitation in order that we may have art. (Upham).

Arnold Kettle remarks that narrowness and pessimism are two significant qualities in the modern novel. They are not quite separable. The former is largely a by-product of the latter. Being unable to come to terms with society at large the novelists tend to retreat into his predicament which he feels reasonably sure. Indeed the novelists in my study are selective in their pessimistic themes and restrictive in their attitude towards life. They have focussed, though differently, on some particular aspects of life. In other words, their view towards life becomes narrower and their themes are selective, and, as a result, they grow intense. Indeed, 'art is selection and asymmetry' (A. C. Ward). Here a word about Hardy's plots may be said by way of comparison. In contrast with the modern novels, his novels are mighty and majestic. He adds greatness and grandeur, breadth and depth to the English novel. Indeed, he presents a vast panorama of the tragedy of life.
Hardy has the supreme gift of anecdote, power of inventing lively incidents through which his story could move. Through the incidents he displays the gradual interplay of his characters. In his novel country-life is vividly portrayed.

We note that unlike our novelists Hardy makes no suggestion to get out of pessimism.

Lawrence, Huxley and Greene obviously do not embrace the whole life of man. There is an unmistakable impression of narrowness but it is redeemed by their intensive study of man and the struggle within him, revealing more the inner life than the outer life. But they do not follow the stream of consciousness method. The stream of consciousness novelists aim at losing objectivity in "a version of robust inarticulations". (Paul West) But the novelists under review have not lost their objectivity. They are social. Their plots are complex in proportion to the complexity of their material.

The essence of the novel, as of drama, is conflict, external and internal. Plot becomes complex because of conflict; and character becomes individual and lively. In Lawrence's novels we find various types of conflict of human relationship. So, his plots are problematic. In Huxley there is the ideological conflict and so his plots sometimes become polemical. Maugham, however, deals with conflict of characters centred round sexual desire. In
Green we find conflict between good and evil viewed from the standpoint of Christian theology.

In depicting characters the novelists have shown the inner man. The elemental things mentioned above guide their life. This emphasis on the elemental helps some of the characters to attain universality. For example, Maugham's Charles Strickland, Lawrence's Lady Chatterley, Huxley's Anthony Beavis and Greene's Soobie and others lead a compulsive life. The novelists have thrown light on the secret and subtle dark corners of the characters. Thus the characters are well revealed in the pessimistic novels concerned. The pessimism which defines the attitude of the novelists towards life and social interactions makes for complexity in their characters. And most of the characters are portrayed with sympathy, perception and wit by the novelists we are discussing. In this connexion we mention that Hardy's tragic novels treat of the problem of sex and thus the internal mutual relations between Man and Woman are finely tackled. Here Lawrence has close parallel with Hardy. Hardy's characters are simple, almost primitive human beings living close to the soil.

The authors of pessimism under review have depicted with sincerity and understanding the pessimistic characters and the sad events connected with them. This...
sincerity is another hallmark of the art of the novelists of my study. As Matthew Arnold says, the ‘sincerity’ of the artist must be present in his art. Furthermore, it may be mentioned that the artist’s aim is to communicate his vision of life and its events. According to T. S. Eliot, art is ‘life-communicating’. As regards this communication of life, the novelists of my study have sincerely and successfully done it. This element raises their novels to the position of great art in the sense that they are able to communicate effectively their vision of man and society.

Some of the novelists under review are rhetorical in their art. D. H. Lawrence through myth and symbol exposes the dark aspects of man and woman, and in Huxley images are well-marked. Huxley’s animal images stand for bestialities in human beings. His images spring from his poetic imagination and philosophy of life. There is also antithesis between passion and reason in Huxley’s novel. In Greene one comes across antithesis between good and evil. His prose is metaphorical drawing analogies from Christian themes. In this connexion we may refer to some recurring words we meet with in the novels of my study. Lawrence frequently uses the words ‘darkness’ and ‘fecundity’ to convey the idea of something secret and mysterious.
as regards sex, Maugham's favourite words are 'chains', 'bonds', fetters', 'open air' etc. With them Maugham expresses his main theme of bondage and freedom. His style is simple, and graphic. He has a rare sense of art. He has kept strictly to the matter in hand. The same is true with Huxley also. In Huxley's novels words like, 'evil', 'unhappy', 'pessimistic', 'stable' (or unstable), 'liberty', 'unity' expose the darkness and depression in life and society after the First World War. He also uses irony when he exposes man's debased character or man's progress in science and technology. Huxley's role as a moral-satirist has immense possibilities. In satirising the past, the present and the future society he is striving after a complete philosophy of life that would enable him to get rid of his pyrrhonism. Greene frequently uses two words "dream" and "childhood". In dream one's thoughts, emotions and imagination get swept away unchecked, which cannot be in the waking state. Dream, according to Freud, is the indirect fulfilment of the unconscious desires which are not satisfied in normal life. Sometimes dream serves as premonition. Childhood plays a very important part in moulding one's future. Greene wants to emphasise this while drawing a character in one of his novels. Greene's language is very simple and lucid and transparent. Thus, it creates rare beauty. Simplicity is also a mark of art. This quality in the
language of Maugham, Huxley and Greene contributes to the art of their novels. Hardy's style is also simple and at the same time clear and lucid. He treated the novel seriously as a form of art, in which human life is represented and interpreted as well. He says: "My art is to intensify the inner meaning of things - so that the heart and the inner meaning is made vividly visible". Hardy is intellectually modern but technically conventional. In fact, he has given to the world of novel the permanent interest and value.

In a great work of literary art truth is presented as the artist sees it. In creating art he produces in the readers a kind of "mental and moral ferment whereby vision may be enlarged, imagination livened and understanding promoted". These are the aims of all great art. From this point of view we might say that the novelists under my study create moral and mental ferment in some measure, and thereby their novels provoke thought and imagination and our vision of life with its different aspects, particularly its dark and serious sides is enlarged. Indeed, they leave us with 'a lingering after-image' which is a test of a work of art. In this respect the pessimistic novelists attain artistic quality. Each of the moral and psychological problems has had its own effect on the technique of the novel concerned. So the way pessimism is presented is artistic, and the novelists have written beautiful
novels of passion, as a painter might draw a beautiful picture of a rotten tree.

Literature is an art. Art is the reflection of truth and beauty in life, which remain unnoticed by the ordinary people. Literature as an art appeals to our imagination and emotion rather than to our intellect. Furthermore, literature preserves the ideals of man—ideals of human relationship, love, faith, friendship, freedom—which are essential for a better life. And an ideal endures in the world and is worthy of preservation. Thus literature is a force and contributes to civilization, and culture depends upon literature. The novelists under consideration have also preserved the permanent human ideals. They also advocate spiritual truth and beauty in life and through them suggest a better society. Thus the novelists in my study make at least some contribution to human culture, too.