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IDEOLOGICAL ENCOUNTERS: A RE-READING OF NORMAN MAILER'S WORKS OF THE FIFTIES

*Morris Wei-hsin Tien**

In re-reading Norman Mailer's works of the fifties, I have discovered that his major works of this period—*Barbary Shore* (1951), *Deer Park* (1955), and *Advertisements for Myself* (1959)– are much more ideologically complicated than those works either before the decade or after it.[1] In the major works of the fifties, Mailer has tried, as we read them in a new perspective, uncompromisingly to subvert the dominant ideologies of the period, such as "New Conservatism," McCarthyism, and other social conformist ideologies.

I

American historians, such as John M. Blum, Edmund S. Morgan, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Samuel Eliot Morison and others, all agree that the Eisenhower years were years of repose. By 1952 the American people had endured nearly a

* Research Fellow, Institute of American Culture, Academia Sinica.

[1] For the major work before the decade, *The Naked and the Dead* 1948), see, Morris Wei-hsin Tien, *"The Naked and The Dead:* A Novel of Non-Heroes," *Fu Jen Studies*, No. 10 (1977): 59-77; for the major works after the decade, such as *'The Presidential Papers*, (1963), *Cannibals and Christians* (1966), *Armies of the Night* (1968), *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* (1968), see, Morris Wei-hsin Tien, "The Existential Politics of Norman Mailer: A Study of His Non-Fiction Prose of the Sixties," *American Studies*, XV, No. 1

generation of unrelenting crisis. As John M. Blum, Edmund S. Morgan and others have clearly described:

> In the years since 1929 "the American people" had experienced the worst depression in their history, the worst hot war, the worst cold war, the worst limited war. During these years, moreover, they had been led by two aggressive Presidents who believed strongly in affirmative government and in vigorous action. But a nation's capacity for high-tension political life is limited. Just is the first two decades of the twentieth century–the activist decades dominated by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson–produced by 1920 a condition of near national exhaustion, so the thirties and forties left the American people–or a good many of them–weary of public commitment and ardently desirous of respite. By 1952 they were frustrated and spent; they wanted to be let off public affairs and to resume the private course of life. (Blum et al., 1968, 789).

Eisenhower himself, already a national hero, long admired and beloved by his people, appeared to be a man above "politics" and far from the "mess in Washington." People believed that he was the man to heal the nation's wound. His appointed role, wrote Walter Loppmann, was "that of the restorer of peace and order after an age of violence and faction" (qtd in Morison, 1079). As President, Eisenhower rejected the idea of strong presidential leadership. He felt that both Roosevelt and Truman had extended the power of the executive branch at the expanse of the other branches of government. It was his duty now to "restore" the constitutional balance. In dealing with Congress, He believed that his responsibilty was simply to propose policies; thereafter members of Congress could "vote their consciences." He once said of his Cabinet, "I have given way on a number of personal opinions to this gang"(Blum et al., 1968, 789). In an interview, he remarked, "I have not much patience with the desk-pounding type of leadership . . . Leadership is a matter of influencing people. And you sometimes have to influence people who are hostile as well as friends" (Blum et al., 1973, 735).

In foreign affairs, Eisenhower stopped the Korean War, and an armistice was concluded at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953. So, ending the Korean War marked a just success for Eisenhower as a man of peace. However, his pacific instincts and pragmatic temper were somewhat at odds with the ideological militancy of his Republican party and especially of his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. Yet Eisenhower had had complete confidence in John Foster Dulles and "granted him exceptional authority over the day-to-day conduct of foreign policy, reserving only the right to intervene in extreme cases" (Blum et al., 1973, 736). In domestic affairs, Eisenhower offered only what he called "dynamic conservatism." Ideology of this kind meant in practice an acceptance of the social and economic framework of the New Deal tempered by a determination to preserve the value of the dollar and to cut back the activity of the federal government. Inexperienced in domestic problems, Eisenhower tended to rely heavily on his Cabinet members who were all conservative businessmen, such as George M. Humphrey, Secretary of the Treasury, an Ohio businessman, Charles E. Wilson of General Motor, a new secretary of Defense, and Douglass McKay of Oregon, Secretary of the Interior. McKay summed up their general attitude, "We're here in the saddle as an Administration representing business and industry" (Blum et al., 1970, 741).

Ever since the beginning of the Eisenhower Administration, the nation had been still wrestling with the problem of McCarthyism. However, at the beginning, Eisenhower was reluctant to engage himself personally in McCarthy issue. As he one time put it, "I will not get in the gutter with that guy" (Blum et al., 1968, 699). McCarthyism was undoubtedly an incredible chapter in American history. As Samuel E. Morison has observed, "McCarthyism was saturnine, cruel, greedy, and did nothing for the people of his native state. He was also one of most collosal liars in our history" (Morison, 1075). Before 1950, he was little known nationally. But at Wheeling, West Virginia, on February 9, 1950, Senator Joseph K. McCarthy of Wisconsin made a sensational speech. He suddenly

stepped forward as the most extreme of all the anti-Communists:

> While I cannot take time to name all of the men in the State Department who have been named as members of the Communist Party and members of a spy ring, I have here in my hand a list of two-hundred and five that were known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping the policy of the State Department. (Caughey and May, 678)

The effect was as of a national air raid alarm. Here was a United States Senator declaring that he had documentary proof of what so many anti-Communists had been saying for so long. However, when questioned afterward, McCarthy became less precise. He retreated from 205 to 81 to 57, meanwhile coming up with not a single name. Yet McCarthy still insisted, "During 'Twenty years of treason,' . . . the Democrats, led by Roosevelt and Truman, had 'conspired' to deliver America to the Reds. F.D.R. got into World War II mainly to help Russia, gave away everything to Stalin at Yalta; Harry presented China to the Reds and recalled General MacArthur because he was about to beat them; Alger Hisses were concealed in every government office, college, and corporation, ready to take over when Stalin pushed the button" (Morison, 1074). This utterly preposterous theory almost tore the United States apart then. A committee headed by Millard Tydings of Maryland, one of the most conservative Democrats, heard him at length and finally declared his charges "a fraud and a hoax". Hailing this report, liberals invented the term "McCathyism" and applied it to the whole furor over domestic communism. Their hope was that the discrediting of McCarthy would cause the public to have second thoughts. Incredibly, McCarthy proved not to be discredited.

In their *A History of the United States*, John W. Caughey and Ernest R. May wrote,

> Groups all over the country adopted McCarthy as their hero. Voluntary contributions totaling hundreds of thousands of dollard flowed into his office. Seeking revenge on his chief detractor, McCarthy went into Maryland to campaign against Tydings' re-election. In 1938, Franklin Roosevelt had tried unsuccessfully to purge Tydings from the Democratic party. Where Roosevelt had failed, McCarthy succeeded. Tydings lost and so did other of McCarthy's critics, including the majority leader of the Senate. In spite of having been exposed as a liar, McCarthy had won a large and uncritical following. All of a sudden, he was one of the most powerful men in the United States. (Caughey and May, 678)

Thereafter, McCarthy kept himself on the front pages nearly all time. He would make reckless charges against individuals or groups. With an eye to reporter's deadlines, he would disclose scraps of fact or promise starling revelations until he had squeezed from a given case all of its possible publicity value. Then he would drop it completely, never letting the truth catch up.

About the whole ideology of McCarthyism, Talcott Parsons, in his "Social Strains in America" (1955), has made a very perceptive analysis of it from the viewpoint of American social structure and its traditional values. In his opinion, to describe McCarthyism as simply a political reactionary movement is apparently inadequate. As he has observed, the fact is that "there has indeed been a considerable amount of Communist infiltration in the United States, particularly in the 1930's" (Bell, 220). Although the Communist Party itself has never achieved great electoral success, yet for a time the Communist influence was enormous in a number of important labour unions. And also a considerable number of the associations Americans so like to join were revealed to be Communist-front organizations, with effective Communist control behind the public participation of many non-Communists. Perhaps most important was the fact that large numbers of the intellectuals became fellow-travelers.

The Communist movement then in the United States

had also then confused many liberals with their ideal liberalism. On the one hand, the Communist party had drastically repudiated the procedures of constitutional democracy and broken with all the democratic socialist parties of Europe. But at the same time, the movement had a large content of professed idealism, which contains elements of liberal opinion in the United States as well as in other Western countries. For instance, Marx was, after all, himself a child of Enlightenment, and the Communist movement has incorporated in its ideology many of the doctrines of human rights that have formed a part of American inheritance. As Parsons has pointed out, "However grossly the symbols of democracy, of the rights of men, of peace and brotherhood, have been abused by the Communists, they are powerful symbols in our own tradition, and their appeal is understandable." (Bell, 221) It is in this sense the symbol "Communism" is one to which a particular aspect of ambivalence readily attaches. Parson's analysis is very illuminating:

> It has powerful sources of appeal to their liberal tradition, but those who are out of sympathy with the main tradition of American liberalism can find a powerful target for their objections in the totalitarian tactics of Communism and can readily stigmatize it as "un-American". Then, by extending their objections to the liberalism in general, on the grounds that association with Communist totalitarianism makes anything liberal suspect. (Bell, 221)

This considerations might account for the anti-Communist's readiness to attack from those who have really been party members or advanced fellow-travelers to large elements of intellectuals, the labor movement, etc., who have been essentially democratic liberals of various shades of opinion.

Parsons has also offered his explanations for McCarthy's attacks on Dean Acheson and General Marshall. In 1951 McCarthy had denounced General Marshall as part of "a Conspiracy so immense and an infamy so black as to dwarf any previous venture in the history of man" (Blum et al., 1968, 799).

They were men of "pro-Communist" associated with political responsibility in the international field. Furthermore, they represented symbolically those Eastern vested interest, "against whom antagonism has existed among the new men of the Middle West and the populist movement, including the descendants of recent immigrants". Parsons further elaborated on the situations of Harvard University and the Boston Brahmins:

> Similarly, among Americans universities Harvard has been particularly identified as educating a social elite, the members of which are thought of as "just the type," in their striped trousers and morning coats, to sell out the country to the social snobs of European capitals. It is the combination of aristocratic associations–through the Boston Brahmins–and a kind of urban-bohemian sophistication along with its devotion to intellectual and cultural values, including precisely its high intellectual standards, which makes Harvard a vulnerable symbol in this context. (Bell, 222)

In this sense, the symbol "Communism," then, from its area of legitimate application, tends to be generalized to include groups in the population who have been associated with political liberalism of many shakes and with intellectual values in general and to include the Eastern upper-class groups who have tended to be relatively internationalist in their outlook.

In addition to the symbol "Communism" concerning the relation between the totalitarian and the progressive aspects in the United States of that period, the American people also think that Communism very obviously symbolizes what is anathema to the individualistic tradition of a business economy–the feared attempt to destroy private enterprise and with it the great tradition of individual freedom. For, on the basis of the Marxist philosophy, the Communist movement asserts the unqualified, the totalitarian supremacy of government over the economy. The leaders of the economy and the businessmen have also perceived an actual change in their economical system in that direction. And they have been forced to

accept far more "interference" from government with what they have considered "their affairs" than they have liked. "And now they must, like everyone else, pay unprecedently high taxes to support an enormous military establishment, and give the government in other respects unprecedently great powers over the population." So says Parsons:

> The result of this situation is an ambivalence of attitude that on the one hand demands a stringent display of loyalty going to lengths far beyond our tradition of individual liberty, and on the other hand is ready to blame elements which by ordinary logic have little or nothing to do with Communism, for working in league with the Communist movement to create this horrible situation . . . the indefensible aspect of this tendency in a realistic assessment appears in a readiness to question the loyalty of all those who have assumed responsibility for leadership in meeting the exigencies of the new situation. (Bell, 224)

Obviously, it is in this sense that McCarthy won support from various groups all over the United States. Parsons's final analysis of McCarthyism can be summarized as follows:

> McCarthyism is both a movement supported by certain vested interested elements and a popular revolt against the upper classes . . . McCarthyism is best understood as a deep-seated process of change in our society, rather than as a "movement" presenting a policy or set of values for the American people to act on. Its content is overwhelmingly negative, not positive. It advocates "getting rid" of undesirable influences, and has amazingly little to say about what should be done. (Bell, 226-227)

Besides the elimination of all Communist influence, what the McCarthyites positively want is perhaps "isolation". Judging from the emergence of the "radical right" in American politics in the nineteen fifties, we may sense that the nationalistic overtones center on a fantasy of a happy "American way" where everything used to be all right. Naturally it is tinged with the ideology of traditional laissez-faire and the

American creed of equalitarianism. According to Seymour Martin Lipset, the concept of Americanism has become a "compulsive ideology" rather than simply a nationalist term in the fifties. In his "The sources of the 'Radical Right'," (1955) Lipset thus explains:

> The notions of Americanism as a creed to which men are converted rather than born stems from two factors: first, our revolutionary tradition which has led us to continually reiterate the superiority of the American creed of equalitarianism, of democracy, against the old reactionary, monarchial and more rigidly status-bound systems of European society; and second, the immigrant character of American society, the fact that people may become Americans–that they are not simply born to the status. (Bell, 320)

If foreigners may become Americans, Americans may become "Un-American". This concept of "Un-American activities," it seems to me, has its counterpart in other countries. Consequently, more than any other democratic country, the United States makes ideological conformity one of the conditions for good citizenship. And it is this emphasis on ideological conformity to common American political values that legitimizes the hunt for "Un-Americans" in the United States. Hence, the House Un-American Activities Committee had all the power to investigate any activities which were once considered Un-American. One of the intellectuals of that period said, "McCarthyism is Americanism" (Caughey and May, 679).

Generally speaking, the predominant ideologies of the fifties, as has been so far analyzed, were "new conservatism," "McCarthyism." and social conformity. People in general did not want to be bothered by public issues. They sought security rather than adventure, comfort rather than challenge. Society seemed to reward those who lacked rough edges, eschewed eccentricity, excited no suspicion, and played the company game. More and more people were spending their whole lives in organizations–their days in great corporations, their nights in great suburban enclaves. Both corporation and suburb

appeared to foster a pervasive, benign and invincible conformity. Eric F. Goldman has thus written about the ordinary American living in the middle of the fifties:

> Partly because of the techniques that had been used to being the social upsweeps, partly for a dozen other reasons, millions of Americans now found themselves in a position where the genuine attitudes of individualism were not so much wrong as irrelevant. The average industrial worker belonged to a union and the average farmer was deeply involved in at least one occupational organization. The typical clerical worker was employed by a corporation or a business with more than two hundred employees, and the typical executive was not the owner but an employed manager of the business. A web of relationships bound most Americans in with state and federal governments. The very manner of living was having its effects. The unquestionable trend was toward a home in a suburb–the mushrooming miles of middle-class and worker's suburbs–where the prime virtue was adjustment to what the neighbors thought and did. Under the circumstances the urge was not so much for individualism as it was for getting oneself into the most profitable and confortable relationship with some larger group or organization. (Goldman, 264-265)

As William H. Whyte, Jr. pointed out that an outstanding phenomenon of modern life is the growth of "The organization," while the modern complex business corporation is an example, this collectivization is also seen in education, in the church, in the research foundation, in the medicine, in all parts of American society. There is a rapidly increasing number who give their allegiance as employee to these institutions. This is what Whyte has examined and described in his famous book *The Organization Man* (1956).

As has been politically and socially analyzed, the whole mood of the Eisenhower years was the mood of quiescence. Young men and women of this decade also clearly reflected this kind of mood in thier social behavior. They were mostly very prudent and shunned risk. They would like to subordi-

nate everything to a steady job, a house in the suburbs, and a company retirement plan. They were apparently a generation fearful of politics, mistrustful of ideas, incurious about society, but desperate about personal security. The very essence of the fifties was succinctly presented by Douglas T. Miller and Marion Nowak in the following paragraph:

> The Eisenhower years were tired, dull, cautious, and anxious, in a word more "normal" than the "normalcy" of the Harding-Coolidge era. The fifties witnessed much less happy nonsense, much more conformity. International tensions and conflicts were far greater than had been the case during the relatively isolationist twenties. The daily reality of the cold war caused persons to fear international communism and, more importantly, internal communist subversion. Such fears put a premium on conformity. Bourgeois values reasserted themselves in a manner which would have pleased a twenties fundametalist. Domesticity, religiosity, respectability, security through compliance with the system, that was the essence of the fifties. (Miller and Nowak, 7)

Living in such a "tired", "dull", conformist and organization-belonging age, there were of course quite a few liberal intellects who were discontented and spiritually frustrated. Especially the red hunt hysteria worried every thoughtful American of that age. What was conceived as an effort to guard the national security became a heresy hunt employing all the techniques traditionally used to search out non-conformists. Thoughtful people began to wonder whether such ideas as these might not be the most subversive of all. George Kennan said that "absolute security" was an unattainable and self-devouring end—"that its frenzied pursuit would lead only to absolute tyranny" (gtd. in Blum et al., 1968, 800). Judge Learned Hand summed up the feelings of many Americans when he wrote,

> I believe that community is already in process of dissolution where each man begins to eye his neighbors as a possible enemy,

> where non-conformity with the accepted creed, political as well as religious, is a mark of disaffection; where denunciation, without specification or backing, takes the place of evidence; where faith in the eventual supremacy of reason has become so timid that we dare not enter our convictions in the open lists to win or lose.

Judge Hand concluded, "The mutual confidence on which all else depends can be maintained only by an open mind and a brave reliance upon free discussion" (qtd. in Blum et al., 1968, 800).

II

From the very beginning, Norman Mailer has been a very much social-minded writer. Most of his writings have responded to the largest problems of his society with a directness and an assurance that can rarely be found in the writings of his contemporaries. For instance, about the decade of the fifties, he was very critical. Dulles's "containment policy" and Eisenhower's "new conservatism" made the public mood of the country defensive, just hold on and conserve, not push forward and create. McCarthy's hysterical witch-hunting left no man with any integrity to escape unscathed. In *The Presidential Papers,* he has thus described the fifties:

> Came the Korean War, the shadow of the H-Bomb, and we were ready for the General. Uncle Harry gave way to Father, and security, regularity, order and the life of no imagination were the command of the day. If one had any doubt of this there was Joe McCarthy with his built-in treason detector, furnished by God, and the damage was done. In the totalitarian wind of those days, anyone who worked for the Government formed the habit of being not too original, and many a mind atrophied from disuse and private shame. At the summit there was benevolence without leadership, regularity without vision, security without safety, rhetoric without life. The ship drifted on, that enormous warship of the United States, led by a Secretary of State whose cells were seceding to cancer . . . (qtd. in L.

Goldman, 131)

What Mailer tries to say in the above quotation is that in the fifties the U.S. government tended to be a totalitarian government and its society was also in some respect moving toward totalitarianism. In Mailer's opinion, individuals, particularly the liberal intellectuals, living in that period, had lost their individual originality and imaginative creativity. As a matter of fact, this is also what he has intended to present in his first novel *The Naked and the Dead.* It was published in the same year (1948) as the House Committee on *Un-American Activities* was set up in the U.S. Congress. In an atmosphere of suspicion and frustration, the inglorious witch hunt was sparked off by several incidents. "Alger Hiss was suspected, if not proved, to have been a communist when employed by the state department; Klaus Fuchs in England was convicted of feeding atomic secrets to Russia, and Russian defector Igor Gouzenko revealed the existence of a gigantic communist spy ring in Canada" (Morison, 1074).

Although Mailer was not explicitly saying that the American society had been undermined by the ideology of totalitarianism, yet, in the novel, he was clearly depicting a society which was tightly organized and efficiently ruled, but was hopelessly sick at the same time. In that society individuals were alienated and threatened with pain, fear, and moral destruction. The image of man was also crippled and perverted. Therefore, for all its brilliant evocation of atmosphere and its integrety as a story of war, *The Naked and the Dead* takes its ultimate stand, not in pure art, but in social ideology. Of course, it is true that during World War 11, Norman Mailer served with the United States 112 Cavalry, out of San Antonio, Texas. As he relates in *Advertisement for Myself,*

> I may as well confess that by December 8th or 9th of 1941, in the forty-eight hours after Pearl Harbor, while worthy men were wondering where they could be of aid to the effort, and practical young men were deciding which branch of the service was

> the surest of landing a safe commission, I was worrying darkly whether it would be written about Europe or the Pacific. (*ADV*, 24)

Mailer's own military service was carried out in the Pacific. His experiences there led directly to the writing of *The Naked and the Dead*. It is the story of a fictional campaign near the end of the war to capture the Japanese held island of Anapopei by the 460th Infantry of the U.S. Army. In the course of telling the story of that campaign through the eyes of the officers and enlisted men, Mailer portrayed his conception of the power structure of the Army. By the use of digression and allusion he urged that the power structure portrayed was likewise his conception of the power structure of America's government. The use of war to picture the power system was effective, for it clearly illustrated Mailer's idea that the entire framework was then in flux, and that change was accompanied by great social and ideological conflict.

For his choosing the Pacific to be the locale of his novel, Mailer had given, in addition to his own war experiences there, two other reasons: One was "the Pacific war had a reactionary overtone which [his] young progressive-liberal nose smelled with the aid of PM editorials;" and the other, "because it was and is easier to write a war novel about the Pacific—you don't have to have a feeling for the culture of Europe and the collision of American upon it" (*ADV*, 24). These two reason are very revealing in terms of ideology conflict. The first reason reveals Mailer's own ideological stance—progressive—liberal. The second reveals that his main interest is in the American social or cultural ideologies which are not to be involved together with those in Europe. As a progressive-liberal, Mailer blamed American capitalism for most postwar problems with Russia. Americans had gone to war against Hitler not because the American ruling class was anti-fascist, but because Hitler had shown himself unwilling to play the capitalist game according to the rules, and the next step was to dispose of Russia, the only remaining obstacle on the road to total power in the world.

"World War II, then, was the first phase of a more ambitious operation, while the army had been used as a laboratory of fascism, a preview of the kind of society that American ruling class was preparing for the future" (Podhorezt, 63). These ideas are brought into *The Naked and the Dead* in various ways. Some of them emerge from the long discussions between General Cummings and his young aide Lt. Hearn. Another channel is supplied by the "Time Machine" flashbacks, which are there partly in order to demonstrate Mailer's contention that American society is essentially a disguised and beginning form of the army.

General Cummings and Lieutenant Hearn are undoubtedly the two main characters of the novel. They formulate major ideological encounters in this novel. Cummings is a reactionary and a fascist who believes that Hitler was right in foretelling a long ascendancy for the reactionaries. He sees the army as an instrument for the exercise of personal power. Cummings also believes that man is in transition from savage to god, that Man's primary drive is to achieve omnipotence, that "the only morality of the future is a power morality, and a man who cannot find his adjustment to it is doomed. There is one thing about power. It can flow only from the top down" (*ND*, 176). That is why in the army he persists in sharpening and maintaining the class distinction existing between officers and enlisted men. He knows that effective command is made up of resentment and fear from below. Cummings's fundamental ideology is based on the assumption that " 'Man's deepest urge is omnipotence' " (*ND*, 323). According to Cummings, the collective expression of the will to power is reaching its historical culmination in the twentieth century, as reflected in the rise of Nazism, fascism, and American imperialism supported by a build-up of overwhelming military might. He therefore believes that " 'this is going to be the reactionary's century,' " and may well represent the beginning of " 'their thousand-year reign' " (*ND*, 85). The purpose of the war is to facilitate this totalitarian process.

The army, seen by Cummings " 'as a preview of the future,' "

(*ND*, 324) for the organization of the military, fits every person into position along "fear ladder'," which makes great numbers of men simultaneously the instruments and the objects of oppressive power. As one learns in Cummings's "Time Machine" chapter, he realized several years before America became involved in the war that such an idea was crucial to Hitler's success. Cummings observes that Hitler "has the germ of an idea, and moreover you've got to give him political credit. He plays on the German people with consummate skill. That Siegfried business is fundamental to them" (*ND*, 420). America's millennial heritage and its unwavering certitude in its own primacy as a nation make it particularly susceptible to similar invocations of mythic supremacy. As Cummings says to Hearn:

> "There are countries which have latent powers, latent resources, they are full of potential energy, so to speak. And there are great concepts which can unlock that, express it. As Kinetic energy a country is organization, co-ordinated effort, your epithet, fascism . . . Historically the purpose of this war is to translate America's potential into Kinetic energy. The concept of fascism, far sounder than communism if you consider it, for it's grounded firmly in men's actual nature, merely started in the wrong country, in a country which did not have enough intrinsic potential power to develop completely. In Germany with that basic frustration of limited physical means there were bound to be excesses. But the dream, the concept, was sound enough . . . American is doing it now. When you've created power, material, armies, they don't wither of their own accord. Our vacuum as a nation is filled with released power, and I can tell you that we're out of the backwaters of history now." (*ND*, 321)

From the beginning, Cummings is trying to convert Hearn to his own special brand of fascism. Only grudgingly Hearn "absorbs" his lessons, bowing to his superior's sharp logic in assailing Marxist doctrine. Hearn usually feels "shame and self-disgust and an impossible impotent anger" (*ND*, 362). Yet, he sees Cummings as a "nerve end with no other desire than to

find something to act upon" (*ND*, 298). Although he acknowledges the intellectual power and the personal magnetism of Cummings, he rejects his theories as simplistic and subhuman. As an intellectual liberal. Hearn's sympathies are with the left. Obviously, these two characters objectify two kinds of opposing ideologies in the novel.

However, Hearn has his own disillusionment and dilemma. First of all, as a social type, Hearn represents the rich, intellectual, sons of the upper class who see their parents as having gained economic power at the expense of the lower classes, and yet are not quite ready to give up that inherited power. Of course, as he joins the John Reed Society and becomes an avowed Marxist, he rejects his family's wealth. But the president of the John Reed Society finally asks him to quit. He tells Hearn:

> "If a man moves to the party because of spiritual or intellectual reasons, he's bound to move away again once the particular psychological climate that moved him there in the first place is changed. It's the man who comes to the party because economic inequities humiliate him everyday of his life who makes a good Communist". (*ND*, 343)

So Hearn finds himself in limbo in the power system. He has rejected the upper-middle class capitalistic imperialism, as Cummings expressed in fascist terms, and has in turn been rejected by those dedicated to subvert that ideology. Therefore, he has his own dilemma, which is that of the modern liberal in the fifties: he is unable to attach himself to anything or anyone and finds no practical solution for any complex social problems. He believes that "everything is clapped up, everything is phony, everything curdles when you touch it." His rebellion against the system is nevertheless sterile and ineffective, for it involves nothing more than a determination to preserve "inviolate freedom," as Hearn himself puts it, "from . . . the wants and sores that caught up everybody else" (*ND*, 66). In a key passage, Mailer tells us, for liberals like Hearn living in

a society of rigid conformity and superficial respectability, "The only thing to do is to get by on style. He had said once, lived by it in the absence of anything else . . . The only thing that had been important was to let no one in any ultimate issue ever violate your intergrity" (*ND*, 326). But as Norman Podhoretz has pertinently observed, "Style without content, a vague ideal of personal integrity, a fear of attachment, and a surly nihilistic view of the world are not enough to save a man in the long run from the likes of Cummings, and certainly not enough to endow him with heroic stature" (Podhoretz, 65).

Even as a character, Hearn is rather empty. He comes off as less real, as well as less sympathetic, than most of the other characters. Mailer certainly knows it. In a gallery of well-known characters, it is difficult to believed that so pivotal a figure as Hearn would have slipped away from Mailer's control. Rather, it would seem a logical part of the statement that this novel tries to make clear to the reader, that an intelligent and outspoken man of that period in the United States who is ineffectual with and resented by both the upper and lower classes, and who is ultimately killed to no purpose. A man of this kind might be exactly the representative of the American liberalism of that period that Mailer wishes to show. Perhaps, we may here use part of Louis Althusser's theory on ideology to explain the ideological encounters as Mailer has presented in *The Naked and the Dead*. According to Althusser, once a kind of ideology, such as fascism, or capitalistic imperialism, has become the ruling ideology of the society, there are a number of ideological state apparatuses (religious, educational, family, legal, media, etc.) which function primarily by ideology. They exhibit unity. They saturate the very textures of social life. And they are pervasively present as truths which need no further evidence to prove. Other opposing ideologies are repressed either by violence or through Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs).[2] For instance, there are many evidences in both the "Time Machine" chapters and the narrative of the Anpopei Campaign itself that most American soldiers display an ignorance and helplessness in the face of large social and histo-

rical forces. They have allowed themselves to be drawn to the war by the considerable attraction of nationalist rhetoric. Or in Mailer's own terms, "People can be swept up rather easily into the wave of a vast and impersonal historical force or be molded like argil to assume whatever attitude best fits the regimental needs of a totalitarian state (Wenke, 29). It also illustrates precisely how millions of Americans, despite an unalterable belief in their own powers of self-direction, are actually controlled by the ruling ideology that they do not dimly understand.

If Mailer chose Cummings and Hearn to represent the clash between the Fascist and liberal ideologies, he selected Red Valsen to articulate the viewpoint of the common American soldiers. A wanderer since the age of eighteen, Red has constantly fought to maintain his identity in a world which seeks to rob him of it. Although his wanderings have led him toward fatalism, he has not accepted it. He knows that the long-range chances for survival are slim, but he responds in a very practical way: "There was nothing to do but to go from one day into the next" (*ND*, 139). To an editorial sent by a relative to one of the men, which asked rhetorically whether the GI's are dying in vain, Red answers, "Of course they died in vain, and GI knew the score . . . fighting a war to fix something works about as good as going to a whorehouse to get rid of the clap" (*ND*, 121). Justice is irrelevant, both to the American "cause" and to the destinies of the men themselves. Red, drunk on jungle juice, tells his buddies, "You're all good guys, but you're gonna get . . . the shitty end of the stick" (*ND*, 202).

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[2] See Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation), " in his *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster. London: New Left Books, 1971: 127-186. For comments on and analyses of, Althusser's theory of Ideological State Apparatuses, see John Urry, *The Anatomy of Capitalist Societies* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1981): 44-62; John Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1984): 73-83; Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*. Ed. George H. Taylor (New York: Columbia UP, 1986): 103-158.

The other GI's, though they lack Red's insight, sympathy, and integrity, are also aware of the abyss which may swallow them at any moment. Although they try not to think about it, it is never very far from this consciousness, and they have little faith in the rituals which they invoke against it. On the one hand, Mailer shows that his characters, especially those from the lower social classes, are conditioned by their ideologial environments. On the other hand, he sometime shows that they help to create their own fates.

The events of the novel, re-enforced by Mailer's ironic commentary, illustrate a deterministic view of war. General Cummings's abilities in complex organization and planning are shown to be almost irrelevant to the outcome of the campaign. Thus the war is shown to be irrelevant, a series of almost random accidents, despite the huge, intricate military organizations which nominally direct it. It is, in the structural metaphor of *The Naked and the Dead*, like a wave whipped up somewhere far offshore, gathering amplitude and direction, crashing upon a beach, receding once again. Mailer's soldiers—even his general—are like the molecules of the water involved; for them the process is random, the result of countless collisions with other molecules. The only fact is death and confronted by that fact man is naked. The wave itself is campaign, the war, ideology; it has a certain pattern, but its origins, its ultimate end, and its significance are unknown.

III

In *The Naked and the Dead*, Mailer has employed World War II in the Pacific and the American military system to present certain ideological conflicts, as those represented by General Cummings (Fascism), Lt. Hearn (Liberalism), and common soldiers (naturalistic fatalism), which were already in existence at the end of the forties in the United States. At the same time, in the characters of Cummings, Hearn, and Croft (the platoon sergeant, sharing Cummings's beliefs), and to a lesser

degree other soldiers, Mailer also touches upon the response to war as the fulfillment of certain basic psychic drives and needs. Norman Podhoretz has called Cummings and Hearn the "natural heroes" of the book. While Cummings and Croft are reactionaries, Podhoretz remarks, "they demonstrate (as reactionaries often do—the workings of the radical spirit—which is to say that the principle of their behaviour is a refusal to accept the limitations inherent in a given situation as final . . . " (Podhoretz, 66). Mailer himself admitted that "Beneath the ideology in *The Naked and the Dead* was an obsession with violence. The characters for whom I had the most secret admiration, like Croft, were violent people" (*PP*, 136). This concern with the psychic roots of social problems become central in his second novel, *Barbary Shore*, which he had called "the first of the existential novels in America." In it, Mailer tries to capture "the air of our time, authority and nihilism stalking one another in the orgiastic hollow of this century" (*ADV*, 106, 94). Podhoretz also states that "in Marx and Trotsky, Mailer found a system that brought the courage, vision, and uncomprimising determination of Cummings and Croft into the service of freedom and equality rather than class and privilege . . . " (Podhoretz, 69). This observation is especially true of *Barbary Shore*, where, Mailer utilizes Marx and Trotsky in the form of political experiences and ideology to which each of the characters must relate. As in *The Naked and the Dead*, no one survives as a successful political radical or as a hipster to subvert the political conservatism and social conformity of the fifties, but in the creation of McLeod, Lovett, and Hollingsworth, Mailer embodies ideologies that he is later to use in "The White Negro."

The narrator of *Barbary Shore*, Michael Lovett, is an unpublished novelist whose memory does not extend beyond the postwar period, because of a war injury. As Robert Ehrlish has commented on Mailer's creation of Lovett, "Of greatest significance is [Mailer's] departure from a realistic rendering of events through the use of Lovett as a first person narra-

tor" (Ehrlish, 32). He is therefore a truly objective observer: with no commitment to the past, he can have no commitment to the future. And since he is uncommitted, he is an ideal listener to the troubles and schemes of Mrs. Beverly Guinever's boarders's in Brooklyn Heights. Her boarders are McLeod, LeRoy Hollingsworth, and Lannie Madison.

McLeod, Guinevere's husband and a former official of the soviet International, is living as a boarder under the present name. LeRoy Hollingsworth has been assigned by the U.S. government to recover a secret which McLeod is suspected of stealing (after his defection from the Soviet McLeod worked for the U.S. governmant). Assisting Hollingsworth is Lannie Madison, who seeks revenge because she holds McLeod partly responsible for the death of the idol of her youth, Trotsky. These relationships and personal histories are not made explicit in the manner of *The Naked and the Dead,* but are revealed gradually through the eyes of the narrator as he discovers them. And some points in the story, like the identity of the "little object" McLeod is suspected of stealing, are left purposely ambigous.

There is little doubt that Mailer intended his characters to be representative of certain ideological types in the society of his time. Lovett is the sensitive intellectual, cut off from his heritage of the past, anxious and uncertain about the future, searching for personal relationships and political beliefs to which he can commit himself. He finally makes this commitment by becoming a disciple of McLeod, a commitment to guard the heritage of socialist tradition until "its phoenix-like resurrection from the ashes of the final war." It is Lovett who inherits the "little object" in the end. Although its identity is never revealed (Hollingsworth is not even authorized by his superior to know what he is looking for), the object may be, simply, hope.

McLeod is an ex-Communist, disillusioned by the betrayal of the Revolution and ashamed of his own part in the betrayal. His belief in the importance of the Communist ends had overcome his revulsion at the means, and had led him to commit

acts, such as the murder of deviationists, which he now knows were inexcusable. He is now pursued not only by the government, but even more relentlessly by his own conscience. Like Lovett, he is alienated from humanity, but for different reasons. McLeod had seen people not as human beings, but as tools to be manipulated in the development of the socialist state. it is only at the very end of his life that he becomes capable of the "selfless friendship" which he discovers to be the only truly worthwhile human relationship. But by then it is too late.

Lannie is the remote idealist, driven by a hostile world into psychosis, into "fathomless desperation." She drinks compulsively, as if from some deep urge to destroy herself. Although she permits Lovett to make love to her and Hollingsworth to degrade her sexually, she seeks and enjoys sex only with Guinevere. Life, she tells Lovett, is a prison which we must choose to enter, and choose gladly. She often dreams of a mouse who is Christ, and she herself feels compelled to share the suffering of others and to seek it for herself.

Guinevere, faithless queen of the boardinghouse, is the twentieth century American mob personified. Her values are the values of Hollywood, where she claims to have slept around and where she dreams of sending out her husband to Hollingsworth, with whom she plans to run away, and at the same time she is teasing Lovett and discovering new forms of sexual ecstasy with Lannie. Her sex life is symbolic of her life in general: selfish, grasping, mindless, animalistic.

Hollingsworth, the FBI agent in the boardinghouse, is also selfish, materialistic, dominated by the pleasure principle. He can achieve sexual satisfaction only inflicting pain (as with Guinevere) or degradation (as with Lannie). He is an eminently practical man who can recognize his own inadequacies without allowing them to tear him apart. He is interested only in facts, and is comtemptuous of theory and feeling; he is well qualified to build the governmant's case against McLeod. "I don't give two cents for all your papers." he tells McLeod and Lovett, "A good-time Charley, that's myself, and that's why I'm smarter than the lot of you" (*BS*, 135).

Whether or not Hollingsworth is smarter, he wins in the end. He kills McLeod and carries off the fair Guinevere. Although *Barbary Shore* is not an entirely systematic allegory, its implications are clear enough: the crowd has been reduced by totalitarianism, and the liberal cause has been fragmented and driven underground. In retrospect, the novel appears to be remarkably reflective of the McCarthy era and the deepening schizophrenia of the cold war.

At this point, we have to take Mailer's political attitude into consideration. Between 1948 and 1951, Mailer had himself lost faith in the Communism of Soviet Russia; for he felt that the Russian Revolution, the revolution of that time had failed because it had not and probably would not establish a new sort of state, a new set of social relationships and a new type of socialist ethic and psychology. Mailer came to this discovery slowly and only after he had written *The Naked and the Dead*. This discovery was the main cause of his break with the Progressive Party. In his recent book, *Mailer: His Life and Times* (1985), Peter Manso quoted from Mailer himself concerning the novel, "What nobody had ever understood is that *Barbary Shore* is my most autobiographical novel" (Manso, 155). Norman Rosten explains in what sense the novel is autobiographical," . . . the novel is autobiographical in the sense that he puts you through all the political formats, trying to find out where you are. In that way the book was a little confusing–you didn't quite know who or what anything was. But it had a magnetic, mysterious appeal at the time because in '51 everyone was screwed up that way. No one quite knew what one was doing" (qtd. in Manso, 157-58).

As has been discussed earlier, Mailer, as a progressive-liberal in the fifties, was obviously very antagonistic toward the ruling conservative ideologies of his time. Nor was he satisfied with the political ideologies of Marxism or Communism as it was implemented in Russia by the Stalinists. McLead's speech in the twenty ninth chapter of *Barbary Shore* remains Mailer's most important and perceptive political statement of that period. McLeod argues that war and preparations for war are

turning both America and Russia into dangerously unfree societies. Mailer feels that war and preparations for war also lead to the spiritual and intelledtual sterility of the nineteen fifties. So, what has happened to Mailer's political attitude in the three years is the changed perspective of the two books. Whereas in *The Naked and the Dead* the historical process is viewed in terms of its effect upon the general run of mankind, in *Barbary Shore* Mailer writes out of the dilemma of the defeated radical intellectuals. As Diana Trilling has correctly put. "The great battle of history is now fought out, not on the wide proletarian front where his first novel had located, but on the intellectual left flank where Mailer had been isolated by his inability to maintain his trust in Stalin's revolution" (Trilling, 50).

In *Barbary Shore*, the ideology of fascism again announces its advance, but now it is personified in an FBI agent Hollingsworth. Although he fits the representative of a social force that is already permitted to execute the political dreams of General Cummings, Hollingsworth has none of the human attributes of the General. He can only do this duty unquestionably and competently for a modest reward. Of all the characters in this book, he is probably the one who comes very close to embodying Mailer's theme that America is now a schizophrenic nation with a strong underlying attraction to reactionary ideology, and has a deeply ingrained contempt for intellect and culture. Hollingsworth's blond hair and blue eyes, his neat appearance, and his deferential manners all suggest that the image is always lightly skewed by the suggestion of the sinister: Hollingsworth's "chain-blue eyes" hold "a hint of aggression" (*BS*, 111). His neat appearance is contradicted by the violent disarray of his room. And his politeness is wooden and insincere, not a mark of civility but a clumsy cover for the boorishness that is always threatening to break out in the humorless "hir-hir-hir" of "his excessive laughter" (*BS*, 39, 41). In his characterization of Hollingsworth, as Joseph Wenke has recently observed, "Mailer expresses an idea that he has returned to repeatedly throughout his career, namely the tremedous capacity for brutal and impersonal violence which

lurks with the heart of Middle America . . . " (Wenke, 47).

Hollingsworth's reactionary ignorance can also be understood by the fact that he is willing to act as an instrument of the United States government and investigate McLeod despite the fact that he has no idea what the little object is that McLeod has supposedly stolen. Therefore he cannot possibly know what the moral and political implications of the theft might be. About McLeod, on the other hand, he really suffers from the ideological conflict in very personal terms. He is an ex-Communist. When we meet him in the Brooklyn boarding-house, however, he has nothing to which to dedicate himself except an intensive study of Marxism and the preservation of the Communist ideal, which has been betrayed by the Soviet reality. As a result, McLeod has made himself the enemy of both powers. And he knows, the risk of retaliation against him from either side continues to increase as long as he insists on keeping the little object. He can compromise himself once again and turn over the object to Hollingsworth. He finally refuses to do so. Hence, Hollingsworth kills him.

It is Lovett who finally inherits the "little object" and who plans to use it in the service of humanity. As the story develops he recovers fragments of his past; and he is also shown to be moving toward "selfless friendship" which McLeod had spoken of, and which apparently will be the key to Lovett's possible salvation and to his possible salvation of others. The last paragraphs of the book summarize Lovett's final point of view:

> So the heritage passed on to me, poor hope, and the little object as well, and I went out into the world. If I fled down the alley which led from the rooming house, it was only to enter another, and another. I am obliged to live waiting for the signs which tell me I must move on again. Thus, time passes, and I work and I study, and I keep my eye on the door. Meanwhile, vast armies mount themselves, the world revolves, the travellers clutches breast. From out the unyielding contradictions of labor stolen from men, the march to the endless war forces its pace. Perhaps, as the millions will be lost, others will be created, and I shall discover brothers where I thought none existed. But for

> the present the storm approaches its thunder head, and it is apparent that the boat drifts ever closer to shore. So the blind will lead the blind, and deaf shout warnings to one another until voices are lost. (*BS*, 311-12)

The image of the drifting voyager recurs throughout the book which certainly reflects the sense of drifting in the American society of the fifties. The frail vessel of the society is drifting helplessly down upon the Barbary shore. Why Barbary? The answer is given by Guinevere, who has asked Hollingsworth to take her away with him. When he asks her where she wants to go, she replies, "Anywhere. To the end of the earth. To Barbary—I like the sound of that" (*BS*, 205). Anywhere. The sickness of the American society of the fifties, Mailer is saying here, is mindlessness and cannot be treated rationally. Society is in danger not only from the conflicting ideologies, but also from the lack of interest in finding any solution of its danger. It has become a great Guinevere—fat, stupid, faithless, obsessed with its own sensual gratification. She perhaps best symbolizes the whole deteriorated situation.

In *Barbary Shore*, as has been previously stated, Mailer goes much deeper into the psychic origins of behavior than in *The Naked and the Dead*. Although his characters are not presented primarily in sexual terms as they are in many of his later works, their sexual natures are central; they involve, describe, and perhaps even define the whole nature of the individual. Robert Solotaroff believes that, in *Barbary Shore*, "Mailer's interest in sexual disturbance ranges beyond its availability as a symbol and symptom of total social dislocation. It intrigues him in its own right" (Solotaroff, 50). The uniformly bizarre, perverted sexual relationships in the novel are best understood as the eruption of unconscious concerns. "On one level," writes Howard Silverstein, "*Barbary Shore* is a novel about the compulsive incestuous drives of the characters. All the emotional attachments take place between characters living under one roof. In this sense, the novel is a 'family romance,' a dramatization of the characters's earliest sexual

desires focused on the members of the family circle" (Silverstein, 279). On another level, we might consider the "family romance" is created by Mailer to subvert the essence of the fifties: the ideologies of "domesticity, religiosity, respectability, security through compliance with the system" (*Miller and Nowak*, 7). Obviously, Mailer also intends, by revealing the sexual promiscuity and perversity of these members living under one roof, to show that life in the fifties was domestic, religious, respectable, and secure only on the surface. What Lovett, McLeod, Lannie, Hollingsworth and Guinevere try to demonstrate is the whole nature of the individual. And the allegorical nature *Barbary Shore* extends this involvement to include society as a whole.

Lovett, a contemporary liberal, is cut from his social heritage by amnesia. He "could never judge whether something had happened to me or I imagine it so" (*BS*, 4). He is also adrift sexually; his sexual meaning is lost in his forgotten past. In the present, all of his sexual encounters are either incomplete or not very satisfying. He is often teased by Guinevere, the living symbol of empty sensuality. His brief sexual involvement with Lannie is a measure of her "fathomless despair" and an indication of Lovett's own incompletion.

McLeod, the ex-Communist, also illustrates this fragmentary incomplete nature, His view of life is theoretical. His love for Guinevere is greater than he consciously admits, but it fails because his attempts at reconciliation with her are intellectual and verbal, in a language foreign to the sensuality which she understands. And McLeod does not understand her language either; he does not realize until too late that existence must be sensual as well as intellectual. In his relations with her and the others there seems to be strong sexual element which he is not aware of. His interest in Lovett's progress with Guinevere, for example, is more than the intellectual curiosity which he professes. And it is possible that his need for confession is partly a sexual need; it certaily reflects a need for some sort of emotional involvement.

Lannie, Like McLeod, is haunted by her feelings of guilt

for the death of Trotsky. And like McLeod, she feels a perverse need for martydom. She seeks sex as a form of punishment and gets a strange pleasure from her sexual degration. Her sexual relations with Lovett, Hollingsworth, and Guinevere all relfect this psychic need for pain and punishment. The psychic natures of Lannie and McLeod, dominated by guilt complexes, are easily exploited by Hollingsworth.

Hollingsworth and Guinevere, dominated by pleasure principle, objectify the political and social psychology of the masses: their only criterion for choice is self-gratification. The personality of Guinevere is carried to its logical and horrifying extreme in her daughter Manina, who is, as Harris Dienstfrey has said, "Obviously a token of the generation to come, a child of the mass media as Mailer sees them. Hardly able to speak, she is nevertheless a consummate narcissist, brilliantlv aware of the most delicate sexual nuance. . . She lives in fantasy and emerges into the real world only to be shocked into fright" (Dienstfrey, 427).

Although *Barbary Shore* was compared unfavorably to *The Naked and the Dead* by most reviewers when it was published in 1951, it is a much deeper, more fascinating, and less mechanical book.[3] The American society of the early nineteen fifties has been, politically, spiritually, psychologically and sexually, analyzed. In other words, it has been ideologically examined at all levels. In Mailer's opinion, the ruling ideologies of that period had to be broken up, for the nation was already suffering from the sickness of totalitarianism. Norman Podhoretz has also made a very similar observation here:

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[3] For the unfavorable reviews of *Barbary Shore,* see the review made by Irving Howe, "Some Political Novels," *Nation,* 16 (June 1951): 568-60, rpd., in *Critical Essays on Norman Mailer.* Ed. J. Michael Lennon (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1986): 45-46; other reviews made by *The Nation, New York Herald Tribune, The New York Times, The New Yorker Time;* and Maxwell Geisman in *Saturday Review of Literature.* All their excerpts have been reprinted in Peter Manso's *Mailer: His Life and Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster 1985): 159-60.

> The race, in Mailer's view, must either grow into greater possibilities or retreat into less; there can be no stagnation. But the retreat into less is not merely a matter of shrinking or cowering; it involves a disruption of the whole organism, a radical dislocation—it is a disease that infects the life of individuals no less than the behavior of nations. *Barbary Shore* is an investigation of this disease, a pathology of the modern spirit. (Podhoretz, 72)

IV

Only one year after *Barbary Shore* was published. Mailer indicated in a symposium that he admired the artist who would attempt to describe America's war economy and increasing authoritarianism, but was very dissatisfied with those novelists who were moving "from alienation to varying degrees of acceptance, if not outright proselytizing for the American century" (*ADV*, 187, 190). In 1954, he reviewed the work of David Reisman, whom he criticized for failing to explore adequately the nature of power and capitalism in America. As has been examined earlier in this paper, Eisenhower's Republican version of state capitalism and the erosion of democratic liberties in the anti-communist assault of Senator Joseph McCarthy intensified Mailer's despair about political life. Diana Trilling has remarked that by the time Mailer was in the process of writing his third novel, *The Deer Park* (1955), "he realized that politics was failing him as the material fiction, as it had failed him as a means of saving the world" (Trilling, 1962, 51). Having seen the failure of radical politics and become more discontented with the oppressive social and political conditions in America, Mailer in *The Deer Park* intends to explore more fully the American experience of the fifties in the psychological aspects. In this novel, the American society of the fifties is reflected in the Hollywood world; it is a society that has reached the end of its historical term, a society caught between the values of an age not quite dead and those of a new era that may never crawl its way out. The do-

minant ideologies and the suppressed ideologies are most often made to clash or to struggle against one another.

The action of *The Deer Park* takes place mostly in Desert D'Or, a fictional Palm Springs, where the veterans of the Hollywood wars come for rest and rehabilitation. The narrator here Sergius O'Shoughnessy, who has come to Desert D'Or from another war, the Korean War, and for the special rehabilitation. Like Lovett of *Barbary Shore*, Sergius is an outsider. Lovett had lost his past; Sergius is trying to lose his–a series of napalm missions he had flown against Korean villages. For him, as for Lovett, "everything is in the present tense," and he is caught in the familiar existential dilemma: "I know that finally one must do, simply do, for we act, so we act in total ignorance and yet in honest ignorance we must act, or we can only measure what has happened inside ourselves" (*DP*, 120). From Hearn to Lovett to Sergius is thus a progression from external to internal choices and justifications.

The therapeutic "good time" which Sergius is looking for proves to be illusory. Although he regains his sexual confidence with the movie star Lulu Meyers, their affair eventually becomes as meaningless as the liaisons in the Deer Park of Louis XII, which Mailer's epigraph suggests as an archetypal Palm Springs. Although Desert D'Or is based on the real model (Palm Springs, California) is a surrealistic world in which reality is juxtaposed with dream. Even the name of the resort is artificial, for it is a perversion of Desert Door, the name it was given by the early gold prospectors. Now the resort is an artificial oasis of self-love. Nothing appears to be what it really is, everything is disguised to look like something else:

> It was a town built out of no other obvious motive than commercial profit and so no sign of commerce was allowed to appear. Desert D'Or was without a main street, and its stores looked like anything but stores. In those places which sold clothing no clothing was laid out. . . There was a jewelry store built like a cabin cruiser. . . (*DP*, 3)

Mailer used the description of the buildings to foreshadow

his character portrayals. The people of *The Deer Park*, like the shops of Desert D'Or, like their commercial motives behind the veneer and facade of their artificial emotions. And it is in this respect that Desert D'Or becomes a symbol for the American society of the fifties.

But there is another setting in the novel, a very important one. As Howard Harper points out, this is Washington, the Washington of the McCarthy era. *The Deer Park* is in part the story of the House of Un-American Activities Committee's harassment of the entertainment industry. Thus, like *Barbary Shore, The Deer Park* continues to trace the ideological encounters of the fifties. Washington, on the surface quite unlike Hollywood, is "still the other pole defining the illusory world of *The Deer Park*" (Harper, 196). The Entertainment industry here, the furthest development of Guinevere's American dream, is fraudulent, too: it sells a phony product to a gullible public. Supreme Pictures produces not the deep, disquieting truths, but the shallow, comforting half-truths of mass entertainment. Lulu, a love goddess on the screen, is wholly narcissistic in private life. For her the ultimate reward of life is the adoration of her fans. The popular leading man of Supreme Pictures, Teddy Pope, is a blatant homosexual. For Herman Teppis, the head of the studio, it is the material rewards his own personal God gathers for him. In one of the most humorous chapters of the book Teppis tries to marry Lulu to homosexual Teddy Pope in order to bolster their respective Bimmler ratings. He moralizes in public but deals savagely with his employees. Having sensed the undercurrent of confusion in the American culture of his time, Teppis is ready to exploit the situation: " 'So what do they want? They want a picture that confuses them. Wait till they get really confused. Then, they'll want a picture that sets them straight' " (*DP*, 72). What he means by "setting them straight" is of course to reinforce in one's heart and mind through the power of motion pictures and the fabled lives of the movie stars themselves belief in the permanent value of motherhood and religion. To accomplish this noble task and make great profits

as well, Teppis not only produces movies but tries to arrange marriages that will appeal to the American public's " 'big red heart' "(*DP*, 265). Thus he wants to marry the sex symbol Lulu Meyers to the popular actor Teddy Pope and thereby they become, in Teppis's words, " 'the Number One royal couple of America, and America is the world' " (*DP*, 274). Here, Teppis's episode provides the best example of moral hypocrisy, and also the moral contradictions that Mailer tries to dramatize in American movie industry.

The Deer Park is a sweeping, savage indictment of the schizophrenic world of Hollywood, there every glowing pubic personality masks a dark, grasping, vicious inner life of self. In their frantic pursuit of pleasure and power, these personalities only sink deeper into schizophrenia. In Hollywood, as in the American society of his time, Mailer shows, illusions have become institutionalized, and hypocrisy has become a way of life. Success in the Hollywood jungle demands total acceptance of its jungle morality.

But there are some whose sense of personality integrity makes the cost of acceptance seem too high. Charles Francis Eitel, Sergius's idol, is a director who had refused to cooperate with a witch-hunting Congressional committee and had consequently been blacklisted by the industry. He wages a daily battle to overcome his own failings such as cowardice, materialism, and debased romanticisn to act courageously , and by virtue of such struggles Eitel comes to dramatize both the source of many of America's problems and possible solution. But it is only at the beginning of the affair that Eitel shows any promise of rising to this stature. Indeed, he betrays almost from the very start the extent to which the worldly values of Desert D'Or have become his own. Eitel's own theory of personality, related by Sergius, best explains the problems:

> The core of Eitel's theory was that people had a buried nature—"noble savage" he called it—which was changed and whipped and trained by everything in life until it was almost dead. Yet if people were lucky and if they were brave, some-

> times they would find a mate with the same buried nature and that could make them happy and strong. At least relatively so. There so many things in the way, and if everybody had buried nature, well everybody also had a snob, and the snob was usually stronger. The snob could be a tyrant to buried nature. (*DP*, 121-22)

As the story develops further and further, Eitel's courage fades into caution and from caution to cowardice. At the same time he moves from passion to technique, from compassion to guilt, from guilt to anxiety, from anxiety to greed. In Mailer's view, Eitel's failure to resist the temptation to sell out and falsify his story marks the end of his chance of being a real artist. Marion Faye, the bisexual pimp, who once respected Eitel, makes this point in a cruelly honest but fitting judgment on Eitel's career and life. He therefore shows no sympathy in explaining why he now hates Eitel, telling him simply and forcefully, " 'You might have been an artist, and you spit on it' " (*DP*, 184).

The cast of the novel ranges from Herman Teppis, the utterly corrupt head of Supreme Pictures, to the lowliest hangers on. Of major importance, however, are two characters in addition to Sergius, Lulu, and Eitel: Elena Esposito and Marion Faye.

Comparatively speaking, Elena, is more generous, more perceptive, more honest, and more sensitive than Lulu. Her openness places her at a disadvantage in the modern Deer Park; because she keeps nothing in reserve to bargain with, she is more often than not at the mercy of her lovers. Her relationship with Eitel is the best example in the novel. At first, Elena has devoted herself to Eitel. And Eitel also has the sentimental cream that his buried nature has been revivified by Elena. He thinks that he has found "a mate with the same buried nature and that could make them happy and strong" (*DP*, 121). However, before long, Eitel becomes unfaithful to Elena. Eitel believes that if he is to wake up his former role in Hollywood he must do so without Elena. She has none of the talents she

would need as the wife of a famous director. She is "timid with people" and "crude in her manners" (*DP*, 103); even "medium clever" conversation ruins an evening for her (*DP*, 172). By Hollywood's standards, Elena is a "fifth-rate woman" and Eitel a "second-rate man" (*DP*, 204). How would they even manage together in Hollywood? This logic points to the more serious problem of Eitel's snobbery. It is he and not Hollywood who thinks of Elena as a "fifth-rate woman." His dream is that together each of them would make something of the other, but it is Elena who must change. She is a "fish wife" (*DP*, 166) and such poor material "for his remodeling program" (*DP*, 167); "She was only what he could make of her" (*DP*, 115). Eitel's arrogance is most evident in the conceit he invents while preparing Elena for the announcement that they must part: She becomes his "one hundred and fourteen pound sailfish whom he must maneuver with "professional disinterest" (*DP*, 203).

Yet, mixed with Eitel's arrogance is his profound guilt. Because Elena represents everything that Hollywood is not, he knows that he has the chance of finding real love with Elena if he is able to overcome his snobbery that aligns him with the frauds and cheats of Desert D'Or. And furthermore, he must stop scrutinizing Elena's flows and reject the desire to make her conform to his idealistic ideology of a classy woman. He knows that, in cold fact, "it was his own fault, finally it was always one's own fault" (*DP*, 164). When the affair finally collapses, Eitel is left to ponder his own compromises, while Elena chooses to live with Marion Faye. However, Faye is more interested in using Elena to test out his ideology of nihilism, or American existentialism in Mailer's term. By now, we may understand that a female character like Elena is created by Mailer to reflect the weak, helpless position of the liberal intellectuals in the McCarthy era. McCarthy's position, as Leslie Fiedler has written, depends not at all upon fair play or respect for conscience "whereas the moral *raison d'etre* of his intellectual opponents is their scrupulousness" (Fiedler, 66). And it is for this reason that those intellectual opponents are

always at a disadvantage when McCarthy is once betrayed into playing his game of symbolic truth-telling.

Marion Faye, in Mailer's idea, a new hero image of the fifties and an American existentialist, is able to subvert the ruling ideologies of his time. His sense of outrage at the phoniness of Desert D'Or has led him to feel only contempt for the victims of the golden wasteland: "Faye knew all about compassion. It was the worst of the vices; he had learned that a long time ago . . . once you knew that guilt was the cement of the world, there was nothing to it; you could own the world or spit at it. But first you had to get rid of your own guilt, and to do that you had to kill compassion" (*DP*, 138). Given to extremes of thought, feeling, and behavior, Faye creates a theological ideology of the devil to encounter the ruling ideologies of new conservatism and religious respectability of his time. Donald Kaufmann states that Faye's name is close to *ofay*, the black's term for a white person, and points to Mailer's conception of the "White Negro's" desire for power, psychopathic disposition, and love of violence (Kaufman, 32, 73). While the quality of this thinking and experience parallels the dynamics life style of the hipster, Marion's desire for power is not for the realization of all the possibilities of the self; it is a reflection of his need to humiliate others and oppose the social conformity.

As an illegitimate child, Faye was immediately cast in the hipster's role as an outsider. With a mother from the lower class who later became an actress and nightclub singer, and a father who was a Prince, Marion's past suggests those extremes which later characterizes his life. Dorothea could not handle her "high strung choir boy" and was "pleased to spoil her son, to forget him, to love him, and to match his tantrums with her own" (*DP*, 13). His extreme sensitivity is particularly revealed in his intense anger. Like the hipster, he can be quite violent: in his first fight, "he had been pulled screaming off the other boy's neck" (*DP*, 14). Always he pitted himself against his teachers, "smoking, drinking, doing whatever was not allowed" (*DP*, 14). However, he was also a very speculative boy, drawn to theology. His interest in religion involved him in

a continual search for a state of purity that could be attained after a willed submersion in "sinful" pursuits, including Witchery and the Devil.

As a pimp, he continues to operate on the fringe of society but he refuses to be a slave to his business: "he kept his freedom and used it to drink, to push dope on himself, and to race his foreign car through the desert. . ." (*DP*, 15). And he continues to stay close to violence through his jobs, which makes it necessary for him to keep a gun. However, with the call girls and their clients, Faye explores the depths of the unconscious, where he seeks the roots of our modern schizophrenia. It is these depths, he feels, which govern what we are and do, but they have no acknowledged place in the pollyana philosophy which prevails in Hollywood, and indeed in the nation as a whole. Faye rejects all socially imposed attitudes and values–in his words. " 'the whole world is bullshit' " (*DP*, 17). His answer is that to live in a rotten world, one must become rotten. If the world is a whore, then he will be her pimp. That is why he approves of violence as a sign of rebellion and a way of liberating primitive energies and thereby accelarating personal growth. For him there is no morality, because the conventions of society are superseded by the individual's need to cultivate intense feeling: "Nobility and vice, they're the same thing. It just depends on the direction you're going. You see, if I ever make it, then I turn around and go the other way. Toward nobility. That's all right. Just so you carry it to the end' " (*DP*, 147).

Even with his picaresque adventures, for Faye the external world is merely a vehicle for his psychological explorations. The self has turned inward to the extent that he rents a furnished house where the "furniture meant as much to his eyes as stones and cactus on the desert flats" (*DP*, 151). He pursues the interests of the mystic as he studies "odd books," and lays "new arrangements of his Tarot cards. . ." (*DP*, 148). Under the influence of marijuana, his vision is frequently transformed from sexual to religious imagery:

> Far beyond, in the far beyond, was the heresy that God was the Devil and the One they called the Devil was God-in-banishment like a noble prince deprived of true heaven, and God who was the Devil had conquered heaven, and God who was the Devil had conquered except for the few who saw the cheat that God was not God at all. So he prayed, "Make me cold, Devil, and I will run the world in your name." (*DP*, 127)

And the religious theme, in turn, invades the world of sex: Faye the pimp and Elena his mistress become Father Faye the flagellant monk and Sister Elena the lewd nun. Faye's morbid, and nearly successful, desire to make Elena herself seems to represent an almost religous form of protest. For he is the prophet and priest of Armageddon:

> So let it come, Faye thought, let this explosion come, and then another, and all the others, until the Sun God burned the earth. Let it come, he thought, looking into the east a Mecca where the bombs ticked... Let it come, Faye begged, like a man praying for rain, let it come and clear the rot and the stench and the stink, let it come for all of everywhere, just so it comes and the world stands clear in the white dead dawn. (*DP*, 139)

Faye searches for a new world, beyond nobility and vice; otherfore, he imagines an atomic blast that purifies the present of "the stench and the stink" and "the world stands clear in the white dead dawn."

Faye's apocalyptic vision is close to Mailer's own. He sees the world of Hollywood as the symbolic sum of all America's illusions. *The Deer Park* shows that those illusions are ultimately intolerable and unsatisfying. But there are only two routes out of Hollywood—either toward truth or further into an even more illusory existence, such as the world of Desert D'Or. Sergius, Faye, and Elena, involved as they are with the world of illusion, nevertheless make their conscious commitment to truth. Lulu, despite her fragment awareness of truth, is committed to the world of Supreme Pictures.

Washington, superficially quite different from Hollywood, is still the other pole defining the illusory world of *The Deer Park*. The Congressional committee of superpatriots certifies the Americanism of the movie colony; dissenters are blacklis-

ted. Mailer's story, of course, reflects the real story of the House Un-American Activities and the entertainment industry during the McCarthy era. Like the real story, Mailer's is not comforting: it includes the principles of guilt by association, conviction for refusal to "cooperate," secret accusations, intimidation and harassment of witnesses, and various other extra-legal and illegal procedures. The point here, as in *Barbary Shore*, is the insidiousness of totalitarianism. One small compromise of concession leads to the next, until the situation reaches the dimensions of unconditional surrender—the status which Eitel finally reaches. He cannot survive in Hollywood without accepting its demands, and ultimately these demands—both artistic and political—are total.

V

By the middle fifties, Eisenhower's "new conservatism," McCarthyism, and the rigid social conformity were still the dominant ideologies which pervaded the whole country of the United States. The liberal intellectuals were either sold out, put in prison, forced to give up, retreated into the self or fighting on in the same useless way as Mailer did. This bad time seems to have affected him in many ways. First, it convinced him that organized political action, while certainly not useless, was not going to lead to any genuine radical change in America. The ruling ideologies were too deep-rooted to be dealt with on a conventional level. Secondly, while Mailer was convinced that the great danger of that time was no longer any specific political force, he did see the dangerous effects of the ruling cultural ideologies upon the mass society: "This society stifles man not in the brutal straigntforward manner that primitive capitalism or fascism did, not by violence, but by subtle almost untraceable processes involving the cultural apparatus and institution of advertising" (L. Goldman, 133). In discussing how the Ideological State Apparatuses function in a state, Louis Althussers explains how the ruling ideologies are enforced through cultural apparatuses and institutions in a

state:

> . . . the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly *by ideology*, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic. (There is no such thing as a purely ideological apparatus.) Thus Schools and Churches use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection, etc., to "discipline" not only their shepherds, but also their flocks. The same is true of the Family. . . The same is true of the cultural IS Apparatus (censorship, among other things), etc. (Althusser, 145)

Althusser's theory of ISAs can be obviously, I assume, used to explain Mailer's view of the American mass society of the fifties. Through the institutions such as schools, churches, trade unions, and families, the ruling ideologies permeate the whole society, and very few individuals can escape their control.

Throughout his evolving criticism of the dominant ideologies of the fifties, Mailer finally fixes on one ideology—totalitarianism, an evil that makes him view the fifties as the period of "our subtle and dear totalitarian time" (*ADV*, 18). According to Mailer, it was totalitarianism that broke upon the incompatible military force of Russia and America. And it was totalitarianism that altered America "from a nation of venture, exploitation, bigotry, initiative, strife, social justice and social injustice, into a vast central swamp of tasteless toneless authority whose dependable heroes were drawn from FBI men, doctors, television entertainers, corporation executives, and athletes who could cooperate with public-relations men" (*ID*, 119). Mailer also asserted that totalitarianism appeared first in Nazi Germany as "a political juggernaut" and in the Soviet Union as "a psychosis in ideology." But totalitarianism has slipped into America with no specific political face. "There are liberals who are totalitarian, and conservatives, radicals, rightists, fanatics, hordes of the well-adjusted." And

> Totalitarianism has come to America with no concentration camps and no *need* for them, no political parties and no desire for new parties, no, totalitarianism has slipped into the body cells and psyche of each of us. It has been transported, modified, codified, and inserted into each of us by way of the popular arts, the social crafts, the political crafts, and the cooperated techniques. It sits in the image of the commercials on television which use phallic and vaginal symbols to sell products which are otherwise useless for sex, it is heard in the jargon of educators, in the synthetic continuums of prose with which public-relations men learn to enclose the sense and smell of an event, it resides in the taste of frozen food, the pharmaceutical order of tranquilizers, the planned obsolescence of automobiles, the lack of workmanship in the mass, it lives in the boredom of a good mind, in the sexual excess of lovers who love each other into apathy, it is the livid passion which takes us to sleeping pills, the mechanical action in every household appliance which breaks too often, it vibrates in sound of an air conditioner of the flicker of fluorescent lighting. And it proliferates in that new architecture which rests like an incubus upon the landscape, that new architecture which cannot be called modern because it is not architecture but opposed to architecture. (*IO*, 119-20)

Mailer has employed the ideology of "totalitarianism" to mean all the ruling ideologies together, how they have infiltrated and penetrated the American culture of that period in every way. How this ideology—"totalitarianism"—may evolve in America even shows up in *The Naked and the Dead*. The Fascist Cummings says, "If there's a war it'll help" (*ND*, 462). As has been discussed, the novel seems to dramatize the belief that World War 11 has been a try-out of American Fascism under way. Cummings calls "the concept of Fascism" a dream that started in the "wrong country," Germany, and that "America is going to absorb that dream, it's in the business of doing it now" (*ND*, 321). The average soldiers had become victims who were "spiritless and insecure, ready-made cannon fodder for the American Warlords" (Kaufmann, 53). Their bitterness toward society kept in step with apthy toward de-

mocratic ideals and other patriotic gimmicks for undertaking the war.

In *Barbary Shore,* McLeod's life relfects the recent history of Soviet socialism. His nineteen years' affiliation with Communism illustrates how Trotskyite altruism had degenerated into the Stalinism of the Nazi–Soviet pact, the purges, assimilations, forced labor, and imprisoned mind. The failure of revolutionary socialism also shapes the Guinevere-McLeod relationship. As a political symbol, Guinevere stands for the American proletarian, ignorant of political doctrine–"I don't know anything about politics" (*BS*, 31). "Her marriage to McLeod highlights the passing of intellectual Marxism, brainwashed by mating with mindless capitalism" (Kaufmann, 54). At the core of her heart, Guinevere is irrational energy feeding on materialistic desires–a style that suggests to the other boarders a way of forgetting the subtle totalitarianism of the times. And so McLeod, Hollingsworth, Lovett and even Lannie all fall under her spell of brainless energy, which attenuates their dread of the encroaching tyranny.

In *The Deer Park*, as has just been analyzed, sex not politics, takes center stage, but totalitarianism is at the root of every action. When Mailer was thus burdened by the deadening effects of the American society and by the impotence of the radical movement, he proposed to the political and social ills a solution. Mailer advocated that in a world that reeks of totalitarianism everywhere one must choose whether to die a slow and anonymous death at the altar of conformity or to strike out into a bold search for individual selfhood. The touchstone to Mailer's subverting ideology is his seminal essay "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster," which first appeared in the summer, 1957, issue of *Dissent* and which is reprinted in *Advertisement* (1959). The White Negro is:

> The American existentialist–the hipster, the man who knows that if our collective condition is to live with instant death by atomic war, relatively quick death by the State as *L'univers concentrationaire,* or with a slow death by conformi-

> ty with every creative and rebellious instinct stifled . . . if the fate of twentieth-century man is to live with death from adolescence to premature senescence, why then the only life-giving answer is to accept the terms of death, to live with death as immediate danger, to divorce oneself from society, to live without roots, to set out on that unchartered journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self. (*ADV*, 312-313)

Mailer explains that the reason the Negro is the source of Hip is that he "has been living on the margin between totalitarianism and democracy for two centuries" (*ADV* 340). The resultant life style of the Negro, the functional paranoia which enables him to survive and commits him to the present more than the future, have been adopted by the Hipster. The Hipster has much in common with the psychopath: both have intuitive sense for action. While most of us are prisoners of habits and inhibitions, the psychopath and the Hipster live on the knife edge of violence, always ready to defeat fear by action. The psychopath, Mailer says, seeks love–love not in the socially acceptable forms, but in the form of "apocalyptic orgasm." Life for psychopath–and for the Hipster as well–has no past and no future, only the present moment, which contains all sensory experience. The present moment is dynamic than static, and the Hipster can either grow or wither at each moment. The threat of totalitarianism is not merely an external one, but internal as well. The Hipster must guard against the deadening society. In Mailer's view, the Hipster's ideology is fully adequate to countercheck all the ruling ideologies of the fifties:

> . . . the nihilism of Hip proposes as its final tendency that every social restraint and category be removed, and the affirmation implicit in the proposal is that man would then prove to be more creative than murderous and so would not destroy himself. Which is exactly what separates Hip from the authoritarian philosophies which now appeal to the conservative and liberal temper–what haunts the middle of the twentieth centu-

> ry is that faith in man has been lost, and the appeal of authority has been that it would restrain us from ourselves. Hip, which would return us to ourselves, at no matter what price in individual violence, is the affirmation of the barbarian, for it requires a primitive passion about human nature to believe that individual acts of violence are always to be preferred to the collective violence of the State; it takes liberal faith in the creative possibilities of the human being to envisage acts of violence as the catharsis which prepares growth. (*ADV*, 328)

Since the Hipster is the man who lives the life of sensations and since he is the absolute anti-intellectual, the total irrationalist, it is highly possible that Hipsters rather than conformists could destroy mankind. Mailer is too honest to ignore this possibility. However, while he admits that the removal of all social restraints could lead to unprecedented violence, he nevertheless maintains that "man would then prove to be more creative than murderous and so would not destroy himself." This is a better risk, he says, than subscription to any of our current authoritarian ideologies or forms of government, in which the assumption is that man is inherently evil and that restraints, he feels, are themselves destroying man by denying "the necessity of life to become more than it has been."

Furthermore, Mailer believes that man himself creates reality and the reality changes as man changes. The universe, he says, is a changing reality whose laws are remade at each instant by everything living, but most particularly man, man raised to a neo-medieval summit where the truth is not what one has felt yesterday or what one expects to feel tomorrow but rather truth is no more nor less than what one feels at each instant in the perpetual climax of the present" (*ADV*, 354). In other words, reality is the instantaneous sum of all human attitudes toward reality; it is subjective and created by man rather than objective and perceived by man. This definition of reality is the key to Mailer's very real and passionate belief in the possibility of social action. Reality can be transformed through the transformation of human attitudes toward it. The

Hipster, in rejecting the prevailing social and moral ideologies, is creating a new ideology and a new morality which are relevant primarily to the self rather than to the social structure. According to Mailer, "The only Hip morality is to what one feels whenever and wherever possible, and—this is how the war of the Hip and the Square begins—to be engaged in one primal battle: to open the limits of the possible for oneself, for oneself alone, because that is one's need" (*ADV*, 354). To open the limits of the possible, to make life more than it has been, is thus the criterion which must be used to judge every human action. Thus Mailer has formulated his Hipsterism to counteract the prevailing ideologies of the fifties.

After Mailer found his solution—Hipsterism—to cope with the political and social ills of the fifties, his position as a social critic was then rather firmly established. Most of his works appearing after fifties are either offering additional insight into his subversive ideology of Hipsterism, or amplifying the materials in the works of the fifties. *The Presidential Papers*, (1963), for instance, is a collection of Mailer's writings, primarily journalistic, since the publication of *Advertisement for Myself* in 1959. It is valuable in illustrating the application of those ideas expressed in *The Naked and the Dead, Barbary Shore, The Deer Park* and "The White Negro," to social situations, such as in his analysis of the character of President Kennedy, the motives of juvenile gangs, the meaning of the reactionary movement in America, the nature of American politics. In *The Presidential Papers,* Mailer still deplores the tendency of modern American society to restrict the range of human possibilities. America suffers, as has been pointed out, from "a tyranny one breathed but could not define; it was felt as no more than a slow deadening of the best of our possibilities . . . " In speaking of the deadening of the human possibilities of the Eisenhower era, Mailer emphasized, "the result was an alienation of the best minds and the bravest impulses from the faltering history which was made. America's need in those years was to take an existential turn, to walk into the nightmare . . ." (qtd. in Breslow, 104) The "existential turn,"

Mailer had hoped, would be the election of Kennedy as President. In Kennedy—young, courageous, personable, dynamic, intelligent, informed, politically shrewd, and with a sense of history and tradition—Mailer had found a leader who could respond to the nation's deepest desires, a hero of the Hipster type. He hoped that Kennedy could create a political reality that Americans would believe in and support.

As a social critic of the fifties, Mailer responded to the political problems, social issues, cultural patterns, and individual lives of the decade. He challenged the ruling ideologies of the decade, such as New Conservatism, McCarthyism, religiosity, respectability, and security through compliance with the system. All the ruling ideologies were enforced through various Ideological State Apparatuses. For instance, the political state ideology, the direct or indirect "democratic" ideology. The communications apparatus crammed every citizen with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, moralism, etc., by means of the press, the radio and television. In the same way, the religious and family apparatuses operated throughout the country during that period. Mailer's collective term for those prevailing ideologies is "totalitarianism," which "has slipped into the body cells and psyche of each of us." And "[it] has been transported, modified, codified, and inserted into each of us by way of the popular arts, the social crafts, the political crafts, and the cooperated techniques," as has been quoted earlier.

However, Mailer found that the liberal democracies were inadequate not only in their capacity to govern successfully in a period of the fifties, but also in their ability to defend and maintain the political ideology that underlay the liberal way of life. Mailer asserted that the American society as a whole in this decade had been seriously infected by the subtle totalitarianism. So, the individual lives in general, greatly improved as they might have been in their living standards, were spiritually sterile. They seemed to have lived in a completed society and had nothing to achieve, nor anything to adventure on. Mailer's formulation of Hipsterism was intended to subvert the

subtle totalitarianism on the one hand, and break down the completed society on the other. The Hipster was totally bored by society, paranoically alert to danger, and he lived in an acute intimacy with the criminal and the psychopath in himself. His sexual conduct also expressed a new, radical principle of selfhood. The Hipster was created by Mailer to settle a new direction that America must take to save itself: it was the direction of purposeful, as opposed to purposeless, death.

Practically speaking, we might think that Mailer was too ambitious, or unrealistic, to achieve his goal of counterchecking the ruling ideologies of the period with his Hipsterism only. However, as America, as American history indicated, moved toward the sixties, it did change its course drastically. The conservative mood of the fifties changed into the rebel mood of the sixties. As a matter of fact, McCarthyism declined rapidly even within the first half of the decade. As John M. Blum and others have observed, "The spell was at last broken. On December 2, 1954, the Senate censured McCarthy by a 67 to 22 vote. The Wisconsin senator was finished. His death in 1957 merely ratified his political demise" (Blum et al., 1968, 801). Mailer has, it seems to me, commented upon the American society of the fifties with greater detachment than those more directly caught up in the practical business of production and power. As a social critic, Mailer's gifts are impressive: a large capacity for direct experience of life, a mind capable of brilliant insights, and above all, courage and a willingness to engage the most perplexing issues of the whole decade of the nineteen fifties.

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意識形態的對峙：重讀梅勒五十年代之主要作品

田維新

摘 要

本論文試從意識形態的角度分析梅勒於五〇年代所出版的主要作品，例如：≪巴巴雷海岸≫（一九五一），≪鹿園≫（一九五五），≪自我宣揚≫（一九五九）等。作者認為梅勒在這些作品裡所欲表達的意識形態，正好和五〇年代，美國當時的社會意識形態是相互對峙，水火不相容的。梅勒的策略，似乎要以他在這些作品裡所表達的那種極端的，具有叛逆性的意識形態來破除或改變當時美國社會的各類保守主義。

本論文對意識形態一詞的詮譯，是採純描述中性意義的解釋。是指美國一般人士在五〇年代所持有的價值觀念和信仰系統。以此做爲他們思考的準則和實踐行動的綱領。所以對於意識形態的應用，既不採馬克斯在≪德意志意識形態≫一書中所用的，具有貶抑的「假意識」的意識形態，也不採列寧所要建立的「工人階級的正確世界觀」那類共產革命性的意識形態。