

**HEROES AND ANTI-HEROES IN
CONTEMPORARY BRITISH AND
AMERICAN NOVELS**

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HEROES AND ANTI-HEROES IN
CONTEMPORARY BRITISH AND AMERICAN NOVELS

An Abstract
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Geraldine Marks Tatham


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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Geraldine Marks Tatham entitled "Heroes and Anti-Heroes in Contemporary British and American Novels." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

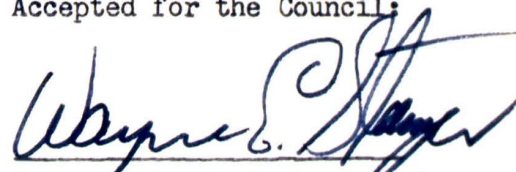

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ABSTRACT

Heroes and Anti-Heroes in Contemporary British and American Novels examines the history of the hero in literature as it completes a kind of evolutionary cycle in the novels of Ken Kesey. From the classical tragic hero has evolved the anti-hero, who, when he moves out of his passive role, often achieves the more glorified status of the sacrificial Christ figure. In Kesey's Sometimes a Great Notion, there is a return of the courageous, larger-than-life hero, but with added embellishments.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine that cyclical phenomenon--to trace the new hero's evolution as the end product out of the passive anti-hero, as represented by Kingsley Amis's Lucky Jim, to the Christ figure, with particular focus on Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, to Christ himself, as portrayed by Nikos Kazantzakis in The Last Temptation of Christ, and finally, to the new hero in Sometimes a Great Notion. Because the terms hero and anti-hero are elusive of definition, it seems advisable to handle the analysis by examining these representative works.

The theme of the exiled hero in a meaningless universe is as old as Don Quixote and as new as Kesey's Hank Stamper. Variations on the theme have ranged from Dostoevsky to Camus, from the absurd hero to the transcendental, with treatments including the tragic, the comic, and the tragicomic. This study attempts to show, by definitive example, the direction in which that exiled hero is going.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study examines the history of the hero in literature as it completes a kind of evolutionary cycle in the novels of Ken Kesey. From the classical tragic hero has evolved the anti-hero, who, when he moves out of his passive role, often achieves the more glorified status of the sacrificial Christ figure. In Kesey's Sometimes a Great Notion, there is a return of the courageous, larger-than-life hero, but with added embellishments. The author deals with two protagonists: a new hero, more classical than modern, in the person of Hank Stamper, juxtaposed with his anti-heroic half-brother, Leland Stanford Stamper. In this double-protagonist style, he emphasizes the difference between the hero and anti-hero; he goes still further in having Leland serve a kind of apprenticeship under Hank, that Lee might eventually achieve the same heroic stature as that personified in Hank. Lee himself goes through a heroic evolution: from inept, scholarly anti-hero to a reverse Christ figure--a sacrificial goat who would undergo even bodily punishment to accomplish his object of victory through weakness--and finally, into a heroic strength which parallels his brother's.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine that cyclical phenomenon--to trace Hank's evolution as the end product out of the passive anti-hero, as represented by Kingsley Amis's Lucky Jim, to the Christ figure, with particular focus on Kesey's One Flew Over the

Cuckoo's Nest, to Christ himself, as portrayed by Nikos Kazantzakis in The Last Temptation of Christ, and finally, to the new hero in Sometimes a Great Notion. Because the terms hero and anti-hero are elusive of definition, it seems advisable to handle the analysis by examining these representative works.

Jim Dixon, in Amis's Lucky Jim, is a definitive example of the anti-hero; from his character it is possible to form a general definition of this literary type. Jim Dixon is a cunningly introspective young man who can see through his own foibles and those of his associates, but cannot take any action to free himself. Like Holden Caulfield, in Salinger's Catcher in the Rye, he is surrounded by phonies, and his unexalted position renders him their prey. He is a cog in the academic machine; it is made all too clear to him that he can be replaced. Jim is in danger of losing his identity: most contact with his associates involves his assuming an elaborate series of masks which he has perfected to the point of ludicrousness. He forces himself to play the game, but can only bear to do so by clowning his way through it. His attitude toward his teaching position is negative, but he can find nothing more positive to do. And Jim is so lonely that he must accept second best in his social, as well as his professional life. He remains consistently in a second-best position throughout the novel, and is hanging onto that only by a kind of pitiful desperation. He can initiate little positive action; rather, forces act upon him, and he can only endure. Any positive protest he makes invariably results in chaos. And he never finds salvation; he is "lucky" Jim because salvation finds him.

Out of this brief portrayal of an anti-hero, the most typical characteristics of the anti-hero emerge:

First of all, the anti-hero is impotent. He has discovered that all action is futile and that any mark he makes on the world is written in invisible ink. He is a part of a society which pays homage to the well-oiled machine, and there is nothing heroic about functioning as a cylinder. There is no glory or glamor attached to the cylinder: it is expected to function smoothly and contribute to the efficiency of the whole machine. It can insist on its importance by clogging up the works, yet it can be replaced with a minimum of effort, with hardly any recognition of its rebellion. The rebellion is meaningful only to the insignificant individual in a negative way: he resents his insignificance--society's denial of his importance.

The anti-hero is egocentric: his principal concern is with his own identity. He is forced, by his intellectual recognition of the inanity of his existence, to withdraw. But his withdrawal suggests nothing positive, only impotence. He cannot accept his limitations, neither can he impose his own values (if he is still potent enough to have any) on the common herd. It would be something worthwhile to him to be able to disturb the universe, if only to prove that he is alive. But all his actions turn out to be petty and spiteful. He cannot, because of his awareness, be small enough to play his unquestioning role for the good of the whole society; he cannot be large enough to impose anything on it but a petty, spiteful resentment. He is a rebel and a victim all at once; as one critic puts it:

The future of modern man, when he chooses to assert his full manhood, always bears the brave, indissoluble aspects of Prometheus and Sisyphus--the eternal rebel and the eternal victim.¹

The anti-hero is a clown. He is caught in a world which has no conception of human dignity and in which the importance of human passions assumes a mundane boy-gets-girl theme. Every passion is suspect; it carries the aura of a stereotype. So aware is the anti-hero of simulated, sterile declarations that he can only clown or intellectualize his feelings in an attempt to make them genuine and individual. He cannot, like the hero, be romantic. Romanticism has become trite. And because he is aware of the trite and the commonplace, because any display of heroism is likely to result in a kind of mock-heroism, and because his intelligence is in conflict with nature,

He goes clowning his sentimental way
into eternity, unable to reconcile himself
completely to one or the other.²

He cannot even be tragic, for tragedy demands something greater than a bourgeois hero in a middle-class society. The tragic hero is just as helpless in the clutches of circumstance--in a world he cannot dominate--but his world is aware of him; he is important enough for the gods to connive his downfall. The anti-hero lives in a world unaware and uncaring, and ". . . he is never strong enough in his

¹ Ihab Hassan, "The Anti-Hero," The Odyssey Reader (New York, 1968), p. 526.

² Ibid., p. 521.

own insignificant self to stand alone in a universe which snubs him with its indifference."³

The anti-hero is negative. His perception forces him to refute the commonplace values; yet in his embittered introspection he cannot find any positive values to replace those he repudiates. He quarrels with unmindful nature and he quarrels with himself because he cannot become adjusted to his unimportant role in the scheme of things. He goes all the way to nihilism. Such nihilism, in the case of Dostoevsky's underground man, results in total inaction. In Lucky Jim, it would result in the same kind of inaction if outside forces did not rescue him.

The anti-hero, like the hero, is lonely. He is isolated from society. In the case of the hero, this isolation stems from his larger-than-life superiority over the common herd. The anti-hero's isolation is the price he must pay for his unrecognized superiority. Solipsism ensues: if the world will not recognize him, he must create a world of his own. Or, as Joseph Wood Krutch expresses it,

. . . a too-sophisticated society has . . . outgrown not merely the simple optimism of the child but also that vigorous . . . faith in the nobility of man. . . . Distrusting its thought, despising its passions, realizing its impotent unimportance in the universe, it can tell itself no stories except those which make it still more acutely aware of its trivial miseries.⁴

³ Joseph Wood Krutch, "The Tragic Fallacy," Tragedy: Plays, Theory, and Criticism (New York, 1960), p. 169.

⁴ Ibid., p. 167.

Arranged into a definition, these descriptive qualities of the anti-hero make him appear undesirable: he is impotent, passive, and egocentric--a clown, too base in stature to be tragic. He is negative and lonely, unimportant in his universe, and his miseries are trivial. His only positive virtues are his persistence in seeking recognition and his intelligence--the very qualities which are the cause of his despair. He is almost a transitional link in the evolutionary chain: a creature in the process of becoming all awareness who has not yet risen above his biological and sociological needs. While his perception has grown, his masculinity has atrophied. He is a misfit.

It would be unfair to condemn such a person without a hearing, and a hearing, after all, is what he asks. Though his suffering may be highly personal, it does bear universal importance. The modern man lives in a highly mechanized world which stifles individuality. He exists in a society of questionable values, mundane tastes and formulated morality. And modern society, as depicted in the novels examined, has lost the heroic spirit through loss of confidence in the ability to impose classic values on bourgeois audiences.

According to Ihab Hassan in his essay, "The Anti-Hero,"

The gradual process of atrophy of the hero may have begun with Don Quixote, or perhaps even Job, Orestes, and Christ. It enters the critical phase, however, only late in the eighteenth century. Goethe's Werther introduces the "tragic" Romantic hero who, in his inordinate conception of himself, severs the traditional bond between the hero and his

society, and points the way to such extreme stances of alienation as were to find expression in the Byronic and Sadist hero, in the gothic and demonic protagonist, in werewolf, ghoul, and vampire.⁵

Dostoevsky's Notes From Underground is an example of one of these "extreme stances of alienation" on the human level. The underground man is

. . . shrill and anxious, . . . full of spite and spleen . . . who reveals . . . what the modern soul likes most to gnaw upon: itself. Dostoevsky's hero looks at existence with a cringe and a snarl. His protest is against the whole order of nature, and it takes the form of impotent frenzy. He is the apotheosis of the sheer horror of choice.⁶

More recently, there is a tendency to associate the anti-hero with such existentialist authors as Camus, Kafka, Sartre and Bellow--to see the absurd, rather than the pathetic aspects of his character and his world. Saul Bellow's Henderson the Rain King focuses on such an absurd hero. Henderson's concern is primarily with saving himself and secondarily with saving the world. He is a Quixote-like character: the personification of enthusiasm looking for a cause. "Everything about you," he is told, "cries out, Salvation! salvation! What shall I do? What must I do? At once! What will become of me? And so on. That is bad."⁷ Henderson learns that "the soul of man will die if it can't make somebody else suffer

⁵Hassan, p. 518.

⁶Ibid., p. 519.

⁷Saul Bellow, Henderson the Rain King (New York, 1959), p. 217.

what it suffers"⁸--an apt definition, it would seem, of the anti-hero's attitude.

Henderson does not fit neatly into the above definition of the anti-hero in that he is not particularly intellectual. His principal problem would seem to be plain boredom. On the other hand, he does make contact with an intellectual in the person of King Duhfu (who turns out to be a Christ figure), and it is through the king that he learns the mystery of life and is confirmed in his belief that

. . . there are some guys who can return good for evil, . . . will not want to live by passing on the wrath. . . . A brave man will try to make the evil stop with him, and that is a sublime ambition. . . . In this way, many courageous people have died.⁹

Henderson, like the Underground Man and like Jim Dixon, is most ridiculous when he tries to take action. Every active effort he makes toward heroism results in humiliation and destruction; it is only when he assumes the passive role of scholar, under the tutelage of King Duhfu, that he learns anything. Even then, it is doubtful that he can ever apply it.

For the purposes of this work, Henderson the Rain King provides a transition out of the impotent anti-hero as epitomized by Jim Dixon--through the anti-hero, Henderson, in conjunction with the Christ figure, Duhfu--into the anti-hero as Christ figure, as represented by Randle Patrick McMurphy in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.

⁸Ibid., p. 213.

⁹Ibid., p. 214.

McMurphy is an anti-hero in that he rejects the system and challenges the Combine. His intelligence takes the form of perceptive common sense rather than intellectual self-searching. He is a social pariah because he insists upon individual, independent action. He sets an example of defiance for others and in doing so disrupts the smooth function of the social machine. In the microcosm of the looney world, he sets himself up as the "Bull Goose Looney,"¹⁰ just as in the outside world, he had refused to adjust to any law and order other than his personal dictates. McMurphy is a man of action. When that spirit of action is communicated to the inmates of the cuckoo's nest, it works for the positive good of men who were living-dead rabbits before he injected life and masculinity into them. And when what begins as a game leads into something beyond an interesting challenge--when he can only lead others back to full and meaningful life at the price of his own--he reluctantly takes on the role of their messiah, then carries it through to his crucifixion on the electric shock table.

There is never any humility in McMurphy. He is the Christ who comes not to bring peace into the world but to disrupt its complacent mediocrity. In his temptation in the wilderness of the insane asylum, he protests that he is not some kind of Jesus Christ. And he is not. He is a loud, brawling, cussing, irreverent braggart. On the other hand, he is strong enough physically and psychologically to imbue strength in others. He is as unlike the gentle Jesus in

¹⁰Ken Kesey, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (New York, 1962), p. 22.

appearance and personality as to be his very opposite. It is in his selfless decision to become the savior of his people that McMurphy becomes Christ-like.

Christ himself, as portrayed by Nikos Kazantzakis, is more the son of man than the son of God. He is a man fundamentally uncourageous: self-doubting, introspective, lonely, frustrated by an imposed celibacy, guilt-ridden, and subject to temptation. He suffers a very real and human anguish in self-recognition, difficulty in putting across his message (even some ambiguity as to what his message should be), and acceptance, over fear, of his martyrdom. It is not so much his death he fears as it is his alienation from every joyful, normal facet of human existence--his need to die without really living. Even on the cross, he must overcome a last temptation to choose manhood over godhood.

Christ is anti-heroic in his despair and almost sulky in his attempts to refuse his calling:

His voice no longer trembled. "I can't!
I'm illiterate, an idler, afraid of every-
thing. I love good food, wine, laughter.
I want to marry, to have children. . . .
Leave me alone!"¹¹

He purposely makes the crosses upon which false messiahs are to be crucified because he wants God to detest him--to "go and find someone else." Furthermore, he says, "I shall make crosses all my life, so that the Messiahs you choose can be crucified!"¹²

¹¹Nikos Kazantzakis, The Last Temptation of Christ (New York, 1960), p. 27.

¹²Idem.

As the novel progresses, Christ comes gradually to accept his role as the Messiah. But until he has conquered his last temptation--while physically on the cross but mentally transported to the life of an ordinary man--Christ is not portrayed as glorious. With his last words, "It is accomplished!" comes the full glorification. He is The Christ.

The Last Temptation of Christ represents one facet of a culmination of the intellectual's need to find meaning in life. The existential view can either accept life as meaningless and absurd or can take a theistic stand. An author's treatment of an anti-hero can either bring him to terms with society, as in Lucky Jim, or force him to a transcendental solution, as in The Last Temptation of Christ. Discouraged with any social solution, Kazantzakis and some others have made a jump of faith.

Until the advent of such a novel as Kesey's Sometimes a Great Notion, the evolution out of negative, passive anti-heroism reached its most affirmative stage in the jump of faith. It requires the affirmative spirit of a Kesey to bring the human hero back into literature. His is the Hemingway strong-man, placed in a tragi-comic situation. Defeat is inconceivable; accusation against society takes the form of indifference to its dictates. In confrontation with nature's erosion of his material holdings, his culture's attempt to wear away his manhood, Kesey's hero emerges a born winner. It is not in him to succumb to the pessimism of a Frederic Henry or waste his energy in the philosophizing of a Gavin Stevens. What he acts upon as an individual reverberates throughout his community, and does so because he has the requisite strength and

courage to live outside it. While his social environment can be viewed as a microcosm of all that is frustrating and stifling in American society, it is, at the same time, a primitive wilderness in need of a tribal scapegoat. And Kesey's Hank Stamper bears all the aspects of the Chosen One--the fertility god marked to impregnate strength and manliness into his race, then die when his usefulness is over. But Hank refuses this dubious honor; rather, he reverses the anti-heroic position: it is he who smubs society with his indifference.

Hank Stamper is a larger-than-life hero, greater than one who accepts defeat, even on his own terms. Hank's concern is not with social relationships; he is above his society. There is never any need to worry about society's unawareness of him. On the contrary, he must defend his self-sufficiency and insist on his isolation from the social milieu. Hank is a law unto himself; symbolically, in the novel, he is the big tree that everyone likes to see felled. He is the warrior king of the Stamper clan, and even when his subjects go over to the enemy, he remains strong enough to stand alone. Hank never abdicates, and at the end of the novel--when he is, to all intents and purposes, defeated--he literally thumbs his nose at the whole society, using the severed arm of his father to do so!

Briefly, then, Kesey's completion of the cyclic tendency in literature's treatment of the hero, from classical hero back to classical hero, includes the above examples in its transition. In following chapters, the anti-hero, the Christ figure, and the new hero will be examined in greater depth.

SALVATION THROUGH RESISTANCE

Perhaps Kingsley Amis is speaking as a representative twentieth-century writer when he has Jim Dixon say, "It's just a sort of stodgy, stingy caution that's the matter with us; you can't even call it looking after Number One."¹ For if the modern writers examined in this study agree on one pronouncement about man's dilemma, it is that his salvation must come through resistance. What happens to the individual when he stifles his natural inclination to resist becoming a machine in favor of a cautious clinging to familiar, if unpleasant circumstances, is nowhere more strikingly depicted than in the two novels under examination in this chapter: Lucky Jim, and One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. In the former, an individual finds his salvation when he resists social pressure in spite of himself; in the latter, an agitator leads a crusade-in-defiance, in order that a group of men, lost in the machinations of the system, might be saved. The two novels, though separated by almost a decade in time and several thousand miles in space, concern themselves with a similar social issue: the individual versus the dehumanizing influences of his environment.

Creators of anti-heroes tend to show their protagonists squirming in a complex, Catch 22 world, in which freedom is a shattered illusion. They refuse to perpetuate the nineteenth-century myth that the individual's horizons are unlimited--that he may

¹Kingsley Amis, Lucky Jim (New York, 1953), p. 205. Future references to the novel will be in the text of the paper.

. . . just like they taught some men to goldbrick and some men to goof off . . . they taught him to play poker. . . . Just play poker and stay single and live where and how he wants to, if people would let him, he says, but you know how society persecutes a dedicated man.

(p. 24)

But to make civilian use of the fighting and gambling skill trained into him by the army is anti-social. To McMurphy, this is an unreasonable subtlety. He is competent in a fight and financially enterprising at poker. He sees no reason to curb any natural inclination, and, unlike Jim Dixon, he never hesitates to bet on his luck.

Subtlety is not McMurphy's forte, and his record shows it: he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in Korea for leading an escape from a Communist prison camp; a dishonorable discharge afterward, for insubordination, ". . . followed by a history of street brawls and barroom fights and a series of arrests for Drunkenness, Assault and Battery, Disturbing the Peace, repeated gambling, and one arrest--for Rape" (p. 44). Translated by McMurphy, this simply means, ". . . I fight and fuh--pardon me, ladies-- . . . I am . . . overzealous in my sexual relations" (p. 46).

It is McMurphy's skill in looking out for his own best interests which brings him into the Cuckoo's Nest. Not for him is the hard labor of weeding peas on the Pendleton Farm for Correction when, by feigning insanity, he can enjoy the comparative luxury of a state hospital. His ambitions, however, go beyond mere physical comfort. In any situation in which he finds himself, McMurphy determines to emerge top man. He holds the record as

achieve his every desire through hard work, religious faith, education, and personal integrity. Emphasis, rather, is placed upon the hitch within that democratic ideal: the adjustment factor. The catch is that man's "stodgy, stingy caution" constantly interferes with his daring, making him conform to an anti-heroic, half-satisfying existence. The greater the perception of the enigma, the greater the burden man has to squelch the internal rebellion which threatens to destroy his external comfort.

Jim Dixon is all too aware that

. . . all positive change was good;
standing still, growing to the spot,
was always bad. . . . The reason
Prometheus couldn't get away from his
vulture was that he was keen on it, and
not the other way round.

(p. 133)

At the same time, Jim is not willing to risk the change he advocates: neither in his love life nor in his position is he able to make the break that he knows is essential to his happiness. As Anthony Burgess observes, "Dixon is a radical, but radicalism is in his blood rather than his head."² And so he clings tenaciously to his vulture, and the feathers fly.

The game that Dixon is attempting to play is an unequal contest from the beginning. He has not much to recommend him by way of academic background; it is through chance that he finds himself in the position of junior lecturer in a small university. Amongst the loaded dice there are his professor, Ned Welch, "a monumental fool

²Anthony Burgess, "A Sort of Rebels," The Novel Now (New York, 1967), p. 141.

much given to cultural week-ends, complete with madrigal-singing and recorder-blowing"³, and his professor's son, Bertrand, who is the personification of all that is most repugnant in phoney upper-class values. To make matters worse, it is Bertrand's girl friend who represents what Jim most desires and dismisses as unobtainable. Christine Calligan is a beautiful, good-humored, sane young woman, the antithesis of the unattractive, neurotic Margaret Peel, who has wormed her way into Jim's conscience, if not his affections.

The little that Jim asks from life--even the minimal comfort of enough beer and cigarettes--is denied him.

What he can have, what in fact is imposed upon him, is the great post-war sense of social purpose, hypocritical slogans about education, culture, progress.⁴

Imposed upon him also is the responsibility to be the target of Margaret's neurotic needs, Professor Welch's academic and cultural ambitions, and a crooked editor's treachery.

Though Jim's struggles are heroic, their manifestations are anti-heroic in the extreme. He did not intend to get off to a wrong start at the university by accidentally inflicting a superficial wound on the Professor of English; nor, on the occasion of the first faculty meeting, did he deliberately stumble and knock the Registrar's chair aside just as the man was sitting down. It was somewhat careless of him, though perfectly natural, to inspire one of Professor Welch's honours pupils to write an essay condemning a book which, as

³Idem.

⁴Idem.

it turned out, was written by one of Welch's ex-pupils, "at Welch's suggestion, and, in part, under his advice" (p. 18). Setting fire to Mrs. Welch's bedclothes was the inevitable result of a drunken revelry forced upon Jim by the need to momentarily escape the pseudo-cultural revelry of a Welch week-end.

The culmination of Jim's struggle is an effort to re-establish himself in the good graces of Professor Welch by giving him what he wants to hear in the way of a public lecture on the subject, "Merrie England." The prepared script of the lecture is so successfully Welchian as to assure its writer's success:

Each of us can resolve to do something every day to resist the application of manufactured standards, to protest against sham architecture, to resist the importation into more and more public places of loud-speakers relaying the Light Programme, to say one word against the yellow press, against the best-seller, against the theatre organ, to say one word for the instinctive culture of the integrated, village-type community. In that way we shall be saying a word, however small in its individual effect, for our native tradition, for our common heritage, in short, for what we once had and may, some day, have again--Merrie England.

(p. 209)

The delivery of the speech, however, is executed in so sarcastic and scathing a tone (part of it an imitation of Welch's style of delivery) as to render it a biting criticism of the Welches of the world and all they stand for. Furthermore, since he is hopelessly unable to control an honest disgust with his whole sham position--at the lectern and the university--Jim goes all the way to a final denouncement:

The point about Merrie England is that it was about the most un-Merrie period in our history. It's only the homemade pottery crowd, the organic husbandry crowd, the recorder-playing crowd, the Esperanto . . .
(p. 231)

But he faints before he can tell all. His rebellion, though meaningful and necessary, is destined only to effect "a little dent in the smug fabric of hypocritical, humbugging, class-bound British society, but he is not big enough to portend its collapse."⁵

The above brief resume of Jim's struggles is an illustration of the vast difference between the anti-hero and the coward. Certainly, it takes a great deal of courage and heroic determination to play the game against such tremendous odds as a Welch-dominated environment. For Jim to sacrifice his integrity for the sake of a half-satisfactory survival--whether for the selfish reason of minimal comfort or the unselfish one of aiding another misfit--is to engage in a kind of dragon-slaying which would frustrate a Beowulf. For the dragon Jim is up against is a subtle, evasive beast wearing the cloak of righteousness and social approval: it must be patronized, not slain. The traditional hero has become civilized out of existence, but the anti-hero, as represented by Jim Dixon, has retained something of the integrity and natural aversion to evil of the mythical savior of his race. In the words of Burgess,

His is the voice of decent protest, and it is a voice that a stable society ought to listen to occasionally, though it never does.⁶

⁵Burgess, p. 142.

⁶Idem.

A protest is all that the anti-hero can register. Often, as in this case, that protest escapes him in spite of himself. But if Jim perpetrates some enormous blunders which lead to dismissal from his university position, fate has arranged something better for him. He emerges victorious, with Bertrand's job and Bertrand's girl, freed of the dead weight of Margaret, Professor Welch, and the circumstances which make him a misfit. The reason his future success seems assured may be summed up in the words of his new employer, Mr. Gore-Urquhart:

. . . I think you'll do the job all right, Dixon. It's not that you've got the qualifications, for this or any other work, but there are plenty who have. You haven't got the disqualifications, though, and that's much rarer.

(p. 238)

And what Jim learns from his struggles--what gradually saves him--is to bet on his luck:

What luck had come his way in the past he'd distrusted, stingily held on to until the chance of losing his initial gain was safely past. It was time to stop doing that.

(p. 140)

If it is something more than luck which makes Dixon renounce his "stodgy, stingy caution," the element of chance certainly contributes to the ultimate success which rewards his resistance.

As previously stated, the anti-hero is negative: he knows what he doesn't want, if not what he does. He is forced, by his own nature, to resist if he is to find salvation. This kind of personal salvation is not always the fate of the anti-hero. In the case of

Randle Patrick McMurphy, in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, the protagonist's resistance may bring salvation to others and death to himself.

The man who resists for the sake of resistance may be nothing more than a social pariah, and initially this label might fit McMurphy. It is important to note, however, that his ostracism, except when it leads to jail, is of his own choosing. He wants to go where and when the spirit moves him, with no social force to hinder his movements. He is a fun-loving rebel who begins a defiant reign in a mental hospital by challenging the authority of Big Nurse. What begins as sport develops into a thoughtful, deliberate self-sacrifice from which he emerges a savior of the men on the ward: what recent criticism defines as a Christ Figure.

McMurphy has never been guilty of the kind of cautious self-preservation which characterizes Jim Dixon. On the contrary, his nature is that of a man determined, against all obstacles, to look out for Number One. Before he went into the army, he was "a wanderer and a logging bum."⁷ Within that framework, society is content to tolerate his brawling: he is "a hard-workin feller blowing off steam, they say"(p. 25). Ironically, it is society--army society--which trains him for the life for which it later condemns him. According to McMurphy, the army made him aware of his "natural bent."

⁷ Ken Kesey, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (New York, 1962), p. 24. Future references to the novel will be in the text of the paper.

. . . a bull goose catskiner for every
gyppo logging operation in the Northwest
and bull goose gambler all the way from
Korea, was even bull goose pea weeder on
that pea farm at Pendleton--so I figure if
I'm bound to be a looney, then I'm bound to
be a stompdown dadgum good one.

(p. 24)

Action is not only what McMurphy craves but also something he generates. There is a notable dearth of this quality in the mental hospital until the arrival of this boisterous Irishman--so lacking, in fact, as to be the most abnormal feature of the environment. Big Nurse has long been at the controls. But her dictatorship is something more than a unique phenomenon of a hospital environment: it is a microcosmic parody of the world outside.

Chief Bromden, from whose point of view the story is told, sees outside society as "the Combine"--a vast network of "black machinery" attached to the souls of men. Its object is to keep a smooth-running order, even at the expense of any individual who threatens to disrupt its efficiency. Miss Ratched, or Big Nurse, is the Combine's representative in the society of the mental hospital. She is

. . . precision-made, like an expensive baby doll, skin like flesh-colored enamel, blend of white and cream and baby-blue eyes, small nose, pink little nostrils--everything working together except the color on her lips and fingernails, and the size of her bosom. A mistake was made somehow in manufacturing, putting those big, womanly breasts on what would of otherwise been a perfect work, and you can see how bitter she is about it.

(p. 11)

Miss Ratched's name bespeaks her function: to McMurphy, she is rat-shed. She is, too, a wretched ratchet, who keeps her patients'

gears wound tight, their masculinity sterilized, their independence petrified out of existence. She is the big machine in the adjustment factory: those whom the Combine cannot fit into slots, she cuts down to size. She is, in McMurphy's words, "a ball-cutter."

One of the most obvious techniques of the "ball-cutter" in society is to rob the individual of his identity. In Lucky Jim, Professor Welch emphasizes Jim's lack of importance and identity, often addressing him by the name of his former assistant, Faulkner. Others, throughout the novel, call him "Dickinson" or "Jackson." Margaret's references to him as "James" carry an aura of condemnation, reminiscent of Tom Sawyer's remark to Becky Thatcher, "Thomas is the name they lick me by; I'm Tom when I'm good."⁸ The only time Margaret ever refers to him as "Jim" is on the one occasion when he is in a position superior to hers. Neither Christine nor her uncle, Gore-Urquart, ever fails to see him as the individual, Dixon, and when Christine's affection and esteem are won over, she calls him "Jim." And Jim's anti-heroic position is recognizable because he never insists on his identity.

McMurphy, on the other hand, never allows anyone to err, or pretend to err, on the question of his identity. In an early confrontation with Big Nurse, he sets her straight when she pretends to believe his name is "McMurry." He flaunts her indirectly by correcting Dr. Spivey:

"McMurphy, Doc."

"Oh? But I thought--the nurse was saying--"

⁸ Samuel L. Clemens, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (New York, 1875), p. 49.

"It's okay, Doc. It was the lady there that started it, made the mistake. I've known some people inclined to do that. I had this uncle whose name was Hallahan, and he went with a woman who kept acting like she couldn't remember his name right and calling him Hooligan just to get his goat. It went on for months before he stopped her. Stopped her good, too."

(p. 45)

When Big Nurse persists in her "mistake," McMurphy simply reminds her, "Ma'am, have I told you about my uncle Hallahan and the woman who used to screw up his name?" (p. 47). She finally replies, "I beg your pardon. Mack-Murph-y" (p. 47), and it becomes obvious to the reader that "Rat-shed" has lost that round. At the same time, Kesey foreshadows the battle between McMurphy and Big Nurse as a round-by-round one because McMurphy's victory is not complete:

She has the ability to turn her smile into whatever expression she wants to use on somebody, but the look she turns it into is no different, just a calculated and mechanical expression to serve her purpose.

(p. 47)

This is the smile preceding the "I beg your pardon. Mack-Murph-y" speech which makes of her words more an admission of a mistake than an apology and admits only to a calculated feeling-out of the adversary.

Neither Big Nurse nor McMurphy ever hesitates to gamble on luck or cunning. The army has taught both of them their natural talents and the strategy that goes along with making use of them. It is obvious from the beginning that this is going to be a grim struggle between two relentless opponents: Big Nurse, backed by the full power of authority, McMurphy, by the strength of his will. If that,

however, was all there is to One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, the story would amount to nothing more than a kind of Superbowl game between evenly matched opponents, and there would be no social significance in its telling. The entire novel is a kind of ironic twist: the representative of society's best interests has become increasingly authoritarian and ultimately wicked, while what was originally the epitome of anti-social forces becomes selfless and ultimately good. What begins as a contest develops into an all-out war for the souls of men--microcosmically and macrocosmically--and becomes representative, like Amis's novel, of the contemporary human predicament.

Because Jim Dixon is presented as an anti-hero, he cannot be expected to do more than blunder his way into personal salvation. When someone like Randle McMurphy appears in literature--someone so naturally strong by comparison--it immediately becomes apparent that he must rise to greater-than-personal heights: he must somehow effect the salvation of others. When he does so through self-sacrifice, he may be a Christ figure. When many elements of the Christian myth are brought in--references to crosses, a crown of thorns, Good Fridays, apostolic groups of twelve, fishing trips, growing strength of the disciples combined with ebbing strength of the leader, some form of a last supper, and, finally, crucifixion--it becomes apparent that the author of such a work means for the reader to see his protagonist as a Christ. When he is as unorthodox as the cussing, brawling, overzealously sexual McMurphy, he is obviously a human counterpart of The Christ, though never an intentional pejoration or parody of the original. Though he may or may not have the initials

J.C. (Steinbeck's Jim Casy, Faulkner's Joe Christmas, Crane's Jim Conklin, for example), he is, as Jesus Christ was, the savior of a group of men who needed the strength and example of a leader to bring them out of a spiritual Egypt into the promise of the earthly land which is their birthright.

Randle McMurphy is a boisterous, cocksure rebel who, by his very nature, is going to take over any situation in which he finds himself. Until he is confronted with a situation in which he is truly the bull goose anything, and until he finds himself in a society which recognizes, by its dearth, true sympathy, understanding, and need of his affirmative qualities, McMurphy has never really found his "natural bent." Because he is asocial, rather than anti-social, McMurphy never recognizes in himself any falling short of the glory of God or humanity. In gambling, he has quickly recognized his luck and his prowess. It is not until he comes to recognize the lack of luck and the unfair infringement upon the masculine prowess in the inmates of the Cuckoo's Nest that he ever feels any obligation to God or man. It is inmate Harding who tells him

This world . . . belongs to the strong, my friend! The ritual of our existence is based on the strong devouring the weak. . . . All of us here are rabbits of varying ages and degrees, hippity-hopping through our Walt Disney world. Oh, don't misunderstand me, we're not in here because we are rabbits--we'd be rabbits wherever we were--we're all in here because we can't adjust to our rabbithood. We need a good strong wolf like the nurse to teach us our place.

(p. 60)

To McMurphy, the place is "A hell of a lot like a Chinese prison camp" (p. 62); ergo, all that is needed is a strong leader to set the men free. The inmates are careful to point out the pitfalls and punishments of such a game. They hope, but do not believe, that the big Irishman can get the best of Big Nurse. The one thing nobody thinks to mention is McMurphy's commitment to the institution, the risk he takes of extending his time there if he doesn't behave. All he wants is a little action and something to bet on. He doesn't know how badly the odds are stacked against him until someone from another ward mentions that Big Nurse has all the time in the world in which to set him free and all the power to free him on her own terms. Armed with this knowledge, the hero goes back to looking out for Number One, and the inmates drop back into purgatory.

The turning point is reached when inmate Cheswick drowns and McMurphy realizes that death is the only future for these men who have chosen to confine themselves to the asylum. Though Kesey is subtle in his suggestion that Cheswick's death is suicide, the subsequent symbolic suicides of other inmates show that this is what he meant. Cheswick is the one McMurphy most lets down: without the Irishman's support, he so loses control as to be sent to the disturbed ward. On the day he returns to the group, he tells McMurphy

that he could understand how he acted
and that it was surely the sharpest
thing to do, considering, and that if
he'd thought about Mack being committed
he'd never have put him on the spot like
he had the other day.

(p. 151)

Nevertheless, just before Cheswick made his fatal dive into the swimming pool, ". . . he said he did wish something mighta been done,

though . . ." (p. 151). A close reading of the passage confirms the suspicion that he never meant to come up again.

Soon after the Cheswick disaster, inmate Sefelt, an epileptic, has a seizure which occurs because of his neglect to take medication. That he is being crucified by McMurphy's betrayal is suggested by the effect the attack takes:

His hands are nailed out to each side with the palms up and the fingers jerking open and shut, just as I've watched men jerk at the Shock Shop strapped to the crossed table, . . .

(p. 154)

And as McMurphy looks down into Sefelt's face, "His face has commenced to take on that same haggard, puzzled look of pressure that the face on the floor has" (p. 155).

For the first time since he has entered the ward, McMurphy is forced to submit helplessly to the matriarchy which poisons its atmosphere. The mechanism is running smoothly once again: "the white hands of the Big Nurse float over the controls" (p. 156). And Chief Bromden is going back into the fog: "I feel like I'm floating in the dusty yellow air of the library, halfway to the bottom, halfway to the top" (p. 157). Even McMurphy is becoming apologetic and is forgetting how to laugh. Though he can never be forced to submit long to the rules of any society, he has always been bound by his own kind of morality. One of his most rigid thou-shalt-nots might be stated, in his vernacular, "Thou shalt not fink out." It is his own conscience, rather than any overt condemnation by the inmates, which makes him read accusation against him into their every subjection to indignity.

The situation reaches explosive proportions when Harding, after a particularly trying visit with his wife, makes a tentative plea to McMurphy: "What do you think?" (p. 159).

"Hell's bells, Harding!" McMurphy yells suddenly. "I don't know what to think! . . . All I know is this: nobody's very big in the first place, and it looks to me like everybody spends their whole life tearing everybody else down. I know what you want me to think; you want me to feel sorry for you, to think she's a real bitch. Well, you didn't make her feel like any queen either. Well, screw you and 'what do you think?' I've got worries of my own without getting hooked with yours. So just quit." He glares around the library at the other patients. "Alla you! Quit bugging me, goddammit!"

(p. 159)

Later, McMurphy apologizes to Harding for his outburst, and admits that something has been giving him bad dreams "this last miserable week." When Harding attempts to relieve the strain with a joke, McMurphy cannot laugh. His reactions to the events of the week show that he is undergoing the soul-searching which is a prelude to his acceptance of the messianic destiny. A later discussion of Christ himself, depicted by Nikos Kazantzakis, will show the same initial rejection of this responsibility, and the same suffering irritation which leaves a Christ no real choice in the matter.

McMurphy must resume his symbolic function as The Way and the Light, or, as Chief Bromden sees it, the power who can pull men out of the fog. It is, significantly, on a Friday when he decides he must give the men life and hope, even though their salvation might mean his physical destruction. And as Christ offered his body to

pilate's soldiers, McMurphy offers himself by crashing his arm through the large plateglass window in the nurse's station.

From his protagonist's recognition of himself as a savior, the author almost launches into a re-enactment of the life of Christ. He has McMurphy take twelve people (ten patients, the doctor, and a Mary Magdalene) on a fishing trip which is the most beautiful blend of Christian elements in the novel. In the trip, Kesey combines the fisherman concept associated with Christ: Christ's calming of the storm, the culmination of Christ's earthly ministry and the disciples' growing awareness of the reality that was Christ. Within the context of the novel, the fishing trip is a taste of life. Though the men are fearful of the risk (and Big Nurse does her best to point out the dangers inherent in such an adventure), McMurphy, like Christ, is able to quiet their inward fears, much as Christ calmed the storm. The result is that the disciples grow strong from the spiritual feast prepared by their teacher. And as they grow strong in self-assurance, McMurphy's strength ebbs.

When McMurphy is submitted to the shock treatments, it is symbolic of the crucifixion. Big Nurse portrays Pontius Pilate as she turns to "the people" for a verdict. She makes it appear that the group decided in a meeting that McMurphy should have shock treatments. And as McMurphy is strapped to the cross-shaped table, he jests, "Anointest my head with conductant. Do I get a crown of thorns?" (p. 237).

Further into the novel, the Lord's Supper is symbolized by the party McMurphy engineers in the ward. This event as a symbol can be supported in that it occurs in the late evening and early

morning hours, just as did the Passover Feast. Another support is the presence of the "cough syrup" concocted by McMurphy. This becomes as the wine, or blood of Christ--in this case, the blood of McMurphy.

Finally, as Christ presented salvation by the only way--his physical death--McMurphy presents salvation in the only way he can: he physically attacks Big Nurse, an action which can only lead to his death.

We couldn't stop him because we were the ones making him do it. It wasn't the nurse that was forcing him, it was our need. . . .

Only at the last--after he'd smashed through that glass door, her face swinging around, with terror forever ruining any other look she might ever try to use again, screaming when he grabbed for her and ripped her uniform all the way down the front, screaming again when the two nipples started from her chest and swelled out and out, bigger than anybody had ever even imagined, . . . did he show any sign that he might be anything other than a sane, willful, dogged man performing a hard duty that finally just had to be done, like it or not.

He gave a cry. At the last . . . he let himself cry out.

(p. 267)

Later, silenced once and for all, his "ministry" comes to an end, but again, like Christ, McMurphy leaves disciples to carry on his work. Several of the men leave the hospital; others, who cannot, transfer to other wards, that they might have life and have it more abundantly. And Chief Bromden at last lifts the steel and concrete panel in the tub room, puts it through the steel mesh imprisoning him, and escapes. McMurphy had told him how to gain his freedom, just as Christ left his message to the world.

When the reader discovers the above correlation of the story of Christ with the story of McMurphy, he can see why the latter cannot be dismissed as a mere anti-hero. Only insofar as he is a social reject is this true. Only when he is forced to submit to the power of the Combine is he seen as the typically unheroic, frustrated man in the modern captivity. But this period in McMurphy's life is only a brief interlude which he quickly rises above, in a kind of all-or-nothing Hemingway manner. If he is doomed to defeat, it will be on his own terms. Where he goes beyond Hemingway heroism and beyond defeat is in changing the social situation. He has taught others how to carry on his work--has even brought a Lazarus back to life (in the form of Chief Bromden) to be his Saint Paul. And because he does this, he is, again like Hemingway's heroes, destroyed but not defeated.

In the anti-hero, Jim Dixon, another kind of social outcast finds another kind of solution. The anti-hero is an egocentric person in search of personal salvation. He is looking for his own niche within the system. In Jim's case, that niche can be found if he will follow, rather than repress, his instincts. If Jim's instincts are somewhat more civilized than McMurphy's, so is his society. The environment of the Cuckoo's Nest is brutal, whereas Jim's surroundings are merely phoney and frustrating. In both novels, the only solution to the predicament is some form of revolution. Jim's is quiet, and meaningful mostly to himself. He has been an impotent, passive clown, unimportant in his position, unrecognized as an individual. The best he can do is to emerge from his revolt as less impotent, less passive: more a wheel in society than a cog in

that wheel. He can refuse to stumble his miserable way from day to day which leads only to the reward of being allowed to stumble through another year of the same. He will never be noble, but he can, at least, cease to be a public property.

The message to modern man contained in both Kesey's and Amis's works is this: man is doomed to failure when he forgets his individuality and tries to play society's game. When McMurphy tries to play it smart in order to escape his confinement, he discovers a sense of obligation to himself that won't allow him to turn the other apologetic cheek to his colleagues. McMurphy sees his attempt at self-preservation as unmanly: he is only true to himself when he becomes the savior of men whose need is real; Dixon learns that his attempt to take on the role of the neurotic Margaret's personal Christ is damaging to both of them because her need is not real: she can and must save herself. For Dixon, self-preservation is the manly thing.

In the hierarchy of heroism, Kesey's protagonist takes modern man one step farther toward salvation in society. Jim's resistance brings individual reward; McMurphy's sacrifice brings a group of men back to life. But the full glorification of the human sacrifice reaches its culmination in Nikos Kazantzakis's portrayal of the man, Jesus Christ. The next chapter will investigate this stage in the evolutionary cycle of the hero in literature.

CHAPTER III
THE JUMP OF FAITH

In his Pseudonyms of Christ in the Modern Novel, Edwin Moseley states that many intellectuals have turned, in their writing, to "highly individualistic and introspective solutions"; they have become disillusioned with any social answer to man's dilemma and "have somehow made the jump of faith to transcendental and supernatural answers."¹ While Nikos Kazantzakis's novel, The Last Temptation of Christ, does involve a "jump of faith," it would be a mistake to dismiss the work as an escape into transcendentalism out of denial of any social hope for mankind.

Kazantzakis's faith is as much a belief in the human's ability to transcend his purely human nature as is Friedrich Nietzsche's. Both authors proceed from the belief that the answer for man is here on earth and that man (or at least the aware individual) can bring out the divinity within himself. Theirs is the kind of belief in humanity expressed by William Blake: "All deities reside within the human breast."² While Nietzsche portrays his "Overman" in the prophet, Zarathustra, Kazantzakis chooses Christ as his prophet--a modern Christ for modern man:

¹Edwin M. Moseley, Pseudonyms of Christ in the Modern Novel (Pittsburgh, 1962), p. 209.

²William Blake, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," The Portable Blake (New York, 1946), p. 264.

. . . he wished to make Jesus a figure for a new age, while still retaining everything in the Christ-legend which speaks to the condition of all men of all ages.³

The traditional Christian salvation, involving faith in an external, as well as an internal God, is an element of Kazantzakis's answer for humanity; however, his Christ is depicted more as the Son of Man than the Son of God. Jesus is faced with the same obstacles to spiritual freedom as any man. He is as prone as the proverbial philistine to ignore the suffering of his fellow-man--to shrug off social responsibility and "let someone else do it." He faces the same difficulty as any anti-hero in transcending his all-too-human nature and becoming, by sheer force of will, a spiritual being. In his struggle, both as a man of will and a man of faith, he is able to set a pattern for individuals of all ages who are willing to learn, as Kazantzakis did, that ". . . freedom is not a reward for the struggle but rather the very process of struggle itself. . . ."⁴

In depicting Christ as both a man of will and a man of faith, The Last Temptation of Christ is a unique blending of the two cults of existentialist philosophy: the theistic and the atheistic. When Christ finally accepts the responsibility to save mankind, he makes a commitment both to God and to man. Because his indomitable human spirit can find the strength to say "No" to temptation, even while being crucified, he is reminiscent of Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and other French writers of the Resistance who discovered the strength of the human will to say "No," even under the most severe torture.

³P.A. Bien, "A Note on the Author and His Use of Language," in Nikos Kazantzakis, The Last Temptation of Christ (New York, 1960), p. 496.

⁴Ibid., p. 495.

Because he must achieve victory over the physical and become all spirit, Christ makes the commitment of the religious existentialist:

The religious existentialists . . . stress the man of faith rather than the man of will. They interpret man's existential condition as a state of alienation from his essential nature which is God-like, the problem of his life being to heal the chasm between the two, that is, to find salvation. Freedom . . . involves an acceptance of responsibility for choice and a commitment to one's choice. This is the meaning of faith, a faith like Abraham's, the commitment which is an agonizing sacrifice of one's own desire and will and dearest treasure to God's will.⁵

In The Last Temptation, Christ's own desire and will and dearest treasure is his humanity. He would enjoy good food, wine and laughter. He would marry and have children, and settle down to making household furniture--would live as joyously as possible under Roman oppression. He would let God choose someone else to fight for his people's physical and spiritual salvation. All he wants is to be left alone.

When God refuses to accept such excuses as illiteracy, idleness or fear, Christ turns from sulky despair to defiance. He will continue to fashion the crosses upon which other zealots--both enemies of Rome and Messianic pretenders--are crucified. In time, God will hate him enough to choose somebody else. But in becoming the cross-maker, Jesus defeats his own purpose: he succeeds not in making God hate him, but only in further ostracizing himself from all human intercourse. It is impossible for him to flee the claws of God, which have fastened themselves in his skull: gently, when he was

⁵Gordon E. Bigelow, "A Primer of Existentialism," in Alton C. Morris, et. al., The Modern Essay (New York, 1968), p. 255.

twelve years old, more forcefully with every year of his growth. He cannot flee the celibacy imposed upon him by God, any more than he can flee the guilt for Mary Magdalene's whoredom--a condition which his physical denial of her brought about. He cannot ignore the suffering around him, both political and spiritual. As God refuses to accept his illiteracy and his moral and spiritual weakness, Judas Iscariot, who represents the militaristic forces which would free the Hebrew from the Roman yoke, refuses to allow Jesus to languish in oblivion. Both human and superhuman forces combine to remind the cross-maker constantly of his unwilling destiny to become the savior of mankind.

Mary, the mother of Christ, is equally plagued, but is somehow less forgiveable in the whining, embittered lamentation of her lot. She, too, has been denied human happiness: her husband is a paralyzed old man, her only son a source of shame. Without hope for a daughter-in-law and grandchildren, she must remain forever barren. Gladly would she exchange the honor of being Mary, blessed among women, for the privilege of being plain Mary, woman-fulfilled. "Let him marry a nice young girl from a respectable home--with a dowry," is her worldly plea;

let him be a liberal provider, have children,
and then we'll all go out together every
Saturday to the promenade--Grandma, children
and grandchildren--so that everyone can admire
us.⁶

But the rabbi, uncle of Jesus, reprimands her: ". . . if God listened to mothers we would all rot away in a bog of security and easy living" (p. 62).

⁶ Nikos Kazantzakis, The Last Temptation of Christ (New York, 1960), p. 62. Future references to the novel will be in the text of the paper.

The voice of matriarchy is here reminiscent of its symbolic function in the other novels investigated. Margaret Peel, in Lucky Jim, shows the same neurotic tendency as Mary to wedge all of mankind into an orderly framework, that she might be allowed her own selfish fulfillment within the conformity of a secure society. Jim, or anyone as passive as Jim, must be controlled by the indignity, submission, and the feminine tyranny which a stable society demands. In like manner, Big Nurse controls the inmates of the Cuckoo's Nest: her power serves to corrode men's bodies and souls. Mary, as Kazantzakis presents her, would have more potential for the destruction of man's rightful place in the universe than either Margaret Peel or Big Nurse: it takes the power of God to lend Jesus the strength and wisdom to rise above her feminine ideal of peace at any price. The will, it would seem, is a masculine element of the human personality, and Kazantzakis makes it clear why God has always been referred to as masculine.

As is the case with any man, Christ initially submits himself to something higher than his own feminine cowardice more out of frustration than acquiescence. His masculinity refuses to be submerged. Christ's decision to leave his mother's home and set out for the monastery in the desert is a longing for refuge, rather than a submission of his will to God's. His desire is to ". . . shake Man from his feet like so much dust" (p. 65). If he rationalizes that his desires are beginning to merge with God's, his remains a selfish journey, with personal salvation as its basis. But it is a beginning: the same kind of beginning every individual must make in breaking

from the generalized morality of his age or society. Man is as much following Nietzsche's prophet, Zarathustra, as he is Christ when he seeks to overcome his complacent acceptance of the evil and cowardice within his human nature.

In Thus Spake Zarathustra, Nietzsche presents a formula for the metamorphosis of the individual: a man who would surpass his human nature, says the prophet, must be able to bear much, like the camel. With his burdens, he goes off into the desert, away from the herd. In isolation, his first metamorphosis takes place: the spirit becomes a lion, "who would conquer his freedom to be master in his own desert."⁷ Here he seeks out his last master. He wants to fight with the great dragon. Thou Shalt is the name of the dragon. The lion in man is needed for the spirit to create freedom for itself-- to give a sacred "No," even to duty. But the lion cannot create new values; for that, he must become a child.

The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning. . . . a sacred "Yes." For the game of creation a sacred "Yes" is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who has been lost to the world now conquers his own world.⁸

In his journey to the desert, Christ is aware of heavy footsteps which pursue him. Initially, he believes them to be his mother's; later, he comes to recognize and accept them as those of his impending martyrdom and death. He is, at first, running away from his burdens, rather than bearing them with him into the desert.

⁷Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spake Zarathustra," in The Portable Nietzsche, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York, 1945), p. 130.

⁸Idem.

In much the same manner as the inmates of the Cuckoo's Nest seek refuge in a locked-away world, Christ seeks asylum in the monastic life. To hear him tell his uncle, the rabbi,

I'm afraid of my own shadow . . . I'm
afraid! Afraid! Afraid! If you look
inside me, you'll see Fear, a trembling
rabbit, sitting in my bowels . . .

(p. 142)

is to be reminded of Harding's observation concerning his fellow-inmates of the mental hospital: "All of us here are rabbits. . . . We're all in here because we can't adjust to our rabbithood."⁹ And later in Kazantzakis's novel, the cowardice of Christ's disciples is described in like metaphor: "And now, their ears sticking up like rabbits', they trembled and stood on tiptoe, ready to flee" (p. 278).

It is only after his recognition by John the Baptist and his baptism in the River Jordan that Jesus begins his first metamorphosis. In his second trip to the desert, his spirit becomes a lion--combines his message of love for humanity with John the Baptist's apocalyptic warnings: God's grace with God's requirements for salvation. Jesus has, indeed, won the battle with the Great Dragon: Thou Shalt. God's will and Christ's will have merged. He who had been lost to the world at last gives the sacred "Yes" which commits him to the obligation to be master of his own world: the kingdom of heaven on earth.

In the introduction to his novel, Kazantzakis says, "This book was written because I wanted to offer a supreme model to the man who struggles . . ." (p. 3). He points out the stages of Christ's

⁹ Ken Kesey, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (New York, 1962), p. 61.

struggle as those all men must pass through:

That part of Christ's nature which was profoundly human helps us to understand him and love him and pursue his Passion as though it were our own.

(p. 3)

The dual substance of Christ, Kazantzakis recognizes as the dual substance of man. About himself, he says:

I loved my body and did not want it to perish; I loved my soul and did not want it to decay. I have fought to reconcile these two primordial forces which are so contrary to each other, and make them realize that they are not enemies, but, rather, fellow workers . . .

(p. 1)

The discovery of the dual substance of man is hardly unique to Kazantzakis or to the twentieth century. The story of man's struggle to reconcile his physical and spiritual drives is perhaps the oldest theme in the chronicles of civilization. Whether man is born in original sin or a state of innocence--whether corrupted by his own nature or by society--whether God's child or Satan's--the mystery of his place in the universe has been, throughout the ages of mankind, an all-pervasive concern. Whether man is able to conquer his own world through his indomitable human will and accept it as meaningless except in his own individual commitment to it, or whether he is able to heal the chasm between God's will and his own, he must struggle for an existence which is something more than vegetable growth. "Man in the sum total of his own actions--no more, no less."¹⁰

¹⁰ Bigelow, op. cit., p. 254.

That both William Blake, in the late eighteenth century, and Friedrich Nietzsche, in the nineteenth, could foreshadow the direction in which man is heading in modern times testifies to the imagination of all men in all ages who concern themselves with the human predicament. Both the eighteenth-century poet-artist and the nineteenth-century philosopher created systems which would agree with--indeed presage--the central tenet of the existentialist: "life can only be understood by man in terms of his involvement in it and commitment to it."¹¹ There is nothing new in the intellectuals' turning to "highly individualistic and introspective solutions"¹², but surely it is more than coincidence that such solutions should agree in their emphases on the power of the human imagination. It is always the artist who engages in pursuit of self-recognition. It is the man of vision who can see the divine potential within mankind, whether it is expressed in purely social, transcendental or supernatural terms.

The "jump of faith," then, is as much an imaginative as a religious experience. Kazantzakis's faith in the individual who struggles is expressed in his portrayal of Jesus Christ as a man who went through the anti-heroic phase, of a Jim Dixon before he learned to trust in his potential to be something better; the frightened phase of the self-committed inmate of an asylum who tried to hide from the world and from his own divine destiny; the tortures of the ordinary human, like Kazantzakis, who knows the anguish "in choosing between love and the ax, between household joys and the loneliness and exile of the martyr, between liberation of the body alone and

¹¹Ibid., p. 250.

¹²Moseley, op. cit., p. 209.

liberation of both body and soul."¹³ Man's last temptation, like Christ's, is to forget the struggle and submerge himself in the imperfect, material world rather than seek out the full divinity inherent in his human nature.

¹³Bien, op. cit., p. 496.

CHAPTER IV
THE CLASSIC PRIMITIVE

In his novel Sometimes a Great Notion, Ken Kesey juxtaposes a born winner with a born loser--a new hero, more classical than modern, with an anti-heroic victim of the modern, meaningless universe. Hank Stamper is the personification of what Kazantzakis calls "the man who struggles"; yet Hank's will to win is more an instinctive, primitive quality than it is an intellectual decision to choose existence over essence. Hank's half-brother, Leland Stanford Stamper, personifies the intellectual who is

. . . morose, almost paranoid, consumed by self-pity, tottering on the brink of nihilism and alienation, but clinging to a transcendent view of man's fate, though all life seems to negate that vision . . .¹

The conflict between the Stamper brothers is representative of the twentieth-century struggle, in which the individual must win freedom through his determination to find life, even if he has to risk death in search of it. What Lee Stamper learns is to master the courage "to act with morality and love in a universe in which God is dead . . . to see everyone as a suffering Christ."² He begins his quest in the manner of other absurd heroes whose vision is of an apparent lack of meaning in the world. Out of his leaning

¹David D. Galloway, The Absurd Hero in American Fiction (Texas, 1966), p. 124.

²Ibid., p. 122.

toward "popular nihilism"--through an apprenticeship in heroism served under Hank--he concludes with a poetic affirmation of existence, a hymn of recognition of the significance of life and love:

For there is always a sanctuary more, a door that can never be forced, whatever the force, a last inviolable stronghold that can never be taken, whatever the attack; your vote can be taken, your name, your innards, even your life, but that last stronghold can only be surrendered. And to surrender it for any reason other than love is to surrender love. Hank had always known this without knowing it, and by making him doubt it briefly I made it possible for both of us to discover it. And I knew that to win my love, my life, I would have to win back for myself the right to this last stronghold.

Which meant winning back the strength I had bartered away years before for a watered-down love.

Which meant winning back the pride I had exchanged for pity.³

"Hank had always known this without knowing it." For him, too, a recognition must be effected before he and his brother can "wholeheartedly embrace for our first and last and oh so long overdue dance of Hate and Hurt and Love" (p. 584). So much a part of Hank's character is the unconquerable will to win, he cannot believe the weakness of others to be anything but a sham, or pretense for laziness. What he comes to learn, however, is that weakness is

. . . true and real. I used to accuse the kid of faking his weakness. But faking proves the weakness is real. Or you wouldn't be so weak as to fake it. No, you can't ever fake being weak. You can only fake being strong.
(p. 503)

³Ken Kesey, Sometimes a Great Notion (New York, 1964), p. 594. Future references to the novel will be in the text of the paper.

(And if you can only fake being strong, not being weak, then the kid has done to me what I set off to do to him!
He's straightened me out.)

(p. 504)

The Stamper family is a race of titans. Amongst them, only the strong survive. The heritage of Hank is that of a pure strain of pioneers: wiry, obstinate men whose restless need to conquer new frontiers caused them to move ever-westward until they reached Oregon, where the only frontier left was nature herself. Survival depended on fighting the Wakonda Auga River, a vicious antagonist, determined to undermine the foundations of their home. Symbolically, the constant battle with the river represents the Stampers' independence from all forces, both natural and social. As quickly as the river eats into the banks, the Stampers nail in their own foundation of planks and wire and barrel staves, even pieces of the corrugated aluminum roofing.

And all this haphazard collection is laced together and drawn back firm against the land by webs of wire rope and log chain. These webs join four main two-inch heavy-duty wire-core construction cables that are lashed to four big anchoring firs behind the house. The trees are protected from the sawing bite of the cables by a wrapping of two-by-fours and have supporting guy lines of their own running to wooden deadmen buried deep in the mountainside.

Under normal circumstances the house presents an impressive sight: a two-story monument of wood and obstinacy that has neither retreated from the creep of erosion nor surrendered to the terrible pull of the river.

(p. 5)

Likewise, the Stamper empire is dedicated to fighting against the erosion of big business on their independent logging operation. It must fight to maintain its independence against the creeping

socialism which threatens to undermine the heroic manliness of a titanic race. As Hank's father, Old Henry, dedicated his life to retaining his self-sufficiency against the indignities foisted upon him by the pseudo-charitable hypocrites of Wakonda and managed to build his own empire after the desertion of his father from the pitiless frontier, Hank must carry on the motto Old Henry nailed up over his bed: "Never give a inch." And though Hank comes close to capitulating, he never at any time gives more than a quarter-inch. His life is a succession of incidents which forces upon him that inbred and omnipresent struggle for identity and dignity which is the lot of all men who struggle.

Hank's cousin, Joe Ben Stamper, is identifiable with Hank as an instinctive rebel, but Joe Ben is more comic and intuitive than Hank has the freedom to be. Joe Ben won his identity when the handsomeness of the face he inherited from his father was so carved up as to make an ugly, comic individual of him. This release from following the sins of his father, who was a drunkard and ladies' man, allows Joe Ben to embrace all of the comic, primitive, affirmative drives of his own unique personality. In his release from the old bonds, he is able to achieve an empathy with Hank's unavoidable heroic destiny. He believes Hank to be as unconquerable as Old Henry, just as he would inevitably have followed the path of his father, had not fate intervened. He is able to articulate the struggle Hank is forced to wage. He knows that Hank will continually be called on to fight battles he would just as soon avoid. Everyone, Joe Ben observes, likes to see the big tree felled, and Hank is his community's big tree, so he might as well get used to the idea of

the constant and unyielding struggle, against man and nature, which is his destiny. Such a fight will continue "from now to doomsday, so you might as well accept what you know already and see what you can find about it to have a ball with" (p. 314). What Hank must learn is to accept that inevitable struggle and glory in it.

Lee Stamper represents a quixotic appendage to the Stamper clan, and his character is the epitome of an appendage: arm without body, intelligence without essence, soul in limbo. He is a Stamper by heritage but not by training. He is his mother's child by appearance, indoctrination, and lack of paternal interest.

When Hank's mother succumbed to the hopeless fight of her own anonymity and weakness, her unfitness to survive in the wilderness, Old Henry went east to find a replacement. The fifty-year-old Henry's cocksure manliness led him to accomplish what he never doubted he could do: return to Oregon with the prize he went after. His selection was Myra, a young coed home for the summer from her studies at Stanford. Myra spent her first year in Wakonda "wondering whatever on God's green earth had possessed her" (p. 33). After the second year, she definitely determined to leave. Meanwhile, however, she discovered herself pregnant with Lee, and her life thereafter was a postponement of leaving and living until it was too late ever to return to the only meaning she'd ever known: her coed existence. And when she was forced to recognize the hopelessness of returning to the womb of the university, she committed suicide.

Old Henry never appeared to notice her dissatisfaction. He was busy expanding the family logging operation, and the only notice he took of his second son was to christen him:

The old man . . . took no special notice of the blessed event other than christening the boy Leland Stanford Stamper in what he considered a favor to his young wife; he stomped into her room in Wakonda, calk boots and all, trailing sawdust, mud, and the stink of machine oil, and announced, "Little honey, I intend to let you call that boy there after that school you're forever mooning about quittin'. How does that strike you?"

(p. 33)

In the years that followed, Old Henry took no more notice of Lee than that. He insisted on raising Hank to be as strong and self-sufficient as he was, but he allowed Myra the complete raising of Lee. The boys were twelve years apart, and Hank was so close to his cousin, Joe Ben, as to need no other brother. And so Lee grew up in a matriarchal, bookworm atmosphere, alienated from the kind of hell-raising masculinity which characterized a Stamper man.

Hank did make some attempt to introduce his brother to the masculine world and its games, but Lee felt too intimidated by Hank's seemingly effortless successes to risk any involvement in like skills. Lee was not capable of understanding Hank's and his father's good-natured teasing: he felt he was constantly being ridiculed--that it was safer not to act than to risk failure. His mother reinforced that cautious attitude.

Prior to his return to Wakonda as a man, Lee's relatives met to discuss the training he ought to have to be a successful logger, as well as a bonafide Stamper:

Now to the problem at hand: who's gonna teach thisyere boy to ride a motorcycle n' doodle a cousin an' all that sorta thing? . . . Who's gonna learn him to shave with a ax blade? To nut a nigger? We got to tend to these details. Who's gonna see to him gettin' a tattoo on his hand?

(p. 77)

But Lee, unlike his brother, is no Paul Bunyan of a man, nor was he raised to be.

Myra made the break from Wakonda when Lee was twelve years old, using his further education as her excuse. But her actual reason was the loss of Hank, who had enlisted in the army. She had seduced Hank on his sixteenth birthday and subsequently earned him a reputation hard to live with in Wakonda society. Myra's only meaning in her Oregon existence was to attempt an emasculation of Hank, out of revenge against his father. This was the watered-down love which Lee accepted as his only reality and Hank submitted to out of the same strange kind of compassion he felt for his half-brother.

For some two years previous to his mother's taking him back east, Lee had been aware of her relationship with Hank. For two years he had been peering through the hole he had drilled between his and his mother's room, vicariously learning about sex in the same manner as he vicariously learned about all of life. Hank's relationship with his mother gave Lee the excuse for a vicious hatred of his brother which was as much jealousy as outraged virtue. During the boatride across the Wakonda Auga, he threatened to come back one day and get even. Hank's response was, "Anytime you're big enough, bub" (p. 41).

The first view Kesey gives his reader of Leland Stanford Stamper is that of an absurd hero, twelve years removed from his Oregon background, about to receive the postcard which will bring him back to the struggle promised at his leave-taking. Joe Ben Stamper sent the card for Hank, saying that Old Henry was out of commission with a bad arm and leg, and that Lee was needed to meet

the contract deadline for a logging operation. To get around union rules, the operation had to be a family enterprise: anyone hired must be a relative. "Since you're the only footloose relative left not already working for us, what you say, Lee?" wrote Joe Ben (p. 41). "And penciled at the bottom, in a thicker, stronger hand: You should be a big enough guy now, bub" (p. 41).

The postcard literally brings Lee back to life. Simultaneous with its receipt--as the postman was in the act of dropping it into Lee's mailbox--was the abortive attempt at suicide which underlined Lee's meaningless existence:

I close the door and lock it. Dishtowel, wet, across the bottom. Check all windows, moving cryptically about my task. Then open all the jets on all the wall heaters . . . turn on all the burners of that godawful grimy stove. . . . Then, satisfied with the arrangement, having removed my shoes . . . I climb onto the bed to await sleep.

But, as Lee observed, "even the Mad Dane of Denmark would have allotted himself a last cigarette" (p. 62). And as he performed that last ritual, while the postman was dropping the card into the slot, Lee flicked his cigarette lighter and blew out all the windows in the place. At the same time, he blew the postman across the lawn, and a strategic retreat from the consequences of that act seemed wise.

Lee has become so much a failure, in spite of his graduate-school status, that he cannot even commit suicide properly. He cannot even retreat into madness, for, as a psychiatrist informed him,

No, Ieland, not you. You, and in fact quite a lot of your generation, have in some way been exiled from that particular sanctuary. It's become almost impossible for you to 'go mad' in the classical sense. At one time people conveniently 'went mad' and were never heard from again. . . . you are too hip to yourself on a psychological level.

(p. 68)

The psychiatrist goes on to say that the best Lee can hope for is a short hitch at Bellevue, and that the best psychiatry can offer is "plain old schizophrenia with delusional tendencies" (p. 68).

And so the only possibility for Lee's existence is to prove Thomas Wolfe wrong--that he can go home again. He has plumbed the depths of nihilism and found even that lacking. His plan is to seize the opportunity afforded him to defeat his brother. Such a cause, negative as it is, becomes the beginning of Lee's life. It is a reason for living. His plan, however, is based on previous failure, organized on the power of weakness, and eventually carried through as a battle of weakness over strength. Lee finds his modus operandi in Hank's wife, Vivien, and his plan of action is to use Vivien's frustrated matriarchy as his weapon to conquer his brother. Like the society of Wakonda, he will rely on trickery and inferiority to evoke a cheap victory. And he will settle for sympathy rather than win love, just as years before he had settled for the watered-down love of his mother.

It requires an ultimate battle with Hank--a literal fight for life in which Lee is forced to fight back rather than retreat--to make Lee aware of his potential manliness. During the fight, he notices the peculiar fact that he is a good two inches taller than

his brother; also, that physical pain is negligible compared to the enduring pain of weakness. In this fight to the finish, Hank learns something, too: he has to fight the inevitable battle, rather than try to emulate Lee's kind of victory through weakness. Weakness cannot be faked, and faked weakness is a defeat: Hank must play the winning game which his spirit demands and which he has only momentarily relinquished. Both brothers fight for their lives, and the fight is a draw.

What Kesey tells the reader of his novel is that there are still heroes left in the modern world. Some men, he submits, have remained so strong as to never succumb to the pressures of living in society; others are still capable of learning that freedom from nothingness can be found if they have the requisite courage to engage in the never-ending struggle to retain their masculine place in the universe. Kesey, Amis, and Kazantzakis have illustrated in their works the question of man's need to maintain his individuality, but not at the price of nihilism. Lee Stamper learns that too much involvement in himself will "cancel out the universe."⁴ He grows to recognize, as did J.D. Salinger, that "Hell is the inability to love."⁵ As Maurice Hertzog expresses it:

. . . in overstepping our limitations, in touching the extreme boundaries of man's world, we have come to know something of its splendour. In my worse moments of anguish I seemed to discover the deep significance of

⁴Galloway, op. cit., p. 134.

⁵J.D. Salinger, Sergeant X, quoted in Galloway, op. cit., p. 125.

existence of which till then I had been unaware. . . . The marks of my ordeal are apparent on my body. I was saved and I had won my freedom. This freedom, which I shall never lose, has given me the assurance and serenity of a man who has fulfilled himself. It has given me the rare joy of loving that which I used to despise.⁶

For Hank and Lee both, to rejoin the world without sacrificing their integrity means to rejoin the titanic race which the Stamper family represents. The weak and the parasitic eventually negate themselves; there is no need to be concerned with them. They may ". . . take your vote, your innards, even your life, but that last stronghold can only be surrendered. And to surrender it for any reason other than love is to surrender love" (p. 127).

⁶ Maurice Hertzog, quoted in Galloway, op. cit., p. 126.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The anti-hero, as defined in this study, is impotent and negative, lost in the social milieu, haunted by an awareness of his meaningless role in a too-sophisticated universe. The examples of anti-heroes chosen from modern fiction--Jim Dixon, Randle Patrick McMurphy, and Leland Stanford Stamper--have been used as representatives of what Ihab Hassan calls "extreme stances of alienation."¹ Each, in some way, has found himself severed from ". . . the traditional bond between the hero and his society."² Each is forced to find some meaning in life for himself, whether it be a niche within the system or the creation, out of rebellion, of a personal place in the sun.

A common trait which the above protagonists share is a sense of the absurdity in their lives, and it is their intelligent recognition of the comedy within the tragedy which makes them sympathetic characters rather than simple neurotics. The creators of such anti-heroes have succeeded in presenting their environments as the primary villains; thus, the modern dilemma of individual man versus middle-class society provides a basic theme for all of the novels. As Hassan describes such characters,

¹Ihab Hassan, "The Anti-Hero," The Odyssey Reader (New York, 1968), p. 517.

²Ibid., p. 518.

The image of the self in its standing, and recently embittered, quarrel with culture--indeed in its quarrel with itself, . . . comes to focus in the figure of the anti-hero.³

The search of the anti-hero is for love and self-discovery; his motives are thus more personal than social:

To become someone, to know who or what one is, to reach finally another human being with love, and to do so in terms that society may censure, this is the passionate, bitter concern of the modern anti-hero.⁴

Both Jim Dixon and Leland Stamper resolve their conflicts by reaching another human being with love. Randle Patrick McMurphy and Kazantzakis's Christ find their lives to be meaningful only as they can lead others to know themselves. They can only find significance for their own lives in the sacrifice which fulfills their destinies.

In contrast to the anti-hero, Hank Stamper emerges as a reaffirmation of the classical heroic ideal. He is instinctively aware of his position as a giant among men. He never needs to seek out any position in society, nor does he feel any obligation to take the responsibility for the well-being of lesser men. He is answerable primarily to himself; secondarily, to those he loves. He will not surrender his strength and integrity for any reason other than love. Though he loses his wife and his best friend, though his father is on the verge of death and Hank himself may die to prove the titanic majesty of his heritage, he will never relinquish his will to win.

³Ibid., p. 517.

⁴Ibid., p. 519.

Hank Stamper is the humanistic counterpart of Kazantzakis's transcendental Christ. He is his own suffering Christ, and needs no example for living other than his instinctive courage and fitness within his race and his universe. Randle Patrick McMurphy, too, has this instinct for living as a strong man should. He exudes a spirit of life and fun and fearlessness which sets the example for others who could live life as fully. Jim Dixon has all the instincts of rebellion against the meaningless facets of life; however, he is without the power to create a universe of his own.

As the thinking man must resolve his own doubts rather than accept formulated answers, the creative spirit of the writer of modern fiction has likewise sought the answer to the meaninglessness of the universe. When saints and angels become repressors and morality becomes an evil clothed in righteousness, and when socialism makes of mankind a herd without a shepherd, man is forced to create his own heaven and hell. From William Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, to Friedrich Nietzsche's Thus Spake Zarathustra, and on into the twentieth century, writers and philosophers have tended to emphasize the creativity in man as a major factor in his existential struggle. Ever since Nietzsche's anguished cry, "God is dead!", man has been seeking some meaning in life to substitute for faith in a supernatural purpose. Human society has not become the force for good which Blake had hoped it might; at the same time, though the Church might seize man's soul, the State, his mind, Industry, his energy, none of these forces appears to have totally succeeded in subduing his imagination.

51

Following the route of these thinkers, much of modern fiction has portrayed man's intellectual voyage down to nihilism and back again to affirmation. In examining this literary cycle--from classical heroism to anti-heroism, thence from the ridiculous back to the sublime, this study has attempted to illustrate trend through example. From Jim Dixon, who clowns his way out of embittered introspection, through luck, to a niche for himself within middle-class society--to Randle Patrick McMurphy, who sacrifices himself to create a new life for self-committed escapists from reality--to Christ, who set a saintly example for mankind--emerges an example for humanity in Hank Stamper. The man who would follow his example, as did Lee Stamper, is one who would win back for himself the right to a pride which he has exchanged for pity and comfort.

The theme of the exiled hero in a meaningless universe is as old as Don Quixote and as new as Hank Stamper. Variations on the theme have ranged from Dostoevsky to Camus, from the absurd hero to the transcendental, with treatments including the tragic, the comic, and the tragicomic. This study has attempted to show, by definitive example, the direction in which that exiled hero is going. And that direction appears to be toward a renewal of universal connections: the hero today would attempt to rejoin the world without sacrificing his integrity. It can be concluded that today's hero is the creative man who struggles--the man who, like Hertzog, has discovered the rare joy of loving that which he formerly despised.

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