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THE ISOLATOR OF THE AMERICAN NOVEL

In Fulfillment of Requirements

of

One Hour of Special Studies in Conjunction with

the Honors Program

Submitted to Mr. Herman Sandford

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Martha Ann Rayfield

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THE ISOLATO OF THE AMERICAN NOVEL

There were, in pre-Revolutionary America, no native novels. Even the popular novels of Europe had little demand in the Colonies. Pamela by Richardson was printed three times in 1744 when Benjamin Franklin published it simultaneously with two other equally adventurous printers. It was not until forty years later that another of Richardson's novels appeared--in 1786, the same year Tom Jones was printed in abridged form. Robinson Crusoe had to wait fifty years for American publication. The printing of any European novel was more for competition between printers--and that was practically non-existant.

True, the lag in taste and culture of the Colonies accounted partially for this apathy toward novels. But, it was far from the distinct antipathy following the Revolution when native novelists sprang up and novel reading stepped up. There were moralists who were aroused and began loudly condemning the change. It seemed as though all types of people were against the novel:

> The dullest critics contended that novels were lies; the pious, that they served no virtuous purpose; the strenuous, that they crowded out more useful books; the realistic, that they painted adventure too romantic and love too vehement; the patriotic, that dealing with European manners, they tended to confuse and dissatisfy republican youth.

In the face of such criticism, any art form would be forced to defend itself in its present state, or change.[1] But the novel sent out a vast network of roots in the soil of America, drawing constantly from

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[1]Carl Van Doren, The American Novel 1789-1939 (New York: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 3-4.

American life for its existance. The novel grew and thrived as a literary form in the United States, becoming the mirror of American Man.

Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecœur was one of the first commentators on the subject of The American. Since he actually lived in the American Colonies before they became the United States, he could speak with some authority about the character of this new man. Crèvecœur saw in The American a much changed European, one who had to start thinking for himself--having thought of self-advancement, meeting with success, and thereby gaining a new respect for himself and a new confidence in himself. Later, Frederick Jackson Turner interpreted the frontier as having been the line of quickest and most effective Americanization. Before Turner, Crèvecoeur had written, "A European, when he first arrives, seems limited in his intentions, as well as in his views; but. . .he no sooner breathes our air than he forms new schemes, and embarks in designs he never would have thought of in his own country. . . .Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men. . . ." Turner got a bit more specific when he wrote that:

> The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization, and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and the Iroquois, and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick; he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails. Little by little he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe, not simply the development of Germanic germs, any more than the first phenomenon was a case of reversion to the Germanic mark. The fact is that here is a new product that is American. At first the frontier was the Atlantic coase. It was the frontier of Europe in a very real sense. Moving westward, the frontier

> became more and more American. As successive terminal moraines result from successive glaciations, so each frontier leaves its traces behind it, and when it becomes a settled area the region still partakes of the frontier characteristics. Thus the advance of the frontier has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines.[2]

Among the traits of the American intellect as a result of his struggling with the settlement of the wilderness was a "dominant individualism." This individualism was to be written about time and time again by the American novelists. But this individualism grew into a trait that could more accurately be called individual isolationism; a man found himself isolated from society--very unlike the condition prevailing in Europe where a man always had his niche in society. He knew his social duties and did them; he knew who his superiors and inferiors were and acted in an historically accepted manner to both groups; in short, he knew who and what he was in relation to his society and he could easily find his place there. The significance of the individual in English society was noted by Granville Hicks when he wrote: "Jane Austen, Thackeray, Trollope. . . and many others simply took for granted the kind of society they knew and wrote about the problems of the individual <u>within</u> [my underlining] that society."[3] This was not true of the revolutionary American, the isolato. Radical individualism dominated this era. The American was proud of his country's independence and just as proud and more so of his <u>own</u> independence. What were the Americans?----scouts, frontiersmen, settlers later to become business entrepreneurs and self-made men.[4]

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[2]Bruce R. McElderry, Jr., ed., <u>The Realistic Movement in American Writing</u> (New York: Odyssey Press, 1965), p. 628.

[3]Granville Hicks, "Signatures to the Significance of the Self," <u>Saturday Review</u>, XLVII (   ), p. 67.

[4]Laurence MacPhee, <u>Review Notes and Study Guide to Melville's "Moby Dick"</u> (New York, Thor Publications, 1964), pp. 7-8.

Cooper's novels are excellent examples of this type. In The Spy, Harvey Birch is the hero, a well-drawn, memorable character who does not seem outwardly to be hero-material. He is skillfully presented as a mysterious, sly, unimpressive-looking character slinking unobtrusively about on unknown errand. The patriotism which motivated his life, gave him purpose, and set his destiny was the same force which made of him a dedicated but isolated soul.

Indian John in The Pioneers is presented as an old, broken man who was the only remaining member of a once proud race--a man corrupted by the civilization of the settlements, whose only dignity came when he died. Natty Bumppo is introduced as a "Daniel Boone-type," the isolato of the forest who was better than the Indian because he had not yielded to society but had kept his virtue intact by retreating to the deep forest. Natty stands today as a symbol of man's protest against the creeping demands of civilization.

The hero of The Pilot, J.P.Jones, is the typical Byronic hero----dark, secretive, brooding--an isolato.[5] Speaking collectively of the Leatherstocking Tales, Cooper said of Natty: "The most surprising peculiarity about the man himself was the entire indifference with which he regarded all distinctions that did not depend on personal merit."[6] Cooper is considered by some people to be highly over-rated as a novelist. It cannot be argued that some of his situations are not too contrived, but one has to admit that the characters he drew were typical of the American during his lifetime.

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[5]Van Doren, pp. 25-27.

[6]Van Doren, pp. 37-38.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, himself an isolated figure for many years, portrayed the isolato in several of his works. The members of the triangle in The Scarlet Letter (Hester, Chillingsworth, and Dimmesdale), involved though they were with each other, were very much apart from the other members of the triangle. Each was involved with a conflict much more exacting and immense, with a struggle between the universals, good and evil.[7] Hester alone, the only one who did not try to preserve her standing in the community and the one who was ostracized and isolated from society, was released of her guilt. Hester became a symbol of the individual who throws off traditions of his society, is punished for it by being excluded from the society, and is actually resigned to his status so much that he would not wish his act undone.

In Ethan Brand's search for the Unpardonable Sin, he "lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity." His intellect was "on a star-lit eminence, whither the philosophers of the earth. . .might vainly strive to clamber after him"; but his heart "ceased to partake of the universal throb." When Brand in the end found that the Sin was in himself, his mission was finished, his isolation complete, and he had but to die--a death symbolic of his absolute disaffiliation with society.[8]

The isolato is present in Hawthorne's novels; in his short stories they appear time and again, showing distinctly his awareness of the man apart from society, one who is not a member of any social structure comparable to the one of Austen's or Trollope's or Dickens' England. With Hawthorne, the American novel began to take form as a truly serious literary expression.

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[7]Van Doren, p. 68.

[8]Richard Harter Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), pp. 44, 47.

The fate of the unhappy man who is alienated from the human community, by choice or by chance, was intriguing to Hawthorne. This theme held a similar allurement for Herman Melville; possibly as a result of his acquanitance and association with Hawthorne, Melville's interest grew in the "Ishmael motif." The theme's moral and philosophical implications were where Melville's interest lay; out of these came his doctrine of a racial or social community as an ideal opposite the individual who was isolated from this community. These persons, who were called isolatoes by Melville himself in a description of the Pequod's crew ("They were nearly all Isalnders. . . .'Isolatoes' too, I call such, not acknowledging the common coninent of men, but each Isolato living on a separate continent of his own."), were excluded from normal social relationships by some trait, achievement, by birth, or character. Melville never failed to include one of these persons in every novel he wrote.[9]

Some of Melville's isolatoes were outcasts by chance--not by choice. The narrator of Omoo was isolated because he was an educated man. In Mardi, Taji experienced a similar exclusion described in the following passage:

> . . .Aboard of all ships in which I have sailed, I have invariably been known by a sort of drawing-room title. . . .It was because of something in me that could not be hidden; stealing out in an occasional polysyllable; an otherwise incomprehensible deliberation in dining. remote, unguarded allusions to Belles-Lettres affairs; and other trifles . . . .

Only Jarl who was experiencing the loneliness of an again sailor could sympathize with Taji. Typee's narrator was estranged because he had not lived the same kind of life as the rest of the crew. Likewise, he was an outsider when in the valley with the natives. Clothes often distinguished

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[9]Edwin T. Bowden, The Dungeon of the Heart (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 107.

an isolato, as in White Jacket and Redburn. The name Ishamel is symbolic of a wanderer or an outcast, so when the narrator of Moby Dick introduces himself as Ishamel ("Call me Ishamel."), the reader is immediately aware of another isolato. Ishmael could identify with Queequeg, a foreigner and a wanderer himself, and could therefore feel less isolated.

Melville also wrote of two involuntary female isolatoes. One, Isabel, in Pierre, had been treated so cruelly as a child that she was unsure that she was a part of the creation called humanity. She considered herself "an outcast in the world." Hunilla, the Chola widow, was termed a "lone, shipwrecked soul."

The voluntary isolato was more often a subject of Melville's study. Probably the two best-known are Pierre and Ahab. Ahab, although occasionally regretting his self-imposed solitude, tried to survive as much as possible without any help from anyone or anything. The same Ahab who said: "[L]et me look into a human eye; it is better. . .than to gaze upon God. . ." and ". . .'tis sweet to lean sometimes. . .and would old Ahab had leaned oftener than he has," was also the man who boasted proudly: "Ahab stands alone among all the millions of the peopled earth, nor gods nor men his neighbors!" He resented any indebtedness to a person for any act, notably to the carpenter for making his leg and even his ancestors and parents who gave him life. Since the quadrant sybolized human science to him, he destroyed it and later made his own compass. He would not allow any purely social contacts with other ships. F.O. Mathiessen in American Renaissance interprets Ahab's tragedy as "a fearful symbol of the self-enclosed individualism that, carried to its furthest extreme, brings disaster both upon itself and the group of which it is a part. He provided also an ominous glimpse of

what was the result when the Emersonian will to virtue became in less innocent natures the will to conquest."

Pierre was like Ahab in his exaggerated self-reliance. He was willing to give up all social relationships (with mother, friends, relatives, fiancée--everyone). Pierre wanted a complete disassociation with humanity. Melville described pierre as a "proud man [who] likes to feel himself in himself, and not by reflection in others. He likes to be not only h s own Alpha and Omega, but to be distinctly all the intermediate gradations."

Among the minor isolatoes, Bartleby the Scrivener provides "the most complete and moving portrait." He was not adamant or violent in his rejection of society, he just "preferred not to" when his new employer's office called for participation in minor social functions. His job as a sorter in the Dead Letter office was quite appropriate since he was dealing only with the unsuccessful efforts of men to communicate with each other. Melville's ending for the story with the lament, "Ah Bartleby! An humanity!", suggests first that Bartleby has suffered much in his social disaffiliation, but secondly, that society too has lost from Bartleby's non-participation.

The Negro Pip, in Moby Dick, who had jumped from the whaleboat and had been deserted for quite a long time afterwards, went insane not so much from fear for his life as from his realization of his complete aloneness in the vast "shoreless ocean."[10] In this pitiful character one can see represented Melville's sympathetic attitude toward his isolatoes.

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[10]Bowden, pp. 108-113.

Throughout his novels he displayed the contention that the isolated man is not capable of finding satisfaction or happiness. Nevertheless, Melville was conscious of the tendency of The American to become this type of individual or he would not have written about him so many times.

Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn serves as a suitable example of the treatment of isolation by later novelists. Huck wanted to escape, just as Natty Bumppo had, from the social restrictions and responsibilities. As Huck cried at the novel's ending,". . .I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize [sic] and I can't stand it. I been there before." Huck Finn might easily have been the young Natty Bumppo, their desires were so similar. Huck's wish for freedom is much the same longing as was experienced to some extent by all young people. Huck was an isolato both by chance and by choice; for a long time no one was there to even make him think of relinquishing his isolation. Just as Natty had his forest, Huck felt attached to the river. The river was the substitute friend--one with whom there was never the danger of having demands made, no emotional ties; and yet the river was almost human in its stormy anger, its indecisive moodiness. The river was unpredictable, not to be taken for granted. Huck understood sympathetically the river as he never would have allowed himself to be devoted to any human being. Nigger Jim served as the one person who could actually be called a friend to Huck. But, there seemed to be too much to separate them--Jim was an old Negro, Huck a young white. The (the color question) presented the same insurmountable problem as the difference between the white Deerslayer and the red Chingachgook. Color was never to be forgotten by Huck.[11]

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[11]Bowden, pp. 30-37.

Although Huck was a child, or maybe <u>because</u> he was a child, he could successfully be a isolato. "The ethical determinisms which control the action" of an isolato all come from the basic rules used on the children's playground. The direction of the moral emphasis is unquestioningly toward the individual rather than a combined or "social achievement." No matter how many players, the protagonist will always be alone. As is seen in this fiction about a child, the isolato (Huck) is playing his own game outside the basic structure of life where the players can all throw away accepted rules because of their consuming self-interest.[12]

When Huck made a step out of isolation by consenting to hlep Jim get his freedom, he was also making a step toward maturity. In a very true sense though this could be seen as a step back into isolation because even though he was helping a friend out of love, he was also flagrantly neglecting his social duty to turn Jim over to the authorities. since he felt absolutely no duty to society, this was not really so difficult a decision.[13]

If Cooper's and Hawthorne's have the setting of frontier novels, Nelville's of the sea, and Twain's the problem of maturity, then Henry James' <u>The Portrait of a Lady</u> is full of the aura of sophistication and high society. Even though there is a great disparity among these settings, James' novel presented the same conclusion about a life of isolation. Isabel Archer was much like Hester Prynne in that they both led solitary lives, the mental and moral implications of which were dealt with in their novels. Isabel began alone and ended alone having to face her problems

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[12]Earl Rovit, "Fathers and Sons," <u>Yale Review</u>, LIII (December, 1963), pp, 254-255.

[13]Bowden, p. 38.

by herself. She said, "'If there is a thing in the world that I am fond of, . . . it is my personal independence.'" Huck Finn's desire for isolation and h s fulfillment of that desire whenever he felt he had to be alone, is reminiscent of Isabel at such time as the following:

> "I love you, Isabel," said Miss Stackpole, with feeling.
> "Well, if you love me, let me alone. I asked that of Mr. Goodwood, and I must also ask it of you."
> "Take care you are not let alone too much."
> "That is what Mr. Goodwood said to me. I told him I must take the risks."

Isabel thought she had found in Gilbert Osmond a man who shared her wish for a voluntary isolation from social demands in a complete independence. However, she later found that his isolation was merely to satisfy his absolute selfishness. Isabel was not able to return his hatred; her reaction, instead, was to retreat as far from him as she could, protecting herself by completely isolating herself. Nevertheless, Isabel was able to reach out of her isolation and touch the lives of others beneficially; she was a humanitarian, aster all. Because of her committment to life and humanity, her isolation could never be a complete one.[14]

The reader can see the American man constantly trying to change himself to become something different from the old man.[15] This new surge was brought about in part or in connection with "the revolt from the village," as Carl Van Doren calls it. Edgar Lee Masters' Spoon River Anthology in 1915 which was a collection of poetic epitaphs, voiced the movement's discontent and dramatically gave it impetus.[16]

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[14]Bowden, pp. 89-92, 98-102.

[15]Gay Wilson Allen, "It's All in Our Imagination" Saturday Review, XLIV, (May 27, 1961), p. 39.

[16]Van Doren, pp. 294-5.

The intense interest in this them continued on into the Twentieth Century with Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio being representative of the novel of the early 1900's. This novel presents several sketches of isolatoes in a small, ordinary Ohio town. The loneliness and the extent of isolation began with the turn of the century to become more harsh, more intense, more total.[17] The majority of the more than twenty stories deal isolation; "Loneliness" is the title of one sketch and "lonely" appears repeatedly. With two notable exceptions, the isolatoes are unhappy in their disaffiliation. Winesburg has been described as a town where people "collide but never meet. Longliness is the mark of mankind there, and each person must live his life alone within transparent walls that no one else can enter."

One of the characters, George, reflects Anderson's opinions about the theme. In the next-to-the-last section ("Sophistication"), George finally was able to create a brief moment of understanding with Helen, with whom he was infatuated. Just before he left Winesburg, he found her by herself at the empty fairgrounds and realized a depth of relationship with her that he had never known with anyone. "The feeling of loneliness and isolation that had come to the young man in the crowded streets of his town was both broken and intensified by the prescence of Helen." They became increasingly conscious, standing alone, of some bond between them. However, the moment passed, they parted, and went back to their normal existence. An analysis of George could be found within one paragraph of the sketch:

> The eighteen years he has lived seem but a moment, a breathing space in the long march of humanity. Already he hears death calling. With all his heart he wants to come close to some other human, touch someone with his hands, be touched by the hand of another. If he prefers that the other be a woman ,

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[17]Bowden, p. 114.

> that is because he believes that a woman will be gentle, that she will understand. He wants, most of all, understanding.

Understanding, then, makes the position of the tortuous isolation vulnerable, not unconquerable. However, this does not completely solve the problem; if there were understanding, there would be no loneliness, but, it is impossible to have understanding between two isolated people. For Anderson's characters, the only solution was escape, running away as George Willard did and others like him did. Death promised the real excape. In Sherwood Anderson, the Twentieth Century man is no longer a hero; he is a lonely world- or self-combatant.[18]

John Steinbeck has presented in the twentieth century a very credible account of the isolation experienced by an actual group of people in his time. The Grapes of Wrath is a revelation of the conditions forced upon the poor sharecropper during the agricultural depression in the 30's. More than a novel of conditions, it is a novel about people. These people, the Okies run out of the dust bowl by mechanized farming, had the same desires, the same feelings as other men.

Within the isolated group are some painfully isolated individuals. Uncle John was forever marked with a sense of guilt about his wife's death of appendicitis which he had thought was only a stomach ache. He was called the "lonest goddam man in the world." A man alone and searching for a new faith to replace his lost one was Casy. When everyone left for California, one man stayed behind--Muley Graves who described his existence: "I'm jus' wanderin' aroun' like a damn ol' graveyard ghos'."

Even though there are outstanding individual isolatoes, the novel's main isolation is that of the entire group. They were driven out

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[18]Bowden, pp. 114-123.

of their homes to survive however they could. Some did not survive the experience: Grampa and Gramma both died. They were spurred on in their trek by the Promised Land vision of California; but they arrived in California only to find they were not wanted anymore there than they had been in Oklahoma. With the Californians' violent disapproval of their prescence, they were possessed of a feeling of not belonging anywhere to anyone. Of necessity they had to look to their own poeple for any help or sympathetic understanding.

Even though The Grapes of Wrath deals with the group as well as the individual, it is still definitely a representative American isolato novel. It has merely expanded the theme to reflect the sociological smphasis of the century. Each person was isolated in his solution to each situation facing him, but the family and the group was always behind him and they had to meet the problem too. Only in concern for others and loss of self in that concern can one find satisfaction and a release from his isolation.

The Grapes of Wrath was a drastic departure from an isolation novel such as The Portrait of a Lady, but it still presented the problem of disaffiliation which really was not so different from what it had been even in Hawthorne's time. The theme was too basic and too ingrown in the American way of life to change even with the new developments in the novel.[19] After the war many novelists started writing about the man isolated in society. As in Ralph Ellison's The Invisible Man, the isolation may be physical; however, spiritual isolation is more frequently the case. Society surrounds the chracters, but they are never really in or of that

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[19]Bowden, pp. 138-149.

society. Their problems tend toward the ethical and philosophical rather than the political and economic.[20] Man is faced with a seemingly impossible dilemma: he must either compromise with society (that is, conform) or he will be destroyed by society. However, the novelists have created a third choice, that being disaffiliation--neither being a part of society, or protesting against it. The dilemma now becomes a paradox: "[S]ociety is deterministic, but the individual, though a part of society is remarkably free--indeed sufficiently free that he is able to ignore society utterly, if not actively to substract himself from it." The heroes of the modern American novel are disaffiliates by choice or by chance (even by force in some cases): Saul Bellow's Augie March and Henderson, Nelson Algren's Frankie Machine and Dove Linkhorn, William Styron's Cass Kinsolving and Peyton and Milton Loftis, Herbert Gold's Bud Williams, Vance Bourjaily's U.S.D. Quincy, Paul Bowles' Port and Kit Moresby, Bernard Malamud's Frank Alpine, Morman Mailer's Serguis O'Shaughnessy and Mike Lovett, and J.D.Salinger's Holden Caulfield. None of these twentieth century heroes is a conformer or even capable of conformity--neither are they social protesters.[21]

Huckleberry Finn found his modern-day counterpart in Holden Caulfield of The Catcher in the Rye. Huck's isolation was no greater than Holden's was in the heavily populated New York City where isolation was possible among seven million people, but where real freedom was practically unachievable. Holden could not find the easy escape offered Huck by a lonely forest or an expansive prairie. Also, Holden's

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[20]Hicks, p. 70.

[21]Joseph Waldmeir, "Quest Without Faith," Nation, CXCIII (November 18, 1961), p. 391.

emotional state was much more complex than Huck's because of the more complex world in which he lived. One of his "solutions" was to go west and be completely isolated by pretending to be a deaf-mute: "That way I wouldn't have to have any goddam stupid useless conversations with anybody."

Holden's problem was a serious one, a dilemma to be sure: he was in the midst of fellow human beings, yet was isolated from them; he struggled against loneliness, yet he desired isolation; he was ensnared in a society from which he struggled to escape. His answer began to reveal itself to him toward the end of the novel as he realized that he could find some individuals whom he could appreciate and still remain isolated in a busy world. This had always been a part of Holden's nature; he had always tried to be fair in his appraisal of people and even gave them the benefit of the doubt. To the mother on the train whose son he detested, Holden gave a glowing report of him as a well-liked nice guy. About Stradlater whom he saw as a "secret slob" and a "conceited girl chase," Holden noticed his generosity. He said of a former roommate, Harris Macklin, "He never stopped talking, and what was awful was, he never said anything you wanted to hear in the first place. But he could do one thing. The sonuvabitch could whistle better than anybody I ever heard." This attitude prevented him from completely removing the possibility of developing some kind of "meaningful relationship" with another person.

It was apparent throughout the novel that Holden was a child in desperate need for affection--just as any child is. Holden found this affection in his little sister, Phoebe. Through her devotion, he found a guide for his exit from the cell of solitude into a new relationship with humanity. At the end of the novel, Phoebe repeatedly insisted that

Holden take her with him if he left.

> The gesture of love was too much for him, and the novel ends with Holden sitting in the rain--the traditional suggestion of rebirth--watching her go around on the carrousel: "I felt so damn happy all of a sudden, the way old Phoebe kept going aroung and around. I was damn near bawling, I felt so damn happy, if you want to know the truth. I don't know why.". . . But the reader knows why. Holden has begun to break out of the shell of his isolation; or, perhaps better, the shell has been cracked by Phoebe, aided by his almost unconscious efforts from within.

Naturally, the transformation will be slow, but the result will find Holden for once in the stream of humanity.[22]

Lewis Dabney has written that dramatic relationships in these modern novels are minimal because of the isolation or disaffiliation of the hero. This is true enough. However, he also wrote that the reader could not identify with the hero because his life and problems are too remote from that of the reader, therefore lessening the impact on the emotions.[23] This point can be taken issue with. The reader can identify with a majority of the heroes or heroines of the isolato novels; even if he could not identify, it would be a calloused, insensitive man who would not feel some sympathy or empathy. Not seeing oneself in the following passage, for example, from Kit Brandon by Anderson would be impossible.

> She had a terrible need. . .it growing in her. . .of something. . . a relationship. . .some man or some woman, to whom she could feel close. Just at that time she had. . .it was she felt the strongest thing in her. . .the hunger to give.
>
> Loneliness.
>
> The loneliness, so pronounced in Kit at that time, was not so unlike the loneliness of many Americans.
>
> Loneliness of the radical in a capitalistic society, of the man who wants to fight it, who does feel in himself a kind of social call. . .
>
> Immediately the thing called "respectability" gone. Such a one, a Eugene Debs for example, may be the most gentle of

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[22]Bowden, pp. 54, 56-57, 59-61, 63.

[23]Lewis Dabney, "The American Novel in the Age of Conformity," The Nation, CLXXXIV, p. 169.

> men. He becomes in the public mind something dangerous, is pictured as Kit had been picture, as a dangerous one.
> . . .The life of the artist in any society.
> . . .Life of the labor leader and for that matter loneliness also of the lives of successful Americans, even the very rich, the leaders of a capitalistic society.[24]

This is typical of the longing and searching of young people who for some reason or another are unable to communicate with each other or to find their place in America. society.[25]

The interpretation and treatment of this theme of the American isolato has been of necessity varied over the past three hundred years. Natty Bumpps wanted nothing at all to do with civilization. Holden Caulfield and Huck Finn also wanted to escape the confines of their respective societies. Ahab, too was adamant in wanting his isolation. These four, then, would be isolatoes by choice. Hester Prynne and Isabel Archer, however, are isolated against their wishes and struggle to find a new position in society.

> As social conditions become more equal, the number of persons increases who, although they are neither rich nor powerful enough to exercise any great influence over their fellows, have nevertheless acquired or retained sufficient education and fortune to satisfy their own wants. They owe nothing to any man, they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands.
> Thus not only does democracy make every man forget his ancentors, but it hides his descendants and separated his contemporaries from him; it throws him back forever upon himself alone and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart.

Contemporary as this may sound, it was written by Alexis de Tocqueville in 1840--and has been descriptive of the American as reflected in the American novel from Cooper, through James, down to Salinger.

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[24](Ellipsis marks are in the original text.)

[25]Charles Child Walcutt, American Literary Naturalism, A Divided Stream, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1956), pp. 237-238.

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