THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNHEROIC HERO

IN THE MODERN NOVEL

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CHAPTER I

THE CHANGING HERO

The term hero connotes for most of us "a man of distinguished valor, intrepidity or enterprise in danger; a central figure in any remarkable action or event; a great, illustrious, or extraordinary person."¹ In such figures we retain an interest even when we outgrow the hero-worship of youth. One basic cause of this lasting interest in heroes is the indispensability of leadership in all social life and in almost every form of social organization—the need for leaders who are centers of responsibility and men of decision and action.

Also, hero-worship is kept alive through our methods of developing attitudes in young people, for the history of every nation is represented to its youth in terms of great individuals, either mythical or real. One contemporary sociologist, Paul Meadows, says, "Whether professional or folkic, the hero must serve as the carrier of cultural values,"² and "The promotional uses of the hero must not be overlooked. There are times when heroes must be manufactured as a morale

²Paul Meadows, Southwestern Social Quarterly, XXVI (December, 1945), 247.
or sales device." Even on higher levels of instruction the heroic approach is not abandoned in study; nor do we necessarily dispense with heroes when we move into the study of economic and social forces, for the same qualities of greatness are to be found in pioneers and leaders in those fields as are found in truly heroic characters in any age. According to Meadows, "Our heroes are now what they have always been, the measure of the range of our values;" and Fishwick both defines hero and expresses an opinion as to the importance of the study of heroes:

In classic times, heroes were god-men; in the Middle Ages they were saints; in the Renaissance they were universal (and very human) men; in the nineteenth century they were "Christians and gentlemen;" and in our time, they are the self-made men. For every culture certain men embody dramatically what most men want to be; and they become the heroes. Hero-symbols are one of the components of a civilization's ideology.

It does not necessarily follow, then, that heroes are gone because knights in armor are gone. For almost every human situation, regardless of how commonplace it may seem, there is a hero who must overcome obstacles and win over circumstances; consequently, whether he be a pioneer hero, a frontiersman, a businessman, statesman, or soldier, the man who is honorably shrewd, capable, independent, forceful, and courageous is still found as the central figure in much of the literature of the day.

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3 Ibid., p. 246.  
4 Ibid., p. 245.  
5 Marshall Fishwick, A Bibliography of the American Hero, p. 3.
Early in the nineteenth century, however, a new type of central character, or hero, began to develop in prose fiction. It is difficult to say just when or where this new hero made his first appearance, but somewhere in the course of the development of the central character his shrewdness became fraud, his forcefulness became lust for power, his initiative became greed; and oftentimes he appeared without independence, a weakling with no saving virtue. In an article in the *North American Review* in 1933, Louise Field discussed the change appearing in the hero of fiction:

Among the many phenomena to be observed at the present day few are more striking or more significant than the almost complete disappearance of the acclaimed hero. Once dominant, he has now vanished, not only from literature and the stage, but from life. Which is more important. The old phraseology, it is true, still lingers on. Occasionally you hear people speak of the hero and heroine of some play or novel. But nowadays it is only the heroine who is ever permitted to be truly heroic, and that more and more reluctantly, more and more grudgingly. As far as the so-called serious novel is concerned, the hero has been superseded by a whining, sniveling creature with less backbone than an ordinary self-respecting jelly-fish, while on the stage he has only too often been replaced by a wise-cracking bounder with the conceit as well as the morals of a rooster and the intelligence of a hen. If the hero of old was more or less superman, his successor is certainly a good deal of a subman.\(^6\)

Now, no one needs to be told that men are good, bad, and variable; but one might ask what conditions have focused the emphasis on the bad and the variable. There are those who say that this figure is the product of a bitter realism;

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there are others who contend that the portrayal of such characters is a type of social criticism which is actually the product of idealism.\footnote{Hiram Friedsam, "Entrepreneurs and Bureaucrats as Heroes: A Footnote for a Sociology of Contemporary American Literature," Paper read at the annual convention of the Southwestern Social Science Association, Dallas, April 3, 1953.} Meadows asserts that occasionally the hero is utilized negatively and that Emerson made that suggestion in these words: "The reputations of the nineteenth century will one day be quoted to prove its barbarism."\footnote{Meadows, op. cit.} The purpose of this study, however, is less to attempt to define the motives of the authors who have created the unheroic hero than to substantiate the thesis that such a hero has become common as the central character in fiction.

Since it is a fact that each age has its own interpretation of experience and that experience takes on the color of the age in which it occurs, and since the hero is, usually, a reflection of his age, it seems important in this study to point out what appear to be, from this perspective, some of the principal forces causing him to develop as he has. Concerning the relationship of the hero and literature, Henry Seidel Canby has said,

> But books must play their part, also; for it is the printed and the spoken word which establishes the hero
or heroic type in the popular imagination, though the man and type must be made by action.9

As "the structure of the novel is such that sociological analysis will center on the hero"¹⁰ and as there is evidence that the novel is one of the best mirrors of the features of an age, the study will be limited to an examination of the novel. In his book The Novel and the Modern World, David Daiches states,

Civilization refers to attitudes and actions of people and fiction uses the attitudes and actions of people as the raw material out of which to construct the pattern we call a novel. No other art does this quite so directly; not even other forms of literature.¹¹

Alan Reynolds Thompson substantiates that idea in The Anatomy of Drama:

In recent times we have come increasingly to concern ourselves with the ordinary mortal who is acted upon rather than acting and less and less with the exceptional hero who wills and fights on the grand scale. The old pieties that fostered heroism have largely passed away, along with the old monarchies and aristocracies. . . . The novel is well adapted as a medium to handle the unheroic protagonists of naturalism, the "little men" who are chosen for their roles not because of their similarity to the mass of men. The novel can not only tell their story, but also supply the philosophic commentary that is needed to render such a story generally significant or take the time needed to set the little man in his significant environment, to demonstrate his representativeness, and to show in detail the complexity of the influences that mold and control him.¹²

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10Friedsam, op. cit.
A thorough examination of the many nuances of meaning in the terms hero and heroism would be impractical here; but in an attempt to define and thus to recognize this "new creature," a brief survey of the most common characteristics of older types of heroes and of works which illustrate the tendency to make characters in fiction like the mass of men, will be useful. Seemingly, early writers of fiction gave little or no thought to authenticity of character. For example, at the dawn of English literature the tales recounted the fantastic adventures of heroes in whom nobility, gravity, and an unshaken courage were common and were commonly exaggerated. These were men who did not lose dignity, even when caught by the terrible powers of heaven and earth, and were heroes with both physical and moral strength, such as Beowulf. In the literature of most ages there has been the tragic hero, who is a noble character, but who falls because of a flaw within himself, as did Achilles, or because of outside circumstances over which he has little control, as did Oedipus. A variation of the hero who acts wrongly because of some flaw in his own being is the person who is swayed by two ideals, the difference being that he is faced with two alternatives, neither of which is wholly bad, but of which one represents the power of common duty and law, and

13 Gordon Hall Gerould, Medieval Taste in Fiction, p. 3.
and the other of passion and emotion. Though the tragic action may be brought about by a conscious or unconscious act which springs from some flaw, the interest is in the struggle in the mind of the hero. Still, according to Aristotle, although this hero may not be a paragon of goodness, he remains noble even in defeat. It is true that in many instances this type of hero, fitted to convey the highest tragic emotions, has been carried over into modern times and fitted into new situations.

Though both the old epic hero and the hero of tragedy no doubt had some traits characteristic of people in any age, the qualities of these heroes were exaggerated, and the emphasis was not on their being true-to-life. As a matter of fact, though characterization today is partly the result of the desire of writers to depict people as they are in life, fiction does not offer any steady progress toward verisimilitude, for while knowledge of the laws of nature and of the human mind advanced with civilization, love of the fantastic and ideal also advanced. In the extravagant development of the medieval romance, verisimilitude was wholly rejected,

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16 Deiches, op. cit., p. 98.
17 E. M. de Vogue, Russian Novelists, translated by Loring Edmands, p. 10.
and the fantastic past was depicted as a "fanciful region of errant knights riding through a world peopled only by monsters to be fought with and distressed damsels to be succored."\textsuperscript{19} Gerould thus describes the tone of the medieval tale:

There was no single formula to which the romances were addicted. Sometimes they began artlessly with the birth of the hero, or sometimes even supplied the background of his parents' lives, proceeding to tell as many episodes as they chose of a career that owed much to chance (or heavenly providence) and much to physical prowess, but little to the personal choices that come from individual character. Sometimes they began with some striking events, which sent the hero forth on a quest of honor, whether by rescue or by achievement. If so, it was only by devious ways and after many disconnected adventures that he reached his goal. . . . The monotony of battles between knights armed with spears and swords was relieved by encounters with giants and strange beasts, or by the extraordinary conditions under which the fights took place. Unexpected reunions and coincidences, disguises, grotesque obstacles, and treacheries added zest to the wanderings of the heroes.\textsuperscript{20}

Three well-known heroes of this period were Tristan, to whom fatal love came without his seeking it; Arthur, who was sometimes pictured as a frigid conqueror and sometimes as a dashing cavalier; and Gawain, pictured at times as a symbol of all the knightly virtues and at other times as a rather despicable philanderer.\textsuperscript{21} However, it was not merely by the excitement of adventure that medieval romance gained its popularity:

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 162.
\textsuperscript{20}Gerould, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 10.
Although writers seldom tried to give their characters individualized personalities or the events they pictured any solid reality, admitting the incredible as if it were matter of fact, they nevertheless held the mirror up to nature in so far as human desires and emotions were concerned. At least, they endowed their heroes and heroines with acute sensibilities and often elaborated their moods. . . . If knights and lovers were made to act and suffer not altogether as we do today, it was because they were under the domination of codes different from ours, which were well understood at the time.22

Also during this period, from the eleventh century to the fifteenth, the church played an important part, and the lives of saints were commonly made use of in literature. Incongruous as it may seem to us, in letting the lives of the saints take on the color of the age, it was the custom of the writers to use the same methods in portraying the heroes of the church and the heroes of romance.23

Although there is plenty of evidence that people were still interested in the heroes of romance during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there is also evidence of other trends which were to influence the portrayal of character when the novel became full grown.24 John Lyly, in the preface to his Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit, made the bold assertion that he meant to use fiction as a vehicle for such wisdom as he had at his command, and that he meant to tell the unvarnished truth: thus he took a step toward authenticity of both

22 Ibid., p. 10.  
23 Ibid., p. 11.  
24 Horne, op. cit., p. 86.
situation and character. In 1621, John Barclay, a Scot, finished his romance *Argenis*. This work is based on the history of France during the Religious Wars, but its importance rests in the fact that it was an attempt to make prose fiction a vehicle for the interpretation of ideas. A romance completed in France in 1638 by Honoré D'Urfe demonstrates, also, an important trend in fiction. *L'Astrée* is, indeed, a story of shepherds, shepherdesses, and nymphs, which disregards actuality in general; but the characters think and act as human creatures. This work illustrates the developing use of fiction for serious interpretation of human life.

Although a few writers besides D'Urfe were successful with that type of characterization, others reverted to the use of the older romance. About the middle of the seventeenth century a group of authors, attempting to write so-called heroic romance, wrote stories of fantastic adventure and delicate passion which had appeal for many readers, but which caused many to ridicule romance in general. *Le Grand Cyrus* by Mlle. de Scudery illustrates the technique used:

*Le Grand Cyrus* and the romances of which it is perhaps the most conspicuous specimen, have been ridiculed.

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26 Ibid., p. 38.
27 Ibid., p. 39.
ever since...and to some extent they have merited the scorn heaped upon them...they have heroes who are excessively valorous and at the same time abnormally sensitive, capable of the most flaming passion and of extraordinary self-restraint, a race of sentimental prigs who resemble one another far more than they resemble human beings.29

Of course, people did not lose interest in the fantastic and in the exaggerated tales of heroes and heroism in the course of a day, but enthusiasm had been growing for a new type of romance for quite some time. While Lyly, Spenser, and Lodge were keeping romance alive in England by telling the adventures of ladies and gentlemen, other writers were gaining in prominence by relating authentic information about the travels of explorers and buccaneers.

Still other writers turned to the lives of vagabonds and rogues for material, not quite in the spirit of satirical humor that had inspired the more bold fabliaux and novelle of earlier centuries, but intentionally shocking the respectable by their revelation of villainy, and furnishing an agreeable equivalent of romance in terms of sordid homely adventure.30

*Lazarillo de Tormes*, in 1554, offered for the first time in modern fiction the detailed narrative of the actual life of a common man instead of an ideal knight.31 Lazarillo is pictured as a simple-minded but shrewd rogue, a *picaro*, whose adventures set a fashion which has appeared intermittently in fiction ever since.32 With the rise of the picaresque

30Ibid., p. 32.  
31Horne, op. cit., p. 85.
32Gerould, op. cit., p. 32.
novel, verisimilitude came once more to the front. Since the author was dealing with the commonplace, he had to create excitement without the use of monsters, victorious battles, or enchanted castles. This he achieved by making the hero a rogue and relating in detail all his clever rogueries. However, he was dealing with common life, the accuracy of which the audience could judge; therefore he had the burden of making the hero’s rogueries not only clever but possible. Thus the picaresque romance is an important landmark in a study of verisimilitude in characterization, because the writer was attempting to deal with life exactly as he found it.\footnote{Horne, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 34.} In \textit{Don Quixote} Cervantes used both chivalric romance and picaresque devices in fighting against falsity and folly and in attempting to get at the heart of human realities.\footnote{Gerould, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 39.}

When the novel emerged in England in the eighteenth century, interest was focused on various types of fiction, such as the sentimental novel, the romances of Scott, and the novels of morals and manners; and for a period the tales of roguery shared their place with other types of work, appearing many times as secondary elements.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 220.} However, the works of both Spanish and French writers of picaresque stories had by that time found their way into English, and possibly were responsible for the type of work done by several early...
English novelists. Fielding, for example, evidently read widely from the picaresque. The material for his novels he found from commonplace observation. He believed that we are not what we seem and tried, as a novelist, to remove the mask of affectation. His *Joseph Andrews* is an attempt to reveal the truth about human nature; and in *Jonathan Wild* he maintains the thesis that force, fraud, and heartlessness—qualities which are commonly regarded as the peculiar endowments of the successful housebreaker and highwayman—are likewise characteristics of great men in all ages.

Fielding makes no attempt to gain sympathy for his pseudo-hero, but pictures him consistently as indifferent to his own faults and as always traitorous to those who trust him. There are critics who believe that the central figure in *Fielding's masterpiece, Tom Jones*, has no claim to the name of hero, because his reputation is bad, his honor is questionable, and his will-power is weak. Still, Tom Jones is not completely unheroic, for Fielding has given him a good heart and a generous nature.

Smollett professed the same source of inspiration that Fielding had, but was probably more familiar with the French

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38 Wilbur L. Cross, *The Development of the English Novel*, p. 44.

39 Neill, op. cit., p. 68.
and Spanish picaresque literature than Fielding was. In his first novels he puts emphasis on the "selfishness, envy, malice and base indifference of mankind." It is not necessary for him to strip his rogues, for they are stripped when introduced; he at once exposes the "parts of life where the humors and passions are undisguised by affectation, ceremony, or education." His *Roderick Random* belongs to the old picaresque tradition: "a series of episodes, told with vigour and vividness, are linked together in the life of the selfish and unprincipled hero." In this novel, as in *Peregrine Pickle*, *The Adventures of Ferdinand*, and *Count Fathom*, Smollett pictures a disagreeable world in which the commonest emotions spring from malice, envy, spite, and cruelty. He, to a greater extent than Fielding, was concerned with psychological traits which reveal twisted natures. Perhaps that is one reason that Smollett was able to paint the picaresque with a broad stroke so that his *picaros* seem to come to life.

Thus the tale of the *picaro* continued through a period in which a great deal of interest was centered in other types of writing, and when the novelty of the Gothic and the sentimental novel wore off, the picaresque novels gained once more

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a prominent position. Frederick Marryat (1722-1848) wrote in what one may call the orthodox tradition of the picaresque romance:

He was at his best when he adopted the traditional formula of the picaresque and let his hero recount his own adventures from childhood until he has reached some happy port, usually of wealth and marriage. These heroes are frequently not too scrupulous in their adherence to moral codes, which is suitable to a kind of romance always associated with roguery, but they are fine fellows at heart and acquire good principles in the end, along with manners and establishments. They have no depth as characters, . . . but of their sort they are excellent.\(^45\)

In that explanation is found one of the chief differences between the *picaro* and the unheroic hero: he, the central figure in the picaresque romance, is a "fine fellow at heart" and acquires good principles in the end, but the new hero in fiction makes no reversal; that is, he does not, as does Smollett's Count Fathom, a villain with no spark of honor or decency, repent or find happiness. As a matter of fact, he often remains unaware of his condition.

After the work of George Borrow, who handled vagabondage and roguery with great skill, the picaresque movement dwindled in the middle of the nineteenth century.\(^46\) Though the experiences of the *picaro* represented an escape from life, as did other types of romance, and though the central character was merely a shadow of the unheroic hero, still the adventures related in the picaresque romance were in direct

contrast to the experiences of the old romance and helped to sustain the growing interest in the character of less nobility.

By the early nineteenth century there was little doubt that the so-called popular novel with its superhuman heroes was becoming tedious and that it was giving way to the works of men who had begun to observe life around them and to study something outside of themselves. On the continent the way had already been opened by Henri Beyle, known to literature as Stendhal. Richard Burton says:

"His is all the merit pertaining to the feat of introducing the novel of psychic analysis: of that persistent and increasingly unpleasant bearing down upon the darker facts of personality. Hence his Rouge et Noir, dated 1830 and typical of his age and method, is in a sense an epoch-making book."  

For the first time at full length a writer shows the possibility of that realistic portrayal sternly carried through, no matter how destructive of romantic preconceptions of men and women. Balzac's method, too, was that of the social scientist. He felt no obligation to purify his heroes, and he wished to exhibit man as he was to be seen in the France of that era; his works, such as Père Goriot, seem like life, not an opinion of life. In France, also, Flaubert

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47 de Vogue, op. cit., p. 56.
49 Ibid., p. 158.
set a new standard for psychological analysis of human experience with his *Madame Bovary*. In Russia Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky took liberties with traditional methods; they made the poor, the diseased, the socially branded familiar subjects of the novel, not as case studies, but as man in the throes of spiritual, intellectual, and physical torment. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the works of these men were translated into English and exerted a great influence over young writers of the time.

Actually by the year 1850 in England the so-called novel of realism had conquered. By that time the industrial revolution was the motivating force of thought and action, with the emphasis on obtaining wealth and power. With this shift in emphasis came loss of respect for traditional virtues and prevailing values, and men became filled with a sense of futility. As man became more and more aware of his inadequacies, he began to noise the fact abroad; and once the de glamorizing process had begun, it knew no bounds. Since truth-telling was the aim, novelists began to be brutally frank—to tell all; and as man's faults became common knowledge, novelists began to feel that the stagey hero of tradition no longer represented anything real in

actual life, but that, on the contrary, the little man or
dwoman could do so.52

Soon writers were not satisfied with a realistic port-
trayal of man's overt actions, but became more and more con-
cerned with what he was thinking, with what motivated his
actions. Today, with the increasing interest in psychology,
writers have often proceeded from his conscious to the semi-
conscious and sub-conscious. Experimental and individual
psychology, with their studies of abnormal minds and vagaries
of behavior, have impressed writers of fiction with the
wealth of material to be found in that field. From the
study of animals, savage folk, children, and crowds, the
psychologist has gathered much precise information as to the
deeply primitive impulses that persist in even the highly
cultured. Concerning the influence of delving into man's
mind, one writer expresses this opinion:

Psychologists of the unconscious are forcing the crum-
bling of the individual upon us. It is ironical that
the triumph of man, the conquest of nature, and sweep
of untrammelled intelligence should have brought us to
the brink of both a philosophical and material abyss.54

Realists, borrowing from the psychologist and the psycho-
analyst, have become dissatisfied with traditional methods
of characterization and have found abundant inspiration in

52 Thompson, op. cit., p. 14.
53 Walter L. Myers, The Later Realism, p. 29.
54 A. R. M. Lower, "Why Men Fight," Queen's Quarterly,
LIV (Summer, 1947), 188.
man whose pessimism and despair have been broadcast to the world at large. Daiches says of modern novelists,

They have realized that a psychologically accurate account of what man is at any given moment can be neither in terms of a static description of his character nor in terms of a group of chronologically arranged reactions to a series of circumstances. They have become interested in those aspects of consciousness which cannot be viewed as a progression of self-existing moments, but which are essentially dynamic rather than static in nature and are independent of the given moment.55

The psychological theories of Freud have had great influence on novelists, especially the idea that man inherits his destiny, that it is determined by the content of his unconscious mind, which is conditioned for him by factors operating before he can gain control of them.56 In summing up the influence which a study of psychology has had on characterization, it can be noted that novelists have followed psychologists in accepting the fact that human irrationality, whatever the cause, is better faced than ignored.

The sciences have also had a large share in destroying the heroic tradition.57 Alan Thompson suggests that science seems to demonstrate that men are petty, bestial, and physically conditioned, and offers the following explanation for man's pessimism:

55 Daiches, op. cit., p. 21.
56 Myers, op. cit., p. 38.
57 Thompson, op. cit., p. 8.
A philosophy of flux, a belief that no standards are absolute and that all things change with the shifting forces of a blind and indifferent nature, has come to dominate the thoughts of modern man.\textsuperscript{58}

The theory of evolution, teaching that man has grown through the ages from a very low form of life, has probably been responsible in part for such a point of view. That theory is upheld by Grant C. Knight:\textsuperscript{59}

\ldots since he was seen no longer as of divine origin but rather of simian--what chance to idealize or even satirize an animal who had so shrunk in stature and scheme of things. He might be turned over under a microscope, his reactions to the stimuli of environment tabulated, his inherited traits noted, he might be pitied as a helpless beetle stuck on a pin can be pitied, but his romantic lustre had been rubbed off by the hand which had written a mechanistic interpretation of his existence.\textsuperscript{59}

As more and more young people in high schools and colleges began to receive scientific training, regardless of how elementary, interest began to grow in scientific knowledge so that there was a demand for truth, for facts, for material evidences, which made it difficult for the novelist to exaggerate the size of an individual in a universe which contains millions of worlds.\textsuperscript{60} What the novelist actually did was to assume the scientist's point of view toward the individual: He discarded the old romance "because the meanest man who breathed was infinitely more interesting,"

\textsuperscript{58}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{59}\textit{Grant C. Knight, The Novel in English}, p. 261.

\textsuperscript{60}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 258.
more worthy of investigation and exposition than was any
prince or beggar of fancy."61 Frierson believes that it is
important to approach life from a questioning, agnostic
point of view, for by doing so we learn:

... that the structure of society is of an inex-
haustible interest to those who would examine it; that
all is not well with the world, nor with the institu-
tions of society which reveal man's improvidence and
incapacity, that poverty is a disease, and that no
good end will be served by calling it by any other
name.62

With the loss of confidence in man came a loss of once
accepted panaceas and programs and estimates.63 Cynicism was
spread through the "muckraking" done by newspapers and maga-
zines. There ceased to be, as there once had been, reverence
for men in high places; biographers were not content to
deglamorize contemporary figures only, but began to call
attention to the fact that great effigies of the past "were
supported by feet of clay."64 Finding new freedom in dis-
closing facts about men and conditions, historians began to
point out, among other things, economic factors involved in
causes of war. Once novelists grasped that idea and focused
attention on war in its nakedness, the myth of the military
hero began to pale.65

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61 Ibid., p. 263.
62 William Q. Frierson, The English Novel in Transition,
p. 123.
63 Knight, op. cit., p. 258.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
Of all the forces which have brought about the changes in the characteristics of the hero, war, the most awesome of men's mass actions, is probably the force which has had the most influence in making him unheroic. If it is true that war ordinarily calls forth the greatest physical heroism, why does it not make heroes as it once did? The answer to that question can possibly be found by noting changes occurring in both motive and method of warfare, and by observing conditions brought about by the new warfare. During the eighteenth century war had ceased to be a weapon of religious fanaticism and had not yet become an instrument of nationalistic fanaticism; hence it was less atrocious than either before or since, actually being merely a "sport of kings." Though it might be difficult to accept this use of war morally, yet it can be seen that such warfare did away with much of the material horror of war. Armies were not recruited by conscription; they knew the liberties allowed them and kept their activities within bounds; they observed the rules of their military game; they set moderate objectives and did not impose crushing terms on defeated opponents.

Toynbee, in "The Impact of Democracy and Industrialism on War," explains one theory concerning the development of war from the "sport of kings" to mass destruction. According to his explanation, the impact of industrialism has increased the horrors of war; and, though on intellectual grounds there
is a widespread school of thought that war does not pay, both democracy and industrialism make it difficult to get rid of war. During the eighteenth century, before the emergence of these two driving forces, there was a period of relatively "civilized warfare." Then, with the French Revolutionary Democracy came the first of the modern wars. But why should democracy have an aggravating influence on war? Toynbee says that the answer is to be found in the fact that before colliding with the institution of war, democracy collided with the institution of local sovereignty. Then "The importation of the new driving forces of democracy and industrialism into the old machine of the parochial or local state has generated the twin enormities of political and economic nationalism." Emerging through this alien medium, democracy has put its drive into war instead of working against it. In the pre-nationalistic age of the eighteenth century, the parochial sovereign states were not the instruments of the general wills of their citizens, but were virtually private estates; conveyance of such estates from one dynasty to another was brought about by royal marriages or by royal wars. Such a system took the shine out of patriotism, but with it, the sting. For example, during the Seven Years War between Great Britain and France an English civilian could travel in

67 Ibid., p. 285.
68 Ibid.
France without much unpleasantness. But forty years later, on the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, Napoleon had all British civilians between the ages of eighteen and sixty interned. 69 Though his action was regarded as an act of Corsican savagery at that time, it is what liberal and humane governments do today as a matter of course. The difference is that parochial states have become nationalist democracies with the result that war has become "total war." 70 No longer are the combatants selected chess men called soldiers and sailors, but in modern warfare whole populations are concerned. Wars are now "peoples' wars."

Economic nationalism has played its part in the change in warfare. In the eighteenth century there were economic ambitions and rivalries, but the prizes of warfare included principally markets and monopolies. Since each village and country produced only the necessities of life, these conflicts touched such few people that wars for markets could be called "the sport of merchants." 71 With industrialism, however, came change, for industrialism is a cosmopolitan operation. Just as the real essence of democracy is a spirit of fraternity, the essential requirement of industrialism is world-wide cooperation. Thus it sought to make economic units fewer and bigger and to lower barriers between them.

69 Ibid., p. 286. 70 Ibid. 71 Ibid., p. 287.
Then, about the middle of the last century, both forces which had been trying to reduce the number of economic units reversed their policies and began to work in the opposite direction. As the nations one by one became industrialized, it suited their interests to pursue cut-throat methods of competition, and what once was to be the instrument to bring about social unity became the instrument for disruption. These forces have brought about changes of motive in warfare, leading to changes in method; as a result of both developments, individuals and society as a whole have ceased to find war a glorious adventure, and, if modern novels dealing with wars indicate anything, it is that men are not eager to become heroes through bravery in battle.

In elaborating on her statement that the once-dominant hero has vanished, Louise Field explains:

The change is great; the reason for it extremely simple. For the no-hero situation has been brought about principally if not entirely by the revolution resulting from the World War. Not the Russian Revolution nor the German or Austrian Revolution, but that which has transformed the general mental and moral attitude, especially in England and the United States.

For generations war has been deplored, and after each conflict there were those who pointed out that little was achieved and much lost. But it is true that even while war has been rebuked, there has been applause for the participants.

72 Ibid., p. 288.
73 Louise Field, op. cit., p. 370.
who were often proud to relate their experiences. That has not been generally true since World War I. If a man who has fought writes a book, his pen drips vitriol. Both the conscience and the instinct of English-speaking nations have revolted against war, not because of any loss of courage nor because of an ardent objection to fighting. The objection, seemingly, is to fighting against machines and chemicals.

There does not seem to be much gallantry in long range guns shelling an unseen target. There is only horror in the stealthy approach of submarine and invisible wave of poison gas. For what can bravery, no matter how splendid, how heroic, do against these? But as far back as the spade of archaeologist has yet taken us, it is war which has made the acclaimed hero. The great gods of old were fighting gods. . . . Jupiter wielded the thunderbolt; Artemis had her bow, as did Apollo. . . . Jehovah himself was the Lord of Hosts. . . .

The kings who have become legendary characters today were kings who themselves led their men into battle: Arthur and Alfred and Charlemagne. Napoleon may have been a great lawgiver, but it is as a great general and as a conqueror that he made an impression on the mind of the world. The same is true of Washington; and the factor taking both Grant and Theodore Roosevelt to the White House was success on the battlefield.

But with the waste and suffering and horror of World War I, hero-worship—everything except the hideousness of

74 Ibid. 75 Ibid., p. 371. 76 Ibid.
war—was blotted from the minds of most people, and the picture has not been improved by World War II, the conditions resulting from that conflict, or by the Korean War.

In the words of David Cohn,

We are living in the night of total crisis. God is dethroned from his central place in the universe. Tradition loses the force of its compulsion. Ancient values are radically revolved. The great truths are distorted. . . . Whole nations sink out of sight. . . . Whole populations are dispossessed to walk directionless upon the cold crust of cold earth.

At one time warfare gave most spectacular opportunities for displaying qualities which distinguished the hero: courage, loyalty, generosity, self-sacrifice. But the literature from the peoples' wars indicates that along with the new hatred and revolt against war has come a fear and a dislike of qualities associated with war, so that both the heroic hero and his distinguishing qualities are suspect.

In more recent fiction the idealism of the old-time hero is looked upon as sentimentality; his good qualities are minimized and his bad ones magnified. An examination of novels written by the war generations and the generations feeling the impact of the wars suggests that the age for heroics is past:

A machine is speaking, a machine is fighting, and the man inside is no longer a warrior or really a man: he has merged with the machine and assumed its indifference, its certainty; together with it, he has turned

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again into a double monster, a beastlike monster of remote antiquity. . ."78

Even a brief study of the type of character chosen to be the hero in the fiction of various ages shows that there is often little resemblance between the so-called hero of the modern novel and the hero of earlier days. It is no longer true that he must be strong, brave, and honorable like the hero of the epic; nor is he expected to respect womankind and have all the knightly virtues, like the hero of the medieval romance. He does not need to look outside himself for strength as heroes have done in many ages. In characterization modern authors follow the pattern for the age. They reject all dogma, exalt individual opinion to the level of established truth, and explain man by their impression of him; and often in their novels man seems to be a victim rather than a free creature.79 The opinion of many people concerning the reason for the great change in the conception of the hero has been summed up by Monroe:

Man in Greek tragedy struggled with universals. His fall was impressive because the conception of character was lofty and the struggle was heroic. Christianity supplied even greater motives and added to the catharsis the consoling melodies of redemption. Modern literature has nothing to put in the place of universals. The struggle for bread uses only a part of man's nature; the struggle for power turns to inhumanity

78Ibid.
and brutality, when not made to subserve a law higher than man himself; the struggle to save humanity turns into self-will and tyranny.  

It is true that the hero did not change his colors in a day or in a decade. The change has been a gradual one as writers of fiction have struggled to produce lifelike characters. Even as early as the days of the picaresque tale, there was a tendency to bring into view the undesirable traits of man—his meanness and his weaknesses. Some authors seemed to reverse once-accepted techniques: to exaggerate the worst qualities of the hero instead of his best ones. With the beginning of wars involving the masses instead of only a few groups, forces were brought into action which have in turn brought about many changes in man's outlook on life. Expansion, desire for wealth and power, and wars, among other forces, have brought about scientific research which in many instances has resulted in a changing attitude toward man and toward his relationship to the universe. Man's greatest problem remains himself, and he continues to search his conscious and his subconscious mind in an effort to understand his actions. In recent years these forces have gained momentum, and the embryo which was taking shape gradually as the forces were gathering has developed quickly into a full-grown figure, so that today the unheroic hero has become one of the most significant figures in the novel.
CHAPTER II

THE UNHEROIC HERO IN WAR

Since the military theme is always a popular one, novelists through the years have made use of stories of war and of life in military service. In most instances in early novels, however, it was either the brilliant spectacle of army life, campaigns, or battles; the glory of victory; or the humor of barracks life which were popular as material for fiction. 1 Then, after the Napoleonic Wars, writers began to break with traditional methods of presentation, and by a gradual process to deglamorize war.

One of the first writers to make this innovation was Stendhal, in his Charterhouse of Parma. Though he did not picture the hero, Fabrizio, as a coward, the novel is significant in this study because of the fact that the battles which Stendhal described did not offer what Fabrizio wanted--a chance for heroism. To make Fabrizio’s aspirations clear, Stendhal explained the traditional attitude toward service for one’s homeland:

A whole people discovered, on the fifteenth of May, 1796, that everything which until then it had respected was supremely ridiculous, if not actually hateful. The departure of the last Austrian regiment marked the collapse of the old ideas: to risk one’s life became the

1 Agnes G. Hansen, Twentieth Century Forces in European Fiction, p. 78.
fashion. People saw, that in order to be really happy after centuries of cloying sensations, it was necessary to love one's country with a real love and to seek out heroic actions.²

Fabrizio, filled with the inspiration of youth, left his home to fight with Napoleon, believing that only in battle could he be truly courageous and thus become a hero; but war was not the adventure he had thought it would be. Instead it was confusion, horror, and death, and it offered little chance for him to fight as he had planned and to seek out heroic actions.

Another French novel concerned with the Napoleonic Wars is The Conscript, written by Erckmann and Chatrian in 1868. Instead of following the practice of many of their contemporaries of appealing to their compatriots' love of glory and military allusions by celebrating the military victories of Napoleon, these two men uncovered the tragic but significant story of the conflict. The Conscript is certainly an impressive picture of the darker side of the national pursuit of glory, and the central figure is by no means filled with the glow of patriotism. He is pitiful Joseph Bertha, a clubfoot, aged twenty, who was in despair when he learned that in spite of his lameness he had to march against the enemy. He related what he saw, and there is nothing glorious in the vivid and pathetic account of the passage of the great army through Alsace on its way to Moscow. Bertha did not pretend

to be a hero; he did not want to leave his home and his betrothed, but even drank vinegar in an attempt to become ill so that he would not be conscripted. At his examination he limped as much as he could as he cried out, "But I am lame!" It is true that he obeyed his leaders when they bade him rush to glory or to death, but only because there was no choice. Joseph said himself that the fury of the soldiers was the fury of despair: "Despair urged us, and the wish to revenge our deaths before yielding up our lives." He realized that glory had ceased to be important to the enemy and to many of his comrades, and he expressed his true feelings about military service when he told his reason for relating his experiences:

... that my story may show youth the vanity of military glory and prove that no man can gain happiness save by peace, liberty, and labor. ... 

Is not the attitude of the hero of the modern war novel a reflection of that cry from Joseph Bertha in 1868?

Although it is possible that Stendhal's picture of war made way for a new perspective, and although in The Conscript a clearer view was given of the realities of war, it was Tolstoy's War and Peace which opened the way for new methods of writing about war and the men who fight it. He was among the earliest to dramatize the idea that war can be a ghastly

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4 Ibid., p. 252.
5 Ibid., p. 284.
as well as a glorious business; he showed clearly that, once launched, war can rapidly get beyond the control of the men waging it, with the result that they become its pawns.6 Hansen says that those same techniques are being used today:

This view of war /In War and Peace/ and all its inglorious aspects—the ignoble and the degrading effects as well as the temporarily elevated ones experienced by those who suffer it, the seeming futility of the sacrifices it exacts, the disease, death and social disruption it inflicts ultimately upon participants and non-combatants alike—these are the phenomena which have found frequent vivid representation in the pacifist and anti-war novels of the post-war era.7

Also, Tolstoy was one of the first writers of fiction to endow his hero with fear—a fear which he, the hero, admits. Then he refused to give his hero the will-power with which to overcome that instinct. Thus he denied him the chance to be heroic, since true heroism is the result of conscious courage.8

As Rostov saw the French soldiers approaching, he became frantic; and remembering his mother's love for him and the devotion of his friends, he could not, with his confused mind, understand the soldiers' intention to kill him:

He seized his pistol, but instead of firing it, flung it with all his might toward the bushes. He did not now run with the feeling of doubt and conflict with which he had trodden the Bnsbridge, but with the feeling of a hare fleeing from the hounds. One single sentiment, that of fear for his young and happy life, possessed his

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6 Hansen, op. cit.
7 Ibid.
8 Fitzhugh Green, "Are Heroes Heroes?" Forum, LXXIX (January, 1928), 85.
whole being. Rapidly leaping the furrows he fled across the field . . . now and then turning his good-natured
pale, young face to look back. A shudder of terror went
through him.

Nor did Rostov become reconciled to fighting and overcome
his fear after months of service, but added self-pity to his
other weaknesses:

"Nobody wants me!" thought Rostov. "There is no one
to help or pity me. Yet I was once home, strong, happy,
and loved." He sighed, and doing so groaned involun-
tarily.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
He looked at the snowflakes fluttering above the fire,
and remembered a Russian winter at his warm, bright
home, his fluffy fur coat, his quickly-gliding sledge,
his healthy body, and all the affection and care of his
family. "And why did I come here?" he wondered. 10

With these thoughts running through his mind, Rostov seemed
little concerned with patriotism or with heroism.

Tolstoy did not make Rostov unique in having him admit
that he was afraid; that feeling was discussed and analyzed
by Prince Andrew's battalion also. Those men decided that
they were afraid of death because they did not know what lay
beyond: "One is afraid of the unknown, that's what it is..." 11

But whether their fear was of what lies beyond death or
the result of their loving life and not wanting to lose it,
they were afraid and were not ashamed to admit that fear.
Their admission did not make them unheroic; but Tolstoy's
presentation of soldiers under fire, of true conditions of

9Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace, translated by Louise and
Aylmer Maude, I, 46.
10Ibid., p. 260.
11Ibid., p. 250.
battle, and of Rostov's frenzy in times of stress, opened the way for truth-telling, so that later authors wrote with increasing freedom about the horrible aspects of war and the actual feelings of the men who fight. It was inevitable that in time the coward and the weakling should be exposed.

In 1895, influenced more by the thought that wars, the Civil War in particular, had "long been swaddled in heroic nonsense," Stephen Crane wrote The Red Badge of Courage. Ever since Appomattox there had of course been going on a literary attempt to make the Civil War out an epic conflict, with all the appurtenances of pomp and heroism. But side by side with that had run a popular memory of it not enshrined in a book, which former soldiers exchanged in the vernacular and repeated ... to any others who would listen.

It was in this popular account that Crane found his material. Instead of making his story the usual epic of generals and their great victories or defeats, he followed the personal reactions of only one soldier, not even identifying the battle or its leaders. Leisy says that Crane told so graphically how a raw recruit feels in battle that The Red Badge of Courage must be regarded as the first artistic approach to the Civil War:

It pictures no historical figure or events, except that Chancellorsville is its setting, but its sense of the helplessness and meaninglessness of the common soldier,

13Ibid., p. 12.
maneuvered by superiors and circumstances, is a brilliant achievement in impressionism.14

Henry Fleming was impatient for his first battle; he wondered whether or not he would become frightened and run away under gunfire. When he discussed the question with two other soldiers, they told him that he would fight. Henry did not go to war simply because of compulsion. He had dreamed of glory to be achieved in battle and, with that dream in his mind, had longed for army life. But he became disillusioned long before the actual fighting began—disillusioned by meaningless marching and by stupid generals. In his first battle he had little occasion to fight, but finally joined in one skirmish without thinking. Then, when the second attack came and he was not prepared, he fled in terror to hide in a grove of trees. The mangled bodies all about him added to his feeling of terror and fear, and he began to blame a merciless government which had compelled him to suffer. In his flight, he frightened a squirrel, causing it to run away; then he rationalized that in running he had simply acted according to nature, as the squirrel, another of God's creatures, had done. That thought helped him to return to his group, and it may appear that he vindicated himself by his subsequent action in battle. However, closer study reveals that his actions were not those of a man who overcomes fear by will power, but that they were actions of a man who has lost his rationality. He

was motivated first by cowardice, then by fear, and finally by egoism, not by the unselfish heroism exhibited by conventional heroes.

With Henry Fleming, Crane completely disregarded the heroic and took a step in the direction which both American and British literature were to travel for a generation.15 As has been mentioned previously, many writers have continued, with their new freedom, to try to give a complete picture of once-reverenced men and events. Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* illustrates that fact. In that novel she focused attention not only on the suffering, bloody and terrible, of the men in the armies, but also on the suffering of the people left at home. The significance here, however, is that of the two central male characters neither can be said to be the heroic type. Rhett Butler, it is true, was in most instances not lacking in physical courage, but it would be difficult to contend that he was a chivalric gentleman of the old school. On the other hand, Ashley Wilkes had many qualities of refinement which were lacking in Butler, but one loses sight of them as his weakness and his frailty of character become apparent. His fear was a part of him, a part which caused him to hurt those he loved best. The best qualities of both Rhett and Ashley might join in one man to make of him a hero, but considered as they are distributed by Miss Mitchell, these characteristics produce two pseudo-heroes.

To many social and literary critics the nineteenth century does not end until 1914. At least, after that year the social outlook is so changed; political and economic thought so complex; psychological, philosophical, and aesthetic theories so changed, that the conditions existing in the world before that time seem remote. Evidently the war was a gulf which cultural tradition could not bridge, for it destroyed old values: faith in invariables, in orthodoxy, in former concepts of nobility, loyalty, and individualism, and in the static nature of morality.\(^\text{16}\)

Most of the writers who began to gain prominence following World War I had been through the war.\(^\text{17}\) Some had worked with the French in volunteer transport units, some in Red Cross sections in Italy, and others in various branches of the combat army. All had undergone experiences which caused them to develop into a new generation, a "lost generation":

\[\ldots\] the specially damned and forsaken, lost from all others and themselves by the unique conviction of their loss, the conviction by which they lived, wrote and perceived the life of their time.\(^\text{18}\)

During the early years of the war the psychology which inspired men to fight for a cause was, it seems, dependable; and boys rallied to the cause of political and economic leaders. They left college and jobs, farms and tenements,

\(^{16}\)Hansen, op. cit., p. 32.

\(^{17}\)John W. Aldridge, After the Lost Generation, p. 3.

\(^{18}\)Ibid.
to escape boredom in the glorious adventure of fighting for worthwhile values and traditions. In the minds of many, no doubt, were visions of Paris with love, excitement, and freedom. One group of men found a place in motor units in France and Italy, countries to which they owed no allegiance, and found also a new way of life. When the exhibition of violence and destruction became too bloody or too rough or too dull, there was always excitement to be found somewhere else. 19 This part of the "lost generation" are pictured by novelists as losing themselves by losing illusions which they had once held:

As spectators, guests of the war by courtesy of the management, they were infected with irresponsibility, thrilled at second hand by danger, held to a pitch of excitement that made their old lives seem impossibly dull and tiresome. As participants, they learned to view all life, all human emotion, in terms of war, to pursue pleasure with an intensity made greater by the constant threat of death... If the war hurt them... they became numb and stopped thinking and believing... If love died they stopped believing in love too and began believing in sex. If everything collapsed and they were left with nothing, that too was all right. They began believing in nothing. 20

Those who engaged in the actual fighting also lost illusions, but their dilemma was of a different nature. They saw their common suffering, their common sacrifices, and their common idealism availing nothing—and they became critical. They saw the helplessness of the man at the front; they knew of the man directing operations in the rear, and

19 Ibid., p. 5.  
20 Ibid., pp. 10, 11.
conceived of him as being one who viewed the men not as flesh and blood, but as cannon fodder, or as pins in certain areas on a map. When the tragic destruction ended, the men who were spared returned to their homes, but they returned shorn of their ideals, of their bright patriotism, and of respect for their elders, who were, these weary soldiers reasoned, responsible for the confusion in the world. Many of these men were not impressed by bravery in battle, but on the contrary read with a feeling of revulsion the war novels of women such as Edith Wharton and Willa Cather, whose only knowledge of heroics in war was learned from an armchair. When the writers who had been eye-witnesses of the great drama decided to express their views, it was not of heroics that they wrote.

A French writer, Henri Barbusse, ranks among the first to paint a realistic picture of the hero following World War I. In 1917 he wrote Under Fire, a novel in which the characters have neither illusions nor glamour. But one of the first novels which attempted to do for World War I what Crane's Red Badge of Courage did for the Civil War was the American novel Three Soldiers, by John Dos Passos, who used the experiences of three common soldiers to destroy the myth of glamour and glory.

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21 Ibid., p. 3.
23 Frank N. Magill, editor, Masterplots, p. 1037.
In the beginning, Private Fuselli's only purpose was to follow orders and thus to get ahead. His natural manner was to "crab," but he learned to discipline his tongue. His worst fear during the first few months was fear of ruining his chances for a corporalship. Then he went overseas; and as he saw men who had been to the front, his fear became a different sort:

A strange terror took hold of Fuselli. He hadn't expected things to look like that. When he had sat in the grandstand in the training camp and watched the jolly soldiers in khaki marching into towns, pursuing terrified Huns across potato fields, saving Belgian milkmaids against picturesque backgrounds.

"Does many of 'em come back that way?" he asked a man beside him.

Later, when Fuselli heard reports of what the gas did to the men at the front, he lost his ambition quickly and asked for a job in the optical department to keep from advancing with his company.

John Andrews, the most important of the three soldiers, was a musician and had a college education. For months he kept his thoughts about the war to himself. Then he decided that his weakness was not in his hate for the war, but in his keeping that hate to himself; so he admitted to his buddy that he was so sick of "this business" and that he thought it would be better to shoot himself than to keep on. One day he picked up a poppy and wondered what would happen if he ate it. Finally he said,

"They say you go to sleep if you lie down in a poppy field. Wouldn't you like to do that, Chris, an' not
wake up till the war was over and you could be a human being again."25

Another day, after he had bathed in a lake, he commented that putting on his filthy clothes was like putting on slavery again. When a chaplain asked him if he considered serving his country slavery, there was nothing heroic in his answer: "You're goddam right I do."26 It was not long after Andrews started that line of thought that he decided that his real cowardice was in submitting to something he did not believe in:

He remembered the great flags waving triumphantly over Fifth Avenue and the crowds dutifully cheering. . . . but for him, John Andrews, were those valid reasons? No. He had no trade, he had not been driven into the army by the force of public opinion, he had not been carried away by any wave of blind confidence in the phrases of bought propagandists. He had not had the strength to live. The thought came to him of all those who, down the long tragedy of history, had given themselves smilingly for the integrity of their thoughts. He had not had the courage to move a muscle for his freedom, but he had been fairly cheerful about risking his life as a soldier, in a cause he believed useless. What right had a man to exist who was too cowardly to stand up for what he thought and felt. . . .27

By lying, Andrews obtained permission to go to school in Paris, left there without official leave, and was picked up by M. P.'s and sent to a labor battalion. When he escaped and returned to Paris, he could have rejoined his battalion, but instead he ran away, making his desertion final.

25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., p. 209.
In John Andrews can be seen the young man who, under usual circumstances, would have been quite ordinary, but who, when he came into contact with the problems in a world at war, became a liar, a cheat, and a coward. Surely in him the unheroic hero became a reality.

It has been said that of all the fiction that came from the war and from postwar experiences, the work of Hemingway is the most representative. There is little doubt that in both *A Farewell to Arms* and *The Sun Also Rises* he has caught the spirit of the men who were "lost" as a result of World War I:

..."tough young men with the look of punch-drunk boxers and the fears of being left alone in the dark;--all its sad and forsaken, beautiful and damned."  

In the years before Hemingway wrote *A Farewell to Arms*, the forces of disillusionment had been at work. Though Frederick Henry was a lieutenant in an ambulance corps of the Italian Army during World War I, Hemingway did not create him until 1929, so that actually he is the product of post-war thought as well as of war experiences. As a disinterested worker in the war, he shut himself away from all which he did not wish to accept and built around himself a secure world—a world within the circumference of his own mind and will. Anything which tried to invade the retreat he had found for himself was a menace that could cause him to lose footing and fall into depths where he could only grope as he once had

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done; and there was always the fear that he would find nothing to grasp. For that reason he took no chances. He gave nothing, accepted nothing, and had nothing—except the war. Until Catherine Barclay succeeded in breaking through into his world, war was his only reality; but when he finally recognized his love, war signified separation from her. Once, Catherine was a threat to his security, but when she became reality, war meant only death.

Aldridge says that the retreat from Caporetto symbolizes the retreat of Frederick Henry from his responsibilities in the war:

The retreat from Caporetto is an externalization of Frederick Henry's withdrawal from a philosophic position which is no longer tenable. Everything is larger than life, swollen beyond the proportions of sense. The normal processes of war are in reverse, making courage insubordinate and cowardice the rule. To him the whole affair is madness.

Geismar says much the same thing, but so plainly that he cannot be misunderstood:

Following his personal objectives he abandons his friends, his responsibilities as an officer, the entire complex of organized social life represented by the army and the war. This farewell to arms is without request or permission.

Henry ran from the part of his life which he did not want to accept, thinking that Catherine was his new world. In time she became everything, so that when she died, he had

30 ibid., p. 9.
31 Maxwell Geismar, Writers in Crisis, p. 47.
nothing left. By letting someone come through the wall of safety he had built around himself, he opened a door to the abyss of reality—a reality with which he was not big enough to cope. Thus Hemingway leaves him, lost, alone, and without enough strength of character to be called a heroic hero.

The novel *Journey to the End of Night* by Celine indicates that the lost generation was not confined to America. In that novel Celine showed the situation in France during World War I and in the years following.

The hero, Ferdinand, was a student of medicine in Paris at the beginning of the war, but he was not actually interested in his work. As a matter of fact, his natural state was one of indifference, with one exception. He was violently opposed to authority, and, consequently was unhappy in his work. One day he saw a military band, and without considering what life in the service would be, he enlisted. As soon as he began to feel the restraint of authority again, he was as miserable as he had been in school, and began to let his dissatisfaction take the form of cynicism. Lola, his mistress in Paris, finally could tolerate no more of his attitude, accused him of being cynical to cover actual cowardice, and left him. Ferdinand's inability to accept any unpleasant aspect of life made his loss of Lola more than he could bear, and for a time he had to be confined to mental hospitals. There he learned that in fighting the system he accomplished nothing; so he pretended to agree with the psychiatrists in
order to be released. In subsequent experiences, however, he reverted to type, became involved in situations he could not cope with—and ran. His rebellion against authority, his failure to face reality instead of running from it, and his use of cynicism to cover his cowardice are characteristics found often in the unheroic hero of the post-war period.

Though many war novels have been written since World War II, it is probable that only a few of them have literary merit. However, one point of view is this:

But many of those without literary value give a truer reflection of the great cataclysm than can be gained from a perusal of its factual history, for they reveal and account for the complex psychology of individuals and the later political activities of nations suffering and resenting the social and economic results of the war.

Consideration of a few novels which give unrestricted accounts of men and events in the war shows at once that the men relating these accounts were no more interested in heroics than their predecessors were. As has been suggested previously, the men who went into World War I went to fight for a peace they knew had existed, for traditions and values they believed in; but that was not true of many of the boys who were drafted during World War II. Though there had been twenty years of so-called peace, there had been no actual rest.

In comparison with the innocent boys who set out, more than twenty years earlier, to save the world for

32 Hansen, op. cit., p. 67.
democracy, the young men who went into the second war seemed terribly aware. The illusions they might have had about war—the patriotic illusions of courage and noble sacrifice—had all been lost for them that first time and long since replaced by cynicism and a conviction of the international double cross which was sending them out to be killed. Unlike their predecessors, they had no need for adventure or relief from boredom. Their lives, as far back as they could remember, had been spent in a world continually at war with itself, in an economic order that fluctuated from dizzy prosperity to the most abject depression.

These men, then, were of the generation which knew the bitter days of depression. They grew up during the period between wars in which there was a loosening of mental, moral, and social standards. When their call came to fight, they went to war to do a job that had to be done; but they went with few illusions, proclaiming the utter futility of their efforts, because they had little reason to believe in a war to end all wars.

Though the characters created by the writers of World War II are in many ways like those in the novels of World War I, there have been several innovations made by the later writers. For example, in many instances today there is the multiple-hero instead of the single hero. As if it were not enough to make one man unheroic, the men portraying the soldier today paint whole armies of men who have few desirable traits. Nothing is taboo. Many of the novels which have been

33 Aldridge, op. cit., p. 117.
34 Harold C. Gardiner, Fifty Years of the American Novel, p. 256.
recognized as the most realistic portrayals of the war suggest that there were few, if any, decent or competent men in the armed services. Merle Miller has pointed out that although at one time authors realized that there are good officers and bad ones, gentlemen and psychopaths, they seem to have forgotten that fact since hostilities ceased following World War II. The fashion, on the contrary, seems to be to make anyone higher than a captain an idiot, a misfit, or a repressed homosexual. 35 An examination of a few of the novels shows that although Miller's statement may be an exaggeration, it suggests a tendency that is certainly prevalent. Also, many characters who do not come in one of the categories he mentioned are either cowards or brutes.

All of these types are to be found in Norman Mailer's The Naked and the Dead. Lower expresses the idea that in war passions are stirred to the depths and aspects of humanity are revealed with an intensity nowhere else shown. 36 Mailer evidently was interested in the irrational aspects only, for he portrayed men as corrupted and confused. There are ten principal characters in The Naked and the Dead, eight members of the platoon, Lieutenant Robert Hearn, and General Cummings. By a device called the Time Machine, Mailer disclosed the

backgrounds of all the men, and he did not give a well-rounded or happy past to one of them. In fact, if their empty lives represent a cross-section of American society, then Americans are devoid of emotion, of morality, and of purpose in life.

Of the ten, only Cummings has intelligence and free-will; even so he is not a "normal" character, for Mailer made his political views questionable and left little doubt as to his sexual abnormality. To Cummings nothing had meaning except power, and he judged all men by himself. In talking with Hearn he said,

For the past century, the entire historical process has been working toward greater and greater consolidation of power. Physical power for this century, an extension of our universe, and a political power, a political organization to make it possible. Your men of power in America ... are becoming conscious of their real aims for the first time in our history. Watch. After the war our foreign policy is going to be far more naked, far less hypocritical than it has ever been. We're no longer going to cover our eyes with our left hand while our right is extending an imperialistic paw.37

Hearn asked Cummings what he thought man's deepest urge is, for he believed that Cummings' answer would reveal his true nature. Cummings answered,

"The truth of it is that from man's very inception there has been one great vision, blurred at first by the exigences and cruelties of nature, and then, as nature began to be conquered, by the second great cloak--economic fear and economic striving. There's that popular misconception of man as something between brute and an angel. Actually man is in transit between brute and God."38

38 Ibid., p. 322.
When Hearn forced a more direct answer by asking Cummings if he thought man's deepest urge is omnipotence, he replied,

"Yes, It's not religion, that's obvious, it's not love, not spirituality, those are all stops along the way, benefits we devise for ourselves when the limitations of our existence turn us away from the other dream. To achieve God.

The only morality of the future is a power morality, and a man who cannot find his adjustment is doomed."^39

There seems to be no doubt as to what kind of man Cummings would be when he had power to enforce his will on others. Thus Mailer created multiple heroes, nine who are lacking in both physical and spiritual strength, and one who is selfish, brutal, and sadistic. Not to one did he give characteristics that are even suggestive of a heroic hero.

In From Here to Eternity, James Jones revealed the pre-Pearl Harbor army in Hawaii in what has been called "the frankest and most brutal serious novel in American fiction."^40 The following analysis by Gardiner contrasts the central figure in Jones' novel with heroes of earlier novels in American literature:

Jones' glorification of the American as rebel belongs to a strong tradition in American writing, but with a significant difference. The classic rebel of fiction usually had firm artistic, social, or political convictions which inevitably brought them into conflict with the established order. But this is the soldier rebelling for the sake of rebellion in a semi-masochistic fashion.

^39Ibid.  
^40Gardiner, op. cit., p. 263.
not because of firm convictions but because he is the
confused heir to democratic ideas of individual freedom
which have lost their outward form and inward meaning.
It is act divorced from motive and ending in tragic
absurdity. 41

Private Robert E. Lee Prewitt and his buddies are pre-
sented as lonely, restless children of the depression, who
were determined to fight anything that imposed itself on
their wills. Like the men in The Naked and the Dead, they
had no aim in life and no ability to order their own lives.
Though Prewitt's revolt caused his death, he is not in any
sense a tragic hero because he had no qualities to distinguish
him as heroic and no purpose to be defeated. 42 His life had
no significance, and his death was as unimportant as his life.

Another war novel with multiple heroes is Robert Lowry's
Casualty. As the title suggests, the men are all casualties,
their lives wrecked by the war. Joe Hammond, the boy in whom
the interest is centered, came to this conclusion:

Taken all together, Joe Hammond thought, we are big stuff
here. But then he thought of each man separate, and
what the army had made of him, exaggerating through the
narrow army scheme of living whatever natural grotesque-
ness there was about him...

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Whatever I wanted to be, Joe Hammond thought, it wasn't
this. Whoever accepts this world is mad or stupid. 43

Lowry, through Joe Hammond's attitude toward his
superiors, illustrates well the characteristic of war novels

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., p. 264.
pointed out by Miller—the tendency to debunk officers. Joe
thought of Lieutenant Pinkman as a "weak-kneed conniving
creature":

To hell with him, Joe thought, to hell with the whole falseness of men and ambition in this war. . . . The war brings out the worst in everybody. He looked over at Pinkman. He was worst of all. He could not even be strong and cruel and Army about anything he did. He was emotional as a girl, and wiggled, and licked boots furiously.

Hammond pictured his Colonel as a fool, a man inferior
to the men under him in experience, education, and intelli-
gence, who covered his weaknesses by saying that nothing matters but "soldiering."

. . . he saw these fools, these great men of the American Army in action. He hated them. He hated what they were, what they stood for, what they wanted in life. . . . Polaski and Pinkman could adapt themselves to the inhuman army system because they were nobodies themselves, men without personal morals, men who did not think or stand for anything.

Joe's conclusion is typical of the feelings of many of the heroes in the war novels after 1944: "So they can have their rotten war, their rotten safe glory, and their rotten political army." That is the frank, naked cry from men with no illusions and with nothing to hold on to—men who make no pretense at heroics.

All Thy Conquests, by Alfred Hayes, is significant for its picture of desolation in Italy after the war. Carla (the young Italian girl who could not have her baby because his

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father was an American who had a wife at home) saw the city she lived in as sick:

This was her city, tree-lined, splendid, lightless, sick, it was mortally sick. The stupid still hoped. Little dreams flickered up in their dead eyes, and then guttered and went out. The reality was the hopelessness. 47

In such a place it may be difficult for a man not to lose his courage, but it is not necessary for him to be despicable in his cowardice. Aldo, an Italian, wanted two things: He wanted a position, and he wanted to hurt his wife and her father, the old Marchese, deeply. Finally, he found a way to accomplish both wishes at the same time. His father-in-law had betrayed his government during the war and possessed papers which proved that he had. Aldo stole the papers, gave them to the officials, and then watched the old man’s face when he confessed what he had done. Before killing himself, because he could not endure the shame, the Marchese lamented that the future of Italy was not in good hands, when he said to Aldo,

You are corrupt, like all your generation. It is too bad that Italy has you to depend on. Corrupt . . . You will drag us down into your cynicism with you. 48

Aldo, at least, was actively unheroic, whereas all that can be said for the three American soldiers in the novel is that they lacked any traits which would make them outstanding.

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47 Alfred Hayes, All Thy Conquests, p. 188.
48 Ibid., p. 258.
They were not bad, perhaps, but they were not men of valor, men of strong character, or men of action.

It can readily be seen that all the characters used to illustrate the unheroic hero as a type have not been selected because of their fear in battle, but that they are men who are more weak than strong. Some are actually cowards; some have no worthwhile principles; some are mean and selfish; others are simply nonentities. There are men who would have shown the same colors in civilian life, and there are men whose weaknesses might never have been known had they not been revealed by the stress of war, a force which provokes thought about courage and fear, about heroes and weaklings.

_The Steeper Cliff_, by David Davidson, is important because of its discussion of those terms, although the novel is not one which is read widely. Actually, the story deals with post-war activities in Germany and centers around Lieutenant Cooper, who was sent to various places to hunt publishers who had not been Nazis. In talking with one man, Cooper provoked the following conversation:

"What you're looking for," he _Mius_ said, "is heroes."

"We came here at least ten years late, but we're still turning up heroes."

"Not all of us," said _Mius_, "were born that way. A hero is a special man or has special luck. Most of us are just men."49

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49 David Davidson, _The Steeper Cliff_, p. 15.
Cooper would not let Mssius comment on why some men were weak in the war; he wanted only to find those who had been strong, because the men who were going to re-educate Germany, he said, would be exposed to death. They would need to be heroes.

Davidson made the fact clear that passivity is not always a sign of lack of courage. There were men in some towns who had refused to fight for a cause they could not believe in, but they were not cowards:

Encircled, outnumbered, stripped of all weapons, they had stood here with but one single shield, that last armor which is vouchsafed even the most defenseless man: fortitude. This was the heroism, not of attack but of passivity, one that had nothing to do with the size of one's muscles. Among all forms of courage it was the most available, the most esteemed, the ultimate form: the courage to endure. Many more men had won sainthood by suffering than by slaying dragons. Had not the very greatest of all heroes been actually a weakling? Had He not even been made God?50

Cooper's thoughts concerning fear are definitely reminiscent of Henry Fleming and probably typical of the thoughts of many men in war:

Frankly, he said to himself, I am afraid. I have always been afraid, afraid of an almost unbelievable number of things: afraid of high places, afraid of fists; ... afraid of firearms, afraid of knives and razor blades, ... afraid in some form or other of everything in the world. ... At the bottom it must be that I am afraid to die, of obliteration in any form. ... There must be a society somewhere in which it is not incorrect, not reprehensible, to be afraid, and that is the only society in which I can possibly continue to exist—a society of the fleet-footed, of course, of hares and

50Ibid., p. 97.
deer and gazelles, of all such creatures whom nature equipped to be afraid. It was a misfortune, it was miscalculation, for me to be born into a society which makes a stigma of fear when by every instinct I am a fearful creature.51

The man in The Steeper Cliff who is called an authentic hero had paid for his heroism with eleven years of torture in a prison camp. He became angry when he was called a hero, for he insisted that he would not have held to his convictions had he known what the results would be. In grief he admitted, "I would not be a hero again for anything. Under no circumstances." Then, as he looked up at the cross above his bed, he said, "I'll wager that even He would not have undertaken it a second time."52

Throughout the book, Cooper identified himself with Alo, a German whom he had become interested in and could not find. He tried to project himself into the life of that man, to feel what Alo must have felt, before judging him as a coward or a weakling. When he learned that the man had not done all that some had expected of him, but had tried to save his own life, Cooper felt that Alo was his German self, another decent weakling, though to some who saw his passivity as fortitude he seemed a hero. As one man expressed it, there are all kinds of ways to become a hero. Cooper saw Alo's story as "the story of half-a-hero. Or half-a-coward. Whichever way you look at it."53

51Ibid., p. 110. 52Ibid., p. 149. 53Ibid., p. 258.
In trying to understand where the line can be drawn between cowardice and passivity, Cooper asked himself, "How far can a man be stretched? How many of us are born absolute heroes?"  

Thus from Fabrizio and the Napoleonic Wars to Lieutenant Cooper in Germany after World War II may be seen a line of unheroic heroes such as Joseph Bertha, who learned the vanity of military glory; Rostov, who was filled with a terrible fear; and Henry Fleming, who dreamed of glory, but who did not find it through conscious courage. To these may be added the characters created by Barbusse, Dos Passos, Hemingway, Celine, Mailer, Jones, Lowry, Hayes, and other novelists of the twentieth century. No longer can it be said that authors make of their heroes, not what one should be, but what one might aspire to be, for they have proceeded from the extreme in the heroic, in which weaknesses were ignored completely, to the extreme in the unheroic, in which strength is ignored as consistently. Lieutenant Cooper had a point, no doubt, when he suggested that all men are not born absolute heroes, but it must be true, also, that all are not born absolute weaklings, though it has been the tendency in recent fiction to make men unheroic heroes in war.  

54 Ibid., p. 333.
CHAPTER III

THE UNHEROIC HERO IN A CHANGING WORLD

Though war is often thought of as a proving ground for heroes, almost any other phase of life will do as well. In business and in social relationships, in a family group, or in other associations which demand that he take action, make decisions, or face obstacles, a man may show either a heroic or an unheroic attitude toward life. His bravery may become evident in a time of stress; his courage may be recognized because of certain decisions he makes in business; his strength of character may be known because of his thoughtfulness toward other people as he makes an effort to achieve his ambitions.

In contrast to the man who gains a prominent place in the ordinary routine of life by his dependability, integrity, or service to mankind, there is the weakling who winces and runs in times of unpleasantness, the passive creature who cannot face decisions, and the man who is so intent on accomplishing his own goals that he does not notice how many people he tramples in the process. Usually, the man who is overtly unheroic is expected to have the role of villain in drama or in the novel, and the weakling seems hardly impressive enough to claim attention as the central figure, or hero. Yet an
examination of novels written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reveals that the mediocre and the undaring, the rebellious and the bad, do become the central characters in the fiction of everyday life. In short, although war may often emphasize the worst features in a man, it has no monopoly on the unheroic hero.

Stendhal has been mentioned as one of the earliest novelists to make use of an unheroic character as a central figure. In The Red and the Black, Julien Sorel is consistently selfish, cowardly, and hypocritical. If he could be judged by his ambition, by his craftiness, or by his determination, he could be praised, for those qualities were a part of him. But Julien was the type who made use of anything at hand, regardless of circumstances. Possibly his worst fault was his desire to use the church as a means for gaining personal power. He admired Napoleon because of his climb to fame, and believed that he, also, could ascend to a position of prominence. However, Julien saw the church instead of the army as the way to power. As a matter of fact, he obtained his first job as tutor of the Mayor Renal’s children by assuming an attitude of piety and intelligence.

In order to gain power in the Mayor’s household, Julien made love to his wife, Madam Renal; and although he was sent away, he continued to return to her until he ruined her life. In all his other relationships, as a student in the seminary and as secretary in the home of the Marquis de LaMole, Julien
continued to make all his decisions for selfish reasons and
to use all who crossed his path as a means for accomplishing
his own desires. As a consequence, he ruined the life of
Matilde, daughter of the Marquis, caused the death of
Madame Renal, and lost his own life. Though Fabrizio, in
Stendhal's *Charterhouse of Parma,* cannot be called actually
unheroic in war, the novelist took no half measures in
making an unheroic character of Julien Sorel.

Possibly no better example of the growing interest in
the subconscious can be found than is evident in Dostoyevsky's
*Notes from Underground,* written in 1864. In that short novel
Dostoyevsky reveals the innermost thoughts of one man, dis-
closing his manner of reasoning and the motives for all his
actions. The hero is a psychopathic case, but the author
said of him,

... it is clear that such persons as the writer of
these notes not only may, but positively must, exist
in our society, when we consider the circumstances in
the midst of which our society is formed. I have tried
to expose to the view of the public more distinctly
than is commonly done one of the characters of the
recent past. He is one of the representatives of a
generation still living. In this fragment, ... this
person introduces himself and his views, and, as it were,
tries to explain the causes owing to which he has made
his appearance and was bound to make his appearance in
our midst.  

One of the first characteristics which the pseudo-hero
revealed about himself was his enjoyment of his own degradation.
He said,

3Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Author's note for "Notes from Under-
ground," *The Short Novels of Dostoyevsky,* translated by
Constance Garnett, p. 129.
I got to the point of feeling a sort of secret abnormal, despicable enjoyment in returning home to my corner on some disgusting Petersburg night, acutely conscious that that day I had committed a loathsome action again, that what was done could never be undone, and secretly, inwardly gnawing, gnawing at myself for it, tearing and consuming myself till at last the bitterness turned into a sort of shameful accursed sweetness, and at last--into positive real enjoyment.  

His enjoyment came from the fact that even in his degradation he had reached a peak, had crossed the last barrier, and could be no worse.

This man admitted that because of boredom he had tried to play various roles--to be the penitent or to be in love--but that he was never very successful at being either a rascal or an honest man, a hero or an insect. However, he did not consider himself different from all other men; he was different only in admitting the truth about himself. He said,

Every man has reminiscences which he would not tell to his friends. He has other matters in his mind which he would not reveal even to his friends, but only to himself, and that in secret. But there are other things which a man is afraid to tell even to himself, and every decent man has a number of such things stored away in his mind. The more decent he is, the greater the number of such things stored away in his mind.

In his notes he intended to see whether or not a man can, even with himself, be "perfectly open and not take fright at the whole truth."

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3Ibid., p. 155.
4Ibid.
Thus the underground man revealed the truth about his associations with other people. First, he discussed his feelings for his fellow-workers:

They were all stupid, and as like one another as so many sheep. Perhaps I was the only one in the office who fancied that I was a coward and a slave, and I fancied it just because I was more highly developed. But it was not only that I fancied it, it really was so. I was a coward and a slave. I say this without the slightest embarrassment. Every decent man of our age must be a coward and a slave... He is made and constructed to that very end.5

He concluded that it was utter stupidity for his associates not to reason as he did and not to see that "only donkeys and mules are valiant, and they only till they are pushed up to the wall."6

It was in his treatment of Liza, a young prostitute, that Dostoyevsky's psychopathic hero proved himself most despicable. Realizing that his talk was influencing her, he painted for her a picture of what her life would be in a few years. As he chose each word carefully, he watched her reaction and saw her become filled with despair. Her remorse was so deep that she bit her hand until it bled, and when he realized the frenzied state that she was in, he left her, saying only, "Come to me."

Later, when he realized that she would come and that she would see his poverty, he became insanely despondent. In his irrational condition, he then blamed Liza for his

5Ibid., p. 158.  
6Ibid., p. 159.
mental state, so that by the time she came, he hated her. With no thought except for himself, he did the thing he knew would rid him of her: he told her that he influenced her only to show his power by making her suffer. He burst out,

"Why have you come? Answer, answer. . . I'll tell you, my good girl, why you have come. You've come because I talked sentimental stuff to you then. . . . So you may as well know that I was laughing at you then. And I am laughing at you now. Why are you shuddering? Yes, I was laughing at you! I had been insulted just before, at dinner, by the fellows who came that evening before me. . . . I had to avenge the insult on someone to get back my own again; you turned up, I vented my spleen on you and laughed at you. I had been humiliated, so I wanted to humiliate; I had been treated like a rag, so I wanted to show my own power. . . ."7

Thus he did one of the cruelest things a person can do—he showed her the way to a new life and then snatched it from her just as she learned to believe in it.

After relating the incident with Liza, the "underground" man decided to end his "Notes," for, he said,

. . . to tell long stories, showing how I have spoiled my life through morally rotting in my corner, through lack of fitting environment, through divorce from real life, and rankling spite in my underground world, would certainly not be interesting; a novel needs a hero, and all the traits of an anti-hero are expressly gathered together here, and what matters most, it all produces an unpleasant impression, for we are all divorced from life, we are all cripples, every one of us, more or less.8

With these words, Dostoyevsky's "anti-hero" suggests that further study of the inner man will reveal that he is not

7Ibid., p. 215.  
8Ibid., p. 221.
the only one who does not know what living means, that he is not alone in being unheroic.

The unheroic hero appears frequently in Dostoyevsky's work after 1864. The "anti-hero" of Notes from Underground, however, is the most "purely" degraded; he is, in fact, a composite of other utterly unheroic personages in Dostoyevsky's novels.

One of the first English writers of fiction to deal seriously with the weak and the unchivalric hero was George Meredith. In both The Ordeal of Richard Feverel and The Egoist Meredith's central characters act in an unheroic fashion in affairs of the heart. On the surface it may appear that Richard Feverel treated his young wife, Lucy, as he did because he was pulled between his duty toward her and his respect for his father's decrees. Closer study reveals, however, that had he known what he really wanted for himself, he would not have waited so long to claim Lucy as his wife. Even as a child, he had not held his father in such awe. The part that Richard's father played in the ruin of the lives of Richard and Lucy cannot be overlooked, because it is true that instead of trying to know and to understand his son's mind, he tried to direct Richard's life according to his own preconceived ideas. Because he did not have his own way, he refused to accept either Lucy or his son.

During the period in which Richard tried to see his father, he soothed his conscience about leaving Lucy by
rationalizing that he would go to her if she sent for him, and she did not. Neither his concern for her nor his efforts to make peace with his father, however, kept him from spending most of his time in the company of "an enchantress" and from becoming so deeply involved in his affair with her that he could not return to Lucy. In his own words he admitted his principal weaknesses:

O Rip! old Rip! ... I'm distracted. I wish I was dead! What good am I for? Miserable! Selfish! What have I done but make every soul I know wretched about me? I follow my own inclinations— I make people help me by lying as hard as they can—and I'm a liar. And when I've got it I'm ashamed of myself. And now when I do see something unselfish for me to do, I come upon grins—I don't know where to turn—how to act—and I laugh at myself like a devil.

Richard Feverel's weakness of character, which made him fail to consider what was best for Lucy as he made his decisions, was, in reality, the cause of her death. But, though the moral responsibility was his, he does not seem to be the despicable character that Meredith made of Sir Willoughby Patterne in a later novel, The Egoist. Burton says,

It [The Egoist] is a wonderful analytic study of the care of self that is humanity. Willoughby, incarnation of a self-centeredness glossed over to others and to himself by fine gentleman manners and instincts, is revealed stroke after stroke until, in the supreme test of his alliance with Clare Middleton, he is flayed alive for the reader's benefit. 10

Willoughby was not unaware that his rank and his fortune gave him great value in the matrimonial market, and he

9 George Meredith, The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, p. 363.
intended to be sure that the creature he married was worthy of such a person as he. By his supreme egotism he defeated himself. First, he made Constantia, then Clara, hate him because he wanted to dominate even their minds. One woman, Laetitia Dale, loved him, but Willoughby was not interested in her except as someone to feed his ego. He planned to keep her around by having her marry his cousin Vernon. When Clara finally convinced him that she did not intend to marry him, then Willoughby, to soothe his vanity, asked Laetitia to marry him immediately, for, he said, "I have staked my pride on it." Laetitia also refused, and Willoughby raved, "I will detain you. I will use force and guile. I will spare nothing." When Laetitia wanted to know if he did not ask for her love, he answered,

"I do not. I pay you the higher compliment of asking for you, love or no love. My love shall be enough. Reward me or not. I am not used to be denied." 

Laetitia told the ladies who worshipped him still that he was an egoist, vindictive and unpardoning, and that he had persecuted her to make her become his wife.

Burton says that every honest man who reads The Egoist winces at its infallible touching of a sore spot—the inescapable ego in every man. Even Willoughby's fine

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11 George Meredith, The Egoist, p. 516.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Burton, op. cit., p. 289.
"gentleman manners and instincts" could not hide forever his extreme selfishness, his disgusting arrogance, or his egotism, which made him unheroic in love.

In Russia, the process of deglamorizing the hero was carried on by Turgenev. However, his quasi-heroes often have strength and are in some ways admirable. It cannot be said, for example, that Bazarov in Fathers and Sons is a weakling, for he held to the way of life he had accepted, in spite of family, position, or love. Concerning him, de Vogue says,

The novelist has exhausted his art to create a deplorable character, which, however, is not really odious to us, excepting as regards his unhumanity, his scorn for everything we venerate. These seem intolerable to us. With the tamed animal, this would indicate perversion, disregard of all rules, but in the wild beast it is instinct, a resistance wholly natural.15

It is true that Bazarov was called a bird of prey, or a wild animal, by Katya, an intelligent young girl who was in love with Arkady, a disciple of Bazarov:

"Well, I'll say, then, I don't. . . . It's not exactly that I don't like him, but I feel that he's a different order from me, and I am different from him. . . and you, too, are different from him."

"How's that?"

"How can I tell you? . . . He's a wild animal, and you and I are tame."16

15E. M. de Vogue, Russian Novelists, translated by Loring Edwards, p. 117.

16Turgenev, Fathers and Sons, translated by Constance Garnett, p. 124.
Another conversation reveals the nature of Bazarov better than any other attempt at characterization can do:

"He's a nihilist," repeated Arkady.

"A nihilist," said Nikolai Petrovitch. "That's from the Latin, nihil, nothing, as far as I can judge; the word must mean a man who...accepts nothing?"

"Say, 'who respects nothing,'" put in Pavel Petrovitch.

"Who regards everything from the critical point of view," observed Arkady.

"Isn't it the same thing?"

"No, it's not the same thing. A nihilist is a man who does not bow down before any authority, who does not take any principle on faith, whatever reverence that principle may be enshrined in."17

In his conceit, Bazarov considered himself a god and his followers dolts, even Arkady.

In Virgin Soil Turgenev introduces another young nihilist, but Neshdanof is a weakling. De Voguésays,

But Neshdanof is not fitted for the terrible work of the cause of socialism; he is a weak character, and a dreamer and a poet. Distracted with doubts, and wholly discouraged, he soon discovers that all is chaos within his soul...Weary of life, too proud to withdraw...Neshdanof takes his life.18

Thus Turgenev makes both Bazarov and Neshdanof unheroic characters: the former because he uses his strength to fight "all we venerate," and the latter because he cannot, in his confusion, find strength with which to face reality. Both

17 Ibid., p. 24.
18 de Vogués, op. cit., p. 128.
are products of a period of transition, of a changing society which causes man to question old values and to experiment without carefully considering the new.

Though Thomas Hardy wrote at the time that economic and social changes were having a great influence on other English writers, his work does not always reflect the influence of those changes. 19 Dawson suggests that Hardy was "too narrowly logical to see life in its full perspective." 20 As was true of other writers of the period, he was determined to set down what he saw of life; and in so doing he created characters who cannot be called heroic by nature, for according to Dawson,

Hardy sees no element of gravity or splendor in human life; it is sordid, cruel, mean, and therefore he cannot regard it with cheerfulness. 21

Angel Clare, in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, was guilty of the same type of unchivalric actions that were committed by Meredith's Richard Feverel. However, Richard was a young boy, spoiled by many, reared in a peculiar fashion—a boy who did not know what he wanted and who took his time finding out. But Angel Clare was mature in many ways, had been brought up by religious parents in a good home, and had no doubt of his love for Tess. His leaving her was a matter of

21 Ibid., p. 230.
his not being able to forgive in her the same sin which he expected her to forgive in him. Thus, because of a double standard which he felt he must observe, he brought unhappiness to himself and a life of horror to Tess. Because of his pride and his pity for himself, he closed his eyes to what his actions might mean to Tess, and, like Feverel, he became aware of his folly too late to alleviate her suffering. He was so intent on running from the scene of his own unhappiness that he did not take care to be sure that Tess was provided for. Selfishness and lack of courage, again, make a central figure an unheroic hero in love.

The characters created by John Galsworthy in his *Forsyte Saga* reflect the influence of changing society, of the breakdown of tradition, and of the establishment of new values. Daiches states that in an advanced and sophisticated society economics plays a greater part than geography in influencing human conduct, and that a normal writer living in a normal social world is likely to deal with the social and economic factors underlying human emotion and action instead of emphasizing other factors. In this period, heroes and heroines began to be replaced by central characters of mixed qualities. The *Forsyte Saga* is significant in this study for that

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reason. It covers the life of the Forsytes from the late nineteenth century through the transitional period of World War I, and reveals the social codes of the comfortable middle class in England in conflict with the changing values in a fast-moving world.

Galsworthy said himself that "the word Saga might be objected to on the ground that it connotes the heroic and there is little of heroism in these pages," and that is true. In the Forsyte clan the motivating forces were money, property, and family pride. Soames, perhaps, can be called the principal Forsyte, and by no criterion can he be judged a heroic character. In his relationship with his first wife, Irene, he revealed the same qualities that were evident in Sir Willoughby Patterne, and Irene could not love him simply because he had a name and a position which were respected. He married Annette because he wanted an heir; then his true nature was revealed when he had to choose between his wife and his child. These were his thoughts as he made the decision:

"No more chance! All for nothing! Married life with her for years and years without a child. . . . Nothing to look forward to for her--for me! For me!" He struck his hands against his chest! Why couldn't he think without bringing himself in--get out of himself and see what he ought to do? The thought hurt him, and then lost edge, as if it had come in contact with a breast-plate. Out of himself! Impossible! Out of soundless,

scentless, touchless, sightless space! The idea was ghastly, futile! And touching there the bedrock of reality, the bottom of his Forsyte spirit, Soames rested for a moment.26

Soames was typical of the other Forsytes. They were honest, met commercial and social obligations, and cared for their children, but their love for property kept out of their vision all spiritual and aesthetic values. They had no charity for the unfortunate, and being self-satisfied, never saw themselves as they were. Galsworthy made no effort to cover their weaknesses nor to exaggerate their virtues.

Joseph Conrad, writing in the same period of cultural change, was not influenced to the extent that Galsworthy was by the relationships of men to one another in a given type of environment.27 He was much more interested in the relation of the individual to his environment provided by nature, and by nature acting on individuals.28

The novel Lord Jim is possibly the best example of Conrad's use of man versus his environment. In that work Conrad looks under the surface of familiar emotions, and proves that every human experience, though it may seem commonplace, is actually unique when one realizes that the real interest is not in the experience itself, but in how and why it came to be.

27Daiches, op. cit.
28Ibid.
29Alan Reynolds Thompson, The Anatomy of Drama, p. 239.
Jim was a clergyman's son, and he dreamed of going to sea and doing heroic acts. He did go to sea and in the course of time became the chief mate on the Patna, an ancient steamer which was taking Moslem pilgrims to Mecca. Often, as he looked out on a calm sea, he told himself that there was no danger he could not face, but then the ship was damaged in the Red Sea. When Jim checked the hold and reported that it was rapidly filling with water, the captain, a coward at heart, gave orders to abandon ship. There were only seven boats; so Jim's first thought was to stand by. But at the last minute, seized with panic, he followed the instinct to save himself and joined the other men, leaving the pilgrims to drown, or so he thought. Jim was not aware until then of the cowardice that can make itself known at the appearance of sudden danger, but he became intensely aware of it when he was brought face to face with the pilgrims when the ship was saved.

The rest of Jim's life was spent in trying to recover his honor, and although he did redeem himself in his own eyes, he remains, nonetheless, a character who through fear and cowardice committed an act which changed the whole course of his life.

In the novel Victory Conrad created a character who was afraid of life itself. He had been taught by his father that the world is evil. Believing that, he went to a remote island of the Malay Archipelago to remove himself.
from the necessity for any action with forces in a wicked world. Around himself he built his own world, for he, like Frederick Henry, was convinced that to form ties is to be lost. It was inevitable, of course, that he should come in contact with wickedness, and, since he had run from all knowledge of the ways of man, he was not prepared to meet the danger. He had no faith in life and no faith in love; therefore he lacked faith in Lena. When he realized his love for her, his entire world, all that he had believed in, went out of focus; and he had nothing to grasp when he lost her. Like Henry again, he refused the natural attachments of life for too long, then tried to fill the emptiness with love for one person. As a result, loss of that one person meant loss of all. Heyst learned too late that his years without hope, without love, without trust in life were wasted years. His fault was not selfishness, greed for power, nor discourtesy toward people he met, but an extreme distrust of life. He, like Frederick Henry, refused happiness when he refused life—and refusal to meet life is an unheroic action.

Another weak hero from the same period in England is Phillip Mark in Walpole's The Green Mirror. Johnson says of him,

31 Brimley R. Johnson, Some Contemporary Novelists (Men), pp. 56 ff.
Phillip Mark lacks "obstinate courage," which is the backbone of a romance hero: he has at bottom no self confidence.\textsuperscript{32}

Phillip was a weakling in most things, but especially in love. He was engaged to Katherine Trenchard, whose mother was as strong as Phillip was weak. She pretended to accept him so that she could mold him by her own pattern and thus take every quality which was his own; and, amiable as he was, he was susceptible to the domination of a stronger will. The fact that he escaped the net Mrs. Trenchard had ready for him did not make him heroic, because the victory was Katherine's. She understood her mother's craftiness, and she understood Phillip's weakness as well. It was her courage, not Phillip's, that saved them both. Though Phillip is the hero, in one sense of the word, the term is a misnomer if allowed to suggest that he had qualities which accompany deeds of heroism.

From the period following World War I until the present, many writers have pictured modern life as basically purposeless and have suggested through their work that the typical condition of modern man is one of doubt, confusion, and fear.\textsuperscript{33} The characters created by three American authors illustrate that tendency, for in the novels of Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Dreiser, there are heroes who are victims of forces set

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 58.

\textsuperscript{33} J. W. Aldridge, \textit{After the Lost Generation}, p. 90.
in motion by an older generation, heroes who cannot adjust to the rapidly-changing economic and cultural values.

In Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*, Stephen Blaine handed down to his son, Amory Blaine, the tendency to waver at crucial moments. That characteristic joined with his other weaknesses to make of Fitzgerald's central character a hero at odds with the world—apart and alone. Amory developed through the years an unscrupulousness of action; the desire to influence other people in almost every way, even for evil; a certain coldness and lack of affection which at times amounted to cruelty; a shifting sense of honor; an unholy selfishness; and a puzzled, furtive interest in everything concerning sex.

Fitzgerald made Amory the child of parents who trekked about the world living in hotels and resorts. His father, Stephen, was completely overshadowed by his mother, Beatrice, a hypochondriac who was more interested in cures than in her son. In time, Amory became a definite handicap and was sent to be brought up by relatives who knew almost nothing about children.

As Amory grew up, his strength failed to match his ambitions:

> There was, also, a curious strain of weakness running crosswise through his makeup—a harsh phrase from the lips of older boys (older boys usually detested him) was liable to sweep him off his poise into surly sensitiveness, or timid stupidity. . . . he was slave to his own moods and he felt that though he was capable of

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34Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*, pp. 20 ff.
recklessness and audacity, he possessed neither courage, perseverance, nor self-respect. He had enough vanity to consider his associates as "automatons to his will," and to make him want to "pass" as many boys as possible in order to reach a vague top of the world; but the fundamental Amory was idle and rebellious.

At St. Regis, where he was sent to school, he was resentful against all who were in authority. That attitude, combined with his lazy indifference, did not help him to become a part of the school. Thus, because he was left more and more alone,

''he attached to himself a few friends, but since they were not among the elite of the school, he used them simply as mirrors of himself, audiences before which he might do that posing absolutely essential to him. He was unbearably lonely, desperately unhappy.

From time to time Amory became interested in writing or fell in love, but he lacked the initiative to follow through with anything he started. Other influences could, on occasion, dull the influence of Beatrice and cover the fundamental Amory, but never for long. Before any pull became too strong, he listlessly turned his back on it. He accomplished nothing in life and admitted finally, "I know myself, but that is all," and it seems doubtful that he found himself worth knowing.

One of the best pictures of the "Lost Generation" is found in Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises. Every outstanding

35Ibid., p. 27.  
36Ibid., p. 30.
character in the novel led a purposeless life in France and Spain following the war. Evidently, though Hemingway reveals little by the use of exposition, each felt that he had nothing to return to, but much to forget. They were the "specially damned and forsaken" who found it necessary, when life became too dull in one place, to seek excitement somewhere else. Each accepted the others for what they were, as all accepted Brett and her numerous affairs. Jake, the central character, had no ambition, no ties, no plans. He, like the others, did not have the initiative to stay away from people he detested; part of the code was not to be too intense about anything. Jake did want Brett, but, since he could not have her, he spent his time getting her out of trouble and taking care of her. He is typical of the weak, empty characters in The Sun Also Rises, people who have no destination and nothing to look forward to.

Although these characters were pictured as victims in an age of moral and spiritual destitution for which they were not responsible, they are, nevertheless, unheroic, since they accepted a purposeless life without attempting to fight.

In developing the character of Clyde Griffiths in his American Tragedy, Dreiser followed the tendency which by

37 Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises.
1925 was quite common; he did not give his hero any of the characteristics which would have made him a hero in the early novel or drama. There is little doubt that Dreiser was attempting to show that our economic system is often responsible for the downfall of the individual; for that reason some may contend that Clyde's downfall was a tragedy, since contemporary society made him become the victim of his own potential weaknesses. However that may be, Clyde himself is not a tragic hero: he was not a strong character in the beginning and he did not change. He was not brought to his downfall because of a flaw within himself, but by forces from the outside; and although it is true that the tragic hero may be brought to ruin by outward circumstances, he must remain a lofty and noble character in order to be called heroic. Clyde did not do that. There can be no tragic flaw in a character who is essentially weak and passive, and that this weakness was a basic quality in Clyde Griffiths is evident in his every action. He had no noble characteristics to save him from destruction nor to help him to be the conventional hero in meeting that destruction.

Clyde was a young man tempted by desire for luxury and wealth, who, because of his religious background, felt a sense of guilt because of the methods he had to use in making a place for himself in the social world. Moral coward that he was, he could not cope with the conflict between
his desires and his inhibitions and did not have the courage to face any unpleasant situation which might prove painful to himself. As a consequence, he always hunted a means of escape, and in so doing destroyed himself.

Clyde ran the first time following the accident in which he ran over a little girl. Rather than face the authorities, he left home and went to Chicago, hoping that there he could shut from his mind both that incident and the fact that his mother was a "sidewalk missionary," who had brought him up in poverty. When he was given a job by his uncle and thereby was given a chance to find a place in the social life of his uncle's family, he used no initiative, but waited for others to push him.

However, it was in his affairs with Roberta Alden and Sandra Finchley that Clyde proved himself to be a moral weakling. When he learned that Roberta was to have his child, he assured her that he would marry her, although he knew that he would not. Again Clyde ran, but when Roberta followed him, he went weekly with her to obtain a marriage license. That time, however, outside circumstances saved him for another fate.

Finally, in his desperation, because he could not part from Sandra and all that she stood for, he let his mind turn to crime. He planned to drown Roberta, but could not carry

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through—a fact which is not much to his credit, since he let her drown when there was a chance to save her. His first instinct, as before, was to flee instead of telling the authorities the truth, for he was afraid of the law and afraid of being brought to shame before Sandra and her friends.

Each time that Clyde met an obstacle, he could not overcome it because he would not face it. In the trial, his moral cowardice was the issue on which his lawyer argued for his innocence. They tried to prove that he was not inherently capable of such action—that he was not morally guilty because he was morally weak. Clyde Griffiths was not a good man nor a strong man who was overcome by a flaw in his own character or who was courageous against outside forces. Instead, he was a weakling and had no noble qualities to make him a heroic hero.

In creating Sammy Glick in his novel *What Makes Sammy Run?*, Bud Schulberg, like Dreiser, made our economic and social systems responsible for the character of his hero. Both Clyde Griffiths and Sammy Glick were poor. Both were ashamed of their backgrounds; Clyde, because he felt that the religious work of his parents was responsible for his poverty and for his position in society; Sammy, because he believed that his Hebrew extraction and Jewish faith were the sources of all his misery. Clyde lacked the initiative
to assert his individuality; Sammy had been "stepped on" and believed that he would be safe only by being the aggressor.

When Sammy was sixteen, he got a job on a newspaper. His first statement was, "Good morning, Mr. Manheim, I'm the new office boy, but I ain't going to be an office boy long." He was right. Manheim tried to get him to slow his pace, to take time to be decent to other people. He appealed to Sammy by saying,

"... But I'll bet I know what he'd [Sammy's father] say if he saw you today. He'd say, 'Sammy, in the long run you'll get further by being nice to people because then when you need them, they'll be nice to you.'"39

Sammy's reply was typical of his attitude toward other people:

"Mr. Manheim," he said, "that spiel really rings the bell on my old man. That's what he'd be telling me all right. Because you want to know what my old man croaked from? Dumbness."40

Manheim tried to convince him that society is not just "a bunch of individuals living alongside of each other," but that men are interdependent. He said to him,

"Life is too complex for there to be any truth in the old slogan of every man for himself. We share the benefits of social institutions, like take hospitals, the cops and garbage collection... We can't live in this world like a lot of cannibals trying to swallow each other. Learn to give the other fellow a break and we'll all live longer."41

40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., p. 10.
Sammy told him to try China if he wanted to save souls. He continued to antagonize Manheim, who called him the smartest and the stupidest human being he had ever met.

He had a quick intelligence, which he was able to use exclusively for the good and welfare of Sammy Glick. And that kind of intelligence implies stupidity, for where other people might have one blind spot, Sammy's mind was a mass of blind spots, with only a single ray of light focused immediately ahead. 42

As Sammy began to mature, he did not change, but Manheim called his growth a "Sammyglick maturity" in which there was no mellowing, no deepening of understanding. His alert ferret-face began to take on a form that reminded you of an army, full of force, strategy, single will and the kind of courage that boasts of never taking a backward step. 43

Thus Sammy Glick began his career, and thus he continued, conniving, pushing, taking—but failing to make a place for himself. Manheim knew that wherever Sammy went, to house parties, to crowded night clubs, or to intimate dinners, he would be wandering and alone, that he would pay for his treatment of others through loneliness and fear. When the girl Sammy married proved to be capable of letting him learn how it feels to be a victim of the cold, embittered actions of another person, Manheim observed that he got what was coming to him:

I thought of all the things I might have told him. You never had the first idea of give-and-take, the

42 Ibid. 43 Ibid., p. 17.
social intercourse. It had to be you, all the way. You had to make individualism the most frightening ism of all. You act as if the world is just a blindfold free-for-all. Only the first time you get it in the belly you holler brotherhood. But you can't have your brothers and eat them too. You're alone, pal, all alone. . . . All alone in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, with power and with Harringtons till death parts you from your only friend, your worst enemy, yourself. 44

Manheim knew that it was too late for experience to change Sammy, for he had learned of the terrible hungers of Sammy's body and brains, of the imposed wants, and of the traditional oppressions which had caused Sammy to start a blitzkrieg against his fellow men. As he remembered all of Sammy's conquests during the years he had known him, he thought,

It was a terrifying and wonderful document, the record of where Sammy ran, and if you looked behind the picture and between the lines you might even discover what made him run. And some day I would like to see it published, as a blueprint of a way of life that was paying dividends in America in the first half of the twentieth century. 45

In 1830, Stendhal's Julien Sorel ruined the lives of several people and lost his own life because of his ambitions. In the middle of the twentieth century Bud Schulberg's Sammy Glick assured himself of a life of loneliness by using the same selfish methods to accomplish his purposes. The heroes of other works of fiction, such as Richard Feverel, Angel Clare, and Sir Willoughby Patterne, have proved themselves to be unheroic in love. Some central characters like

44 ibid., p. 303. 45 ibid.
Neshdanof and Clyde Griffiths have been weaklings who could not cope with the problems of their lives. Then there have been the Bazarovs, who have refused to accept the existing patterns of society and who have tried to make changes too hastily, and the characters like Conrad's Lord Jim and Walpole's Phillip Mark, who lacked obstinate courage. Many writers do not hesitate to make heroes of men like Fitzgerald's Amory Blaine and Hemingway's Jake, who had no purpose and no destination, or like Conrad's Heyst, who was afraid of life itself. An examination of even a limited number of novels shows that there has been a tendency to let selfishness, fear, egotism, and defiance of economic and social conditions become outstanding characteristics of central figures in the novel. The characters in whom these traits are predominant fail to meet the problems of life effectively and thus become the unheroic heroes in a changing world.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

It has been said that each age has its own interpretation of experience and that that experience takes on the color of the age in which it occurs. Generally speaking, the hero in literature reflects the character of the age in which he is created. That being true, it naturally follows that the conception of the hero may change in a changing world, as new social, economic, and political concepts develop.

In the early periods of literature, the term hero carried with it the idea of physical and moral strength, and the hero overcame obstacles or was overcome by a force stronger than he. In the event that he was overcome, he remained noble in defeat. The tendency to make characters in fiction like the mass of men developed slowly, but with interest in the pícaro in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it became evident that writers were consciously emphasizing the attempt to deal with life as it really is.

In working toward verisimilitude in characterization, the problem seems to be, "What is the truth about man?" At some time during the past century a complete reversal has taken place in the portrayal of many heroes, so that often
the central figure is a hero in name only. Once his best qualities were exaggerated and his weaknesses ignored. Often today his weaknesses are exaggerated and his admirable qualities minimized. Evidently many writers consider the final truth about man to be that he is a weakling and a coward.

The hero, as a product of his environment, has been influenced by many forces. At one time his status reflected that man was considered to be the offspring of God. Studies in science, philosophy, and psychology have caused some people to question that relationship, and, as man has lost confidence in his divine origin, he has lost stature in the universe. His dilemma concerning his origin has produced further questionings concerning his purpose and his destination, and, in many instances, pessimism and cynicism have been the result.

The study of man's subconscious, the "underground man," has been a factor in the destruction of the heroic tradition, for novelists have followed the psychologists in "telling all" about both contemporary figures and heroes of the past.

One factor which has affected the social, economic, and political outlook is the new warfare that involves the masses, warfare which touches the lives of many instead of few, to an extent undreamed of in "Kings' Wars" and wars for markets. With the invention of powerful weapons, the heroic individual is not so conspicuous as he once was in war, for the emphasis is on the machine; and the horrors
of modern warfare have caused man to revolt against everything associated with war.

The conditions which have developed as an aftermath of war have, no doubt, influenced novelists in the creation of the central characters, and, as a result, the hero in the last few decades has often been a complex symbol of social, economic, and philosophical problems. He has been the product of a civilization that is filled with fatigue from having fought two global wars in a generation, and which has lost sight of the values which once were a source of strength.

The effort to picture man as he actually thinks and lives may at times be the only motive the author has. On the other hand, he may use that device in order to reveal his attitude toward existing conditions. That device, in turn, may be a means to an end, a method by which the novelist hopes to point out, and thus correct, the evils of society. But whatever the motive has been, the result has been the creation of heroes who are unheroic in the way that they meet the problems around them.

Although it is not possible to predict what the next step will be in the development of the hero, there are indications that he may again become the symbol of what men aspire to be. A great deal has been said, for example, about the new hero-type which is developing as a result of the courage of the jet-pilot, who has been described as an
intelligent realist who admits fear, but does not let it confuse or stop him. It seems significant, also, that America recently chose as leader of the nation a man who had proved himself to be a capable leader of men in battle, suggesting that this nation, at least, is still impressed by heroic heroes. Perhaps, after all, heroics are not outmoded, but have merely been eclipsed for a time.
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