In the introduction of this thesis I have explained the word "Pessimism". I have analysed the causes of Pessimism as well. I have also shown the relation of Pessimism to Fate, Character and Society and its appearance in English literature. It is to be noted that I have confined my study of pessimism to a particular period of the English novel i.e. the inter-war period (1918 - 1939) and therefore the Socio-economic condition of the period has been briefly discussed. I have also tried to trace pessimism to the different periods of the history of English literature, and in this connexion I have given some incidental references to the note of pessimism found in continental and American literatures.

The Second, third, fourth and fifth chapters of the thesis are devoted to the detailed analysis of pessimism found in the major novels of Somerset Maugham, D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley and Graham Greene written during the period concerned. In these four novelists of the inter-war years pessimism is a strong note, and this is the reason why I have selected them for my study.

With Somerset Maugham pessimism is mainly due to character-passions, desires and whims of men and women. Its origin lies in author's own bitter experiences which he gathered in the course of his life. His pessimism is well-expressed in one of his novels: "Life had no meaning ... There is no meaning in life, and man by living served no end...
Life was no significant and death without consequence."
(Of Human Bondage P.5 Penguin Books).

I should note here that in order to bring out the sequence of Maugham's pessimism I have discussed some of his novels published even beyond the inter-war period. The same procedure I have followed in discussing the other novelists relevant to my theme. I have also tried to show in a nutshell the pessimistic trend of the novelists concerned in some of their plays and short stories.

The pessimism of D. H. Lawrence is, however, attributed to modern mechanical civilization in which Sex is thwarted, and therefore the relation between man and woman is not happy. Moreover, modern civilization tends to destroy man's emotional life, and vital passions do not find suitable environments; and hence there is unhappiness in man's life. The unhappy human relations of other kinds viz. relation between an individual and society, between capitalists and labourers etc. are dwelt upon. I have not discussed The Boy in the Bush written by M. L. Skinner which Lawrence revised.

In Aldous Huxley's novels "there is the sense of a world of cultivated people closely surrounded by a bigger world of horror and brutality." Some of his novels are comic and satirical narratives as he shows the disillusionment of the youths of England in years after the
First World War. In some of his books of fiction Huxley develops "the philosophy of meaninglessness". He holds that too much materialism is the cause of man's suffering. He suggests spiritual interest as the remedy for pessimism.

Graham Greene's pessimistic attitude lies by and large in depicting his heroes. He has remodelled the Greek tragic hero in the Christian form. So his is Christian pessimism; the idea of the original sin committed by Adam and Eve and their loss of Paradise haunt the novelist. His tragic world is the world fallen from God's grace; and in this world his "Demonical Heroes" are the residents. The struggle between good and evil is an important element in his pessimism. With Greene faith in the Divine and recourse to the Catholic religion are the ultimate panacea to sufferings and agony. He is grieved by the meaninglessness of the lives of men who have no faith.

I should note here that I am compelled to leave out from my discussion Greene's *The Name of the Rose* and *Rumour at Nightfall*, the two novels which followed *The Man Within* and were published in 1930 and 1931 respectively. Mr. Greene has suppressed them as they were not up to the mark. And now these novels are not available.

In Chapter VI I have discussed the form of the four novelists. I have also shown how their forms are moulded by their themes. In this connexion I have considered the contributions of the novelists concerned.
In the last chapter I have attempted a brief evaluation of pessimism in literature in general and in the novelists of my study in particular.

Here I add that the quotations from the novels and other books, which I have used in my thesis are from those editions mentioned in the Bibliography.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge my deep debt to my guide Sri P. C. Ghosh, Reader in the Department of English, Calcutta University, under whose kind supervision I have worked out my thesis.

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Hirendra Narayan Sarkar