of the "underlying patterns" and "interaction patterns"[166] of a culture and an ideology at work in shaping the "distinctive thought world"[167] of Americans.

In one sense, then, what begins in the 1950s and continues into the 1960s is not so much a revolt as a reassertion of "traditional" values; the suggestion that in the complexity of post-war politics and post-modern, post-industrial society, "old-fashioned" axiological systems had been devalued or forgotten. This, of course, is in general terms a familiar conservative argument, and at least one commentator on the 1960s has it that the movement called the New Right began as 1960s survivors began to shape the trends which coloured American political life in the 1980s and 1990s. Not all Americans were hippies; Paul Lyons argues that "History belongs"[168] to the young conservatives who helped reassess the direction of conservative politics in the United States after the 1960s, and that "the most accurate and telling stage production of the baby boomers' 1960s...would be a two-ring circus, with New Left and New Right elites under the spotlight, and most of their generational peers—and the rest of the nation—in the audience watching, taking in messages at the margins and over time."[169]

Both the "Left" and the "Right" attempted to appropriate the figure of the American hero, recognising its tremendous emotional appeal, during the 1960s. Indeed, the re-definition and re-delineation of the hero figure and the re-examination of masculine modalities has been seen to be a dominant feature in the cultural landscape of post-war America. David van Leer refers to "(t)he rise of competitive individualism,"[170] which he proposes "may have been a natural reaction against the compulsory cooperation of the New Deal and war years."[171] Here is, perhaps, the origin of the extreme edge of harshness and coldness toward *isotimoi* and *anisotimoi* which sociologists like Miedzian have observed. If in the 1950s the competitive individualist was to an extent encouraged within the corporation—incentive for individual effort had proven to benefit, not undermine, the corporate system—there were limits to the extent to which genuine dissent was tolerated. Individualism and definitions of correct, acceptable or sanctioned behaviour rested increasingly not with the individual, but with a society determined to instruct him in how to be a man for his, and of course its, benefit.

At the beginning of the 1960s, then, the model of ideal masculinity had come under re-consideration due to the social, cultural, economic, and philosophical stresses which had emerged from twentieth century post-

industrial society and the political changes which had arisen from the two world wars. As more aggressive and less tractable characteristics of the American male were being criticised, so it occurred to very few that these same qualities had long provided the basis for the American model of ideal masculinity which was, and remains, so important to the American national self-conception. On a conscious level individuals did—and continue to—wish to eliminate certain "ultra-masculine" characteristics from the ideal paradigm. At the same time identical stereotypical male qualities continue to be produced and widely disseminated within the society, and the society itself valorises the same qualities of ideal masculinity that in another sense it castigates as detrimental, or not socially desirable, during the current phase of the nation's social and cultural development. There is, I would argue, a level of cognitive dissonance within individual Americans on the subject of masculinity. Ideological ambiguity on the subject of aggressiveness and competitiveness leads to social messages which imply that a certain level of these attributes is acceptable, even desirable, but that what is acceptable has become subject to sudden and arbitrary re-definition. The tensions engendered by this dichotomy are examined with great detail in the novels of the 1960s as individual American men, consciously or unconsciously, formulate their responses to the increasing contradictions in the attitudes to masculinity presented to them in the cultural and social phenomena of their nation.

VII

The authors on whom I decided to focus in order to study American masculinity in the 1960s were Norman Mailer, Ken Kesey and Philip Roth. Each of these authors wrote works which were influential or popular during the 1960s; each wrote novels set during the 1960s; and each deals with the unique social conflict in American society in the 1960s while employing distinctively American themes and perspectives in their work. As I am interested in making observations which lie in the field of literary sociology, it is useful for my purposes that, as well as having written about the 1960s, Mailer, Kesey and Roth as individuals are part of the story of the 1960s in America; their names are associated culturally and philosophically with that decade with a prominence that can be matched by few of their peers. Of Mailer and Kesey this is especially true, and Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* has retrospectively assured its author the reputation of one who both chronicled and inspired the liberalisation of attitudes to sexuality and sex which occurred during the 1960s. As a result of the combination of these factors the accounts of American life and American men in the 1960s provided by

Norman Mailer, Ken Kesey and Philip Roth are most authentic, as well as representative in artistic terms. These writers gave me persuasive reason for their choice in this regard: each exhibits a fondness for what William Carlos Williams termed " 'fictionalized recall,' "[172] in so far as each is an example of a writer of whom Tony Tanner might have been thinking when, in introducing the above expression into his *City Of Words*, he noted that "for some American writers their experience of life in America is so intense and primary that it seems supererogatory to invent new material. Instead, the craft of the fiction-maker goes into shaping and ordering the overall structure of his recollections."[173]

I further buttressed my employment of these novelists by the fact that each of these authors had, during the 1960s, enjoyed both commercial success and critical or popular esteem; I have reasoned that high sales figures might be said to indicate a depiction of events, people, and ideas which is "enjoyed" by a large number of people. I would suggest some connection between the popularity of a work and its "cultural efficiency," i.e. its ability to express something which a culture requires be expressed (and re-expressed), or the manner in which it mirrors a culture in such a way that the culture either derives satisfaction from the depiction or, as is often the way with art, uses it for self-criticism, cathartic/symbolic/vicarious experience etc.,. Mailer, Kesey and Roth also match this criterion, although in Mailer's case his non-fiction writing garnered greater attention than his novels.[174] These three writers were part of the 1960s in a sense that transcends their function in the creation of literature in/of the 1960s. These authors inscribe America and its values systems in the 1960s, and American masculinity and its characteristic forms in that decade, in their writing.

Of course, a number of other authors also matched the criteria which had emerged, which were essentially that I was, in my search for evidence of the *p*-structures of American masculinity in the 1960s and expressions of male experience as expressed in novels of the 1960s, most interested in writers who had: achieved some degree of commercial success and/or attracted at least a measure of artistic acclaim played some role in the social or political life of America in the 1960s; and written about men in the 1960s in novels set in or close to the period. Several names were prominent amongst writers whose work I surveyed.

Truman Capote's "non-fiction novel" writing and Tom Wolfe's "New Journalism" attracted to both these authors a great deal of public attention during the 1960s; however, neither are noted for novels written during the

period;[175] Norman Mailer and his fiction seem to occupy a similar place in American life and letters.

Saul Bellow's *Herzog* (1964) probably remains as daring and honest an examination of masculine inner life as any produced by any American writer. However, Bellow's men are in no wise 1960s-men; like their creator, their intellectual and moral selves have been formed in the world which existed prior to the Second World War. Bellow's men find themselves adrift in a society with whose values they find themselves increasingly at odds; their choice is not rebellion or recasting of visions, however, but moral transcendence, and the focus on human eternals in the face of cultural, emotional and philosophical ephemera. They straddle the "old" and the "new" America, and provide us with a rich perspective on a changing society. Much of the tension between Bellow's protagonists and their society derives from their refusal to adapt to "modern" life—Henderson, in *Henderson the Rain King*(1959) flees to Africa and Herzog to solitude—whereas the writers on which this study focuses shows men for whom flight is not an option, or not their desire. They stay, and either change their environment—"cleanse" it—accommodate with the society's values or try to live in permanent conflict with them. Thoughtful, morally serious, and possessed of a sensitivity and restraint coupled with inner strength, they were out of step with their brothers both fictional and real in the 1960s in their reliance on deep, self-accepting, idiosyncratic self-investigation (ontology: what am I in essence? as opposed to: what would I like to be?) as their bulwark against stereotype-bound mode of self-definition.

John Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (1960) and its first sequel, *Rabbit Redux* (1971) trace a "1950s man" who finds the complexity and the revisionism of the 1960s confusing and dispiriting. These novels might have made a component of this study, especially if considered along with *The Centaur* (1963) which deals with family accommodations. However my reasons for preferring Roth's work, which covers the same kind of masculine dynamics, I have discussed, and will further discuss below. Joseph Heller is a novelist with the ability to depict masculine experience both accurately and with distinctively black humour (also like Roth); however, Heller's only 1960s novel, *Catch-22* (1961), is set during the Second World War, and outside America; Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* is similarly dark in its approach to comedy, and represents many of the same observations about the grim irony of human existence and the (apparently) problematic natures of personal choice and free-will. John Barth is another writer one might have

considered; of his two 1960s novels, *The Sot-Weed Factor* (1960) is set in the eighteenth century, and appealing though the wild satire of the allegorical university novel *Giles Goat-Boy* (1966) might have been, Mailer's equally extravagant *Why Are We In Vietnam?* is more incisively savage in its exposure of the sterile instrumentalities of the patriarchy and the destructive hierarchicisation of American males, if much less artistically successful than either of Barth's works.

Other novelists, of course, might have been considered, but in the writings of Mailer, Kesey and Roth I felt I had achieved a complete "portrait" of the American male in the 1960s, and had, in the novels I had chosen, collected different aspects of the life and character of 1960s American man to consider, as well as having 1960s man depicted in a number of areas which I thought crucial: economic, social, sexual, and in terms of the accommodations men strike within the family and with its members, and within society and with its members.

The specific novels I have chosen are: Norman Mailer's *An American Dream* (1965) and *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967); Ken Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion* (1964); Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969) and, for several reasons, the series of novels which deals with the fictional writer Nathan Zuckerman: *The Ghost Writer* (1980), *Zuckerman Unbound* (1981) and *The Anatomy Lesson* (1983). The narrative of Alex Portnoy's sexual mania and his monologic discourse is, of its nature, limited in subject matter. Roth's Nathan Zuckerman comes to maturity and material success in the 1960s, and his tale, I think not unreasonably, although written at some remove from the 1960s, makes an important addition to the portrait I am intending to paint of American man in that decade, through its detailed observations of Nathan Zuckerman and his relationship with his mother and father, and hierarchical society, which add greatly to information in *Portnoy's Complaint* concerning Alex Portnoy's accommodations with his parents, and a demanding world.

The varied approaches and artistic choices offered by the novelists and novels concerned combine into an harmonious "whole" in providing a portrait of American man in the 1960s as he relates to the construction and articulation of his sense of identity, and his relationships with the hierarchical societal instrumentalities with which he is forced to accommodate. In Mailer and in Kesey it is relatively easy to demonstrate that hierarchical structures and status are prime considerations of both writer and characters; in Roth the apparent dominance of other elements

requires a more concentrated elucidation in order to show the presence of these concerns.

There is concinnity in the focus of the works, too, as Mailer's study of a man in virtual isolation (the sociopathic Stephen Rojack in *An American Dream*) prefaces his study of men in small groups (in *Why Are We In Vietnam?*); this in turn segues into the depiction of a family group and small town life in Kesey's novel, which in turn is succeeded by Roth's more complex analysis of men's solitary inner-life and their reluctant acceptance of the web of inter-relationships into which the urban and metropolis dweller is forced. Mailer's view includes interpersonal sexual dynamics, and if Kesey's males seem less concerned with sex than with money and status, Roth's Alex Portnoy and Nathan Zuckerman are as rampantly sexual as any two males depicted in popular post-war American fiction. *Portnoy's Complaint* and the Zuckerman novels deal with father-son relationships and provide contrasting views of the paradigmatic male-male relationship which exists between male parent and son, and of life within "traditional" family groups.

Thus this study takes into account a man's private self; social (and political) self; sexual self; and economic self; and sees how he balances the calls and obligations of the immediate and wider social structures in which he is enmeshed: of the family, the employer, the state and/or nation. I found variety, and comparison and contrast in sufficient quantity in the differences and similarities between Stephen Rojack (*An American Dream*) D. J. Jethroe (*Why Are We In Vietnam?*), Hank and Lee Stamper (*Sometimes a Great Notion*), Alex Portnoy (*Portnoy's Complaint*) and Nathan Zuckerman (*The Ghost Writer*, *Zuckerman Unbound*, *The Anatomy Lesson*) to convince me that I had achieved a reasonable and rounded portrait of the American male in the 1960s, and been able, through their perceptions (and through examination of the literary techniques of the novelists in question) and in the articulation of their experience, to see in operation the forces which shape his identity and his social, economic and familial realities.

The course of Norman Mailer's career in the 1960s can be seen as an allegory for the whole American experience of that decade. Fascinated by both masculinity and American-ness, Mailer and his publicity-attracting antics elevated to public theatre moments of tragedy, drama, comedy, and even nobility. Like a Hemingway manqué, Mailer began the 1960s very much in 1950s status-seeker style dressed in the uniform of white shirt and

thin black tie, he was a bourbon-swilling, Marlboro-smoking aficionado of pugilism and other macho pursuits. However, the 1960s offered Mailer much inspiration: he was already an enthusiastic smoker of marijuana, and he became attracted by the anti-war movement, for whom he would be journalist and spokesmen. Next as a liberal with a "tough-guy" image he ran for political office himself, and thus moved from 1960s observer to 1960s participant. Like much of the intellectual property of the 1960s, however, both Mailer's popularity and the "pop" philosophy he articulates owe their energy more to his personality than to his intellect.

It has been said that Mailer, "exorcised his personal demons by identifying neurotic fantasies with the social and political mood of the early 1960s."[176] In the two novels examined here, the novelist certainly captures the mood of 1960s America. First, he portrays a dark side to the optimism of the Kennedy era in *An American Dream*, and then he provides a most unattractive depiction of an American youth which finds in its own bloodthirsty fantasies the answer to the question *Why Are We In Vietnam?*

Stephen Richards Rojack and Barney Kelly in *An American Dream* and the characters in *Why Are We In Vietnam?* provide examples of the business and public selves men need to construct in order to successfully undertake hierarchical accommodations within the pitiless structures of competitive America. Mailer shows us 1950s "social man" entering a period of transition; enmeshed in capitalist status games and dreams of power, the 1960s will bring to American man a change of clothes, hairstyle and vocabulary, but, the evidence of Mailer's men, the endurance of the "traditional" model of masculinity makes one question the extent to which American men made any other than superficial adjustments to changing social mores. In *An American Dream* the calculating, ambitious Rojack is a politician and Presidential hopeful, sparring at the top of the hierarchies of public life in the most public of nations. His are social man's aspirations writ large, and the web of obligation into which he becomes drawn—with his wife and his friends as much as his adversaries—define him as much as his own desires and his own visions. He remains, however, isolated, and in the final analysis it is his own wilderness he wishes to conquer—Rojack's inner demons and his public failures—and he chooses violence and flight as solutions. Rojack cannot remake himself, and cannot survive; he depends on there being a "frontier" for him to tame. His flight to South America might be seen as analogous to Huck Finn's flight at the end of Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, and all similarly anachronistic yearnings for vanished

freedom, reductive simplicity and a never-ending supply of virgin fields to conquer.

An American Dream was a best-selling novel of the early 1960s; it was controversial, and it was feted as a bold critique of the social, sexual and cultural mores of the period. Its hero is virtually the essence of the archetype of the all-American boy; and his tale everything such an appellation implies: however, there is a canker in the middle of the Rojack apple, which I presume is Mailer's point: the American Dream has failed because at its heart is not love of country but love of self. As Mailer would later write: a "fearful disease"[177] has afflicted America. Its cause is: "Greed. Vanity...[and] Arrogance. Half the people in this country think they are possessed of genius."[178] Mailer's Rojack, blinkered by a full measure of the excessive self-confidence of his fellow Americans, achieves a celebrity status in war which prompts him to tilt for the peak of American achievement, the "Executive Office" of the United States. With Mailer not slow to point them out, the parallels between Rojack and John Fitzgerald Kennedy added spice for the novel's contemporary readers; Rojack, however, fails to reach his goal, and the novel charts the aftermath as he struggles with the reification and the distillation of his own bitterness and sense of failure: in the Lilith-form of his wife, Deborah (whom he murders), and in the figure of Deborah's father, Barney Oswald Kelly, with whom Rojack jousts in symbolic and actual combat. Rojack's intense temperament marks him as a man who will always attempt the path of close accommodation as his first resort. He impulsively competes with his *isotimoi*, but his lack of resources with which to deal with circumstances when he fails in his goals, and his quick resort to violence to solve his problems, his ego and obsession with status, all mark him as a reification of the model of ideal, American masculinity. The inevitable and unpleasant corollary of the valorisation of "mutually exclusive goal attainment"[179] is that not every person can win, and in a society where everyone wants to win, and where males are conditioned from an early age to construct themselves as "winners" and to be "winners," this inevitably leads to disappointed expectations, loss of self-image, and other psychological and physical stresses associated with self-perception contradicted by life experience. It was at the start of the 1960s that a well-known sporting coach, Vince Lombardi, articulated the American position on competition when commenting: " 'Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing.' "[180] Alfie Kohn calls this "a capsule description of our entire culture."[181]

Why Are We In Vietnam? operates against the background of America's military involvement in South-East Asia. The stylistic disorder—or playfulness—of the novel serves as counterpoint to the linearity of determinant, phallogocentric American masculinity, whose brutal disregard for "otherness" is revealed in the violent and exclusivist nature of the patriarchal *Weltanschauung* the novel reveals and dissects.[182] In *Why Are We In Vietnam?* Mailer answers the question posed somewhat enigmatically in the title of a novel which is set in Alaska, and in which only tangential reference is made to the conflict in Indo-China, by implying that certain qualities in American masculinity were responsible for many of the excesses which bedevilled 1960s' American society, including but not limited to America's involvement in the events of the civil war in Vietnam. The nature of the "ideal man" is at heart conquesting, bloodthirsty, and acquisitive; Mailer explores the American cultural processes which produce the strong, competitive "U. S. Male" and illustrates the result of these processes. Material success or fame are the only acceptable yardsticks of human worth in this degenerate culture, and its products are, in Mailer's cartoonish depiction, repellently grotesque. Mailer's characterisations of men are in a "classic" American tradition: they are stereotypical "loners," aggressively driven, intrepid and able individuals who attempt to force their will and their vision on others and on society. The qualities which facilitate the kind of domineering behaviour of these characters are identical with the qualities of masculinity which have been historically valorised in American culture, and Mailer is but a recent example of a trend in American fiction, which, as I have examined earlier, has celebrated the "loner" male, the type which might be characterised by the employment of Melville's term: "*Isolato.*"[183] "Such solitary heroes," comments Walter Allen, "dominate American fiction."[184] Thus an examination of Mailer, often regarded as the doyen of the male chauvinist rearguard, begins the study, providing a portrait of American man, both alone and in relief, as it were, against the background of a social context with which he wars.

Ken Kesey was an influential figure in the youth movement of the 1960s; he was often cited as a "hippy" spokesperson and theorist. Mailer's political protests were directed at a system in which he participated, and which he hoped to reform; Kesey, however, was a maverick figure hero of the counter-culture, which despaired of contemporary mores and their repressive, enervating effect on the individual. He is a literary champion of

the anti-conformist—the symbolism and characterisations in his novels reinforce his thematic assertion of individualism.

These elements contributed to the success of his first novel, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), and Kesey was thereafter "always included with Philip Roth and Joseph Heller and Bruce Jay Friedman and a couple of others as one of the young novelists who might go all the way."[185] Writing, however, began to interest Kesey less than personal and inter-personal experience, social and civil rights issues and experiments in psychedelics-fuelled "consciousness expansion." He "finished his second novel with LSD as his co-pilot...inaugurated his band of Merry Pranksters...[and]...announced he would write no more ('Rather than write, I will ride buses, study the insides of jails, and see what goes on')."[186] L. Gilbert Porter refers to "problem years...between the publication of *Sometimes a Great Notion* in 1964 and Kesey's move to the farm in Pleasant Hill in 1968,"[187] which he describes as being

> characterised by experiments with drugs and group living that sometimes exploited family and friends, the vision of altering consciousness and establishing revolution, the lure of power, the scrapes with the law, the rasping polarities of freedom and responsibility, the frustrating attempts to establish universal connections.[188]

Kesey was eventually to gain the status of a genuine "outlaw," and spend time both in exile from America and in jail in America resulting from drug-possession charges. The former college wrestling champion's movement from small-town "All American Boy" to criminal, revolutionary hero and philosopher was an expression of the 1960s youth experience: many felt obliged to join the novelist in averring that it was not they who were out of step with America, but their nation which was betraying its heritage and its traditional values for material gain according to the corrupt mores of the greedy, anti-spiritual twentieth century.

Raised to the status of a "cult hero" as a result of Tom Wolfe's depiction of him and the Pranksters in *The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test* (1968), Kesey found his fame and notoriety had progressively limited his activities and reduced his influence; nonetheless he retains the status of a "living legend" among the residual members and devotees of a generation Lee Stamper, in *Sometimes a Great Notion*, sarcastically characterises as "dedicated droves, equipped with sideburns and sandals and a steel-stringed guitar, relentlessly tracking...lost rootbeds . . . yet all the while guarding against that most ignoble of ends: becoming rootbound."[189]

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest is an efficient and incisive allegory of the corporate mentality in America, and of the dehumanising effects of technology and of the repression of individualism.[190] Yet in *Sometimes a Great Notion* Kesey's sentimental if gritty portrait of American family life and its exaltation of "traditional family values" gives tacit approval to the same patriarchal structures to which he had seemed creatively and personally in opposition. The ability to reconcile the attack on contemporary American society with the reassertion of "old-fashioned" American values, and feeling no cognitive dissonance in the project, is typical of Kesey, then, as much as of the young generation of the 1960s.[191] Kesey was selected as a novelist who, willy-nilly, clearly and forcefully depicts the workings of hierarchical power structures in American society, even as he, in the editorialising of interior monologues, seems determined to identify and exorcise their malign influence. *Sometimes a Great Notion* explores the relationship between the construction of masculine identity and the experience of a male's life as part of a family unit. The epic novel places the "old order"—a conservative, traditional American family—against "modern values"—a drug-taking 1960s student, and in the dialectic American ideology and American character are treated as abstract qualities, comparable to geological or other topological phenomena, arising from autochthonic processes as much as transmitted genetically or culturally. The novel's careful, detailed pictures of the family life of the Stampers and the novelist's insights into a child's reception of outside experiences and influences, show the ways in which national and transcultural stereotypes of masculinity are transmitted to an individual in the process of the construction of his identity. Kesey's men are seen in the context of both the kin-group and the wider social order, and they are bound by ties of community, regional and national obligation which they acknowledge in a very conscious way—the "belonging" and "mutuality" of obligation participates in self-definition. Kesey's males also inhabit the psychic and geographical locus of the traditional "range" of American hero: the outdoors. Like Mailer's men, they are "Anglo" in the broadest sense; although their poverty and independence render their access to structures of power problematic, the ideological, symbolic and cultural accoutrements of this clan make it clear that they contextualise and define *themselves* as participants in the American mainstream: in quest of the American Dream, economically aspiring, capitalist, conservative, and dedicated to "traditional" (as Stamper-defined) economic, moral and social values. The changing post-war economic situation in America, and the continued

dominance of corporations and group conformism over small business and the individual causes fractures in the balance of life within the hierarchy of the Stamper family, and changes the interactions of all the members of the family.

Kesey's focus on the hero paradigm is foregrounded. Kesey's men, especially the characters in *Sometimes a Great Notion*, are vividly aware of the historical and cultural forces which surround them. To describe the ideal of heroic character to which his central male characters aspire, Kesey frequently refers to the heroes of American history and culture—including that most modern and stereotyped of manifestations of the heroic model, the superhero of comic-books. The unambiguous nature of the character of the superhero expresses something of the idealism which is so often characteristic of American self-definition; in the 1960s Kesey himself regularly adopted such a persona complete with "Uncle Sam" flourishes, in which to execute some of his confrontational theatrics. The influence of the image of ideal masculinity is clearly identifiable in Kesey's depiction of masculine experience. Robert Forrey describes Kesey as being in the tradition of Steinbeck and Hemingway, noting that he "presents as ideals in his first novel the arrogantly masculine ones of drinking, whoring, hunting and gambling," and in "depicting his hero as a masculine Christ whom the conspiring world of weak-kneed men and bitchy women try to emasculate."[192]

Mailer and Kesey are writers for whom American-ness is central; American themes and settings dominate; but if national values and the conduct of U.S. politics and policies might be discussed in their works, the *essence* of America, the validity of its ideological heart, is rarely challenged—indeed, is so much a cultural *donnee* and *noli-me-tangere* or hidden centre that the nature of it is only rarely brought to the surface in their representations of the articulation of experience of that most formed and formative, represented and representative groups, American males.

Ideally, however, the depictions of masculinity in Mailer and Kesey needed to be balanced by representations of masculinity emanating from the voice of a writer who could view naturalised notions of American-ness and maleness from the perspective of one who has some understanding of the experience of marginalisation. Unlike the other two authors, both of whom, it might be argued, represent "mainstream" American masculinity, Roth emerges from, and articulates, an American immigrant background. Roth has noted that the "business of being able to be an American was always problematic for [his] parents' generation,"[193] and the tone of his

works is coloured by "the self-consciousness of someone confronted with the choices of rising up out of an ethnic group,"[194] complicated by the knowledge that the "sense of being part of America merges in all sorts of ways with [one's] personality."[195] Mailer, despite his Jewish background, has not focussed extensively on the articulation of the tension between ethnic- and Anglo-American identities, and Kesey's males are identifiably the result of a "mainstream" construction of American masculine identity. Roth's voice, however, represents those non-Anglo emigrant groups who found, behind the unfamiliar language, cultural concepts and modalities of construction of identity *s*-structures of American society, derived, as we have seen, from European models—and ultimately from *p*-structures—with which they were familiar. Finally, the novels by Mailer and Kesey I examine are each complete in themselves as narratives; conventional structuring allows dramatic events to unfold and reach a conclusion. Roth's literary depiction of Zuckerman's aging and hesitant maturation is instructive, and is additional witness to the continuing influence of family relationships on a male's adult life, as well as providing a perspective not only on the construction of masculinity identity, but its influence on an individual's response to social and familial expectations of him over the passing of time.

Philip Roth's articulate, economical descriptions of family life and the inner life of American men provide an example of a writer whose articulation of gender-identity has sincerity and integrity. His cultural voice as male, as Jew, and as American—and most particularly the nexus of his sense of total identity— is honest and incisive and he plays with American and ethnic identity, personal and public facts, fictions and non-fictions. His characters, elusively, spend their lives spinning self-justifying re-inscriptions of the central dramas of their personal lives from facts, evasions, and half-truths. Roth's presentation of identity exhibits what has been called a "Chinese-box effect,"[196] as a creation from one text gives way to a character of the same name who appears in another, with the end result blurring the distinction between "face," "facade" and "facet," between fact and fiction, and even between writer and writing.[197] If Roth's works are an attempt to define the essence of the inner life of the American Jewish male and the affect of his culture on him, the themes of Roth's work transcend mere ethnic identity. Murray Baumgarten and Barbara Gottfried have identified Roth's signature themes as the

> nexus of ethnicity and gender—of Jewishness and masculinity...his tales focus on the struggle of his

> protagonists...to define their masculinity over against a prototype of American maleness. That masculine ideal is desirable from the point of view of assimilating into the American mainstream, yet antithetical to certain elements in their ethnic makeup...Jewishness contributes what the Roth hero most respects and yet most loathes in himself—that quality which makes him...both superior and inferior to what is defined as masculinity in America.[198]

Roth's themes also include: sex, Jewishness, guilt, concern with the opinion of others, a man's relationship with family, especially his father, and finally the cultural/social nightmare of banishment, the fear of being reviled and disowned. Each has exhaustively, and exhaustingly, alone and in clusters, been examined over the thirty-plus years of his writing career, leading to the criticism that he is, perhaps, a writer with a limited subject range hampered by a penchant for thematic réchauffé.

In a 1973 interview with himself in *Partisan Review* the ever self-reflexive Roth asks Roth the question: *"Can you explain why you are trying to come on like a bad boy—although in the manner of a very good boy indeed?"*[199] The same question might be asked of any of Roth's protagonists: for example, Neil Klugman, Gabe Wallach, Alex Portnoy, David Kepesh, Peter Tarnopol, or Nathan Zuckerman. Like Kesey's characters, Roth's men, classic male status seekers, have to deal with the fact that their identities and desires have been both created and constrained by their backgrounds, and structured by the preconceptions of others. Roth's "urban, intellectual, second-generation American Jews"[200] come to understand, or have circumstances thrust before them, the extent to which the past is at once a strength and a liability, ineluctably conditioning a man's attitudes to existence and experience; to his own, and women's, sexuality; to what it is to be a man; and to how one relates to the religion and culture of one's forefathers and the religion and culture of one's neighbours. Roth teases out the complexities of being Jewish, male and American, and, with humour and empathy and often with a mercilessly acerbic and satirical pen, unveils the lives of individuals who attempt to merge into a coherent, but not necessarily homogeneous, sense of self the claims of different, often conflicting, definitions, while attempting to accommodate successfully and profitably with the social, economic and family structures belonging to Jewish-American life.

The impression which emerges from a study of Roth's works is that they are about people and families who are Jewish, rather than about Jewish

people and families, and the difference is more than a matter of syntax. Stanley Cooperman records a moment in 1964 when, "speaking at the annual American-Israel dialogue at the Weizman Institute, Roth defiantly announced that 'I am not a Jewish writer. I am a writer who is a Jew;' "[201] and Ruth Wisse succinctly defends Roth when she says of his response to his earliest critics: "When he explained himself...Roth rightly protested that he could not be indicted for his failure as a Jew because he was not making any claim for himself as a Jew."[202] Roth himself has preferred to say: " 'Intimacy and subjectivity are my subjects.' "[203] In his work the issues and subjects and themes are not Jewishness *per se*, but, in Jewish families: the relationships between parents and their children; the comic potential of guilt; the bonds of mutual coherence which arise from family ties; the power nexus in kin-groups; the construction of cultural and personal identity; and how the way one deals with the heterogeneous claims of these social elements on one's allegiance affects one's sense of individuality and the process of one's individuation. Here, too, Roth provides another contrast with Mailer and Roth, and thus an alternative "angle" on the mechanisms of the construction of masculine identity in America: Mailer's and Kesey's novels are dramatic, even relentlessly so; Philip Roth engages in a barbed castigation of his society undertaken from a contrastingly comic perspective. In trying to identify exactly what the "Jewish quality" of Roth's books might be, it could be said to reside in a wry, self-deprecating humour, as well as in a tone of emotional sincerity and honesty; the portrayal of intense emotions and close psychic and emotional atmospheres; as well as in the celebration of the vitality of inter-personal relationships that lies behind the astringent, extravagant satire.

These traits are all characteristic of the novels which feature the character of Nathan Zuckerman, who has been called Roth's "alter id,"[204] and whose hyperactive consciousness might itself be said to be archetypically Jewish, were it not for Zuckerman's evasive, ambivalent attitude to the calls of that ethnic identity on him. Having their genesis firmly in the 1960s and their creator's vivid memories of the mood of that decade, Roth's depiction of Zuckerman allows the novelist to illustrate a number of aspects of male experience in terms of the principal hierarchical structures of American society as they were manifest in the 1960s, beginning with, and principally concerning, the hierarchy of the family, and Nathan Zuckerman's accommodation with that hierarchy in the years of his early manhood. All the novels which feature him, like the fictional experiences depicted in them, revolve around the hierarchy which is delineated by the relativities

of prestige and power in the inter-personal relationships of the Zuckerman family. The novels detail the persistence of the emotions engendered by these accommodations, and the pervasiveness of their influence on the life and work of this one individual.

While *The Ghost Writer* takes place before the 1960s, and *The Anatomy Lesson* takes place after them, the 1960s is nonetheless the period around which the Zuckerman saga orbits emotionally, intellectually, and in terms of the history of Nathan Zuckerman and those with whom he is intimately involved. During the 1960s Nathan Zuckerman achieves fame and experiences its vicissitudes; he struggles with his failure to deal with the powerful emotions emerging from his relationships with his parents; and, at the end of the 1960s, after both his parents die within two years of the publication of *Carnovsky,* he deals with the residual influence of the first and most influential hierarchy with which he accommodates, the family structure headed by Victor Zuckerman and his wife Selma.

In Roth's novels his characters find a way to subsume ethnic identity beneath the labile concepts of "America" and "American," if not always comfortably, in a United States itself under redefinition in a diverse, multicultural, post-war society. The America depicted by Roth may be more pluralistic than the America earlier generations of Jewish and other immigrants confronted, but it seems more, not less, hierarchical, conservative, and patriarchal. Roth's 1960s America is the product of overt and covert hierarchical structures derived from a number of cultures which have contributed to a social system in which the "prestige" attached to an individual is accounted for by his or her place in the various hierarchies which make up the national life, and in which individuals are rigidly defined in terms of gender and role assignation. In Roth's America the measure of a person's importance relies on evaluations of status, income and occupation or reputation rather than in an evaluation of an individual's intrinsic or moral worth. Like the male characters of both Mailer and Kesey, Roth's men come to adulthood in a nation which seems at odds with its own philosophical tenets; they enter into accommodations with that nation's economic and social hierarchies —as Americans have since the first European settlement: disappointed that the reality does not seem to match the dream—but convinced that the possibility of close accommodation on the highest levels remains possible, and that, if this is so, a puissant and enthusiastic male can imbue a debilitated order with new life.[205]

Roth's voice is quintessentially American, and identifiably "60s" in its self-questioning, almost neurotic search for liberation and self-definition. Roth's depiction of the American male goes to the heart of issues that lie deep at the core of the divided nature of the American male, torn between cultural and social messages which at once affirm and deny the rugged traditional model of masculinity.

In their focus on the articulation of masculine experience, the three novelists in question have greater stylistic and thematic differences than similarities. Yet, for all their divergent treatments of American life, in their manner of working and in the wider conclusions at which their fictions arrive they show important points of convergence. Each depicts strong individuals set against a society which prides itself on its historical valorisation of individuality, and yet which supports government policies and modern corporate attitudes and instrumentalities which are inimical to the individualist. Paradigms and structures which are hierarchical and patriarchal emerge from the writing of these persons; it is my contention that it is precisely because he has entered into an "honest" "artistic" engagement with his experience of his own culture that each of the three writers in this study demonstrates, wittingly or unwittingly, through his choice of techniques, themes, plots and characterisations, how hierarchies and the pursuit of power have historically occupied American men and male characters in American fiction. Despite appearing to be so different, numerous elements of each of the novels in this study are structured hierarchically, and further show how American society is shaped by hierarchical models which facilitate the satisfaction of a lust for power which is fundamental to patriarchal culture in its American manifestation. Each novelist depicts hierarchies and hierarchical patterns of interaction, status seeking, the forming of hierarchies and dependent relationships, acquisitiveness, aggression either real or covert, and the exercise of power.

This study hopes to make some comments about how selected novels of Norman Mailer, Ken Kesey and Philip Roth illuminate the social context of America in the 1960s, reflect the instrumentalities of ideology and social regulation in operation at that time, and how this concerns the articulation of American male experience during that decade. I intend to discover the extent to which, in the novels on which I will focus, the paradigms of ideal masculinity prominent in American history and society are instrumental in the construction of masculine self-identity, and in what ways hierarchical structures regulating power and access to power, facilitating and controlling

masculine interactions in social, economic and familial spheres of life, will be found in the representations of the lives of American men in these novels. In American novels set during the 1960s, will obsession with power and its concomitant hierarchical structures dominate other modes of discourse even in novels in which they do not at first seem to be the principal concern of either characters or authors? The essentials of what became this work were crystallised by the hypothesis that, even in texts which presented male experience in other terms, male experience in art, as in life, would be ineluctably conditioned by the pursuit of power and prestige through hierarchical structures.

Notes:

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[1] Among the traits of the reified archetype of an "Ideal Man" will be: male gender; well-muscled; possessed of great physical strength and endurance; above average height; self-reliance and reserve; strength of character, including stoicism; determination; competence and self-reliance in physical but not necessarily social tasks; dependability; consistency; self-control; honesty and openness in interpersonal relations, canniness or shrewdness or intelligence; attractiveness of person or character (and probably both); courage, either physical or moral (and probably both); "nobility" —perhaps distant or tarnished; and dedication to highly abstract ideals or goals, among which will probably be versions of concepts related to patriotism, religion, freedom, "the family," and/or to other social units. The "ideal man" is imbued with a kind of magnetism, or power, or prestige, which may be cultivated, but which is essentially, in some evasive way, thought of as innate.

[2] Carl Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (London: Picador, 1978) 61.

[3] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (London: Fontana, 1993) 20.

[4] Campbell 36.

[5] For further discussion of "western" views of masculinity see works quoted in this chapter, and also: Elisabeth Badinter, *Man/Woman: The One is the Other* (London: Collins Harvill, 1989); Gwendolen Bell, and Jacqueline Tyrwhitt. Eds. *Human Identity in the Urban Environment* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972); Joseph Allen Boone, "Me(n) and Feminism." *Gender and Theory: Dialogues on Feminist Criticism*, ed. Linda Kauffman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989) 158-180); Heather Formaini, *Men: The Darker Continent* (London: Heinemann, 1990); Giles Gunn, *The Interpretation of Otherness: Literature, Religion and the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford UP, 1979); Ivan Illich, *Gender* (London: Open Forum-Marion Boyars, 1983); Michael Korda, *Male Chauvinism* (London: Coronet, 1972); Theo Lang, *The Difference Between a Man and a Woman* (London: Joseph, 1971); David Leverenz, *Manhood and the American Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1989); Adam Marr-Jones, *Venus Envy: On the Womb and the Bomb* (London: Chatto, 1990); John H. Moore, *But What About Men: After Women's Lib* (Bath: Ashgrove, 1989); Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, *King Warrior Magician Lover* (San Francisco: Harper, 1990); Jack Nichols, *Men's Liberation: A New Definition of Masculinity* (New York: Penguin, 1975); Peter Swenger, *Phallic Critiques, Masculinity and the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1989); Alan W. Watts, *Nature, Man and Woman* (New York: Vintage, 1970); Jeffrey Weekes, *Sex, Politics and Society* (London: Longman, 1981); Alistair White, *Poles Apart? The Experience of Gender* (London: Dent, 1989).

[6] John Williams, and Deborah Best, *Measuring Sex Stereotypes: A Thirty Nation Study* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982) 16.

[7] Williams and Best 16.

[8] Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinity, Changing Men* (London: Virago, 1990).

[9] Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn, "Feminist Scholarship and the Social Construction of Women," *Making a Difference*, eds. Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn (London: Methuen, 1985) 2.
[10] Greene and Kahn 3.
[11] Greene and Kahn 3.
[12] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia UP, 1985) 1.
[13] Toril Moi, *Sexual-Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London: Routledge,1985) 65.
[14] Robert Alter, "The Revolt Against Tradition: Readers, Writers and Critics," *Partisan Review*, 58.2 (1991): 304.
[15] Greene and Kahn 4-5.
[16] Theodor Adorno, "Aesthetic Theory," *Critical Theory Since 1965,* eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State UP, 1986) 232-3.
[17] Gregory Rochlin, *Man's Aggression: The Defence of the Self* (London: Constable, 1973) 63. See also, for example, Terry Eagleton, "Two Approaches to the Sociology of Literature," *Critical Inquiry* 14 (1988): 469-476 and Fernando Poyatos (ed.) *Literary Anthropology: A New Interdisciplinary Approach to People, Signs and Literature* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1988).
[18] Terry Eagleton, "Two Approaches to the Sociology of Literature," *Critical Inquiry* 14 (1988): 469.
[19] Leo Lowenthal, *Literature and the Image of Man: Studies of the European Drama and Novel, 1600-1900* (Boston: Beacon, 1957) x.
[20] Lowenthal x.
[21] Edwin Ardener, "Some Outstanding Problems in the Analysis of Events," *The Yearbook of Symbolic Anthropology I*, ed. Erik Schwimmer (London: Hurst, 1978) 106.
[22] Ardener 118.
[23] Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso; NLB, 1980) 23.
[24] Williams 23.
[25] Williams 24.
[26] Williams 23.
[27] Tony Tanner, *City of Words: American Fiction 1950-1970* (London: Cape, 1976) 421.
[28] Tanner 421.
[29] Tanner 428.
[30] Ardener 110. See Appendix, Fig. 2.
[31] Marc Fasteau, *The Male Machine* (New York: McGraw, 1974) 2.
[32] Myriam Miedzian, *Boys Will Be Boys: Breaking the Link Between Masculinity and Violence* (New York: Anchor; Doubleday 1991) xx.
[33] Sam Julty, "Men and their Health—A Strained Alliance, " *New Men, New Minds: Breaking Male Traditions*, ed. Franklin Abbott (Freedom: The Crossing P, 1987) 106.
[34] Kohn, Alfie, *No Contest: The Case Against Competition* (Boston: Houghton, 1986) 34.
[35] Kohn 4.
[36] This can also be termed "zero sum" goal attainment.
[37] Kohn 25.
[38] Kohn 25.
[39] Richard Bartlett, *The New Country: A Social History of the American Frontier 1776-1890* (New York: Oxford UP, 1974) 343.
[40] Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent* (New York: Routledge, 1989) 84.
[41] Bercovitch 85.
[42] Malise Ruthven, *The Divine Supermarket, Travels in Search of the Soul of America,* (London: Chatto, 1989) 4.
[43] Warren Motley, *The American Abraham: James Fenimore Cooper and the Frontier Patriarch* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1989) 6.
[44] Norman Grabo, "William Bradford: Of Plymouth Plantation," *Landmarks of American Writing*, ed. Hennig Cohen (Washington Voice of America, 1970) 5.

[45] Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (New York: New American Library, 1980) 26.
[46] Walter Allen, *The Urgent West: An Introduction to the Idea of the United States* (London: Baker, 1969) 28-9.
[47] Daniel G. Hoffman, *Form and Fable in American Fiction* (New York: Oxford UP, 1961) xi.
[48] Allen *West* 26.
[49] Drinnon 100.
[50] Ralp L. Ketcham, "Benjamin Franklin: *Autobiography*," *Landmarks of American Writing*, ed. Hennig Cohen (Washington: Voice of America, 1970) 26.
[51] Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern: World Society 1815-1830* (London: Weidenfeld, 1991) 821.
[52] Joseph A. Boone, "Male Independence and the American Quest Genre: Hidden Sexual Politics in the All-Male Worlds of Melville, Twain and London," *Gender Studies: New Directions in Feminist Criticism*, ed. Judith Spector (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State U Popular P, 1988) 190.
[53] Boone 192. For the historical development of the family in America, and for further details on the patriarchal structure of the American family, and the tensions between age and gender defined places within the family structure see: John Demos, *Past, Present and Personal: The Family and the Life Course in American History* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986).
[54] Russel B. Nye, "Michel-Guillaume St. Jean de Crèvcœur: *Letters From an American Farmer*," *Landmarks of American Writing*, ed. Hennig Cohen (Washington: Voice of America, 1970) 47.
[55] Nye 47.
[56] Richard B. Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown: Wesley UP, 1973) 473.
[57] Slotkin *Regeneration* 473.
[58] Slotkin *Regeneration* 473.
[59] Slotkin *Regeneration* 473.
[60] Hoffman xi.
[61] After the American revolution the patriarchal figure of George Washington dominated American life, and this father archetype stands enshrined, literally and figuratively, at the centre of American life; but if the father—distant if authoritative—occupies the phallogocentric centre then the sons, Cains followed by Abels, move to the margins, to the frontier. In American mythos the son is locked in an eternal struggle with the father.
[62] Hoffman 40-61.
[63] Richard M. Dorson, *American Folklore* (New York: Phoenix, 1959).
[64] Slotkin, *Regeneration* 311.
[65] Frederick Jackson Turner, *Frontier and Selection: Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner*, Introduction Ray Allen Billington (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice, 1961).
[66] Slotkin, *Fatal Environment* 33.
[67] Slotkin, *Fatal Environment* 39.
[68] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: the American West as Symbol* (Cambridge: Harvard UP) 1978.
[69] Motley 5.
[70] *The Oxford University Press Dictionary of Quotations*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985) 506.
[71] See Slotkin, *Regeneration*; Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*; Drinnon; Peter Aichinger, *The American Soldier in Fiction, 1880-1963* (Ames: Iowa State UP, 1975); J. C. Furnace, *The Americans, A Social History of the United States, 1587-1914* (London: Longman, 1969); R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1955).
[72] Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* 3rd. ed., (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984); Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982); David Leverenz, *Manhood and the*

American Renaissance (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1989); Robert K. Martin, *Hero, Captain and Stranger: Male Friendship, Social Critique and the Literary Form in the Sea Novels of Herman Melville* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1986); Robert K. Martin, *The Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1979); Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Idea in America* (New York: Oxford UP, 1964).

[73] Robert G. Athearn, *The Mythic West in Twentieth-Century America* (Lawrence: UP of Kansas, 1986); Richard W. Slatta, *Cowboys of the Americas* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1990); Kent Ladd Steckmesser, *The Western Hero in History and Legend* (Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1965).

[74] Aichinger viii.

[75] Athearn 169.

[76] Martin Green, *The Great American Adventure* (Boston: Beacon, 1984) 1.

[77] Green 4.

[78] Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience* (New York: Vintage, 1965) 328.

[79] Boorstin 328.

[80] Slotkin *Regeneration* 21.

[81] Joe L. Dubbert, *A Man's Place: Masculinity in Transition* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1979) 35.

[82] Dubbert 35.

[83] Slotkin *Regeneration* 21.

[84] Slotkin *Fatal Environment* 19.

[85] Slotkin *Fatal Environment* 19.

[86] Motley 29.

[87] Dubbert 31.

[88] Martin *Hero, Captain and Stranger* 4.

[89] Badinter 12

[90] A few titles chosen at random indicates the mood of such tomes: George W. Burnap's *Lectures to Young Men* was published in Baltimore in 1848; J. W. Casey's *Young Man's Guide to Greatness* a decade later; a collection of the ideas on masculinity of Thomas Hughes, the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays, True Manliness*, was popular after its Boston publication in 1880; J. M. Buckley's *Oats or Wild Oats: Common Sense for Young Men*, appeared in 1885; and Randolph Bourne's *Youth and Life* (1913) was an influential paean to the positive influence of heroes and role models. What is sometimes known as "muscular Christianity" colours these books; Tract and Temperance Societies were important creators and distributors of such material. See also Isabel Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982).

[91] Slotkin *Regeneration* 307.

[92] Athearn 169.

[93] Slatta 214-215.

[94] Hoffman 74-5.

[95] Michael J. Fischer, "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory," *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography Writing and Culture*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: U of California P, 1986) 197.

[96] Martin E. Marty, "The Changing Role of Religion in American Society," *The National Purpose Reconsidered*, ed. Dona Baron (New York: Columbia UP, 1978) 29.

[97] Motley 16.

[98] W. R. Brock, *The Character of American History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1965) 97.

[99] Brock 13.

[100] James D. Hart, *The Concise Oxford Companion to American Literature* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986) 90.

[101] Hoffman xi.

[102] Hoffman 353.

[103] Hoffman 42.
[104] Stewart R. Clegg, *Frameworks of Powe* (London: Sage, 1989) xv.
[105] Kenneth E. Boulding, *Three Faces of P wer* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1989) 15.
[106] Boulding 15.
[107] R. N. Adams, "Power in Human Societies: A Synthesis," *The Anthropology of Power*, eds. R. D. Fogelson and R. N. Adams (New York: Academic P, 1977) 388.
[108] Roger M. Keesing, *Cultural Anthropol gy* (New York: Holt, 1981) 299.
[109] John K. Roth, *American Dreams: Med tations of Life in the United States* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1976) 4.
[110] John K. Roth 11-12.
[111] John H. Moore Burt, *What About Men: After Women's Lib* (Bath: Ashgrove, 1989) 35.
[112] Theodosius Dobzhansky, "Evolution and Man's Self-Image," *The Quest for Man*, eds. Vanne Goodall et. al. (London: Phaidon, 1975) 215.
[113] Greene and Kahn 8.
[114] Greene and Kahn 8.
[115] Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Mac ine* (London: Hutchinson, 1967) 45.
[116] Koestler 47.
[117] Koestler 47.
[118] Boulding 21.
[119] Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: A Essay on the Caste System*, trans. Mark Sainsbury (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1970) 2.
[120] Jack Nichols, *Men's Liberation: A Ne Definition of Masculinity* (New York: Penguin, 1975) 164.
[121] Nichols 169-70.
[122] See Fig. 1.
[123] See Fig. 1.
[124] D. S. Pugh, *Writers on Organizations*, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971) 22.
[125] Boulding 44.
[126] Tanner 421.
[127] See Figure 1, Appendix. I derive this focus in part from Philip Rieff's distinction between chronological development of types in western society. Rieff saw these as being: political man; religious man; economic man; and psychological man. Although ideological emphases change, these areas still, I think, provide a useful starting point for division of the hierarchies of human societies. See Philip Rieff, *Selected Writings* ed. Jonathan B. Imber (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990).
[128] Joesph Dunner, ed. *Handbook of World History* (London: Owen, 1967) 130.
[129] Hoffman 42.
[130] Moi 65.
[131] I take some liberties with phrase "The 60s." While acknowledging a division based purely on the calendar (i.e the 1960s is the ten-year period 1961-1970, I join many in thinking of the 1960s as defined by events. In American terms "The 60s" (as opposed to the 1960s) begin on February 2, 1960, when a sit-in at a diner in Greensboro, North Carolina, sparks "race riots" and heralds in the human rights movement. They might be said to end with Altamont in 1969 or, as late as April 1975 and the Fall of Saigon, which ended the Vietnamese-American War.
[132] Paul Lyons, "Another Sixties: The New Right," *Nobody Gets Off the Bus: the Vietnam Generation Big Book*, 5.1-4 (1994): 2.
[133] Hoffman xi.
[134] Vermont Royster, "A Monstrous Thought," *A Pride of Prejudices* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 1984) 11.
[135] Demos 13.
[136] See for example Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd* (1960) and Marshall McLuhan's *The Gutenburg Galaxy* (1962).
[137] Ray Grinker and John Spiegel, *Men Under Stress* (Philadelphia: Blakiston, 1945); Vance Packard, *The Status Seekers* (New York: D. McKay, 1957); George Leonard, "The American

Male: Why Is He Afraid to be Different?' *Look*, 23 (1954) 95-98.
[138] Dubbert 243.
[139] Dubbert 242.
[140] Dubbert 243.
[141] Dubbert 243.
[142] Dubbert 242.
[143] Dubbert 231.
[144] Grinker and Spiegel 452-9.
[145] David van Leer, "Society and Ident ty," *Columbia Literary History of the United States*, ed. Emory Elliott (New York: Columbia UP, 1991) 487.
[146] Van Leer 487.
[147] For a detailed observation of this "modern" American type in fiction, see Graham Greene, *The Quiet American* (London: Heinemann, 1955).
[148] Nowhere better exemplified nor examined than in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, in part an allegorical representation of the psychology of ideology-inspired hysteria.
[149] Daniel Bell, "The Cultural Wars," *Quadrant* July-August 1992: 11.
[150] See, for example, the articles in Ken Kesey, *Garage Sale* (New York: Viking, 1970) or Gitlin, Todd. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987).
[151] Joan Morrison and Robert K. Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State* (New York: Times Books, 1987) 282.
[152] See Gitlin and Morrison and Morrison
[153] Pete Townshend of rock-group The Who wrote: "Meet the new boss—same as the old boss." ("Won't Get Fooled Again.")
[154] Perhaps along with Ginsberg's "How "; novels by Kerouac; Leary's LSD philosophising; Robert M. Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*; the Tibetan Book of the Dead; *The Medium is the Message* by Marshall McLuhan; Kahlil Gibrahn's poetry; Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poetry; De Quincy's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*; *Games People Play* by Dr Eric Berne; Heller's *Catch-22*; or, after 1969, Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*.
[155] Ruthven 13-14.
[156] Ruthven 14.
[157] Drinnon 429.
[158] Chomsky, Noam. *Rethinking Camelot: JFK, the Vietnam War and U.S. Political Culture* (London: Verso, 1993) 36.
[159] Chomsky 36.
[160] *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, scr. Sidney Buchman, dir. Frank Capra, with James Stewart, Jean Arthur, Columbia, 1936.
[161] Robert Duncan, *The Noise: Notes from a Rock 'n' Roll Era.* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1984) 212.
[162] Duncan 212-3.
[163] Andrew J. Edelstein, *The Pop Sixties* (New York: World Almanac, 1985) 95.
[164] For example, John F. Kennedy in *PT 109*, dir. Leslie H. Martinson, with Cliff Robertson, Robert Blake, Robert Culp, Warner Brothers, 1963.
[165] Richard Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible: Class, Race and Ethnicity in the United States Since 1938.* (New York: Viking, 1980) 96.
[166] Hall, quoted in Tanner, probably 428
[167] Benjamin Whorf's term
[168] Lyons 1.
[169] Lyons 1.
[170] Van Leer 484.
[171] Van Leer 484.
[172] Tanner 295.
[173] Tanner 295.
[174] *The Presidential Papers* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1963); *Cannibals and Christians* (

London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1966) *The Armies of the Night* (New York: New American Library, 1968); *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* (1968).

[175] Capote's *The Grass Harp* (1951) and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1958) might be said to stand in similar relation to the 1950s, however, as the novels I have chosen to represent American masculinity in the 1960s.

[176] Matthew Grace, "Norman Mailer at the End of the Decade," *etudes anglaisés* 24 (1971): 51.

[177] Norman Mailer, "Mr. Mailer Interviews Himself," *The New York Times*, 17 Sept. 1967: 4.

[178] Mailer, "Mr. Mailer Interviews Himself" 40.

[179] Kohn 4.

[180] Kohn 3.

[181] Kohn 3.

[182] Martin Green, in Chapter 13 of *The Great American Adventure*, discusses *Why Are We In Vietnam?* and Mailer's "parodic...yet...affirmative" response to the adventure novel, comparing it with *Henderson the Rain King*. (Green 199.)

[183] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (New York: Norton, 1967) 108.

[184] Walter Allen, *Tradition and Dream: The English and American Novel from the Twenties to Our Time* (London: Phoenix, 1964) xv.

[185] Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (New York: Bantam, 1968) 3.

[186] Warren Hinckle, "A Social History of the Hippies," *The American Experience: A Radical Reader*, eds. Harold Jaffe and John Tytell (New York: Harper, 1970) 267.

[187] M. Gilbert Porter, *The Art of Grit: Ken Kesey's Fiction* (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1982) 80.

[188] Porter 80.

[189] Ken Kesey, *Sometimes a Great Notion* (New York: Viking, 1964) 406.

[190] However, in keeping with my focus on the traditional nature of the literary techniques and themes in Kesey, see Michael André Bernstein, " 'These Children that Come at You with Knives': *Ressentiment*, Mass Culture, and the Saturnalia," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991): 368.

[191] Or the strain in American conservative thought which is at once anti-communist and suspicious of the U.S. government. Regionalist and anti-corporate attitudes have been as prevalent in American society as the strong strain of individualism on which I tend more to focus.

[192] Robert Forrey, "Ken Kesey's Psychopathic Savior: A Rejoinder," *Modern Fiction Studies* 21 (1975): 223.

[193] Philip Roth, *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* (New York: Penguin. 1988) 164.

[194] Roth, *Facts*, 164.

[195] Roth, *Facts*, 164.

[196] Joseph Epstein, "What Does Philip Roth Want?" *Commentary* 77.1 (1984): 65.

[197] For example, Nathan Zuckerman, or another character of that name, is first introduced by Roth as a creation of the "author" Peter Tarnopol in the novel *My Life as a Man* (1974). This Zuckerman has a sister named Sonia, and elements of his personal history preclude conflation of this and the later identity; Roth also has written a story about a boy named Philip Roth and his Hebrew teacher, a certain Dr. Kafka, (in *Reading Myself and Others*, New York: Farrar, 1975.)

[198] Murray Baumgarten and Barbara Gottfried, *Understanding Philip Roth* (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1990) 84-5.

[199] Philip Roth, "Reading Myself," *Partisan Review* 40 (1973): 405.

[200] Murray Baumgarten and Barbara Gottfried, *Understanding Philip Roth* (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1990) 84.

[201] Stanley Cooperman, "Philip Roth: 'Old Jacob's Eye' With a Squint," *Twentieth Century Literature* 19 (1973): 208.

[202] Ruth Wisse, "Philip Roth Then and Now," *Commentary*, 72:3 (1981): 60.

[203] R. Z. Sheppard and Joelle Attinger, "Goodbye, Nathan Zuckerman," *Time*, 7 Nov. 1983: 89.

[204] Sheppard and Attinger 88.

[205] See, for further discussion, Mortimer Adler and William Gorman, *The American Testament*

(New York: Praeger, 1975); Quentin Anc erson, *Making Americans: An Essay on Individualism and Money* (New York: Harcourt, 1992.)

Part One: "To Scale the High Pyramides": Norman Mailer's *An American Dream* and *Why Are We In Vietnam?*

What glory is there in a common good,
That hangs for every peasant to achieve?
That like I best that flies beyond my reach.
Set me to scale the high pyramides.
Christopher Marlowe, Massacre at Paris.

Chapter One: "The Unstated Essence of Hip": Norman Mailer and the Articulation of Male Experience.

"One is Hip or one is Square...one is a rebel or one conforms, one is a frontiersman in The Wild West of American night life, or else a Square cell, trapped in the totalitarian issues of American society, doomed willy-nilly to conform if one is to succeed."
Norman Mailer, "The White Negro."

Norman Kingsley (Nachum Malech) Mailer gave an indication of his later audacity, love of controversy, and desire to contextualise himself in a Western historical and philosophical as opposed to a Jewish cultural and religious context when he devoted part of his bar mitzvah speech to Spinoza,[1] and announced to the gathering that he hoped to emulate " 'great Jews like Moses Maimonides and Karl Marx.' "[2]

Born in Long Branch, New Jersey, on January 31, 1923, Mailer enrolled to study aeronautical engineering at Harvard in 1939. He became fascinated with literary architechtonics and authors like Theodore Dreiser, Thomas Wolfe, James T. Farrell, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, William Faulkner, John Dos Passos, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, and decided that he would become a writer. Mailer studied under the poet Robert Hillyer and experimented with different styles and forms before and after his graduation from university in June 1943 and his subsequent participation in his country's war with German Europe, Italy and Japan.[3]

At Harvard, while listening to a speech by Archibald MacLeish, Mailer wrote his first (and shortest) short story, in which the theme of war, and the casual approach to violence, prefigure with unsettling brevity his later work:

> We were going through the barbed-wire when a machine-gun started. I kept walking until I saw my head lying on the ground.
>
> "My God, I'm dead," my head said.
>
> And my body fell over.[4]

Mailer approached his new vocation by initiating a search for a "writer-persona," and he adopted an unconvincing, swaggering, pugnacious, and occasionally boozy demeanour in what he imagined was imitation of Hemingway. Mailer was slight and skinny, and, comments a friend of the time, George Goethals, " 'Norman...could not hold his liquor.' "[5] Although comparisons between Mailer and Hemingway are often prompted by the centrality of "macho" behaviour in both the lives and the works of the two novelists, in a 1971 article Donald L. Kaufmann dissects the difference between Mailer and Hemingway and finds little similarity, noting that "[u]nlike Papa's assimilation of autobiography, Mailer makes do with bits and pieces of his life revised to fit his fiction."[6] While this critic finds in Hemingway a consistency of style and theme, and protagonists around whom "[a] code emerges with an inner order,"[7] he finds that Mailer's "writing features a series of non-heroes without a code."[8] The "unity, coherence, and simplicity,"[9] of Hemingway is contrasted with the tendency of Mailer to allow "the outside chaos [to] shape his fictive world."[10] Kaufmann's analysis decides that "[t]he times may have gone too much out of joint to include Hemingway and Mailer in the same slice of literary history after all their shadow boxing with posterity ends."[11]

During his war service Mailer wrote a series of letters to his first wife, Bea Silverman Mailer, which provided the basis for *The Naked and the Dead*, which was completed in August 1947, and published in May of the following year. Assisted by an award-winning advertising campaign engineered by Rinehart's Helen Murphy and comparisons which linked it with Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and Dos Passos' *Three Soldiers*, Mailer's novel was critically acclaimed, and remained Number One on the New York Times' best-seller list for eleven weeks. A central element in this work is still evident in Mailer, despite many later stylistic and thematic changes.[12] This I would characterise as "masculinist," and in Mailer's novels of the 1960s military metaphors and the worship of decisive, violent, narcissistic men of "strength" and "courage" colour the characterisation of Stephen Richards Rojack, the protagonist of *An American Dream*, and the "jock talk," Texan anti-semitism, and good-old-boy firearm fixations of *Why Are We In Vietnam?* The pugnacious undertones of Mailer's depiction of men remains in the 1960s; although *Why Are We In Vietnam?* is a trenchant critique of American society, Mailer neither repudiates violence, aggression, and self assertion, nor hierarchical "games" of mutually exclusive status attainment along the American model.

The Naked and the Dead is a detailed examination of masculine hierarchical accommodation. Set during a Second World War campaign on the fictional island of Anopopei, the novel concerns a set of characters differentially placed in the "natural hierarchical structure in the military chain of command."[13] Leading the American forces invading the island is Major General Cummings, an intellectual, cultivated, "crypto-fascist,"[14] and hierarchical theorist. Cummings believes that " 'to make an army work you have to have every man in it fitted into a fear-ladder...The army functions best when you're frightened of the man above you, and contemptuous of your subordinates.' "[15] Cummings revels in leadership and the exercise of authority; he shares the belief of George S. Patton that a military confrontation between Russia and America is inevitable, and he would like to turn America into an overtly structured, militaristic society to prepare for this end. "Cummings," Jean Radford comments,

> believes that beyond the desire to survive and the sexual urge, instincts which men share with other animals, man's primary drive (*qua* man) is toward the achievement of power over other men and the natural world...if man's essential nature is to struggle for power, then his relation with other men is governed by the power principle and other considerations...are betrayals of human nature.[16]

The hierarchical organisational unit on which the novel focuses is the platoon led by the sadistic Sergeant Croft, who is as obsessed by power as the General, and who exercises an authority as absolute, albeit over a smaller number of men. The novel's empathetic centre is Lieutenant Hearn, a thoughtful college-graduate, who is fascinated by Cummings and, eventually, killed after he places his trust in Croft. Mailer's "flashback" technique evokes the confusion of war, and his interior monologues and "Dos Passos-like diagnostic biographical portraits"[17] increase the reader's sympathy for the crusty soldiers. Mailer also intimates a connection between the life of the individual and the state of the larger organisations which the individual can represent: the army, the nation, or even the species. The homo-eroticism of the male relationships, and the admiring presentation of misogyny and the urge to sexual violence and phallocentric domination is also notable. A compact example of Mailer's prime concerns and his literary technique—both at this time and later—is to be found in the following excerpt:

> Croft slaps her across the face...He strikes her so heavily that she falls.

> That's one thing you ain't best in, she screams.
> Croft stands there trembling...He feels nothing and then anger and shame and then nothing again. At this moment his initial love, his initial need of her is full-throated again. (Jus' an ole fuggin machine.).. That's right, honey, I understand you. They roll together in bed...You're all fuggin whores, he thinks.
> His ancestors pushed and labored and strained, drove their oxen, sweated their women, and moved a thousand miles.
> He pushed and labored inside himself and smoldered with an endless hatred.
> (You're all a bunch of fuggin whores)
> (You're all a bunch of dogs)
> (You're all deer to track)
> I HATE EVERYTHING WHICH IS NOT IN MYSELF.[18]

Mailer spent the years which followed the success of *The Naked and the Dead* in search of a public face and a national place. He spent time in Paris and, although he had not read Sartre, embraced existentialism. He would later claim that *Barbary Shore* (1955) was the "first of the existentialist novels in America."[19] Mailer also became an enthusiastic socialist, under the tutelage of a Polish-born Marxist, Jean Malaquais. In 1949 Mailer made a speech at a conference for world peace in New York sponsored by the National Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions which Irving Howe, later the founder of *Dissent* magazine, remembers deciding was covered with "the intellectual fingerprint of...Jean Malaquais."[20] Mailer-versions of both existentialist and Marxist philosophies were important influences in his later fictional creation of men and their place and behaviour in social arrangements.

Mailer's next works were *Barbary Shore* and *The Deer Park*, novels which appeared in 1951 and 1955 respectively, and two works of non-fiction, *Advertisements for Myself* (1959) and *The Presidential Papers* (1963). In *Barbary Shore* the nature of the relationships between the characters and a rather clumsy, morality-play atmosphere allow certain associations to be made in response to what Richard Poirier calls Mailer's "confused but volatile feelings about the relationship between the dialectics of sex and the dialectics of politics."[21] In the eventual confrontation between the capitalist lackey Hollingsworth and the communist functionary McLeod, Mailer's point becomes clear: both are dehumanised "elements" in a mindless, degraded and degrading world drifting toward "the Barbary shore" of social

chaos, from which fate only the intensity of a passionate and aware commitment (to revolutionary socialism) can offer rescue.

While working on the novel Mailer "found his Marxist intellectual convictions continually distracted by compulsive preoccupations with 'murder, suicide, orgy, psychosis.' 'I always felt as if I were not writing the book myself,' "[22] he claimed. Thus this novel prefaces Mailer's later concern with these themes. There has also been the suggestion that *Barbary Shore* serves as a gloss to the thematic intentions of later works, especially *An American Dream*.[23] Even in these earliest novels, Mailer is riveted by the extent to which an individual's actions are conditioned by his or her "place" in a system, by the obligations which arise from acceptance of an ideology, and by the demands inherent in either or both of these activities. No one can avoid being a part of some system, some greater whole, and being subject to the forces of that system. No one can avoid hierarchical accommodations, and all they entail. In *Barbary Shore*, Lovett has a Marx-phrased realisation that: "There was a sentence for it...'Men enter into social and economic relations independent of their wills,' and did it not mean more than all the drums of the medicine men?"[24] Mailer is fascinated by hierarchies and by hierarchical accommodations; in a sense this becomes one more way of observing that he is entranced by the warps and wefts which constitute the "power relationships" in which all "western" persons, and possibly all humanity, are enmeshed, and by which their lives and their personalities are structured.

Despite, or because of, the novel's use of first person narration and metaphysical atmospherics, *Barbary Shore* was a failure both commercially and critically. After a "spiritual trial: years dominated by sensuality, drugs, confusion, disturbing insights into his own violence, and a recurring, morbid depression that had settled on him with the abject failure of [*Barbary Shore*]"[25] the novelist began to form the synthesis of borrowed philosophical and intuitive sociological perceptions which resulted in his idiosyncratic theories of humanity, individual existence, and social order. Mailer had also by this time developed his insights into the emotional greed and egocentricity of America—'the narcissist he finds embedded in the psyche of most Americans, engaged by a ceaseless and passionate inner dialogue between parts of himself."[26]

In *The Deer Park* the presentation of sex and sexuality is metaphorically evocative and used as a barometer of contemporary attitudes. In all the relationships in the novel love and sex are reduced to a "power struggle." Women bait men, and men conquer women; they lead each other on in

order to satisfy their needs; their gambits are the "chips" and "cards" with which these pathetic gamblers wage their contests. The novel is keenly aware of the nuances of social, sexual, economic and creative "rankings," or prestige structures: "Why should a second-rate man spend so much time on a fifth-rate woman?" Eitel wonders of his relationship with Elena. "It was not logical. Second-rate men sought out second-rate women; the summits of society were inhabited by such people, and why had he deserted his caste?"[27]

During the three years it took to write *The Deer Park* Mailer found his way past the uncertainty of tone of *Barbary Shore* to the criss-crossing of modes of confidentiality and didacticism which characterise his later style. Allowing his preoccupations to guide him, Mailer also found "an entrance into the mysteries of murder, suicide, incest, orgy, orgasm, and Time,"[28] which would become the familiar themes and metaphors of the work of the 1960s, and which remain, in essence, his enduring literary hypnotics.[29]

In the late 1950s Mailer, a shareholder and co-founder of *The Village Voice*, began a provocative column in its pages. In it he constructed the myth of Norman Mailer the 'psychic outlaw," and, as Carl Rollyson comments, "found his way to a set of terms, the Hip and the Square, that encompassed his either/or, Manichaean view of the world."[30] In this, and in his other non-fiction of the late 1950s, the most important of which was collected in *Advertisements for Myself* (1959), Mailer engages in a dialectical process which shows the evolution of his thinking about the nature of man and his place in this cosmic order. Mailer would eventually achieve the joint tasks of reaching for intellectual and creative credibility via a dazzling process of re-invention, building self-confidence through self-promotion and self-assertion. "Mailer lost his voice by the discovery after three novels that he didn't have one," writes Richard Poirier. Thereafter "[h]is writing began to take its form from the very instability of his voice...it took its form from a species of debate or dialogue or 'war' among the possible or competing voices that are alive within him."[31]

Displacing his personal frustrations and disappointments onto national, political, and metaphysical concerns, Mailer created a closed "reality" in which a kind of karmic law operates, and in which every individual's fate is not in the hands of tasteless, faceless publishers, editors, and critics, and an ungrateful and ignorant public, but can be seized and manipulated by any individual with the confidence, power, moral courage and *virtu* to do so. Ideas and impulses, as well as people—colleagues, politicians, journalists, women, and other writers—all become symbols of an enemy who serves as

catalyst in a "Manichaean epic vision of American possibilities."[32] Love and hate, envy and inspiration, despair and self-confidence: any oppositions which can be paired are paired in Mailer's dialectic of dichotomy. The writer merges elements derived from Marx, Freud, Wilhelm Reich, and fashionable metaphysical, psychological and sociological concepts within a system of homologies and oppositions which express his ideas of masculinity, American-ness, and identity. Mailer had become entranced by the works of Robert Lindner, author of books like *Rebel Without a Cause—The Hypnoanalysis of a Criminal Psychopath*. Lindner characterised the psychopath as an individual who " 'cannot wait upon the development of prestige in society: his egoistic ambitions lead him to leap into headlines by daring performances.' "[33] This sentence goes to the heart of hierarchical function and form and shows Mailer's thematic emphasis on the close hierarchical accommodation open to the "daring," as it moves from "prestige" to "egoistic" to "leap" to "lead." "What characterizes almost every psychopath and part-psychopath is that they are trying to create a new nervous system for themselves,"[34] enthuses Mailer in the 1966 essay "The Metaphysics of the Belly," but he never seems to question the extraordinary suggestion that one can reorganise one's biological, electro-chemical structures by an act of will or experience; indeed, this is precisely what both Stephen Rojack in *An American Dream* and D.J. Jethroe in *Why Are We In Vietnam?* claim to achieve. Mailer's tacit condoning of violence in the interest of self-exploration and self-expression also remains problematic.

The most important single piece produced by the author in this period, and one which serves as an example of Mailer's style and his emerging philosophy, is "The White Negro." In common with many writers of the post-war period, Mailer was concerned with the difference between the states of individuals and societies after as compared with before the war. His subject in "The White Negro" is the post-war man he would elsewhere portray as "a modern soul marooned in constipation, emptiness, boredom and a flat dull terror of death,"[35] trapped in "a deadened existence, afraid precisely of violence, cannibalism, loneliness, insanity, libidinousness, hell, perversion, and mess, because these are the states which must in some way be passed through, digested, transcended, if one is to make one's way back to life."[36] In "The White Negro" Mailer posits a psycho-sexual and cultural malaise which haunts "twentieth-century man...from adolescence to premature senescence,"[37] and which has, as its only "life-giving answer,"[38] the acceptance of "the terms of death"[39] and the decision "to live with death

as immediate danger, to divorce oneself from society, to exist without roots, to set out on that uncharted journey with the rebellious imperatives of the self."[40] The model of how to live this way is provided by "the hipster,"[41] who Mailer describes as the product of a "wedding of the white and the black,"[42] in which "it was the Negro who brought the cultural dowry,"[43] and in which nuptials "marijuana was the wedding ring."[44] The American black, according to Mailer, has a special kind of consciousness enlivened by the fact that he or she "must live with danger from his first day...paranoia is as vital to survival as blood."[45] One must, he says, "encourage the psychopath in oneself...explore that domain of experience where security is boredom and therefore sickness.'[46] The result of following this prescription would be "a new breed of...urban adventurers...looking for action with a black man's code to fit their facts. The hipster," Mailer trumpets, "had absorbed the existentialist synapses of the Negro, and for practical purposes could be considered a white Negro."[47] Unhappily vague, as he often is about such details, Mailer does not suggest how this electro-biochemical alchemy has been effected. "The unstated essence of Hip," he nonetheless exults, with a similar lack of precision:

> its psychopathic brilliance, quivers with the knowledge that new kinds of victories increase one's power for new kinds of perception; and defeats, the wrong kind of defeats, attack the body and imprison one's energy until one is jailed in the prison air of other people's habits, other people's defeats, boredom, quiet desperation, and muted icy self-destroying rage.[48]

Mailer goes on to score a firm dividing line down society, condemning those who cannot achieve his breakthrough: "One is Hip or one is Square...one is a rebel or one conforms, one is a frontiersman in The Wild West of American night life, or else a Square cell, trapped in the totalitarian issues of American society, doomed willy-nilly to conform if one is to succeed."[49]

Much of "The White Negro' is flawed both as an argument and as ethnography. Its more fanciful assertions perpetuate racist stereotypes, as the "assimilated" black members of a conformist, college-educated middle-class are forgotten, or as Mailer implies that all American blacks are vital, intense, creative and intuitive, marijuana-smoking, jive-talking, "cool," and emotionally charged just because they are black. The main thrust of the argument rests on a series of non sequiturs which the force of Mailer's prose might hold in place on a first reading, but not subsequently, seductive as

their energy is. Further, the specific examples Mailer chooses all derive from an identifiably American context. While his themes are global, his settings are national, with the implicit identification of the experience of all "Western" humanity with American experience. This Americo-centric view seems to escape the author and although Mailer gallantly allows his friend Jean Malaquais this objection in a riposte immediately after "The White Negro" in *Advertisements for Myself*, his application of American phenomena to universal human experience remains questionable. There has always been a cultural solipsism about Mailer's smug re-discovery of what are often old ideas, and his assumptions about the universalising and naturalising of American norms and the applicability of American experience to other persons, places and cultures. "The White Negro" is a notable example of a failure which Robert Solotaroff characterises as Mailer's "attempt to ground the intuitive in the factual, the mystical in the phenomenal, the psychic in the biological and the apocalyptic in the historical."[50] Richard Poirier has also commented on Mailer's capacity "to confuse problems of literary technique with personal problems of life."[51] For the former critic "[p]erhaps the most remarkable stance in 'The White Negro' "[52] lies in Mailer's apparently seriously-held belief "that the attempt 'to divorce oneself from society' can actually be achieved."[53]

The novelist James Baldwin brings his critical faculties to bear on "The White Negro" in the essay "The Black Boy Looks at the White Boy," first printed in *Esquire* in May 1961, and included in *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son* in the same year. Baldwin's response to what he perceives as an "antique...vision of the blacks,"[54] in "The White Negro" is charged by the awareness that Mailer's argument contains a central flaw: no matter how alienated a white individual, even a whole generation, might be from "mainstream" American life, the embedded racist ideology and systemic racial divisions in American society prohibit any white from genuinely understanding what it is to participate in the African-American experience. Baldwin adopts the mild pose of a disappointed rather than angry friend and fellow-artist, effectively undermining Mailer's posturing regarding spiritual affinities with, as Baldwin phrases it, "the periphery he so helplessly maligns in The White Negro."[55] Baldwin recalls reading "The White Negro" and being perplexed by the difference between the sparse prose of a novelist he admits he has admired, a writer who could portray the "sense of the danger and complexity of human relationships,"[56] and what he describes as the "downright impenetrable"[57] style of an offering which is

nothing but an "imitation of "Kerouac, and all the other Suzuki rhythm boys."[58]

For Baldwin Mailer's metaphysic not only represents a misunderstanding of what it is to be black in America, but posits a vision of life that few African Americans could recognise. It is "a total rejection of life...an infantile vision of love" powered by nothing more than a "mystique [which] could only be extended by violence."[59] Baldwin focuses on two of "The White Negro"'s themes, both of which feature prominently in Mailer's depiction of Stephen Rojack's inner life in *An American Dream*. Baldwin accuses Mailer of "malign[ing] the sorely menaced sexuality of Negroes in order to justify the white man's own sexual panic,"[60] before summarising the naivety of the views of the other writer as a failure to come to terms with the psychic as well as economic plight of the marginalised in America. He regales his colleague with his own view that "to become a Negro man...one had to make oneself up as one went along. This had to be done on the not-at-all metaphorical grounds of the world's determination to destroy you."[61] Baldwin's criticism of "The White Negro" might be summarised by the comment a musician friend once made apropos Mailer which he relates in "The Black Boy Looks at the White Boy": " 'Man...the only trouble with that cat is that he's white' "[62]

Neither for the first time, nor the last, a reader of Mailer will be infuriated by the solipsistic assumption that wishing something to be so can make it so. Mailer's enthusiasm might be contagious, but Baldwin probably articulates many reservations about Mailer's work when he interpolates the telling opinion that: "No one is more dangerous than he who imagines himself pure in heart: for his purity, by definition, is unassailable."[63]

Despite such criticisms "The White Negro" nonetheless continued to be a philosophical touchstone for Mailer, serving as a kind of manifesto for much of his later work. In Mailer's cosmic conception every act, every relationship, virtually every thought and action, is tied into the private metaphoric schema he first enunciates in this essay.[64] Complex social and economic realities are simplified in order to "solve" the inconsistencies of human life and systems: the exercise of daring and ability is always rewarded with success; cowardice invites only defeat; and judgement follows every act and every thought. In describing the need for those with the requisite qualities to break the shackles of a confining and moribund order, Mailer evokes the Puritan-Frontier Hero and the metaphors of frontier a number of times to illustrate his ideas. The call for "masculine" traits and the invocation of what are claimed as "eternal" moral values or verities as part

of an effort to conquer "new territories" of the psyche, or of the social order, allies Mailer with those who applied such thinking to the territorial expansion of America in the nineteenth century.

It is germane at this point to rehearse the essential features of what is often referred to as Mailer's Manichaeanism. At the centre of Mailer's universe is theomachy, the scarcely original notion that there is a universal, eternal "conflict" between "gods," equal forces of "Good" and "Evil." In linking the two novels *An American Dream* and *Why Are We In Vietnam?* Richard D. Finholt notes that "Mailer seems to have built a complete cosmology around his resurrection of the notion that man acts as the agent of external, eternal, and omnipotent cosmic forces. They are not 'Satan and the Lord' exactly, this identification being more metaphorical than anything else."[65] The operation of this system depends on Mailer's metaphoric links between the terms he employs. Mailer assigns words and concepts to one side or the other of a structure of oppositions, with "God" and the "Devil," or positive and negative, as the primary terms. For Mailer this struggle has reflexes and expressions on all levels of physical, spiritual, and psychic existence. In various ways the characters, events, and actions in Mailer's novels, even the thoughts of his protagonists, dance in symbolic tension between the two polarities. Mailer's universe is driven by a dynamic of movement, energy, and duality. Combining Jewish mysticism and an ingrained streak of American Calvinism with his own version of existentialism, Mailer develops a system of polarities and their synonyms in metaphoric association which link poor health with failure, with loss of potency and nerve, with darkness, negativity, "evil" and the Devil, on one side. Opposed to this "'pole" is an order which links good health with the successful, with the sexually active, with the brave, with light, with positivity with "good," with God, on the other. Jean Radford notes how throughout Mailer's work "certain ideas persist—like that of the dual nature of man as 'beast' and 'seer'—through the patterns of imagery...Mailer has always used sexual relations in a highly stylized, rather Lawrentian way, to symbolize his view of *social* relations"[66] In Mailer's writing "[t]he poles of good and evil, God and the Devil are interlinked with a series of oppositions: the rational and the instinctive, the intellectual and the mystical, the conscious and the unconscious."[67]

A glib rhetoric, however, colours the associations of "The White Negro" and Mailer's subsequent fictional excursions into his system. Interviews with Norman Mailer have often provided a source of amusement as he has been forced to be both specific and brief about subjects he can artistically

obscure in his fiction or disguise with flights of rhetoric in his non-fiction. In *Advertisements for Myself* Mailer includes an interview with Richard G. Stern which helps articulate what J. Michael Lennon calls "a pronounced Pauline-Calvinistic sense of evil which is associated both with the imperfection of men and God and the actions of a powerful, wily Devil."[68] To a question about God, Mailer replied:

> "I think that the particular God we can conceive of is a god whose relationship to the universe we cannot divine...But almost certainly, He is not all-powerful; He exists as a warring element in a divided universe, and we are a part of—perhaps the most important part—of His great expression, His enormous destiny; perhaps He is trying to impose upon the universe His conception of being against other conceptions of being very much opposed to His."[69]

Mailer's is a world suffering from axiological decay, a world in which strange people behave without recourse to, or in open defiance of, the normative values which are said to give life meaning and society stability in a seedy ambience created by alcohol, drugs, encounter sex, and dispirited interpersonal relationships. Ascribing decay to a cosmic conspiracy ennobles vice, militates against the argument for choice and responsibility in moral issues, and reinforces a sense of loss of individual control, coherence and self-assertion. In opposition, in Mailer's cosmos, the "forces" of "evil" are countervailed principally by the "good" of "courage": whatever the nature of the act dared, the act of overcoming personal trepidation reduces negativity, bolsters confidence and puissance, and cures everything from hangovers to cancer. If the law and its agents are corrupt, and helpless before an evil determined to degrade and humiliate all that is "decent" and "innocent" and "pure," a rousing bout of "good" sex or a display of confrontational "bravery" can dispel the negative energies, and put individual and society back on course.

Through appropriation, adaptation and misprisioning, Mailer develops a vocabulary of words, concepts and metaphors that enables him to pursue his beliefs about "power" in the areas of the social, the sexual, the economic and the political, and to communicate and refine a paradigm of united physical and the metaphysical universes. Mailer's theomachy posits "inverted" isomorphic hierarchical structures whose conflict is the centre of Mailer's intellectual, symbolic and narrative constructions.[70] Mailer's approach to his intellectual mentors often does considerable damage to their original concepts as he habitually discards elements of their thought not useful to his

purposes, or too hard for him quickly to internalise. Mailer's uses of the terminology of existentialism, or Marxism, or Freudianism, for instance, recall Humpty Dumpty's petulant assertion that when he uses a word, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."[71] The impression lingers that when Mailer employs terms, symbols and images which he borrows from others he is seeking new ways to express the things which he already thinks and feels rather than allowing himself to be genuinely influenced by the ideas, issues and philosophies to which he has been exposed. The rhythms and the poetry of his language, the energetic synthesis of populist notions, and the urgency of his Whitmanesque, "And what I assume you shall assume'[72] style aggressively insists on an intimacy which often successfully covers imprecision of definition, lack of clarity of concepts, and illogical arguments. As Joyce Carol Oates has noted, Mailer is "so dangerous a visionary, a poet, a mystic...one is led to believe anything he says because he says it so well."[73] Even the most suspicious of readers can be seduced by Mailer's *chutzpah* into suspension of their critical faculties.

It is ironic that the work of a person who once enrolled to study as an aeronautical engineer should be bedevilled by so many structural problems. Conceits and pretensions which can be engaging in Mailer's fiction are egregious in his non-fiction; the evocative, intuitive metaphors of the former become simply fatuous in the latter. Mailer's great strength is that he seems to be in touch with a quirky, violent, and superstitious underside of the character of contemporary American men; his great weakness has been his insistence on attempting to spell out and codify that moodiness, and theorise about its causes and cures. Mailer was, and remains, an incisive artist and expert emotional diagnostician but an inept metaphysical clinician and a easily discounted social theorist.

Notes:

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[1] Peter Manso, *Mailer: His Life and Times* (New York: Simon, 1985) 25.

[2] Hilary Mills, *Mailer: A Biography* (Dunton Green: New English Library, 1982) 55.

[3] Mailer wrote for Harvard's literary magazines; he published "The Greatest Thing in the World," in *Story* magazine in 1941; he wrote two unpublished novels, *No Percentage*, and *A Transit to Narcissus*; a novella, *A Calculus at Heaven*, and an unproduced play which shares its title with his first major success.

[4] Norman Mailer, *Advertisements for Myself* (New York: Perigree, 1981) 391.

[5] Mills 49.

[6] Donald L. Kaufmann, "The Long Happy Life of Norman Mailer," *Modern Fiction Studies* 17 (1971): 351.

[7] Kaufmann 348.

[8] Kaufmann 348.

[9] Kaufmann 348.
[10] Kaufmann 348.
[11] Kaufmann 347.
[12] In a 1980 inteview with John Aldridge Mailer discussed his attempt to return to the simple style of *The Naked and the Dead* in his non-fiction novel *The Executioner's Song*. John W. Aldridge, "An Interview with Norman Mailer," *Partisan Review* 47 (1980): 177-8.
[13] Barry H. Leeds, *The Structured Vision of Norman Mailer* (New York: New York UP, 1969) 16.
[14] Richard Foster, *Norman Mailer* (Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1968) 10.
[15] Norman Mailer, *The Naked and the Dead* (New York: Holt, 1948) 136.
[16] Jean Radford, *Norman Mailer: A Critical Study* (London: Macmillan, 1975) 8.
[17] Foster 10.
[18] Mailer, *The Naked and the Dead*, 163-4.
[19] Mailer, *Advertisements*, 106.
[20] Mills 114.
[21] Richard Poirier, *Mailer* (London: Fontana-Collins, 1972) 36.
[22] Foster 7.
[23] Poirier 76.
[24] Norman Mailer, *Barbary Shore* (London: Cape, 1952) 152.
[25] Mills 141.
[26] Michael Cowan, "The Quest for Empowering Roots: Mailer and the American Literary Tradition," *Critical Essays on Norman Mailer*, ed. J. Michael Lennon (Boston: Hall, 1986) 157.
[27] Norman Mailer, *The Deer Park* (New York: Fertig, 1980), 204.
[28] Mills 142.
[29] for further discussion see Michikio Kakutani, "Mailer Talking," *New York Times Book Review* 6 June 1982: 39.
[30] Carl Rollyson, *The Lives of Norman Mailer, A Biography* (New York: Paragon, 1991) 101.
[31] Poirier 55-56.
[32] Cowan 170.
[33] Mailer, *Advertisements*, 306.
[34] Mailer, *Advertisements*, 307.
[35] Norman Mailer, "The Metaphysics of the Belly," *Cannibals and Christians* (New York: Doherty, 1966) 303.
[36] Mailer, "Metaphysics," 303.
[37] Norman Mailer, "The White Negro," *Advertisements for Myself* (New York: Perigree, 1981) 301.
[38] Mailer, "The White Negro" 301.
[39] Mailer, "The White Negro" 301.
[40] Mailer, "The White Negro" 301.
[41] Mailer, "The White Negro" 301.
[42] Mailer, "The White Negro" 302.
[43] Mailer, "The White Negro" 302.
[44] Mailer, "The White Negro" 302.
[45] Mailer, "The White Negro" 302.
[46] Mailer, "The White Negro" 301.
[47] Mailer, "The White Negro" 303.
[48] Mailer, "The White Negro" 301.
[49] Mailer, "The White Negro" 301.
[50] Robert Solotaroff, "The Formulation Expanded: Mailer's Existentialism," *Critical Essays on Norman Mailer*, ed. J. Michael Lennon (Boston: Hall, 1986) 124.
[51] Poirier 57.
[52] Solotaroff 122.
[53] Solotaroff 122.

[54] Baldwin 186.
[55] Baldwin 178-9.
[56] Baldwin 186.
[57] Baldwin 186.
[58] Baldwin 186.
[59] Baldwin 187.
[60] Baldwin 187.
[61] Baldwin 189.
[62] Baldwin 188.
[63] Baldwin 187.
[64] See Appendix, Table 2.
[65] Richard D. Finholt, " 'Otherwise How Explain?' Norman Mailer's New Cosmology," *Modern Fiction Studies* 17 (1971): 376.
[66] Radford 3.
[67] Radford 34.
[68] J. Michael Lennon, "Mailer's Cosmology," *Critical Essays on Norman Mailer*, ed. J. Michael Lennon (Boston: Hall, 1986) 147.
[69] Mailer, *Advertisements*, 340.
[70] See Appendix, Fig. 2.
[71] Lewis Carroll, *The Annotated Alice*, intro and notes Martin Gardner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960) 269.
[72] Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," *Leaves of Grass and Selected Prose* (New York: Modern Library, 1981) 23.
[73] Joyce Carol Oates, "Male Chauvinist?" *Modern Critical Views: Norman Mailer*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea, 198[illegible]) 79.