A CRITIQUE OF AMERICAN SOCIETY
I

We have seen during the recent past ideological and military blocks developing cracks and breaking up because of common ideology and military alliances are by themselves not enough to keep countries and nations together. Even a common religion cannot hold two otherwise distinct entities together. What is more, the feeling of nationalism in its broadest sense of patriotism, and not in its narrow sense of chauvinism has emerged as the dominant factor in many of the newly independent countries of the world and is spreading even among some of the older independent countries including members of various military alliances and ideological blocks.

The concept of power is unfortunately based today on the military and economic strength of a country. However, the lesson to be learnt from Vietnam, Watergate is that there is a greater than military or economic power, and this is moral fibre of a nation and the determination of its people to be truly independent in all spheres while cooperating to the maximum extent possible with other countries.

In this regard Mailer sounds as American anthropologist Leslie White, who has nearly pointed out the most needed solace in this restless world. It goes,
...an elaborate mechanism, and organization of exosomatic ways and means employed by a particular animal species, man, in the struggle for existence and survival....Everything - the cosmos, man, culture - may be described in terms of matter and energy. The primary function of culture is to harness and control energy so that it may be put to work in man's service.

Life in these days has become easier for many. Many people have opportunities to study, to learn, to enjoy. Yet, strangely enough, man is not happy. Mailer wants to know what he must do to find peace with himself and his fellowman. His mind grows weary thinking of indefinite progress onward and upward to be realised, when he is unable to realize a fraction of the possibilities of his present nature.

What Mailer feels is that these factors are mainly due to lack of awareness on the act of existence, man's appreciation of beauty, his sense of moral accountability, his communion with the source of being. These facts lie close to the heart by reality. His Jewishness has been a matter of social and psychological importance, rather than a reflection of his theology. He refuses to let past sufferings slip into the comforting darkness of oblivion and scorn for those who seek to give ethical or cultural sanction to murder and loot.
Mailer insists that, whatever be the official justifications for U.S. Military actions, the real reasons for them have always been the old and familiar imperialist drives, theft and power, insatiable greed and social arrogance. The U.S. may once have had ideals and dreams, ethical norms and utopian ambitions but for Mailer the real and documented practices of a series of U.S. Governments show that they were corrupted a long time ago by the callous, unprincipled and cruel ways in which those who came to govern the state learnt to use their lethal technology and the ease with which they managed to seize the intellectual resources and worldly possessions of others.

Mailer's books are subversive counters to the histories of U.S. Foreign policy which have either been officially sponsored to defend government assumptions, interpretations and lies or written by university scholars for whom the ideological commitments and economic interests of their principal are usually more important than the need to search for truth and to speak about societies. If one makes an impartial, factual and ethical human inquiry, the indubitable conclusion would be that the U.S. is the latest of the terrorist empires whose primary concern is to keep that
part of the world which is not brutalized by the U.S.S.R. open and available for its own domination and exploitation.

Mailer remains a cultural analyst with a political commitment that defies precise categorization. His attempt to introduce metapsychological, as well as mystical, theological and cosmological speculations into his analysis of American society has left him quite vulnerable to attack by theorists who are more intent upon understanding the nature of political reality through analysis of specific material conditions.

Mailer utilizes new aesthetic techniques which help to use language as a concept of the self in its relation to the external world. For him events attain their ultimate significance when an active engagement with the external world gives rise to the process of writing. This trend continues in his works where Mailer removes himself from events through the creation of a new personage. He is much less a participant and more of a witness—recording his observations from a dispassionate distance in *Of a Fire on the Moon*.

As Aquarius, he views the existing social order through a sensibility which at times reflects the mysticism of Rokeby, but which preserves the integrity of the event
because of a concern with external detail. He continues to present not only a dialectical conception of life which allows for the reconciliation and interpretation of opposites, but an aesthetic that reveals his preoccupation with the need for offering innovation in the uses of language and genre.

Mailer offers one kind of justification when he says if what one writes is a reflection of ones own consciousness, then even journalism can become interesting. As a journalist he began to laugh at himself for a failure which is more rewarding than success in that it teaches a lesson. In achieving this realignment, Mailer can hardly be accused of cynicism. His strength is and has always been, in his quick instinct for the raw edge of a thing, the hidden detail that reveals a personality otherwise obscures. One could count on Mailer to choose a subject which skirts the edges of disaster by bringing him close to the materials of gossip column, to public legend and private disintegration.

It is against this larger perspective that Mailer depicts America. Since the Second world war, America has really entered the world. The progress of history, especially had made America a World Power and exposed her to the manyfold challenges of the modern world. Even if the world war had not
thrust leadership on the U.S., everything would not have been the same within its frontiers. With the trauma of the ravages caused by the war, loss of volunteer forces on the fronts, economic depression, had created psychotic conditions. Added to these are the proliferation of industrial units, growth of inequity, slums and diseases, had created an enormous, destabilizing effect on the American society. The greatest harm caused by the war can be identified as the moral bewilderment and consequent apathy to ethical standards, sensitive writers were concerned about the spiritual health of the nation, its conscience and society's moral fibre.

Power, demonic, instinctual, and human, is the crucible into which Mailer's values are cast burnt out of their dress, and refashioned....Take not as a new work of art, nor as a series of conclusions and prescriptions, but as a record of an unusually sensitive modern urban consciousness, and it has a great deal to tell us about the way we live now, or perhaps Mailer would say the way we die now.2

AN AMERICAN DREAM, ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF, OF A FIRE ON THE MOON and WHY ARE WE IN VIETNAM? epitomize Mailer's keen and alert common sense to the politics of America. With a willingness to look at the facts; he wants to
expose that evil which continues to enjoy intellectual
legitimacy and romantic sanctity; it is this evil which is
used diabolically for purposes of statecraft against
civilians freedom or justice.

In *AN AMERICAN DREAM*, Mailer turns his attention
to the realities of his surroundings; he is confronted,
principally, with the brutal realities of society and
polity. What distresses him most, is the all powerful modern
state, its total denial of the principle of individuality and
liberty as well as equality.

Though Negro emancipation was proclaimed more than
five score years ago, Negro emancipation as Martin Luther
King protested, was still in the realm of dream:-

But one hundred years later, the
negro is still not free; one
hundred years later, the life of
the negro is still sadly
crippled by the manacles of
segregation and the chains of
discrimination; one hundred years
later, the negro lives on a
lonely island of poverty in the
midst of a vast ocean of
material prosperity; one hundred
years later, the negro is still
languishing in the corners of
American society and finds
himself an exile in his own
land.
Though it is a dark and hopeless picture Luther King has drawn, it is not a confession of despair; rather a testament of hope a vista drawing closer every minute:

So I say to you, that even though we must face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American Dream, that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.

Mailer intends to be a fiery chisel working its way into all the dull layers of American guilt and malaise. His method is to present a narrator whose senses are unsheathed, who looks at the world—indeed, smells it, feels it, hears it, tastes it—with an heightened consciousness. Rojack, the hero of the novel *AN AMERICAN DREAM* is the man operating on an edge between life and death, for, at the core of the novel is the conflict between creative and destructive power.

The original American dream is expressed by the Founding Fathers in their famous declaration, that all men are created equal and free; that they were endowed by the creator with inalienable rights, the right to liberty, and equality. The Statue of Liberty is a standing monument of the original American Dream; which appears now as the mockery of the
American vision. All the while, there has been a tacit agreement between black power and liberal power.Mailer's remark is that the power of the State has grown so enormously that individual rights are no longer secure, that equality is a mere political slogan and the individual conscience, a mere figment. Government bears a resemblance to cell fission, of cancerous sort. When a cancer cell cannot solve a problem it divides.

That's why they proliferate more quickly than normal cells—they are not equipped to solve problems, only to grow. When in doubt, divide; that's cancer. Government proliferates all the time. It does not solve problems.

Stephen Rojack, the protagonist and narrator of *An American Dream*, is a decorated war hero, a television personality, a college professor, husband of a wealthy society girl—Deborah and an ex-congressman. Before the action of the story begins, Rojack has quit politics because as a politician he has been merely playing a role; his personality floating in a void, because his real preoccupation has been with death, referred to it as his 'Secret frightened romance with the phases of the moon.'
The hero's progress, encounters, battles, victories, defeats and orgasms - his journey, in short are recorded in this novel. His journey is presented in terms of the body, the spirit, the mind and the unconscious. The novel conveys the only life-giving message that is, to accept the terms of death, to live with death as immediate dread. So to the war hero Rojack, war experience taught him that death is a creation more dangerous than life. Thus Rojack's journey begins to put an end to evil power over good and a quest for spiritual salvation. Thus Mailer's AMERICAN DREAM upholds the background for American political thought, dominated by the clergy, the lawyers and the university.

Another major theme involves Stephen Rojack's confrontation with the many institutions of squaresville and the individuals connected with them. Here the picture is equally vivid and obsessive: the police, the judicial system the educational institutions. Mass communications, men business they are all hypocritical, corrupt, unimaginative and anti-human, death dealing workers for the Devil, because along with the sexual and social themes An American Dream contains a deeply religious theme, making Rojack's journey a constant battle between the forces of good and evil and a quest for spiritual salvation.
Mailer intends chastising most of the institutions that constitute the mighty America. Neither the institutions nor the persons representing them, are found nothing but corrupt. There is no end to hypocrisy in police or judiciary, in business or educational institutions. By writing *AN AMERICAN DREAM*, Mailer releases his obsessive concern for restoring the pristine, glorious dream of America. The corruption that runs through the veins of political and administrative body politic of the United States of America, has rendered the national a mockery, a scarecrow of the original.

The Founding Fathers were an idealistic lot who flocked to the newfound land, driven by economic constraints in their homelands or religious segregation and persecution, allured by stories of success and plenty. As such they were oppressed and voracious Europeans metamorphosed from the lists of poor to venerable citizens of America who propounded idealistic covenants, announcing their intent of free life, to pursue their own pleasure unhindered by them arms of the State. As such they were not thinkers and philosophers to evolve a coherent theory of political economy. They were driven by "abundancy motivation" for economic betterment, with a gambling instinct to surmount misfortune and adversity,
to gain satisfaction and joy. American political thought has not been related to any broad philosophic vision but has rather tended to concentrate on specific institutions such as slavery or revolution or particular subjects of immediate controversy such as tariffs or foreign affairs. Mailer is very much keen in describing, himself or a few fictional characters or the major political figures, in order to detail the condition of America. He believes that man must solve social and political problems without subordinating himself to any organisation.

Rockey is framed with this bent of mind in Mailer's novel AN AMERICAN DREAM to battle the unseen, unknown forces which operate from within the corrupt political system. In this novel the emphasis is about the existence of powerful forces operating against individuals.

The climatic chapter of Norman Mailer's AN AMERICAN DREAM is entitled "At the Lion and the Serpent". The reference is to the animals in Kelly's Coat Of Arms emblazoned on the door of his waldorf suite. In conjunction with Rockey's observation in anticipating his confrontation with Kelly, the lobby of the Waldorf looks like, 'the ante chamber of Hell', the animals as symbolic equivalents of Kelly, seem to spring from Dante's INFERNO. The lion appears
at the beginning of the inferno and traditionally symbolizes pride or ambition. More interesting are the serpents of Canto XXIV and XXV and the dominant sinner of these two cantos, Vanni Fucci. After being bitten by a serpent, Fucci burns to ashes, then rises from the ashes to reveal his sin. He had stolen the treasure from the scarcity. He had, in a sense, stolen from God. Fucci then raises his fists to God in obscene gesture and Dante promptly labels him the haughtiest sinner in INFERNO. Kelly obviously is proud and ambitious, but he is more like Fucci, he has violated a serious taboo. In Kelly’s case it is incest. In so doing he has in terms of Rojak’s thesis "ON THE PRIMITIVE VIEW OF MYSTERY", stolen secrets or power from gods, and therefore, now lives at the summit with the few to whom, he states, “God and devil are very attentive....." This Kelly tells Rojak "is a little secret a few of us keep to ourselves but that my friend, is one reason it’s not easy to go to the very top. Because you have to ready to deal with one or the other, and that’s too much for the average man....." Kelly has the ambition to get to the top and once there, has the haughtiness to deal with God or the Devil, who ever is dispensing the power. He is, therefore a fitting descendent of the haughty Fucci, and the Lion and the Serpent are his perfect objective correlates.
Mailer finds similarities between Fucci and Kelly as much as Dante's *Inferno* and America. America of Mailer is a place of sin, hypocrisy and moral bankruptcy. The pioneer's America, was guilty of debauchery, drunkenness, lawlessness; the Dutch pioneers were half-savage, the Swedish on the Delaware were wild, Kentucky was referred to as "Rogue's Harbour" where fights were common, wherein the antagonists aim to main or gouge out an eye. Beyond Mississippi, profanity, tobacco-spitting and carrying a knife were common sights.

From the beginning these malcontents who sought to "Civilize" the new world set in motion through the contradictory nature of their journey a Schizophrenia from which American history and literature have been unable to escape.  

The onward march of the civilization, which started with subduing the "Wild West" remorselessly established a quixotic quest for adventure, wealth, an inflated sense of self-importance, and above all, a ruthless materialistic competitiveness.

As a radical, Mailer recognizes that these problems cannot be solved by private effort alone. No longer referring to himself as a socialist in the New York campaign for
Mayoralty in 1969, he proposes reforms, emphasizing the need for individual initiative in a society which has grown too large and bureaucratic. His campaign slogan—"power to the neighbourhoods"—is designed to encourage limited forms of collective involvement in an attempt to improve the lot of a neighbourhood, which shall preserve the integrity of the self. Individual should not be a lost sight in the mass of humanity.

The American dream stretched between a golden past and a golden future, is always betrayed by the desolate present. Mailer has metaphorised Deborah as America in his novel AN AMERICAN DREAM.

Deborah - Grace and Lust. The afterbath, lying on her body, floated on a current of low heavy fire a sullen poisonous fire, an oil on flame which sent out on her and took me in. Invariably a groan came out of me like the clanking of chains, my mouth on hers, not sobbing but gropping for air. I always felt as if I had born Free some promise of my soul and paid it over in ransom.

Incestuous relationship between Kelly and his daughter Deborah, metaphorically represents the rape of America. The loss of innocence, initiation into the sin of material culture accompanied by ghastly absense of sensibility.
....Like most of her friends, she had an aristocratic indifference to the development of talent. One enjoyed what was in flower, one devoured if it were good for one, but one left the planting to others.11

Rojack, naturally, feels suffocated because of the sin, loss of self etc. Mailer has revulsion for the inherited wealth, unscrupulously garnered, unsavoury effects of rudeness and insensitivity. American dream concepts goes counter to what Deoborah signifies.

Mailer's themes show how the individual is in conflict with society, the role of the artist in the modern world and in what ways these conditions of our social, psychological, political and natural existence are at odds. Mailer projects the plight of an artist in America as that of a nightmare. America has been violated by the avaricious Europeans, the Dutchman's vision of the virgin evaporated, the stretch of green land changed into vast heaps of ashes. Brothel, bootlegging, underworld dons control the economy, and rule the roost. The very settlers turned out to be the molesters of the continent, paralleled by father Kelly's incest with his daughter, as Mailer unerringly suggests by implication. Indiscriminate plunder without a sense of guilt, complicity, in crime of violating the modesty of the vast,
vulgar and meretricious beauty that America metaphorically represents has historical antecedents. Kelly, figuratively, is the descendant of the pioneer plunderer whose medium was matter and whose psychology centred round violence and debauchery.

Authority of the state has gained unmitigated powers that an individual finds himself reduced to insignificance. State demands the individual to submit, to obliterate himself before its omniscience. If a sensitive individual finds himself at variance to the demands of the state authority or society, he has to wage a lonely battle, conscientiously and with great determination.

Will and conscience are two levels of the transcendence of the self over itself. WILL is the result of the self's transcendence over the complex of its impulses and desires.... Will is operative on all levels - consistency is the achievement of the self rather than reason. Self's capacity to view itself and to judge its purposes gives rise to a reality in life which is usually termed 'conscience' - a sense of obligation in contrast to inclination.12

To seek justice, individual is often compelled to resist the brute forces of the state, either through courts of
law or by launching a crusade. Most often, an individual, to escape being crushed, might adopt insidious methods to achieve a noble end, which conversely belittles his heroic attempt in the absence of moral authenticity.

Rojack comes from the common mill of American society, draws his sustenance from the social and cultural milieu that cherished American sentiment. He too seeks nourishment to his self, seeks.

Completion for its incompleteness. The sexual relation is the most vivid form of one self seeking completion in another self. The self cannot be truly happy if it is not drawn out of itself into the life of the other.13

Rojack discovers to his dismay that Kelly, over-drunk in power, is villain of the piece; that he seduced his daughter Deborah and further exploits her beauty and youth deliberately for purposes of grasping and wielding more powers, profaned the prestigious charm of love for unworthy purposes.

Power, that of a state is mostly instrumental in organizing a society, to provide security to individuals from the ravaging sharks in the society. Law and order are the power teeth of a state authority to ensure common good of the
subjects. Those who violate the law are tried for their crimes and exemplary punitive measures are taken. It is the authority of the State that guarantees safety to life and property, initiates welfare schemes for the upliftment of the downtrodden, enhances the joy of life for its subjects.

Persons representing the authority of State are enjoined to be honest not only in their discharge of duties but also in private lives; public life cannot be delinked from the private. These custodians of the state power resemble the hedges around a farm, implanted to augment protection. If the hedges encroach upon and annihilate the farm, it is not only unnatural but dubious and diabolic. Kelly, the ring leader responsible from vice and murders, vandalism and illicit romance, is presented by Mailer as the shadow that accompanies the vision of American dream.

Richard Poirier has perceived "perversity is in many ways the subject and the villain of the book, or atleast the evidence of the villainy". The leader of the perverse forces in dream is of course Kelly, who not only viewed procreation as a means of furthering his Dream of power but tried to lure Rojack on to the same bed on which he had seduced an impregnated his daughter.
Mailer's attack upon the State is that it treats all men as equal which is actually unjustifiable because though our conditions are the same, particular realization, of the possibilities of the conditions are not the same but differ from one being to another. When the Founding Fathers included in the "Declaration of Independence" that all citizens are equal, they were aware that all men were not born equal, the intellectual attainments vary from one to the other. Rojack's situation was so desperate that he had to murder to create, to kill Deborah before he could have a sense of purpose to his life.

Rojack as an individual fails to draw his spouse away from the cauldron of sin and hypocrisy, as their selves are not drawn out into each other, they recriminate and accuse each other. Rojack had to prove to himself that he can liberate Deborah from the vicious circle and that the source of social cancer, Kelly, can be done away with. As law does not recognize the truth that Rojack known through Deborah's confession, for want of proof and evidence he undertakes to cleanse the stinking stable. He throttles and hurls down the carcass of Deborah on to the street-death of the lady has been recorded as suicide. After liberating Deborah from the hell she has been subjected to live; Rojack proves his
altruistic love by sneaking into the den of Kelly. The old man is easy prey to Rojack, resulting in instant death. The murder accomplished, the metaphor for sin and vice extinguished, Rojack escapes—speeds toward Mexico.

Rojack needs no place to permit the expiration that will eventually enable him to rejoin the society that he wronged. Subject as he was, as we are, to that cruel, just law of growth or decline, it was to free himself from New York society that he killed Deborah; it was to follow the dream of being, that he renounced the Dream of power.15

Rojack may be expected to escape punishment for his crimes of murdering Deborah and killing Kelly for the crimes were commissioned for elimination of evil, for restoring health to the society.

Mailer employs the structure of a crime-punishment sequence as can be found reported in police records, where the culprit remains at large. Mailer employs the style of a mystery thriller, in unrevealing the secret, revelation of guilt, followed by punishment.

Even this early in his career—after only two novels—it was clear that Mailer’s imagination, unique in his generation, was cast in the epic mold. As bard and prophet to an age in which
history is at odds with nature or "destiny," he was telling in fevered voice of the permutations of the heroic imperative in a post-heroic world. His theme was the struggle of life and form against death and chaos. But his subject matter was history.16

ADVERTISEMENT FOR MYSELF and OF A FIRE ON THE MOON are startling presentations to rouse people to think and act. They are also interesting because of Mailer's inventory form. If AN AMERICAN DREAM is the clarification of the subconscious self, ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF and OF A FIRE ON THE MOON are that of the artist's plight for clarification like the plight of every thinking man.
II

Mailer has delineated multi-faceted America in an effective manner. The emphasis is on the voice of genuine Americans who are sensitive to the decline of America from its cherished dreams. ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF is a confessional document of considerable interest and engrossing chronical of the post-war literary life. OF A FIRE ON THE MOON is a journalistic document of the corporate America though he had only to write a book about the moon landing. But Mailer preferred to divine an event through his senses.

... since he was as nearsighted as he was vain... that was one advantage of using the nose - technology had not yet succeeded in elaborating a science of smell.17

ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF is a collection of pieces and parts, of advertisements, short stories, articles, short novels, fragments of novels, poems and part of the play come to be written on the day to day affairs of this mechanical life. It is a kind of exposure of under currents in the main stream of American life. It spins around American religion monopoly, culture, civilization and society. Mailer with his personal exposure to war and his keen observation of the reality of the modern warfare state, the unholy alliance
between industry and the military and civil establishment has given literary expression to this aspect of the malady of the modern body politic.

It is a confessional attempt because Mailer himself was a victim of his time and surroundings. Often unwittingly and sometimes deliberately those experiences are transformed and reflected in the form of his writings.

I suffered, anyway, prodigies of brain-curdling, and educated myself all over again how to write, write without cigarettes, and found the beginnings of a style that might begin to express the way of mind (as opposed to other writer’s minds) was ready to work. So ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF was a book whose writing changed my life. Let us hope that is conceivably for the better.18

ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF is the work which effected a thorough change in his style of writing as well as in his way of thinking over many issues. He is honest and free in bringing a harmony between his personal and creative lives.

This has enabled him to come out very openly about his failures, achievements and ambitions.

So advertisements became the book in which I tried to separate my legitimate spiritual bile from my self pity and may
be it was the hardest continuing
task I had yet set myself. 19
Mailer's acceptance of the actuality of the book
speaks volumes about his openness of heart and intention.
Mailer inaugurates, practically invents a term for the
age - an age of Advertisement - the age of advertisement,
artificial wants and reckless consumerism. American society
seems to have become the helpless victim of its own plenty.
The result is a popular culture which is ostentatious but
vulgar, showy without substance. PHANTASMAGORIA of
satisfaction without delight. The ethical level of this
popular culture finds a perfect reflection in the studios of
Hollywood and in the vacuity of popular sororital and
culinary tastes and styles.

America is a country where aggressive commercial
drive through dubious but powerful advertisements earns a
quick buck that is aggressive salesmanship. Bohemianism or
epicurianism seems to have reached its ultimate expression in
the popular culture of the new world. The puritan philosophy
of the ancestors is now held up to scorn and ridicule. The
relations between the sexes have degenerated into the grossest
physical levels. Moreover carnal gratification is the basis
of corporational affairs.
Sex is the most powerful currency in the national and international political policy affairs. Power and sex are the popular qualities in the present day dealings of civilization. This has resulted in magnifying human wickedness, guilt and bestiality beyond Satan's ingenuity. Need in such a country for individuals is to advertise themselves and their opinions for commercial activities, to sell their thoughts.

Mailer is severely critical of modern American culture. Modern American culture, for all its exterior gloss and glitter is a sick and decaying culture. As Mailer has recurrently moaned, the original American Dream has now faded, if not vanished: still all is not lost.

Donald Babcock has expressed this disappointment over the withering of the American Dream in this sonnet:

So then, we were no new device at all we who were born the first-fruits of the west. Or so we fancied. Oh, we stood so tall we looked abroad and smiled at all the rest; They dwelt in Europe's tombs, they dwelt in shadow; Their forests fell in dust; mold and the blight. Lay on the vine; the moss crept on the meadow; The doom had come on peasant, priest and knight. And over us, who would not stop to the gleam Among the echoes of their precious word Nor doubted that our liberty must mean The advent of an ultimate accord. Bides now an ignorance of all things old, A famine of the heart and bitter cold.
The disillusionment with modern culture has become a common subject matter with most of the modern writers. The emptiness of modern life and the vacant spaces of existence, the almost total nothingness and despair.

Religion which was once the cementing force of society and the solace of individual life, has become supplanted by the 'worship of bitch goddess of success' in William James phrase and the pursuit of material prosperity. The presence of faith is almost indiscernible and its 'withdrawing roar' clearly rings out.

We toil for six days, on the seventh we must motor,
To Hind head, or Maiden head.
If the weather is foul we stay at home and read the papers.
In industrial districts, there I was told of economic laws.
In the pleasant countryside, there it seemed that the country now is only fit for picnics.
And the church does not seem to be wanted.
In country or in suburb; and in the town only for important weddings.21

Eliot's concern for the absence of religion, and ethics in a society predominantly industrial, the pervading sense of emptiness that corrodes the soul, making it dependent on newspaper for sustenance than the Bible, unmistakably reflects the popular culture that America has been subjected to. Mailer has tellingly delineated all the ugly symptoms, in Tanney's phrase of "the sickness of an acquisitive society".
The characteristic of this society is exploitation in myriad forms. He has noted that as modern society has grown in its gigantic proportions, forms of exploitation too have taken new and hitherto unknown forms.

...The old exploitation was vertical. The poor supported the rich. To this vertical exploitation must now be added the horizontal exploitation of the mass by the State and by Monopoly, a secondary exploitation which is becoming more essential to a modern capitalist economy than the direct exploitation of the proletariat....Through the post-war years, prosperity has been maintained in America by invading the wage earner in his home.22

Modern industrial society, as is well known is characterized by class exploitation. Karl Marx had long back analyzed this feature of the industrial society and its dehumanizing consequences. The modern industrial worker is looked upon as a cog in the machine, valued for his work but not treated with the dignity and consideration that a human being deserves. He is a faceless and anonymous part of the system of production. He works on a subsistence wage, lives under the most wretched conditions, is haunted by the spectre of insecurity and unemployment. But he produces more
than what he is paid for. The market value of what he produces is more than what is paid to him in the shape of wages. This is the well known "surplus value" of the industrial system. This goes into the pockets of the capitalists and managers of industry. Marx has described this feature as the "Law of accumulation" which works to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

The State or Government, said Marx, is only an agent serving the interests of the haves and protecting them against the uprising of the have-nots. Karl Marx visualized that a struggle between these two classes is inevitable. The workers would develop revolutionary consciousness, defy the oppressive system and emancipate themselves from their bondage. Ultimately, there would be a classless society and there would be no exploiter and exploited; there would be no need of the state to support the exploiters as the exploiters themselves would be no more. In a famous phrase Marx said that the State would then become, anarchism and would be, like the spinning wheel, relegated to the museum of historical antiquities. With the progress of time, exploitation which has become a feature of industrial society has developed new forms and shapes.
The new forms of exploitation in modern society are "more sinister" because they are invisible and apparently harmless, like sugar coated poison, they work out their deadly consequences silently and unnoticed until vitality is entirely drained.

....If this revolutionary vision is to be captured by any of us in a work or works, can one guess that this time it will explore not nearly so far into the jungle of political economy which Marx chartered and so opened to rapid development, but rather will engage the empty words, dead themes and sentimental voids of that mass media whose internal contradictions twist and quarter us between the lust of the economy (which radiates a greed to consume it into us, with sex as the invisible salesman) and the guilt of the economy which must chill us with authority, charities for cancer, and all reminder that the mass consumer is only on drunken furlough from the ordering disciplines of church, FBI and war.23

Modern industrial society cannot do away with the poor. They are to continue if the present industrial system is to prosper. As Jeremy C.Nrook, a student of poverty in Britain has remarked, the poor are necessary because they foster the illusioned that "we still live in a society of
scarcity". (Times Of India, Bombay, Aug. 8th 1985.) They have been kept at a subsistence level barely above the level of starvation while the captains of industry and the managerial sections thrive on the surplus value resulting from the exploitation of labour. While this is the general truth, about industrial society, the emergence of the welfare state has brought about an apparent improvement in the living conditions of the workers.

Their income and living conditions have improved under the benign dispensation of the welfare state. But Mailer has noted that this very factor which has enabled the working class to spend more, has enabled the traditional exploiters to invent novel forms of exploitation. Cheap industrial products have invaded even the homes of the workers. New tastes are purveyed and new ideas of "status" have been trust into them by produces through the advertising agencies. This has led to the emergence of the new phenomenon called 'ADMASS', a term coined by J.B. Preistly. A culture mesmerises customers into purchasing a product, worthless though it may be. The mass of populace is cultivated, rather indoctrinated through Advertisement agencies.

The urgent need to 'stimulate' people, as Vane Packard has put
it, "Bought new power glory, and
prosperity to the professional
stimulators are persuaders of
American industries particularly
the skilled gray-flannelled
suiters of New York's medicine
Avenue, known as 'Ad Alley' in
1959, $9,000,000,000 was poured
into United States Advertising
up a billion from 1954 and up 3
billion from 1950.
For each man, woman and child in
America in 1955, roughly $53 was
spent. To persuade him or her to
but products of industry. Some
cosmetic firms began spending a
fourth of all their income from
sales on advertising and
promotion. A cosmetic typhoon,
probable mythical, was quoted as
saying: "we don't sell lipstick,
we buy customers."
The working class is tempted by the unnecessary but
attractive products which flood the markets daily to part
with his money for the false and ephemeral satisfaction of
draining the aristocracy.

...A car is sold not because
it will help out one to get a
girl, because it is already a
girl... look at the commercials
on television... to benefits are
vague...There is no one power
who has a tongue to say that sex
has become the centre of our
economy, and so commodities which
will the years of our lives are
not going to be presented to us
for what they are : machine-made
sacraments closer to the
consumer than the bread and wine
of his Host."
Man thus is enticed and transported into fairy regions on the invisible wings of imagination through visuals, to the utter neglect of spiritual happiness. As a result of this development we find that a new culture has developed which may be called proletarian culture of the masses. In such a society every wish becomes a want and every want becomes a need, which adds to the self esteem and vanity of the purchaser and distinguishes him from those who cannot afford to spend like him. This bestows on him an illusory consciousness of higher social status. The philistine culture of which Matthew Arnold had written in "Culture and Anarchy" has been raging relentlessly by. What Veblen had earlier characterized as 'Conspicuous consumption' has now become the most conspicuous characteristic of the present day society and has enslaved the rich as well as the poor. To this Mailer responds:

....It is likely that the survival of capitalism is no longer possible without the creation of the consumer of a series of physically disruptive needs which circle about such wants and emotions as the desire for excessive security, the alleviation of guilt, the lust for comfort and new commodity, and a consequent allegiance to the vast lie about the essential health of the state and the
economy, an elaborated fiction whose bewildering interplay of real and false detail must devil the mass into a progressively more imperfect appreciation of the reality and thus drive them closer to apathy, psychosis and violence. Nineteenth century capitalism exhausted the life of millions of workers. Twentieth century capitalism can well end by destroying the mind of civilized man.26

One must spend and spend lavishly if social acceptance is to be gained. Cheap and attractive, often more attractive than cheap goods have made their way into the very kitchens and drawing rooms of the lowest of men in society. Production has now turned to new areas of consumer goods and with this the purchaser is driven not only into the satisfaction of essential needs but in essential wants. The home has been, so to say, annexed by this new development in production. The housewife now may either sit at home in comfort or return from her place of work with a satchel of pre-cooked food, escaping from the drudgery of the kitchen. What is more, this has been a prelude to a culinary revolution not only are fast foods produced but the palate is being educated and conditioned to fall in line with the supposed advanced tastes — an inescapable insignia of civilization.
wrong in social life and individual conduct.

Adopting the well-known saying "All is fair in profit and material satisfaction". The consumer culture has been thriving. The ethical purists may condemn this as immoral. But the advocates of the materialistic outlook would only say that this is beyond the purview of moral consideration.

We now are confronted with the problem of permitting average American to feel moral even when he is flirting, even when he is spending, even when he is not saving, even when he is taking two vacations a year and buying a second or third car. One of the basic problems of this prosperity, then, is to give people the sanction and
justification to enjoy it
And to demonstrate the
hedonistic approach to his life
is a moral not an immoral one.
This permission given to the
consumer to enjoy his life
freely, the demonstration that he
is right in surrounding himself
with products that enrich his
life and give him pleasure must
be one of the central themes of
every advertising display and
sales promotion plan.28

The question of moral compunction never bothered the
affluent American Society, blinded by the glitter of gold.
Automatic entry into the higher society is granted for a
golden hat and no one questions the legitimacy or otherwise
of his source of wealth. Demonstrable carelessness in wasteful
expenditure, always evoked an awe and respectability.
An affluent one earns freedom from the cumbersome irritable
enquiry into the rights and wrongs. He is neutral in regard to
abstract values of right and wrong. He is morally indifferent
to the means to achieve the ends—the end is the reward by
itself; moral surplus hardly interferes in his pursuit of
pleasure.
Mailer in his advertisements expresses:

    Question: Whom do you hate?
    Answer: People who have power and
            no compassion, that is no simple
            understanding....
Question: If you could send ten word message to every man and woman in America, what would you say?
Answer: Please don't understand anybody too quickly.29

This ambivalent attitude to moral questions has been curiously, a characteristic of the scientific attitude. The scientist is an analyst, investigator relentlessly moving towards establishing verifiable truth. His interest is abstract. The politician and the war-monger may exploit the dispassionate explorations of science to selfish ends, for acquiring greater political leverage. Mailer moans at the indiscriminate exploitation of science, unintentionally fashioned by the scientists. The products of science are dangerous material capable of reducing humanity to ashes, as in a furnace. This appears to be the insensitive progression of man in quest of Power and Pleasure.

...could one ask that the power being ready to accept the consciousness of close description, the dignity of the explicit? No, that asks for too much, As a nation we are now dedicated to the principle that all men have an equal opportunity to cheat life, and if we die too soon with too little, our senses lost before our leaving, no one to mourn for us but that three-hundred-horse power chromium bitch in the
cememt-brick gargonate-well, death is better for the race than consciousness, thinks the power for with consciousness might come a cataclysm of history, a shift from the manipulator to his human material, and then, all horror of the void, what can eternity offer to a defeated power? 30

Mailer's agony at the power of destruction that man wields, his anxiety to ensure happiness to himself at the expense of others is not unfounded. The New York times has inserted under the caption.

**EXULTING OVER THE ESCALATION OF AGGRESSION IN VIETNAM**

We had a narrow squeep... the boom had ended, economic activities had slowed down and a longer stagnation if not a serious recession was in the offing. Production would have continued to decline, when it was suddenly decided to escalate... the moment for escalation in Vietnam was splendidly timed and saved the nation's economy from collapsing. 31

The stark reality, on which American economic advisers have gloated over American involvement in Vietnam, is structured on buttressing their sagging economy. The industries - particularly the armament factories, can run to bull capacity and earn phenomenal profits and the American
income soars along with the prestige for protecting democracy — no matter that U.S.A has no moral authority to intervene in the internal affairs of another country. U.S. Intervention in Vietnam is a cruel joke on humanity.

Mailer has attached great importance to Marx’s analysis of industrial society and in his own way, extended it to comprehend the latest developments of industrial civilization such as consumerism, conspicuous consumption, and even the military industrial complex with special reference to the United States.

The cold war had the inevitable effect of turning the minds of the Nation on military preparedness. While America and Russia were not engaged in fighting openly, they were not without fear of a direct confrontation. Therefore they had to themselves to the teeth and look at each other with suspicion waiting for the first move to come from other side. ‘Afraid to strike and afraid to be struck at’ Hot war, no less than cold war called for the aid of the armament industry. This was the golden opportunity for the industries. As Raymond Aron has remarked:

"The United States being what it is the maintenance of a huge and permanently available combat force was bound to produce what
President Eisenhower in his farewell address called The Military industrial Complex".32

He further explains the implications of the idea of the military industrial complex thus:

"It... designates something in precisely certain trade of American reality, accentuated by the effect of United States diplomatic activities all over the world. The major organizations, the allegedly private corporations and the public agencies, control industry and government alike. The conglomerates contribute the major portion of American investment abroad and receive the bulk of the orders for armaments. An exchange of personnel between the corporations and the Pentagon has grown common. The corporations' Executives are lobbyists, established close relations with acting officers, and when the latter retire, they find lucrative jobs in these same corporations, an old-boy network that creates and symbolizes the military industrial complex".33

Prof. J.K. Galbraith, too, has remarked in his THE NEW INDUSTRIAL STATE, that on retirement, admirals and generals as well as high civil servants, go more or less automatically to the more closely associated industries.
To quote from Albert Norden again:

The list of the U.S. defence secretaries and their links with the monopolies prove this: 1947-48 James Forrestal, partner in the DILLON RED AND CO., Banking House, which is associated with the international arms monopolies; 1947-50 LOUIS Johnsen Director of the CONSOLIDATED VULTEE AIR CRAFT CO., which now belongs to GENERAL-DYNAMICS; 1951-53 Robert Lovett partner in the HARRISMEN & CO. banking house, Director of NORTH AMERICAN AVIATION, Atom Air Craft and Rocket monopoly; 1953-57 Charles Wilson, president of GENERAL MOTORS, Automobile and Tank Trust; 1957-60 Neil Mc Elroy, Director of GENERAL ELECTRIC ATOM and electron monopoly, CHRYSLER, TANK AND ROCKET TRUST; 1960-61 THOMAS GATES, partner in the RECHSCHEL & CO., Banking House which belonged to the Morgan Group. From 1961 to early 1968 Robert Mc Namara former president of the FORD Automobile Trust held this influential post. 34

The same discontentment about corporate America is expressed by Mailer with the same fervour, in his novel FIRE:

Some may have been running for president. John Glenn had been campaigning for senator before his accident in the tub, Borman was now close to Nixon, Schirra was to a television commentator (holding position) and collins was yet to enter the State Department. And there were bound
to be others. If an astronaut had political ambitions he did not necessarily announce them.

One of the scientist astronauts said, "Mr. Webb, this hiatus you have been referring to — how would you say that the scientific community—""

"To hell with the scientific community", Frank Borman cut in. The astronauts laughed. The attitude was clear. They were not in astronautics to solve the mysteries of the moon, they were astronauts to save America.

Mailer, revolt against its present amoral conditions and does not want his country to become a second-rate nation. He envisages that the risks in private affairs are too great for youngsters, while seeking advancement or professional preference. The truth is that the capitalist nations have evolved into a form of collectivism. Mailer paints America and its materialistic growth with a deep concern in his novel OF A FIRE ON THE MOON.

Corporate America, a land of plenty, is growing richer and richer with ever increasing industries. Prosperity has come to nearly every pocket after sudden leap in science and technology. Its super highways, its super markets its appliances, its suburbs its shops, has spread out on the road. If this is the picture of corporate America, it is just otherwise in that of Southern States.
It hardly matters if Americans are rich or poor because when they get together, they do not know what to say to each other. It is part of the double life of Americans, the unequal development of the Lobes in the national schizophrenia. Men whose minds worked with admirable depth of reference and experience in their occupations were less interesting in a social gathering. What Mailer points out is that, Americans cared about ideas and the biggest ideas are doubtless the best.

Yes, Aquarius was thinking, ideas were Americans cared about, and the biggest ideas were doubtless the best, but what a price had been paid. For now manufacturers and consumer chase frantically after fashion. It did not matter how cheap and shamful the execution. The bargain stereo could not last a month, the washing machine with the plastic console could break in a week -- all that has been purchased with the idea. Something was happening to Americans. They were a guilty Crew, guilty of new ideas, new license, sacrilege, cynicism, bad faith. As a result, they were always in a rush to purchase a new idea. When people were not willing to die for an old idea, they would rush to a new one. Guilty to the nose, guilty to the ears, they were even apathetic about blaming the fabricators, for
they were guilty themselves. Everybody had been cheated so many
times; everybody had cheated others so often. It was hard to
remain angry that one had been defrauded.36

The general current of American life centered round, what Mailer calls, cheating others. Each American guilty of defrauding other—in a sense, the entire civilization, the craze for things and ideas new has gripped the nation into a frenzy. Any one with a crazy idea, can mint millions by purveying dreams of greatness. A sales executive, for example, could Design T-shirts and sell in millions by printing mottoes like 'I Love You' or 'Target for the Apollo Debris'. Mailer feels amazed and frustrated by this purile, cynical, vulgar display of such elements of American civilization.

Mailer has brought out the contrast of the present technological and industrial country with the old pastoral America. If greenary, natural fauna and flora with lively springs inspired and beautified America, it is machinery and concrete jungles that spread over, today's America.

The journalistic cargo of the bus was now ushered through long narrow corridors painted in institutional green to take turnings by water coolers and vending machines, passed down
other corridors, filed past empty rooms and galleries and were loosed finally into a courtyard. Just over their heads, a story above, was a covered bridge which ran from the building they had just been into the building from which the astronauts would exit.37

American architectural marvels that characterize the 'beauty' of structure, multi-storeyed and expensive have made man a stranger to nature. Mailer as one of the journalists allowed to observe the launch and report, describes the barrenness of the buildings with long corridors, the official green replacing the foliage, water coolers substituting the natural springs. The segregation of human beings, compartmentalization of men, now characterizes and passes for civilization.

Modern American, aspiring to reach the top, has trampled over humanism and spiritualism and gambled with inhuman capitalism. Profit and more affluence is the only goal relentlessly pursued by the middle classes, which Mailer travesties. Alger-myth haunts Americans in all its horrendous forms.

Twentieth century full of its wild dreams and orderly homes, that turn - of - the century American capitalism, the only prosperous middle - class power ever built on a series of
outrageous gambles, on, that capitalism had passed over to its son, corporate capitalism, and corporate capitalism was the marriage of huge profit with huge service, of teamwork—the methods of the hospital mixed with the methods of the football team and of detestation of contradiction.38

Nonetheless, America had become the first society to attempt, on a major scale, to pay off the top and bottom while allowing the middle to support the ends. Money that could be put into increasing true competitive quality instead goes into contest with other producers to have zappier advertising. America at this point is flooded with needless products that depend for their existence on advertising. Here Mailer raises his voice to protest. He strongly castigates television for, it is the most effective genie of media to make the corrupt corporate American more powerful.

TV adulterates human relations. TV does the same thing to human relations that frozen food does to real food. All of this is the blight of corporate capitalism. Corporate capitalism is an incubus on the world quite equal to Soviet Communism.39

For Mailer the haughty air of engineers at NASA is reminiscent of the haughty hollowness of many executives in
many corporations. Every corporation executive blares out lies because it is in the nature of his work to make positive statements. New and attractive machines are manufactured using cheaper materials that assuredly break-down early so that newer ones can be trust as replacements for the old under the guise of modernization.

The corporate son of the old capitalist does not often get the inefficiencies out of his machines, for he is more interested in communicating his love of reason than in applying it. So he designs new machines before the old are tested and vitiates the intestinal fortitude of the old mechanical in sides by using inferior materials which break down too early. The money which used to be spent for good materials is now spent for advertising the product. 40

ADVERTISEMENT FOR MYSELF and FIRE have come at a time when America has been experiencing fast growing prosperity. They testify Mailer's capacity not merely as a war novelist but as a symbol of literary prestige in general as a writer concerned with the state of affairs.

He could not excuse himself from noticing and exposing the notorious, inhuman and lecherous games the
politicians, administrators and corporate capitalists have been playing. He diagnoses that the malady afflicting American culture lies in the dishonest, corrupt and hypocritical political system.

America is a great and prosperous country, but it is not a brave or noble country. Our leaders are drawing in conformity and act like women.41

Mailer’s vision identifies how industry, politics and power go hand in hand for vulgar accumulation of wealth. This has resulted in encouraging human wickedness, guilt and bestiality beyond Satan’s ingenuity. Mailer remarks that Satan is only a pale shadow of the leader of the modern military state.

"...So Von Braun was the heat in rocketry, the animal in the programme. By public estimate he had been a Nazi—That was glamour enough. Who could begin to measure the secret appeal of the Nazis by now?.... America was thus daymighty but headless, America was torn by the spectre of civil war, and many a patriot and many a big industrialist—they were so often the same!.... Was the conquest of space then a potential chariot of Satan, the unique and grand avenue for the new totalitarian? .... It was possible that neo Nazism and technology were
finally inimical to each other, 
but it was all to be considered 
again and again. It was complex. 42

For Mailer Appolo 11 is the very air of messianic 
love - that love, which, like Robert Frost's cube of ice, 
travelled on its melting. Mailer feels that there is nothing 
in human nature that makes these evils inevitable. He believes 
that, combative impulsies have an essential part to play, 
especially to lessen enormously harmful efforts. Greed of 
possesion will grow less when there is no fear of destitution. 
Love of power can be satisfied in many ways that involves no 
jury to others. He wants to make men bold and adventurous 
and fearless except in inflicting injuries upon fellow men, 
which in fact, subsumes the philosophy of the American 
constituution.

FIRE AND ADVERTISEMENT paint the most depressing 
picture of the American situation and by, extention of the 
human situation. But Mailer relieves the gloom by projection 
ray of light and hope at the end of the dark tunnel. The 
gloom that surrounds any sensitive soul is deep enough but 
the human spirit and hope that is ingrained in everyone, 
should be a saving feature.
He was, of course, no longer thinking in any real way — what passed for though were the dull whirrings of his depression, about as functional to real intellectual motion as the turning over of a starter when the battery is almost dead. ... it was technology and the absence of emotion which were the only fit mates for the brave.43

Another contemporary of Mailer, John Updike too, paints a similar picture of America.

Your nothing street corners
you ugly eateries
your dear barbarities
and vacant lots
...
Don't read your reviews,
A*M*E*R*I*C*A
You are the only land.44

But that is not all. Updikes characters too are in search of spiritual and religious meaning to life, they discover that sentimental love is a trap and a deceit, happiness is brief, and life as dull as the prepackaged meals.

What creates pessimism in these sensitive writers is often the mundane world of middle and lower class materialism, a land of sterile, empty, trivial lives centered round T.V., movies, and Vulgar Advertisements.
They have turned from ugliness of the external world
to the inner world of reality and to the deeper regions of
self. This has retrieved their vision from the darkness
of the surroundings and has led them to the world of light
and hope.

So, yes, It may be time to say
that the Republic is in Real
peril, and We are the cowards who
must defend courage, sex,
consciousness, the beauty of the
body, the search for love, and the
capture of what may be, after
all, an heroic destiny. But to say
these words is to show how sad
we are, for those of us who
believe the most have spent our
lives writing of fear, impotence,
stupidity, ugliness, self-love,
and apathy, and yet it has been
our act of faith, our attempt
to see—to see and to see hard,
to smell, even to touch, yes to
capture that never of Being
which may include all of us, that
Reality whose existence may
depend on the honest life of our
work, the honour of ourselves
which permits us to say no
better than we have seen. 45

_Fire and Advertisement_ show the irresistible lure
of power. Even the tragedy of history according to Mailer
lies in the same lust of power. The earliest steps in history
were marked by the assertion of man's power over Nature. This
has, in its course, led to the development of science and
technology and the immense and dreadful growth of destructive power in the shape of modern armaments. Man has been trying to master the external nature without sublimating his internal nature. The same is true of the history of religion. Religion must be distinguished from spirituality. Spirituality unites all, but religions divide one from another. And when the leaders of religion join hands with the secular power, they become all the more tyrannical. Catholicism had its logical end in the inquisition; protestantism began with the promise of liberating christian from the tyranny of catholic priest but in the end lure of power subdued the urge of freedom and protestantism itself became a new tyrant.

That is man's historic fear; literally; it can be said that history was created by man's decision to conquer nature, and the evolution of his institutions may have come out of the need to shape the body and mind into proper parts of a social machine which could move into attack upon the mysteries and powers of his existence.... The fear of licence is indeed the fear of the regulators, the managers, the upper classes, the unbeat, for if they were to express themselves exactly as they wished, the orgy would be equal to carnage. Whether the orgy would be equal in fact to the cannibalism of civilization is of course beyond the
speculative bounds of an essay — the purpose of this reconnaissance has been to find a few of the reasons present in the mind when catholicism was put on the side of Hip and Protestantism to the Square. 46

If Middle Ages were marked by intense struggle for establishing superiority of their respective gods and religions known as crusades undertaken by christians and muslims, the modern world is not free from the same stigma, as evidenced by the persistent hostilities between the Jews and Muslims. Such armed confrontations in the name of religion tend to blunt the religious feelings leading to skepticism and loss of faith. Is it religion or cupidity that encourages such conflicts? Politicians play adroitly on the religions sentimentalism for furthering their own causes, for grabbing more power, for enlarging their popular base conversly subverting the human cause.

It is not only the experience and the fear of another war that oppresses the mind, though this is perhaps the greatest of all the evils of our time, but by the great impersonal forces like machines that govern our daily life, making people slaves of circumstances. Man has chosen wrong gods to worship, wrong principles to follow, depriving themselves of the choice of Will.
Mailer becomes America: for him, as for the transcendentalists, the structure of the universe duplicates, the structure of the individual self, all knowledge begins with self knowledge. He has so steeped himself in contemporary culture, drawing together so much of our literary history, political conflicts, pop art and religious heritage, that in his work we experience both a writer and a nation becoming struggling, splitting, groping for a new form. Mailer has blurred the distinction between regarded the traditional meanings of philosophic and the logical terms and has defined his own brand of existentialism entirely in terms of doing. Translating his ego into a literary portrayal of American life."47

Mailer explodes his evolving perceptions about everything from sex, the media, spies, and politics, to writers and art and success, and his own books and career. In ADVERTISEMENT and FIRE larger problems like war, shortages and financial stringency have caused universal fatigue, and have made hopelessness seen shallow and insincere. Instead, smaller problem which are connected with one's town, trade unions or the local branch of political party, may infuse a hopeful spirit and is the best cure for the general mood of pessimistic weariness.
WHY ARE WE IN VIETNAM is a Rabelaisian story set in Alaska—Story of a hunting trip to Alaska during which taboos are shot down as often as big game becomes a sustained symbol of the outsize American urge to give and grab, create and kill.

Andre Fountaine in LE MONDE says:
The United States lost in Vietnam, their finest title to fame, that of the champion of the right of peoples and the individuals to self determination. But it is not only abroad that its image has deteriorated. How many of the hundred thousands of well fed and over equipped young men who have been fighting in the rice paddies for a year again men, women and sometimes children whose reproachful gaze perpetually face them with the question why they were there, have returned cynical, disgusted, during drug addicts, or at the very least disillusioned with the American dream on which they were raised?48

Raymond Aron has compared the Vietnam misadventure with the Sicilian expedition to ancient Athens, and has suggested that this disaster would become intelligible only evoking debris overwanning ride leading to nemesis.
Absolute idealistic philosophy dwells in the realm of abstraction, and disembodied ideas, in F.H. Bradley's telling phrase 'in bloodless categories'. Pragmatism does not excommunicate ideas and concepts altogether but insists that they should have some connection with life and experience. Thus pragmatism paved way as a protest against absolute idealistic philosophy. Pragmatism is a philosophical attitude popularised by the American philosopher William James. Pargmatism made the United States more American in its terms.

Pragmatism, on the other hand, asks its usual question. "Grant an idea or belief to be true", it says, "What concrete difference will its being true make in anyone's actual life? How will the truth be realized? ...What in short, is the truth's cash value in experimental terms.

A concept which is totally unrelated to life's experience and is unrealizable or impracticable is like a coin which has gone out of circulation or a bank note which cannot be encashed. Pragmatism therefore insist, in the words of William James, on the cash value of truth.

As a result, today in America, the power of the State has grown so enormously that it has secured diplomatically a greater hold whether its entry is approved or not, required or not; that is immaterial to American policy. Here Mailer revolts:
America is run by a mysterious hidden mastermind as secret creature who's got a plastic ass hole installed in his brain whereby he can shit out his corporate management of thought. 50

The novel *Why Are We in Vietnam?* focusses the American misunderstanding of Vietnam—its politics, people and economics and its history. In this century, economic interdependence is very much real than at any former time. The reason is that the American economic system has developed from one of private profits, indirectly it separates national sovereignties, interdependence; instead of producing friendliness it tends to be a cause of rivalry. As economy everywhere has, come to be more and more intimately connected with the state, it has become more and more subordinate to politics.

200 million against 30 million people. Gigantic air and naval fleets, more than half a million of warriors armed to the teeth with thousands of the latest type of artillery, coming from a distance of 13000 kms and invading a country which has never in history done the aggressor any harm. Those Americans spread death and disaster over Vietnam, whose people had never attacked or threatened the U.S.A, never occupied even an inch of their territory. Never raided an
American hospital, a school or a village and never even touched a hair of an American soil. In times to come mankind will be unable to comprehend how such a crime has ever been possible.51

Anthony Eden saying is quoted in this connection:

One can not help admitting that the extensive bombardment and, perhaps even more, the shockingly human in treatment of the prisoners make the blood of many people boil who would like to sympathize with the United States.52

Mailer's fiction WHY ARE WE IN VIETNAM? thus portrays the circumstances and the compulsions under which the Americans undertook the responsibility of policing the interests of the non-communist regime in Vietnam. After the second world war the United States of America emerged as the champion of the free world and free enterprise. The speedy spread of communism in East Europe at the end of the war, therefore, prompted America to shoulder the responsibility of containing communism in Europe and elsewhere.

When China became a Communist nation in 1949, the American theatre of operation against communism had moved into Asia with the 'domino' theory in hand. The country to be protected under this theory was Vietnam because of its strategic location. The outbreak of Korean war had further cast a shadow - the shadow of 'Cold War' on Vietnam.
America's involvement in Vietnam began with its recognition of the non-communist regime, called, the state of Vietnam (SVN) in 1950 which was relatively unpopular compared to the regime headed by HQ Chi Miha namely, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). The American involvement, up to 1954, was confined only to strengthen the SVN to make it a viable state against the communist regime.

The nature of the hunt itself suggests in the novel **Why Are We In Vietnam**, the life style of economically prosperous yet exploitative Americans. It says how Americans are reluctant to face the wilderness without the trappings of civilization, but are quite capable of winning over oppressed peoples around the world.

"Listen, know the worst thing I ever saw. It was a poor deer being killed by an eagle. Some hunter had wounded the deer—the eagle finished the job or was about to when I couldn't stand to watch no more and shot the eagle and put the poor deer out of its misery. But that eagle had swooped in, plucked out one eye of the deer, fluttered up a little you know like a Nigger struttingting his ass feathers and then plucked the other eye. It was going to go for the nuts next. Terrible creature the eagle. I've heard they even pull the intestine out of a
carcass like a Sailer pulling rope with his mouth. It got me so upset to recognize that pluribus unum is in the hands of an eagle that I almost wrote an open letter to the Congress of America. Can you imagine your daddy getting that ape ship? But I think it's a secret crime that America, which is the greatest nation ever lived, better read a lot of history to see how shit — and — sure a proposition that is, is nonetheless represented, indeed even symbolized by an eagle, the most miserable of the scavengers, worse than crow'.53

Mailer is convinced that American operation in Vietnam is more than cruel — it is scavenging. He employs the symbol of eagle — which in fact is the national insignia of America — as gouging out the eyes of a wounded deer. In his imagination the deer is Vietnam, a harmless and lovable creature for its innocence and mildness. The country is wounded by communism the hunter—which provided an excuse for the eagle to descend on Vietnam with its strong beak of weaponry. The person who shoots the evil looking eagle is Mailer, figuratively condemning the American action in Vietnam.

Mailer dared writing a book like WHY ARE WE IN VIETNAM? because he could not rest without reviling the evil contained in such an action.
"...the twentieth century is breaking up the ball game, and Rusty thinks large common thoughts such as these: (1) The women are free. They fuck too many to believe one man can do the job. (2) The Niggers are free, and the dues they got to be paid is no Texas Virgin’s delight. (3) The niggers and the women are fucking each other. (4) The yellow races are breaking loose. (5) Africa is breaking loose. (6) The adolescents are breaking loose including his own son. (7) The European nations hate America’s guts. (8) The products are no fucking good anymore. (9) Communism is a system guaranteed to collect dues from all losers. (9a) More losers than winners. (9b) and out: Communism is going to defeat capitalism, unless promptly destroyed. (10) a. Fucking is king. b. Jerk-off dances are the royal road to the fuck. c. Rusty no great jerk-off dancer. d. Rusty disqualified from playing King Fuck. (11) The white men are no longer champions in boxing. (12) The great white athlete is being superseded by the great black athlete. (13) The Jews run the Eastern wing of the Democratic party. (14) Karate, a jap sport, is now prerequisite to good street fighting. (15) The sons of the working class are running around America on motorcycles. (16) Church is out LSD is in (17) He, Rusty, is fucked unless he gets that bear,
for if he don't know white men are fucked more and they can take no more. Rusty's secret is that he sees himself as one of the pillars of the fireament, yeah, man—he reads the world's doom in his own fuckup. If he is less great than God intended him to be, then America is in Trouble.54

Mailer's classification and cataloguing of what Americanism implies—is a furious, helpless cry of a sensitive observer who has no power to prevent the occurrences as in Vietnam. His far cry was neither heard nor understood by America, given to the vulgarity of private pleasures and aristocratic, irresponsible behaviour of expecting others to clear the rinds and withered flowers. The only linguistic weapon Mailer could hope to effectively employ was vulgarity, abuse and sexy language understood by the vast majority of Americans. It is the only way of holding a mirror to their faces. Mailer intends to convey that America should not cut its nose to spite the eyes if their humanitarian philosophy has any validity of substance, if their intention is ethical.

Experience has shown Mailer that there is something which people desire even more strongly than their prosperity and that is to keep other poor. This is a matter in which military power necessarily plays a great part as soon
as trade has come to be mainly between nations rather than between individuals. That is why politics has more and more come to dominate over economics.

"The bear are bad now," says Big Luke
"What do you mean bad"?
"Changing their habits", Big Luke says it comes out. All the good news. It seems there's been too much hunting in the Brooks Range. That's the confession of Kenny Easterly. The Joe Henry and Obungekat Safari Group (which is the exclusive George Humphrey special they are on right now) is no longer so alone in bringing its fine people up into that arctic Circle, all the counter type safari groups like Hunting Ltd., and the Sam Sting Safari are pouring in too. The wild game is changing its psychology.55

Mailer's unequivocal condemnation of American intervention in Vietnam comes out in terms of the bear - hunt and safari hunting down communism which is on the prowl. What matters Mailer is the clash between the interest of one part of the world and the interest of the another categorized as eastern and western blocks of power. Such causes of conflicts centre round three problems: economy, prestige and pride.

Hunting is one of the outlets, for the impulses of aggression. In the animal kingdom, violent instincts are on
the visible level. Nature is red in tooth and claw. It is different with man who has risen above the animal level and lives in civilized communities. His instincts are subordinated to reason and to the normal discipline of civilized life. But this does not mean that the animal instincts have become extinct. They have remained dormant, ready to spring into action and into violence under the pretext of any provocation.

...In WHY ARE WE IN VIETNAM? D.J. is much more capable of living in close proximity to that subterranean world of uncontrolled feeling. He is therefore, less concerned with his own personal equilibrium and more attuned to the alien quality of his environment. D.J. even states that his purpose in writing the novel is to try to show America how to live "in this Electrod edison world" Through D.J. Mailer is able to present once again his criticism of corporate America. But this time he utilizes a language so blunt and a tone so bitter and cynical that the Criticism becomes his most enraged attack against the forces of totalitarianism.56

What Mailer reflects is that American civilization is the civilization of technology and innumerable gadgets. This civilization has been created by wealth and sustained by
corporations, that man has surrendered himself to the gadgets, operated by politicians. Mailer decries the democratic institution that America was originally envisaged, which in reality has turned out to be, totalitarian but today he has been enslaved by the instrument of his own very creation.

A close reading of *Why Are We in Vietnam?* reveals the contradictions and tensions inherent in American thought. Mailer rebels against all aspects of America which have become emblems or extensions of corporate America. Therefore, he is especially concerned with Rusty's role in the novel as perpetuating the power of the American corporation round the world.

The basic impulses of American revolution were democratic and individualistic. The true spirit of democracy and individualism could thrive only where relationship between individuals would be close and face to face. As industry and technology, have advanced by giant strides the simpler societies have been superseded by enormously complicated web of social relations. In this newly developed society individuals have become anonymous and have become mechanized. But a more important development is that individualism has changed its meaning in recent times. The traditional individual was the single individual as a human unit; the
individual in the present industrial society has become a corporate individual.

In the earlier concept of individualism the individual might be endowed with power but he would also be subject to responsibilities of a legal or moral character. The corporate individuals have limitless power but are not burdened either with moral or legal responsibility. The individual could be held responsible for his acts of commission or omission; with the corporate individual, this is hardly possible. The corporate individual authority is invisible and the fixing of responsibility for its action is like life chasing the mirage, the corporation has no soul to be kicked. Unless there is a certain economic equalization throughout the world, there will be cause of envy, rivalry and hatred. This may lead any government to exercise continual force on its subjects.

One of Mailer's objectives is to restore the potential energy and creativity of the American language which may save the nation from the clutches of totalitarianism. Language is not therefore merely the most striking feature of the novel, it is the literary life of the nation.

The method of a speech at Berkeley on Vietnam Day's is essentially that of Why are we
in Vietnam? The novel he published two years later. The language of Why are we in Vietnam is an attempt to reflect cross section of American speech, to embody in language the multiple voice of American Dream life. It is not, though, the language of rational 'daytime' America but as D.J. makes clear of the subconscious suppressed streams of American thought which the narrator, DJ, can been in only at night: If the illusion has been conveyed that my mother, DJ's own mother, talks; you are sick in your own drool, because my mother is a southern Lady... She don't talk that way, she just thinks that way. The richness and suggestiveness of much of this language, stems not merely from the number of variety of idioms and speech rhythms used, but from the wit of their conjunctions.

Now Rusty rolls that Chateau-Lefite-Mouton-Rothschild around his liver-loving lips, and he can tell 49 from 59, all the while thinking of 69. He sings the song of the swine, DJ's daddy, nice fellow actually. Also forgot to mention he's an unlisted agent for Luce publication's. American Airlines Overseas Division, and the IIR - the Institute for International Research-Shit / Spy Heaven there ought to call it. Here Rusty's move from his 'Cowboy foreass bears to the sophistication of his wine connoisseurship is reflected by the sudden shift to the clipped English idiom.
Another shift back to the American vernacular registers the political point about American 'research' foundations which cover espionage activities. The expletive, shit is introduced to indicate that the extended euphemisms are to be cut short, and the spade is to be given its rightful name - 'Spy heaven they ought to call it' 57

Totalitarianism as a political philosophy is prominent especially since the fourth decade of the present century which exerted great influence on the young mind of Mailer. But its origins date back to earliest political thinkers, like Plato, Hobbs, and Rousseau, who propounded totalitarianism. Whether this was so or not, it has been possible for totalitarians to draw certain useful hints from these thinkers. Totalitarianism as the very phrase indicates is a total philosophy and makes the state omnipotent. It is a variation of adoption of the philosophy of fascism clearly formulates and vigorously practised though with disastrous consequences by Mussolini.

The totalitarian philosophy in its Nazi form was similarly expressed and carried out by Hitler with equally disastrous consequences. The idea behind fascism and totalitarianism is that the State becomes everything - as Mussolini put it "everything for the State, everything within
the state, nothing outside the state". The state was one giant corporation— the corporation state were all individuals and all corporations all liberty, all cultural activities are at the sufferance of the state. The state exercises complete control over all aspects of life and presided over the very destiny of the community.

Vietnam gives Mailer an opportunity to witness terrible carnage to vent his own violence. The Vietnam war is a metaphor for the world we all live in, while Mailer insists on the fact that the world we live in is the underground. Mailer emphasizes the wastefulness of the corporations, which will pawn off the American public, a device that not only causes cancer, but, in the very process of being produced, required a bureaucratic and submissive mentality that creates the psychological climates in which cancer can flourish:

As Vance Packard has remarked in THE NAKED SOCIETY:
The American nation has been systematically subjected to bugging and confidential card indexing. And that one agency or another has every individual of consequence under surveillance and personal privacy in a dead letter.58

Mailer is more clear sighted than the presidents and politicians who presided over the destiny of the nation. For
them issues and rights and wrongs are not as pervasively affecting as to Mailer. In fact the portraits Norman Mailer's imagination draws of Thompson or Theodore H. while McGovern or Rockefeller, are truer than the Real selves.

"These are portraits of the moral life made visible in the flesh, and if they ultimately seem to be cartoons in prose, we might remember what another caricaturist, Philip Roth, has said of the technique, that "distortion is a dye dropped onto the specimen to make vivid traits and qualities otherwise only faintly visible to the naked eye".59

Mailer's analysis and his unerring insight led him to conclude that America in Vietnam is bound to suffer, the hunter has transgressed the natural laws governing the game. Retribution of past catches up, what is normally called 'bad luck' attributed as a cause for failure.

Thus Mailer wails in his VIETNAM ...

... Big Luke knows he's getting away with too much, he's violating the divine economy which presides over hunters, and so he could lose a client, he would mar the record of a life... there was a knot of congested fatigue in his heart...60

What Mailer points out is that it is an irony of history that features of the totalitarian state have been
taken over by the American Republic in recent times. The outward forms of republicanism and democracy are intact but the American state is as powerful as any other totalitarian state. It too, in the name of 'National Security' and containment of Red danger, has arrogated to itself the most extraordinary powers of surveillance and control over the lives and minds of its citizens. Until unethical practice of enslaving minds is mitigated, it will be impossible to bring the poor to the same level of prosperity as is now enjoyed by the richer ones. So Mailer concludes that Military solutions proliferate new problems and the nightmare persists.
IV

Having lived through the depression of the thirties, the military holocaust of World War II in the forties, the cold war period of the fifties, and the rebellions emanating from the ghettos and the campuses during the sixties, it is not surprising that Norman Mailer has been continually concerned with the relationship between American Institutions and the inner lives of the American people.

At various points in his career, Mailer has explored the nature of the family and its immediate extensions, the school and the church, as well as the government with its ties to the large corporation the Army, and the police. If his analyses and his proposals for reform have been a strange compendium of sentiments which cut across the political spectrum, Mailer has generally aligned himself with the left. This alignment as well as his entire intellectual and aesthetic development, cannot be separated from the fact that he is of Jewish origin and has lived most of his life in an urban area under financial conditions which have varied according to his literary success.

Mailer was especially concerned with the form of social communication provided by cinema, radio, television and the newspaper, which could create a common denominator.
By doing so, Mailer could speak of the debilitating effects of social communication in order to present a new type of expression.

"...Listen, America, listen to your shame...." He defended nothing intellectually, almost everything emotionally. He said, "The only thing infinite about man is his vanity", the way he liked to walk in the streets to feel people about him. He painted a great deal, read a great many books of art criticism, so that his painting was always conscious articulate, he was one of the few artists who could explain his work clearly, and what it made him feel. He said he believed in nothing, and he enjoyed, it, for he found believing in nothing meant believing in himself, and at that time he was capable of it.61

Mailer has distinguished two main purposes of social activities, security and justice as assured by government for all its subjects. The governmental activity runs counter to the Algerian myth of self made man, a man worth his weight in gold, personal initiative is the pre-requisite for progress. Mailer is of the opinion that no man is wholly free and no man is entirely a slave. Hence, to the extent to which a man has freedom, he needs a personal morality to guide his conduct. Individual achievement which contributes
to the general prosperity of a society should not be lost sight of:

"...... You are considered important by some and put down by others, and every time you meet a new man, the battle is on: the latest guest has to decide if you are
a) stronger than he, and
b) smarter than he, and
c) less queer.
And if you pass on all three counts, if you win the arm-wrestle, culture derby, and short-hair count, well then if he is a decent sort he usually feels you should run for president. But all this happened in the first place because your reputation is uncertain, your name is locked in the elevators of publicity and public fashion, and so your meetings with every man and women around become charged and overcharged.62

The most urgent problems of modern industrialized society owe their origin to the reckless, unplanned and uncontrolled growth of urban localities. Every industrial centre perforce, develops into an industrial city. The industrial city is a conglomeration of several desperate, warring but jointed elements - The captains of industry, the managerial circles, white collared workers and blue collared workers, casual labour, the unemployed and the unemployable,
the drags and wrecks of society driven to beggary, starvation, theft and delinquency. It is in the very nature of such a conglomeration that law and order would be the first victim. The very growth in the dimensions of the city makes its administration more and more difficult until at last city administration remains a name and the life of the city seems to run on its motivation, irrespective of what this civic administration may stand for. The crime and delinquency in urban centres have taken newer and stranger forms under the stimulus of the appurtenances of what passes for developed culture and civilization — the cinema, especially crime pictures, the TV — flashing scene of crime and the refinements in crime, yellow journalism, drug addiction etc.

What Mailer asks the society is to realize where exactly the problem is situated, often with idle vagabonds enjoying more of what makes life a boon then a curse for the anxious had working individuals. People do not always remember that politics, economics and social organizations belong to the realm of reason where means justify the ends. It is in individuals that ultimate value is to be sought. A society must try and exist to satisfy individuals who form part of it.
Society and individual are the main elements of social themes in his novels. ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF, TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE, THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG are conceived by Mailer to tell upon society's apprehensive pressure on the individuals, of genius are not tolerated by the society. Conformity is a rule and a non conformity is a crime: a rule of the average and the mediocre. What Mailer says is that a society can fulfill itself only in the shape of fully developed individuals.

Mailer's Sam Solvoda in the story THE MAN WHO STUDIED YOGA (Collected in Advertisements for myself 1959) contains all the hallmarks of a modern dilemma. Estrangement with ideology and politics, isolation from one's past and from an affluent society and an inhibition about embracing America. We have heard such laments at other times from other quarters, as this is almost a common feature for what we have now understood as the modern condition. An individuals, is caught in the tension resulting from conflicts between self and society, his position and his ambition; If he is alien then as a man and an intellectual he becomes no less than a lunatic:

How hideous was the mental hospital. A concentration camp, decides Sam, perhaps it would be
the world some day, or was that only his projection of feelings of hopelessness? "Do not try to solve the problems of the world he hears from Sergius, and pounds a lumpy pillow.... So Sam enters the universe of sleep, a man who seeks to live in such a way as to avoid pain, and succeeds merely in avoiding pleasure. What a dreary compromise is life:63

If ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF and OF A FIRE ON THE MOON expose over ambitions America, TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE and THE EXECUTIONER'S SONGS are Mailer's honest attempts seeking daily joys. Possibility of adventure and opportunity for creative activities. Mailer cautions about America's overweening ambition. Arnold's powerful statements on Shelley, aptly refers to America, as "a beautiful and ineffectual angle, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain. 64

There is a time when an ambitious type should fight his way through the jungle and up the mountain - it is the time when experience is rich and you can learn more than you ever will again, but if it goes on too long you wither from high tension, you drop away drunk or a burned out brain, you learn what it is to lose seriously in love, or how it goes when your best friend and you are no longer speaking; it is inevitable that a bad fall comes
to the strong willed man who is not strong enough to reach his own peak.65

Love and power still lead to vast tyrannies or to mere obstruction when its grosser forms are impossible. And fear, scarcely conscious is still the dominant motive in many lives. He believes that Cold war policies led Americans to recognize a new phase in their national history for the most fundamental patterns of life were undergoing rapid and definite transformation. The society as a whole moved steadily towards an urban cultural style, local and regional interest, became more rigidly deep on one hand - the southern state - a rural antimodern sensibility and traditional customers provided a major literary subject matter and on the other - the northern industrial state. If the industrial governments tended towards social movement for modernization, the southern was resisted to the every idea of the modern.

As a result emerged racism and sexism and also sprouted the idea of the generation gap where in up-to-date youngsters revolt against stodgy, conservative oldest. Of course the cries against modern ways also cannot be ruled out. There is a feat about complexity of modernity for it is some how threatening, offensive and dehumanizing than that of
olderways of living style.

Mailer calls his country, America an empty country full with wonders. In *OF A FIRE ON THE MOON* he depicts:

Aquarius thought more than once of how powerful the vision of Appollo-Saturn must have been for the leader of the poor peoples Crusade. Doubtless he too had discovered that his feet were forced to shake. However, Aquarius was not yet ready to call this hallowed ground. For all he knew, Appollo-Saturn was still a child of the Devil, was beautiful indeed. Or rather, was the devil so beautiful because all of them, Johnsons, Goldwater, Paines, Abernaths, press grubs and grubby Aquarius, were nothing but devils themselves. For the notion that man voyaged out to fulfill the desire of God was either the heart of the vision, or anathema to that true angle in Heaven they would violate by the fires of their ascent. A ship of flames was on its way to the moon.66

Thus Mailer portrays the American Society torn between two different cultures, poles apart—the traditional culture of morality and ethical soundness and agrarian and the contemporary trends of in human, greedy, vulturous, consumeristic. By contrast he discovers to his horror, the modern culture provides no moorings for a cultured peaceful
existence. _The Executioner's Song_, _Of A Fire On The Moon_, _Advertisements For Myself_ and _Tough Guys Don't Dance_ are the novels in which the author has tried to peel off the husky mask of modern society.

The sickness of modern society can be seen through each one of its many layers. Mailer has, as seen earlier, diagnosed the many ailments that are eating into the very life of society. Mailer's diagnosis is not only general, comprehending the entire range of society, but also centered round the particular. As an illustration mention may be made of his clinical analysis of the family, which is the basic unit of social life. This is both necessary and useful for, what may be missed in a panoramic view may be grasped with the help of a _Lynx Eye_.

Plato had said long ago that the state is the citizen in large and the citizen, the state in miniature. He suggested that it would be easier to comprehend the nature of the whole by understanding the nature of the part in which the whole is concentrated; similarly the nature of the part could be appreciated with reference to the character of the whole.
In a way it may be said that Mailer reinforces his survey of the nature of modern American society by proceeding to characterize the family in the present context.

America is such a country where greatness cannot be measured: Greatness lies in the promise of growth and promise of well-being.

The great society whose hallmark is economic growth has demoralizing effects for two reasons— one, that it is imposed from the top and therefore fails to enlist the honesty and co-operation of those who are sought to be benefitted by its programmes; secondly because aid is indiscriminately advanced from the top, it is almost invariably misused. Amounts extended for housing purposes may well be diverted for drink. He who does not indulge in fraud would earn for himself the title of a fool.

The so called great society gives the individuals only a momentary sense of well-being like an injection of B-complex but does not prepare the individual for self help and self effort. Besides the temptation it provides for deliberate and ingenious methods of corruption and degradation of human character induces a sense of depravity.
In the novel _OF A FIRE ON THE MOON_ Mailer's ire is clearly directed against the personality, ideas and policies of Lyndon Johnson. There are innumerable references to Johnson, though oblique, in _OF A FIRE ON THE MOON_. Johnson finds his deputy in Von Braun, and Von Braun gives utterance to all that Johnson himself has in mind. Nixon, Barry Goldwater the heroes of the modern American 'Anti-drama' are all subjected to scathing irony and wit:

On this morning, with two hours to spend before the launch, he chooses not to get into another bus - not another bus this day! - to travel to the other of the vehicle Assembly Building where the VIPs will be sitting in bleachers. He knows there is a good haul there - all of two hundred congressmen, Sargent, Shiver, Mr. and Mrs. James E., Webb, WilliamW. Scranto, Jack Benny, Cardinal Cook, Daniel Patrick, Moynihan, Johnny Carson, Gianni Agnelli, Senator Javits, Leon Schacter of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workers, prince Napoleon of Paris, four hundred foreign ministers, attaches and military aviation officials, two hundred and seventy five leaders of commerce and industry, vice President Agnew, Lady Brid and former President Lyndon B. Johnson plus Barry Goldwater and slacks and red goldfing shirt. The last two will shake hands for the cameras before this is all over - space
will prove bigger than both of them.67

Aquarius the reporter of the moon launch strongly feels that he should be there to study them, record their expressions, to comment on the part of history they command and their relations the part of history now being created. But his and their relation will simply be not permit because he is here to see the rocket go up and not to stand and look at very important people. So he takes notes on Moon launch while he sweats in the heat. He is not qualified because he is not a big man.

Mainly, the mass media is made up of a group of people who crave for power. They want power because it is the only thing that will relieve the profound illness which has seized them, which has seized Mailer believes in the 20th century. Malthus propounded that the excessive procreation leads to excessive mediocritization of intellect. The death does occur on the battle field any longer or through malnutrition it occurs within the brain of a human being.

Mailer dislikes the VIPs, dislikes most of them as a gang, mafia of celebrity. They are categorized as a wicked lot, cheering the launch with great relish, for some ulterior
motive of some advantage of higher dignity. They can pose as
great benefactors, great philanthropes and adventurers.

....He is still sufficiently a
Manichean to believe that if
Saturn V goes up in perfect
launch, it will not be the fault
of the guests. No some of the
world's clowns, hand maidens,
and sycophants and some of the
most ambitious and some of the
very worst people in the world
and gotten together at the
dignitaries stand. If this
display of greed, guilt,
wickedness, and hoarded psychic
gold could not keep Saturn V
off its course, then wickedness
was weak today. Or did wickedness
crowd to the witness stand to
cheer evil on its fight? It did
not matter how the reporter's
mind turned, it was filled with
nothing but the most fruitless
questions today. He discovered
he was thirsty.68

Mailer finds an analogy between American social
system and F.B.I. and calls it an organised religion. The
F.B.I. blots out every thing which could bring dread into the
average mediocrity's life. It has nothing to do with
communism, to do with catching criminals or with Mafia. The
syndicate has nothing to do with trust busting or inter state
commerce but it serves as a church for the mediocre, a high
church for the true mediocre:
After all, one can have Fascism come in any form at all through the church, through sex, through social welfare, through state conservatism, through organised medicine, the F.B.I. the pentagon. Fascism is not a philosophy but a murderous mode of deadening reality, by smothering it with lies.69

F.B.I thus panders to the baser elements of man, in order to smother reality with abominable lies, as fascism has done before.

What pains Mailer is that there is a concealed desire to replace men everywhere with machines poorly designed and abominably put together. This is the world created by VIPs who know nothing about the space but they want its value.

Mailer argues that politicians and mass media have an unholy alliance, in misleading the public. A combination of these two categories proffer programmes on the T.V. and through other media, which may appeal least to the people but witnessed all the same for want of a better alternative. After sponsoring and presenting such programmes as achievements of a government or of a particular politician, the gobbelian technique is put into operation. Falsehood acquires the aura of truth, and a selfish politician that of a divine.
Mailer cites the example of army in *Of A Fire on the Moon*. Army is used as a tool to augment to political fortunes of a party or a president, corrupting the force by dubious means. The tall claims made by the generals, become only a strategy to corner glory as well as grab. Army depends on the private manufacturers of armaments who make big profits; big profits are shared by the generals who evolve strategies of security by presenting an alarming picture of superior striking ability of a rival. Thus, the politicians, army and manufacturers of armaments, play a sly game, syphoning of governmental funds, by keeping the society in a state of suspended animation, generating a war hysteria.

...That technological age would solve all the old problems - so declared the confidence of Kennedy's elite. What better for the symbol of a new age than a landing on the moon before the decade was out? It was a blind push, equal to the hot sobs of the Oklahoma land grabber who plunked down his marker and said, "My land runs from this stone to that tree", before he even knew if he had bottom lands or water. Before the decade was out why? Because, the trip to the moon had to serve as the embodiment of a new vision and visions are obliged to be neat. Kennedy, like many an enterprising young man
before him, knew the best approach to large and complex mysteries was to plunge your hands into the short hair. "This is a new ocean," he said, and 'I believe"the United States must sail upon it".70

The moon-launch succeeded in creating a false sense of success in the minds of the Americans as a scientific and technological wonder - no matter billions of dollars evaporated in to thin vision. People could be enthused to crazily ear-mark lands on the space of moon for, only Americans can claim right of property on moon - surface due to the fact that America landed its space - Craft there, before others did.

Alleviation of human suffering has always been on the top of any agenda for political deliberation, and ironically, it attracts the least priority.

Further Mailer's satirical comment on Lyndon Johnson is venomous:

....Lyndon Johnson, was telling Walter Cronkite on television, "There's so much that we have yet to do - the hunger in the world, the sickness in the world. We must apply some of the great talent that we've applied to space to these problems". Yes, his mouth poured forth cement".71
The insincerity of politicians is to be seen to be believed.

Contemporary American Society, sustained by the idealistic, philanthropic, democratic culture of the past, has gradually been corrupted and debased. The present democratic system of government, Mailer wails, is a sad skeleton of the original debased and degraded. Selfishness, power — hunger and ruthlessness have wildly spread in the body — politic too, destroying the very foundations of American society, established on the sacred principles of honest competitiveness, paving way for prosperity. Society, then, faced a moral vaccum, a crisis of faith, which the leadership of the nation is incapable of arresting the decline and restoring to health. The story ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE PATRON SAINT OF MACDOUGGAL is Mailer’s response to the degradation of America’s image as a nation.

Pierrot is presented as the body of American dream without its spirit and substance. Son of a worthy father, Pierrot is a bigot, an imposter, claiming everything without deserving. And through story Mailer introduces every dimension of American imagination.

Born in a family of intellectual celebrity, Pierrot could not boast any of his father’s — Jacques Battigny —
qualities. The two, father and son, could prove a pair of opposites. The father was an upright gentleman where as his son approaches nowhere near his convictions. They represent a thesis and antithesis. Pierrot's greatest quality is chattering about large bodies of experience he knows nothing. He could not fool everyone, everytime - had to change his circle of listeners quite often. He ultimately is forced into the army, then thrown out to USSR. The laconic, taciturn Russians could suffer him no more. The Society army division where he was commissioned desired his position in the firing squad. Nonetheless, Pierrot did not depart from his usual customary habits.

Pierrot is like, the "educated youth of Athens" who were constantly put to test by Socrates and made to confess that they knew not, for all their vain boasting. Pierrot represents the half educated shallow wits that abound in the present day society who may make an immediate impression by their high sounding words but sooner discovered to be the empty headed.

Earlier generation represented by father governed by intellect, honesty, reason etc. is revived by the younger present generation which boasts and bursts. Caricaturing
Pierrot, Mailer concludes:

Then Pierrot will rise to his true stature. "I ask myself" he will say to the Russian Soldiers, "am I not miserable? Is life not sad? Shoot me". At this point the Russians will throw down their arms and begin to weep. "We do not enjoy ourselves either, "they will sob. "Shoot us, too". In the grand Russian manner, the news will spread across the steppes. Soldiers everywhere will cast away their weapons. America and Russia will be disarmed in a night, and peace will come over the earth.72

What could not be attained by intellectuals, honest, peace loving wise men, can be peremptorily achieved by an idiot like Pierrot overnight, Disarmament and arms control between two suspicious rivals like America and Russia is presented by Mailer in such ridiculous terms.

Mailer castigates America as a land of idiots who trounce others with inveterate cackle. As a matter of fact Russia, the communist country becomes a dust bin for discarded intellectuals or presumptuous like Pierrot. Though Mailer hails communism as a philosophy, declines to accept it as a way of life. He finds America, a changed scenario conservation replaced by consumerism, as honour by salute. In
fact the American cultural heritage, rather the absence of it, which has inspired Mailer to convey the reality in a lively and witty manner. He also speaks of American societal setting and the way it has come into the present state of perplexity.

*The Executioner's Song* has an outlaw, Gary Gilmore as its central character. It is created to suggest a change in the understanding of concept of "outlaw". Mailer presents the criminal through the voices and unconsciousness of all the non-violent, non-murderous people around him. Further he invokes and involves the imagination of his audience in their own historically orphaned situation. What Mailer shows is a horror which occurs when decent people happen to come across a man like Gilmore at the wrong moment.

...Can one argue seriously that our streets are less safe to walk on than the streets of Paris in 1300? or Naples in 1644? But the 20th century, in destroying a romantic view of existence, has created an awareness of violence as electric as paranoia.

This condition of paranoia that has gripped the nation has allowed Mailer to concern himself in daily matter of American life. The executioner's song is Mailer's reaction.
What Mailer feels and foresees is that whenever people get collectively sick, the remedy becomes progressively more violent and hideous. An insidious, sickness demands a violent ruthless prognosis. If individual feelings are discouraged at every turn and social irritations are blanketed by benefits and welfare programmes, then the desire to reach toward one's own individual feelings as a solution becomes stupefied. This feeling has led Mailer to attempt another theme, that of Gary Gilmore, in of THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG.

Gary Gilmore, the murderer, appealed to Mailer because he is an embodiment of many of the themes even before they were transformed to in a book form. Besides he felt that Gilmore was not a usual criminal to inflate his character. This event inspired Mailer to expose more about American way of living. He did not want to gild the natural gold he came across while writing his novel. This intention of Mailer is clarified in an interview with the well known critic John W. Aldridge.

....Paint this realistic scene as it is, because in the act of presenting it, you will underline the mystery. Let it be more like American life than anything that's being done in the long time. I don't think good writers often have the kind of opportunity. Usually, material
this good, gets chewed over by journalist and bad writers. There are probably and few exceptions but I can only think of in cold blood.

I was in the more promising position of dealing with a man who was quintessentially American and yet worth of Dostoevesky. If this were not enough, he was also in love with a girl who — I'll go so far as to say is a bonafide American heroine. I didn't, want, therefore, to novelise a bit. 74

Mailer's main motto was to make people believe in what he writes and conveys. With this he wants to show how the onerous duty of a journalist is to replace fiction by the fact and thus create a kind of history, a fictional history, which assimilates actuality of the event. An act of violence, however, cannot be recorded truly because the action cannot create a mood but shatters an act of creation. This means one must make up an act of violence in order to write about it. Thereby, the author has taken someone who is a legendary figure and has invented episodes to make it more authentic. This is something wonderful. It is not just a paranoid work. It has all the rough edges of reality. Mailer insists on being truthful to the spirit of american life than creating a myth of imaginary goodness.
John Didion's remark as quoted by Mailer's biographer, Peter Manso is pertinent:

I think no one but Mailer could have dared this book. The authentic western voice, the voice heard in THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG is one heard often in life but only rarely in literature, the reason being that to truly know the west is to lack all will to write it down. The very subject of THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG is that vast emptiness at the centre of the western experience, a nihilism and antithetical not only to literature but to most other forms of human endeavour, a dread so close to zero that human voices fade out, trial of, like sky writing.... When I read this I remembered that the tracks made by the wagon wheels are still visible from the air over Utah, like the footprints made on the Moon. This is an absolutely astonishing book.75

Mailer went to Utah in order to know more about Gary Gilmore. There, he realised that it is a place whose inhabitants have hardly heard of New York and he was a stranger to them. This helped him to know how americans who don't live in the media-coverage are able to lead interesting lives. He could even notice many trivial details of American life. His stay in Utah added a rich flavour to his experience. He learnt that the hoodlums are
more likely to encounter existential experience than the university man. Something happens in an act of violence which is beyond one's measure of control. It is this aspect that has been focused mainly in *The Executioner's Song*.

In general people use violence in various, often, conflicting ways. For Mailer it seems there are two kinds of violence. One is personal violence - an act of violence by man or woman against other men or women. The second kind is social violence - evidenced in concentration camps, nuclear warfare. Social violence creates personal violence as its complement.

A juvenile delinquency is violent not because the parents are necessarily violent to a child or the society is cruel to him. It is because the child's spontaneous expression is cut off by institutional throttling of his nature. Violence is directly proportional to the power to deaden one's mood which is possessed by the environment. So violence sprouts as a desire to fight one's way out of a trap.

Gary Gilmore had a highly developed kind of man con that caught national imagination. He refused legal efforts to reverse the jury's verdict of death for felony, murder. The last months of his life were covered at great cost as press
persons descended to report - the coverage itself had seemed the real story. At this stage Mailer wanted to exploit the situation for a wonderful outcome. From the point of view of psychology fear and range are closely analogous emotions. The man who feels rage is not necessarily possessed of the highest kind of courage. The cruelty that is invariably displayed by suppressing various forms of opposition is an offshoot of cowardice, some moral inadequacy. So what Mailer wants to draw, is to educate ordinary men and women that they shall be able to live without fear. Since, only a few heroes and saints have achieved such a life of fearless courage from righteousness, Mailer intends to project common people like Gilmore, who realize this great awakening, life without fear. Mailer proudly says:

Probably I was captured by how complex he was. It seemed to me that it’s not the banality or the brutality of evil with which we have to contend, but its complexity, that is the similarity of evil in others to ourselves. As I got to know Gilmore, and I came to know him better than I know almost anyone in my life, I began to see that he was a man easily as complex as myself. Naturally, I have always thought of myself as being fairly complicated. Somewhere, in there, I realized that being a murderer was not
a final factor, and shouldn't stop all thought. Once we allow ourselves to see Gilmore in his contradictions, the fact that he is a murderer is significant, let's say it is as much as one quarter of his personality while the potential murderer in each of us might be only one sixteenth or one sixty-fourth of our personality, but fundamentally he is still more like us than unlike us. That is why I wanted to write the book in this way, with its slow accumulation of detail. 76

Mailer wanted the reader to confront the true complexity of a human personality that can emerge from studying one man from close quarters. Above all the subject was fascinating, for he had to deal with those with a killing instinct.

THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG is about Gary Gilmore a killer and his beloved Nicole. It has been brought out in the journalistic form and that is why it sounds a perfect factual account of the activities of the subject. Minute details about the three characters, Gary Gilmore, Bessie and Nicole are presented. Gilmore from Utah, a remote province. He is not notorious because he has hardly done anything noticeable. However, he has spent a large part of his thirty odd years in reform schools and prisons. Therefore having been reared in
that airless stretch of the western zone of America, he has experienced scarcity of jobs, money and even dreams. A psychological aberration dominated Gilmore’s behaviour as a matter of growing repulsion within. His very style of living had nothing in particular but a kind of recklessness. Gilmore on a fine summer day murders two men by blowing their brains. The obvious motive, the prosecution advances is robbery. For those murders he is tried and sentenced to death, in a country where there had not been an execution for a decade. Until then he is an unknown entity in America. In the normal course, Gary’s sentence would have been commuted to life-imprisonment for the state is reluctant to hang him. After the death sentence is proclaimed, lawyers and well-wishers procure and advance fresh evidence before the trial court for reconsideration of the premise of the crime committed by Gilmore. What he has been jealously guarding as secret is the motive for the crime. Through Nicole’s confession and good offices of friends and relatives, the motive is discovered as a reprimand to eve-teasing. Gilmore could not remain inactive when his lady love has been subjected to ridicule. His reaction may be disproportionate to the light-hearted advances of those murdered. Gilmore extracts a promise from Nicole, not to reveal the truth for,
he seems to have decided to seek an end to the bane of his life. Death would be a relief, a release from the cycle of imprisonment and release from jail. He treded an unwelcome path in childhood. Housed in reformatory for juvenile-delinquency now has no visions of a happy future. He views death as light at the end of a tunnel and years for it. He insists that the original sentence be carried out the ensuing battle and victory make him a media star, turning both his life and his death into a marketable commodity, a grisly media event. Mailer’s novel is created, based directly on interviews, documents, records of the court proceedings and other authentic material, that he chanced to gather from his trips to Utah and Oregon. Out of such material is this book built, and the story is as accurate as one can make it. With the details available Mailer becomes sympathetic and fair to Gilmore, his beloved Nicole and their romance.

I don’t ever want to feel that pain again. I am so completely in love with you, Nicole. I miss you so much, baby when I read your two letters and picture your pretty face the darkness rolls back and I know that I am loved. And that’s for only two months I’ve known in this life. I wouldn’t trade it for anything... There are somethings you just know. And it went so deep so fast - it was a recognition,
a renewal a re-union. Me and you
Nicole; from a long time ago.
I have always loved you, Angel.
Let's don't ever hurt each other
again.77

Mailer presents Gilmore not as a ruthless murderer
but a sensible man, normal in his reactions to the promises of
love and life. There is nothing abnormal in Gilmore neither
depression nor neuerosis, that separates him from others. His
letters to Nicole are virtual testimonials to this fact.
Another striking feature of this novel is that Mailer could
develop an insight into woman's elegance. This has become
possible because he approached many women to study their
minds by interviewing them. Interview with Brenda, Gary's
cousin is quite revealing because she is an unusual
character.

Brenda brings home Gilmore after his release after
a long stint of 14 years of imprisonment for committing
a highway robbery. Individuals as a transparent media of the
society evince no interest in the jail bird. Even cousins
make up their minds to disown him, except Brenda who
represents altruistic love. It is she who covers her husband
to seek Gilmore's release on bail.
Bessie was also a bold woman in her own right a young widow, struggling to rear two of her surviving sons – Gary and Mikail. A character like hers also failed to reform her sons, who have gone astray. But what appears, is not a fact. After the execution of her son Gary, she had received letters threatening her life which she ignored. She also received letters from people who wrote songs about Gary and wanted her permission to publish. She did not bother to reply. Letters would not hurt or inspire a woman whose son had taken four bullets through the heart. What dread would be there for a person who had already reached the point of no return. Even death could not frighten her.

Gary’s love Nicole, personification of perversity has gone through hell to return with one simple message:

Nothing is worse in all the world than the taste of bullshit in your mouth.78

Nicole’s sister April was a specimen of nightmare for their mother Kathrine. April and Nicole did never get along well. Things might get better, things might get worst but certain things Kathrine could count on. One of them was that April and Nicole would spit like cats before the day was out.
**THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG** has posed questions about mass culture and democratic society without seriously debating how much freedom there is to find an effective expression of one's ideas. Everything is viewed in a stoic way. The important intention of Mailer in this novel is to search out the healthy aspects of American life as they are democratic and American artistic caravan is no longer isolated. Mailer has given a curious turn in this novel to the theme of the inviolable spirit of honour. It has become fashionable to sneer at economics and emphasize the human dilemma. What seems never to have been discussed are the possible alternatives and their efficacy.

**THE EXECUTIONERS SONG** is a result of the application of Gilmore's pure thought upon moral purity. The fact that there is a society outside himself which threatens, suggests, nudges, and promises, is dismissed as mere mechanical leftism. It is considered the worst of bad taste to imply that the artist or intellectual who does not find his way within can find a community without and must suffer if he is first rate. The exercise of his abilities in obscurity or if he is second-rate must incur the even more painful condition of being not at all chic.
The other main problem focussed is that the enemy is vague, the work seems done, the audience more sophisticated than the writer. Society has been rationalized and expert encroaches on the artist. Belief in the efficacy of attacking his society has been lost, but nothing has replaced the need for attack. If, then, a number of important intellectuals and writers now see it as their function to interpret American society from within must necessarily assume that the motives are more serious exhaustion.

Actually the execution has paved way for introspection on serious terms like birth, death and life pattern. If Mailer’s way of interpreting about the same theme is linear in THE NAKED AND THE DEAD it is cyclical here. In THE NAKED AND THE DEAD there is no option for it is the war situation, whereas here the situation is the execution of a convict Gary Gilmore who gunned down two men in the summer of 1976. If THE NAKED AND THE DEAD conveys the purpose of life, THE EXECUTIONER’S SONG demarcates the subtle difference between crime from violence and urge for love, which dwell simultaneously in the human heart. Gary Gilmore’s execution has attracted even more attention than the assassination of President Kennedy. What Mailer wants to show is that death is not the ultimate dread but life is.
'Curse all the world's gifts, for mockeries and gilded lies! And miscalled, every one. They are not gifts but merely lendings. Pleasure, Love, Frame, Riches; They are but temporary disguises for lasting realities - Pain, Grief, Shame, Poverty. The fiery said true, in all her store there was but one gift which was precious, only one that was not valueless.79

Gilmore though a ruffian and criminal, has realized the worth and living, the bond of love and the value of death, vividly as any other sensitive and civilized person. Gary was an honest man with no impediment between his impulses and his actions. Perhaps this could turn the world around and he too found a place as an image of that year 1976 in the eyes of Americans.

Gilmore also sensed every aware of the aura of his public image, and thanked Father Meersman each night for the newspaper. It was certain Gary liked to talk about his case. He was fascinated the night Father Meensman brought a copy of Time magazine dated right after the first of the year, first issue of 1977 (although it came out a couple of days before the new year). In it were a couple of pages facing each other said "Images 76" and there you could see photographs of President elect Carter and his mother and
wife, of Betty Ford, and Isabelle Peron from Argentina, and a photograph of the body of Mao Tse-tung lying in state, together with a picture of the leg support of Viking I that had landed on Mars, and Secretary of State of Henry Kissinger holding an African sword in one hand and a shield in the other while out in Kenya, and a photograph of the young gymnast Nadia Comaneci, and yet on the same two pages, was also a picture of Gary Gilmore in his maximum Security prison whites. There he was grinning at the camera just after he'd received the date of his death sentence at the Board of Pardons Hearing. It didn't fail Gilmore's attention that in the yearly roundup of 1976, he was in elevated company.

Gilmore was not a seasoned criminal. He was a talented thief. Circumstances had conspired to turn him a murderer, warranting his death sentence, Mailer records a song to suggest how sensitive Gary has been, and loving and companionable:

When I was a lad, and Old Shep was a pup,
Over hills and meadows we'd roam,
just a boy and his dog, we were both full of fun
And we grew up together that way.
As the years went along, Old Shep, he grew old,
And his eyesight was fast growing dim,
Then one day the doctor looked up at me and said,
"I can't do no more for him, Jim".
With a hand that was trembling, I picked up my gun,
And aimed it at Shep's faithful head.
But I just couldn't do it, Oh, I wanted to run,
And wished they could shoot me instead.
Now, Old Shep, he knew he would go.
He looked and licked to my hand,
He stared up at me, just as much as to say,
"Ee’re parting, but you’ll understand".
Now Old Shep, he has gone where the good doggies go,
And no more with Old Shep will I roam,
But if dogs have a heaven, there’s one thing I know,
Old Shep has a wonderful home.81

Mailer travesties the society and its jurisprudence
that kills for love. Gilmore does not miss the symbolic
significance of the dog’s death and a possible happy home
abroad. Sickness, as identified by the physician in an
individual, for which there is no remedial way of curing or
reabsorbing into the society, the person has to be
sacrificed. The same song was heard by Gilmore often from
Vern what Gilmore understands, clarified Mailer’s mind.

I have talked to people who know
more than I do, and people who
know less, and I listen, and
I decided the only fucking thing
I know about death, the only real
feeling I have about it, it’ll be
familiar; I don’t think it’ll
be a harsh, unkind thing. Things
that are harsh and unkind, are
here on earth, and they’re
temporary. They don’t last.
This all passes, that is my
summation of my ideas, and
I might be all wet.82

This sensetivity of Gilmore attracts the attention
of a pious man like Father Meersman. Gilmore is never afraid
of death; he welcomes it with full awareness of its implications, like the dog in the poem, licking the master by way of saying farewell. Death is not a frightfully harsh phenomenon that many deem but an eternal elysium, end of misery.

Father Meersman, Gilmore’s favourite ‘Padre’, would come to offer his services to Gary Gilmore very very honestly, without even caring whether or not the condemned man is a catholic. It was all due to Gary’s goodness. Even at this hour of peril, Father is amazed to find Gary cool and unperturbed. His determination to die in dignity, which matters a lot for Gary, could win Father Meersman’s friendship. Before Gary, Father Meersman has not come across such an undaunted criminal. He had assisted at many executions and knew something of the routine of it. Father Meersman, deeply religious himself, could divine in Gary’s person those streaks that have gone into the making of heroes and saints – the stoicism, fortitude, the zest for life and fearlessness of death. Mailer is astoundingly fascinated by the heroism of a condemned criminal and does not hesitate to glorify Gilmore and the uncorrupted Glory of love in defence of whose dignity that a person sacrifices his life. Gilmore justifies the pristine purity of love at the cost of his life, as Samson proved the greatness of God and justified his mysterious ways through sacrifice of his life while destroying his enemies.
Mailer knows that sex holds enormous fascination for everyone, and it has dignity and value. It essentially concerned with the process of procreation. Mailer may be considered as deeply involved in and concerned with the problem of Sex — a major thrust in analysing the characteristics of the young men and women in the modern society. From days immemorial, sex has been the major thematic motif, with or without the sanctity of marriage. Love between the sexes has been traditionally accepted in any society as an essential, honest relation where the spouses are expected to remain loyal to each other. Sex has procreative urge — the foundation on which God’s creativity flourishes. This sexual unification of partners has been glorified and attributed a kind of dignity and is governed by a value — system. Mailer subscribes to the value — system governing the love — relationship between a male and female, as a mature writer.

Love has gradually been degraded in the world of materialism, which has been reduced to the status of physical relationship, fulfilling carnal desires. Whatever may be the factors contributing to the loss of values, frustrations or shifting ideals, Mailer is willing to trust the emotion of
love in its purest form. He seems to sensitize love and
differentiate it from lust, from the fun of sex or sexual
orgy.

Mailer seems to have classified 'love' from his
observation into categories procreative and sterile. He must
have been pained to find sterile love gaining in currency,
and encompassing a large section of men and women in America.

Mailer has categorized sexual activities according
to status. He says a leisure class may be more preoccupied
with sexuality, but a "submerged class", meaning the
proletariat - is going to be more allured by it due to easy
availability. He further argues that the upper classes are
obsessed with sex but they invest too much of energy for
manipulation of power. In effect, they exchange sex for power
than developing an emotional involvement with each other.
Their love making descends to sheer sexuality which offers no
pleasure; and the submerged classes plough back their desire
for power into sex. To be clear, there is more sexual vitality
at the bottom than there is at the top. It is more of a natural
phenomenon for the commoner to be more luxuriant. 'Debroah'
of Dream and 'Nicole' of Song are created to represent the
two extremes of female sex - one pandering her love for
manipulations of power and the other, offering love for the
pleasure of it, with no ulterior motives.

Mailer does believe that sexuality plays a major role in the formation of a social set up. The excitability for sexual indulgence varies from country to country, from one community to the other, on various external factors including climate and food. Those consuming spicy food, as the poor do, are prone to greater vitality than the so-called civilized who burn themselves in sterilized spirits and boiled foods.

Cold war politics led Americans to recognize a new phase in their national history, for the most fundamental patterns of life were undergoing rapid and definite transformation. The society as a whole has been steadily moving towards an urban cultural style local and regional interests become more rigidly deep. On one hand - the southern states - with traditional sensibility steeped in agrarian economy and customs provided a major literary thematic motif and the other the northern industrial states of money and power and carelessness offering another motif. If the industrial governments tended to lean towards social movements for modernization, the southern states tried to resist the very ideal of modernism.
Southern states flourished due to the cheap Negro labour which later on acquired the maximum attention for their social integration due to racial discrimination.

The exploitation of Negroes as a disposable commodity, exploitation of the female labour for satisfying their perverted sexual urges, have created the typical American situations where sex and race problems have acquired significance in their lives as well as their literature. Added to these are the frustrations of the post-war youth whose psyches were blased or blunted by the dehumanizing experience. The Jazz and hippie cultures reflect the 'lost generation' who decry the values to which the earlier generations hitched their wagons. In their rapacious desire to project their nihilism younger generation defiled and rejected the old and made efforts to live a life devoid of traditional concepts of morality, love and virtues. They resorted to sex and elevated sexualism – free sex – as a symbol of revolt, and exhibited their angry frustrations through violence.

....That post-war generation of adventurers who (some consciously, some by osmosis) had absorbed the lessons of disillusionment and disgust of the twenties, the depression, and the war. Sharing a collective disbelief in the
words of men who had too much money and controlled too many things, they knew, almost as powerful a disbelief in the socially monolithic ideas of the single mate, the solid family and the respectable love life. So no wonder that in certain cities of America, in New York of course, and New Orleans, in Chicago and San Francisco and Los Angeles, in such American cities as Paris and Mexico, D.F., this particular part of a generation was attracted to what the Negro had to offer. In such places as Greenwich Villages, a menage-a-trois was completed—the bohemian and the juvenile delinquent came face-to-face with the Negro, and the hipster was a fact in American Life.83

Americans who worship the 'bitch-goddess' of success as their deity, whose life-force is possession and display of wealth, have main emphasis in today's society shifting from production to consumption and from work to leisure. This makes an individual deflate the old set of beliefs and look askance at the concept of loyalties, even in marriage, or constancy as a virtue.

ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF, THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG, TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE represent the sociological milieu in these years which are mainly devoted by Mailer to the analysis of the behaviour of Americans. Mailer's writing is
concerned with social and cultural factors. The great expansion of sociology, war, brutality, depression and unemployment, the implications of money, class and ideology, and especially, the individual sentiments and sensibilities that grow out of such a history.

What Mailer suggests is that there are two ways one can get along in the world, studying books, or knowing a great deal about fellow men and women. Perhaps that is how the Jews stayed alive by having a culture to which they could refer, in which more or less they could believe. The Negroes stayed alive by having sex which could keep them warm and multiply. Henceforth majority of Mailer's novels come out from this cast of his mind wherein they exhibit a kind of particular faith, so that man need not feel left out. It may be Gary of THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG, D.J. of Vietnam or Rojack of THE AMERICAN DREAM, even Timothy of TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE they all share the faith of the common man but emerge with greater realisation.

Mailer attaches importance to the feeling of identity a fruitful belonging mainly because the old faiths have been crumbling,

All the Americans faiths, one by one, are being exploded. We lived for too long in a paranoid dream
world that believed communism
was the secret of all evil on
earth because it was the social
embodiment of the devil.84

Mailer decries the American mad scramble against
communism as an embodiment of all evil on earth. It is better
that the salient features of communism are understood and
adopted in order to make the common living worth living,
than languishing in poverty. His excursion with communism has
not turned him into converted zealot. Mailer touches upon
another of his serious concerns in his thought process — the
unit of a family in the society, and need for some sort of
ethics to ensure that the social obligations remain intact.
The older generations held martial bonds sanctimonious —
marrages as made in heaven wherein the spouses have to live
Together whether or not their association turns out good. The
later generations, particularly after the first world war,
reached the concept of sanctity and practised loose morals,
resulting in breaking up of homes, leaving children
destitute. These unwanted children, growing into youth, are
guided by neither morals nor models — they advance into the
world full of ferocity, insensitive to other’s feelings.

The contemporary America has managed to infuse a
need for faith in the institution of marriage, though it
amounts to a gamble of co-habitation, with acceptance of their responsibility in case of procreation. But the society has become wise, taking advantage of the advancement in medical sciences, to avoid child birth or postpone pregnancy, to such time that the partners really decide to have one.

People used to go into marriage without questioning the institution, never thought of a life where they might not be married. By now, weddings are beleaguered. When people go into it today, we have an existential adventure, for they don't know how it will turn out. In other words, marriage has become interesting again. It's gamble they well may lose. Of course, I'm not referring to all of society-more to that education leisure class which is the base of the establishment. Precisely in that part of our world, marriage is weakest.85

Mailer reiterates about the burden of responsibility through a number of characters created in his novels. So too is he concerned with the orgy of sex, irresponsible sexuality which is in fact violence perpetrated on the other sex and pornography as victimizing the younger generation.

The EXECUTIONER'S SONG touches upon the burden of loves's responsibility. The declares in modern society lives
in society but does not belong to the society. This explains their characteristic of alienation. The question with them is whom are they to be held, when they have no life of their own to live. They suffer under the sense of deprivation and discrimination and labour under the conviction that society has done nothing for which they owe a return.

Gary and Nicole, the main characters in *The Executioner's Song* lived through ghastly childhoods of neglect and pain. Children represent a vision in the marriage—bond. It does not even matter how casually they may have been conceived: out of desperation, out of laziness, out of apathy, as a sporting proposition. Which should be when once the child takes birth, parents have to shoulder the responsibility of rearing, clothing and educating the child. The vision that is embodied in that child will be broken and the damage done to the psyche of the child becomes irreparable, resulting in untold misery. Nicole especially and her sister April, even Nicole's own children, belong to the category of neglected children frustrated by life, Mailer's heart goes after such young people suffering from the modern disease of irresponsibility and insensibility.

In order to strengthen the family ties, Mailer underlines the quality of life, lived by parents and given to
the children. He attributes the anger and frustration of
the younger generation to the lack of love and emotional
attachments. If they are lucky to fall in love and secure good
partners, they turn out good, in wrong hands, they get
frustrated, and curse everything including life and the
society.

Everybody prays for love, but
once they get love, they have to
be worthy of it. Love is the most
perishable of human emotions.
It never fades. 86

Family dates back to the very origin of human
history. It is an institution which has been steadily growing
on conventions. It is modern individualism which is leading to
the disillusionment in this institution where the individual
aspiration clashes with the interest of the society, where
personal failure invites ridicule than sympathy. Failure in
endeavour naturally enrages one against the unsympathetic
society thus driving one mad with vengeance, till success is
seized. Mailer has picked this aspect as one of the major
themes in his novels like, THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG,
ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF, OF A FIRE ON THE MOON and
TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE.
Mailer begins with family and proceeds to ponder over subjects like marriage, casual sex, promiscuity, family planning, ethics and pornography. And the other important concerns he has expressed are leisure, desperate faith, burden of responsibility, and sex and violence. However, Mailer agrarian set of faith blames the sophisticated unnatural life embraced by the modern generations, to the neglect of the quiet, agrarian life. Mailer parallels the life of individuals with that of the characters in fiction. He compares the artist with the creator — whose society has developed strain because of cataclysms. The novelist consequently tries to chart out a new, a revised version of the society.

It seemed to him that everybody, literate and illiterate alike, had in the privacy of their unconscious worked out a vast social novel by which they could make sense of society. Obviously, each novel was different. Obviously, some were better than others. But whether each unwritten novel was a comprehensive work of art, or an unhappy one, the psychic fact was that as life presented new evidence, the book was altered in its details. When large events cataclysms and social revelations were sufficiently unexpected to indicate the conception one had
of society - that conception so often forged by inferior art and entertainment - was faulty, then the outlines of the novel would be drastically revised; in effect the Novelist was forever drawing up new social charts upon which the Navigator could make his calculations.87

Mailer delineates in *The Executioner's Song*, the bonds of family love that hold members together. Mother writes to Gary, waiting to be executed, that he is loved, which makes the man die in contentment. Cousin Brenda remises her affection for Gary - their childhood exploits and become the main tie in his efforts to re-enter the society. Gilmore’s love for Nicole defies reason - he appears to have been more than madly in love with her - a woman with no pretensions to beauty or culture, in fact Gary was her fifth lover. What force drives him to avenge Nicole - teased at the Petrol Pump for her sensual appearance - and to joyfully sacrifice his life, is beyond the cogitations of reasons. He is simply in love, perhaps with the idea of love. His impulsiveness, his impatience, notwithstanding, Gary becomes a celebrity to leave a message like a messiah: "Give some love".

Mailer tries to drive home the significance of love in human relations, more particularly, the female - male:
...Love asks that we be a little braver man than is comfortable for us, a little more generous, a little more flexible. It means living on the edge more than we care to. Love is always in danger of being the most painful single emotion we can ever feel, other than perhaps a sudden knowledge of our own death. La Rochefoucauld has that wonderful remark that half the people in the world would never have fallen in love if they had not heard of a word. I think that most people I know, may be three-quarters of the people I know, have never been deeply in love.

Though Gary's philosophy of love appears to be enigmatic, more aimed at publicity than genuine, Mailer intensely feels the need for love in any family structure. Mailer wants to convey that love is something beyond the physical and sensuous. Love should move from emotion to culture.

Mailer believes that there should be a dimension of spiritual obligation to sexual relationship. But the trouble with the word spiritual is that it is misconstrued in religious context, thus descending the concept of its significance. Sex should ennoble male-female relations and attach a bond of confidence in empathy for each other. At this point Mailer clarifies where exactly one should reform
especially about ones idea of sex.

According to him, raping masturbation and suppressed sexual desire are serious crimes. Even to set people’s life on certain tracks, especially using a child to make money from sex, is certainly very offensive. Hence there is a need for education on sex and emphasis on spiritual dimensions. To highlight his concern with the unkind initiation of female child into sex as Nicole was exploited by her uncle Lee, Mailer taps similar theme in TOUGH GUYS DON’T DANCE, where individual is used as a focal point.

Norman Mailer is a sticker to the values of order in a social set up as an essential condition to realize a better vision of the world. He has created the fictional scene of action in Pastoral America, despite the fact of America becoming a society increasingly technological, grand anonymous. His novel TOUGH GUYS DON’T DANCE is one such attempt in order to cultivate individualistic values. The romantic writers found nature as the chief source of inspiration of motivation for conveying their ideas. Further they showed that nature alone has a grip over human beings either to comfort or to console them. Romantic journalistic novelist, Norman Mailer discovered media as a substitute for nature to
rejuvenate the lost consciousness of the despairing man. He pleads that only through media one can rebuild the communion between man and nature which is on the verge of extinction because of machines and robots.

Mailer's confidence in media is for their efficacy. He believes that media can certainly influence and direct an individual in a particular direction. While exploring the different aspects of the media network, one starts realizing for himself, his surroundings in connection with the universe. Each component in the external universe has a specific place in the network of universe. At the same time it is equally interesting to undertake in inner voyage in search of one's consciousness so as to understand one's connections with other individuals. In this arduous task media help in establishing a rapport from person to person and that of individuals with nature becomes imminent.

I remember drinking, and writing, and watching the water. Some observations I would put in my pocket and some I would rip up. The sound of paper as it was being torn set off reverberations in me. I began to chortle within. I was thinking that surgeons had to be the happiest people on earth. To cut people up and get paid for
it—that’s happiness. I told myself.
It comes back to me that I then wrote a longer note which I found in my pocket the next day. For some reason I have it a title: RECOGNITION. The perception of the possibility of greatness in myself has always been followed by desire to murder the nearest unworthy'. Then I underlined the next sentence: "It is better to keep a modest notion of oneself"!89

Norman Mailer once remarked that we all constantly write and revise a vast social novel in our minds in order to make sense of what we see and hear. The modern life has become more complicated because of skyscrapers and automobiles.

So the question that haunts one and all is about one’s survival. It becomes more and more persistent and leaves no room for inspiration or sublimation of oneself in this age of pollution. Living itself becomes exhaustive and tiresome very soon. So it becomes obligatory for anyone to be eager to compromise or console than to combat or lose. Thus Mailer’s argument in this novel is chiefly sought over the life of individuals than their pattern of living. Since, every individual is prone to do some good or bad, the merits and demerits differ according to percentages. So Mailer has also presented his characters who survive in this novel with
better percentage of positive points than others who perish. What Mailer wants to put forth is how a degradation has begun in man’s life; from seriousness to nothingness; from the virtuous path of love and beauty to worthless vulgarity and cheap popularity. Mailer discovers a worthless lot all around and claims to have an impulse to kill the unworthy. If a compromise is to be attempted, to avoid the pitfall of murder, a socio-legal crime, despite the creditable achievement of reducing the burden of earth, Mailer suggests a via media to estimate one’s own importance at rather modest level.

If golden daffodils could demolish Wordsworth’s pensiveness there is no reason for the modern man not to gaze at the world outside. At present, man has become a victim of one or the other addictions. As a consequence, he has mechanized himself. Mailer distrusts this mechanized man’s ability to survive.

One of the virtues of the people
I live among is that none of us
is ever surprised by a friend’s
inability to remember a vivid
hour’.90

Mailer exhorts the virtues of men who cannot and do not bother to mark the hour of a day vividly—a virtue attained by liberating oneself from the coils of time—consciousness.
To the writers of pre-atomic age, there was still some hope left to flash upon that inward eye and thus bring back the recollection of sweet memories. But now despair is the only emotion left to be felt for, their is not trace of being within one self. This is the nightmare of modern man. So begins the hero of this novel, Tim Madden’s disquieting journey into the dark recesses of America’s psyche.

The very beginning of the novel is manipulative of what Mailer intends projecting. The dawn, the gulls, the tides of the dark sea though represent fragments of nature, they are used to bring out the sinews of a broken heart than cheering up the depressed soul. The novel begins:

At dawn, if it was low tide on the flats, I would awaken to the chatter of gulls. On a bad morning, I used to feel as if it had died and the birds were feeding on my heart. Later, after I had dozed for a while, the tide would come up over the sand as swiftly as a shadow descends on the hills when the sun lowers behind the ridge, and before long the first swells would pound on the bulkhead of the deck below my bedroom window. The shock rising in one fine fragment of time from the sea wall to the innermost passages of my flesh. Boom! the waves would go against the wall, and I could have been alone a freighter on a dark sea.
TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE because of its journalistic details about American nightmare, becomes an enduring piece of literature. The way Mailer has argued and connected the various social shortcomings to form a social set up in its own way has really made the novel readable and to understand the pattern of human life in modern times. One has to appreciate Mailer's guts in bringing out the social factors of evil in an effective manner. Pornography, casual sex, family wreckage, promiscuity, homosexuality and other social evils which constitute much of the modern pattern of life.

Mailer agrees that lack of knowledge certainly affects the life in America. But he advances his theory further to emphasize the truth that eastern mysticism is a better means of understanding life which defies reason.

If a lot of people die unnecessarily in a war, a lot of innocent American kinds'- he help up a hand to forestall any argument - " and a lot of innocent Vietnamese, I'll give you that, the question becomes: What's their redress? What's their redress in the scheme of things"?.92

Mailer has also accepted the theory of predestination, which his friend Jones suggested in his thirties. The concept took almost three decades to get into Mailer system of
thinking to take a ripened form resulting in TOUGH GUYS DON’T DANCE from the mature Mailer. Malcom Muggeridge had written a book about Mother Teresa and he has a lot of reverence for her. He has the highest regards for her because she and her order of nuns would take people who die on the street and move them into her convent where they would be nursed and attended. This would help him to die with some relief and not in complete bitterness. Now Mother Teresa a religious woman, Mailer was moved by this and began to think over 'predestination-karma' over and over. Mailer had come across the word in his books but never paid any attention. In about 1953, while talking to James Jones in his writers' colony in Robinson, Illinois, he heard about Karma in detail. After explanation, Jones remarked that Karma is the only thing which makes sense. After two decades full of topsyturvy ideas Mailer began to think and agreed that does make sense, and Jones was right.

Mailer has come to believe that things makes no sense unless one takes into account the peculiar calculus of Karma. He further accepts the theory of life after death and recognises that we are in the cycle of birth and death for every soul in different guises.
Our past lives and our future lives. Paying dues receiving awards. Reducing the cost of future dues, for example, by certain acts of abnegation that make no sense to us or our friends, yet ready to dare, on other hand, sometimes desperate activities because we are desperate. The condition in which we live is hurting our Karma.93

As Dr. Radhakrishnan says, philosophy without science is blind and science without philosophy is crippled. In the same way, Mailer too has realized the worth of reality as zero without the aid of philosophy. In the absence of philosophical approach life looks very hollow. In the literary voyage of three decades, Mailer's **TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE** conveys a message, that life is not a mathematical calculation. Its dimension is indefinite and beyond one's imagination and expectation. Mailer has reacted to the social challenges positively. Social realism is one of the alternatives and the retention of the traditional theistic frame of reference is another. But being an existentialist, his reaction to life and times has been more extensive and the philosophical component both identifiable and interesting.

From then onwards, no information that would come to him could shake the foundations of eschatology or of Karma.
Again Mailer is careful in saying, to what extent one must be careful while believing in the role of fate. This should not mislead man to become a crank. Often man, in his anxiety, tends to behave like a fool and lands up in a coup.

'The law of averages' he said with disgust, 'has done more to mess up people's minds than any idea I know. It's horse manure. The pipeline is either feeding you or it is tripping you. Greedy people get fucked by the pipelines.'

Thus Mailer with this insight, has tried to place human beings amidst those greedy form of devils. In doing so he has also said how these shortcomings go unchecked and undetected, Mailer compares a tough guy to a boxer who tries to stand up to face than to shrug off and escape. Inspite of receiving punches tough guys like boxer keep going. By analogy, one has to continue to live despite hundreds and hardships, which should not defer him.

Once the fight started, I discovered that boxing, like other cultures, takes years to acquire, and, immediately. I lost the little culture I had. I was so scared, I never stopped throwing punches. My opponent, who was fat and black, was just as frightened and never stopped either. At the bell, neither of
us could move. My heart felt ready to explode. By the second round, we could not do a thing. We stood still. We glowered, we used our heads to block punches because we were too tired to duck it costs less to get his than to move. We must have looked like longshoremen too drunk to fight. Both of us were bleeding from the nose and I could smell his blood. I learned on this night that blood has a scent as intimate as body odor. It was an horri nous round. When I got to my corner, I felt equal to an overraced engine whose parts were ready to seize.95

Figuratively, Mailer describes the boxing ring and the code of honour the contestants are required to cultivate and honour.

Receiving punches is common to everyone. Whether a tough guy or a wicked guy, everyone has to face his share of scathing. According to one's deeds and intentions, it varies from one person to another. Thus returns may be high or low. But everyone has to undergo some sort of battering in life, which, he claims is better than avoiding. What Mailer wants to emphasize is that it is only a tough fellow who can withstand, irrespective of the rivals strength and ability. Karma theory says that rewards are proportional to deeds and intentions. Mailer hopes potency lies in the
ability to choose a firm pattern in this jumble of good and evil. This itself decides one's survival and one's reward for living.

Tim Madden, an unsuccessful writer with a penchant for nicotine, alcohol and blondes with money, struggles towards consciousness. This struggle begins twenty four days and nights after his wife has left him. In this bad state of alcoholic amnesia, he suspected something had gone wrong and found a fresh and throbbing tattoo in addition to the front seat of car, drenched in blood. Thus Mailer has his readers to get into fragments of an American nightmare through the hero Madden's tormented efforts. To reconstruct the missing hours of a terrible day. Mailer reconstructs, like a journalist, what scenes of American life he had observed.

In my turn, I nodded. When I started my first job as a bartender, he had given my a schedule. 'Son', he had said, 'keep this in mind. In New York, on the streets, it's peeping Toms from Twelve AM to one AM., fires from one to two, stickups two to three, bar fights three to four, suicides four to five and auto accidents from five A.M. to Six A.M.". I had kept it in my head like typed schedule. It had proved useful.
There is no glory in American civilization which now has been debased to street fights and suicides for lack of better things in life. By recording the banality of American life, Mailer intends to create a revulsion for those things like alcoholism, street fights and rash driving. Mailer is not alone in this quest for instilling a saner view of life through literature. This effort takes the measure of the country itself. It is this impulse toward a total vision of America that becomes most embattled in the post-war period. As more and more novelists take on the role of documenting the special role of minority and private perception in American society, Mailer explores and often romanticizes the soul quickening virtues of the Jews, Southerner, blacks or women. This allows the reader to become part of those experiences in their full shares of social despair and individual agony or pride and forbearance.

Norman Mailer suggests that one can impose some self discipline and thus overcome depression gradually. Mailer who suffered depression in his personal life acknowledges one of the major contributors is weakness. This weakness has to be charged only to make it sublime. Tim Madden in this novel finally succeeds a free himself as to become a sublime man, a
tough guy. Another great problem of this century is leisure a curse. Just as overwork as a burden leisure has become a greater burden today. Having nothing to do is really a punishment. This has led to many unsocial activities. To add upon scientific and technological developments have further provided leisure and comforts to man who is already lazy and sluggard. This has resulted in making a man more of a maniac than an enforcer. Mailer calls this a messenger of consciousness.

If the glories of ancient Greece rested on the leisure exploits of the citizens, it is the very reverse today. The Greek knew how to employ leisure. The modern citizen is at a loss to know how his leisure is to be employed. For the Greeks leisure meant liberation from the physical needs, which can be fruitfully employed for investigating higher truths of life. These pursuits of intellectual activity, has resulted in the philosophy, culture and civilization that the western world can boast of. The modern American’s leisure is a wasteland and an insufferable boredom. In order to fill this wasteland, he resorts to means of cheap entertainment and vulgar sensationalism.

For instance, most of my winter friends never locked their door when they were home. You did not
ring or rap. You walked in on people. If the door was locked it meant only one thing your friends, were screwing. Some of my friends, for that matter, liked to make love with the door unlocked. If you came in, there was the option to watch or, given the phase of the moon to join.

Patty Lareine, .... Her body was her proud possession. She loved nude beach parties on the back shore and enjoyed standing (with her brown snatch lined in honey-gold by the sun) a foot away from the eyes of some potential lover on the sand who was eating a hot dog, one eye on the red meat covered with mustard coming up to his lips, the other on the copse between her thighs.

Mailer portrays the cult of the present day civilization and the pursuits of the leisure-class, centred round alcoholism and shameless sexual exposure, including the act of making love. The suppressed libido may lead to crime and insanity. Under the pretext of the psychological disturbances and the possible, inevitable consequences leading to psychosis or schizophrenia or madness many unpalatable, unethical activities are condoned as civilization. Eccentricity of behaviour get classified under some psychological disorder and the person gets not only medical attention but also popular sympathy, but media attention is
a modern psychological theory which gained currency. While Mailer in his novel *OF A FIRE ON THE MOON* calls Apollo 11 venture as an outcome of suppressing libido from many technocrats and astronauts, the same issue is taken up to show how perversion can occur by suppressing natural desires and needs by man. Tim’s father in *TOUGH GUYS DON’T DANCE* is a sodomite.

Tim himself and many other friends of his are homosexuals and eccentric. This imbalance alone has driven Tim to lose his wife Patty Lareine. Majority of his friends have been drug addicts. Tim has lost even the sense of clarity of thinking and suffers from loss of memory.

In *TOUGH GUYS DON’T DANCE* Mailer presents his painful awareness of the ultimate tendency of perverted sexual drives ending up in insanity. The story of Meeks Wardley Hilby III has its sordid touches, Wardley’s father Meeks was a rich guy, pleasure loving, sportsman. His mother was sickly and Meeks takes to a mistress. When Wardley’s mother died, he is still in his first year. The father married his mistress. Neither of them never liked Wardley or Wardley liked them better. Moreover, in childhood the nurses used to tie his hands to the bed on father’s orders. It was calculated to put a stop to Wardley’s onanism.
Since they kept a door locked on third flood of their house, Wardley decides that was the room to get into. Later on he discovered the reason for the room being kept locked and secluded. The room had a large old fashioned view camera with a black cloth, mounted on a heavy tripod in one corner, and on a library table, five red velvet scrapbooks. It was a special pornographic collection. The five scrapbooks contained large sepia photographs of Meeks making love to his mistress. Each successive volume of the scrapbooks shows the father and mistress getting older. A year or two after the death of Wardley's mother, not long after the new marriage, another man appeared in the photos. Wardley was shocked to locate the manager of the estate, who dined with the family everyday. The later photographs showed the manager making love to the wife while the father sat five feet away reading a newspaper. The lovers would adopt different postures but Meeks keeps on reading the paper. The photographer is the butler. Even Wardley was not spared because the same butler had seduced him at the age of fourteen. The climax reached when Wardley married at nineteen, his newly wedded wife manages to charm his father.

This made her a millionaire. That was Patty Lareine who ditched the hero of the novel Tim and also the police
officer Alvin Regency who was in her grip. Even strangers
Jenica who was another blonde and new to provincetown was
also influenced by such viciously powerful currents.

...This new blonde lady now
transforming my evening might be
short on wit, but then, she had
small need for it. Her manner
came with her money. If all else
was right, she would probably
meet you at her hotel-room
doors attired in no more than
white elbow-length gloves.
(and high heels).

...This lady had a body
language to suggest that you
would be given one thorough
going welcome on first
night — only later would
difficulties arise. But the first
night would be on the house....
his voice droning into her
ear like white noise put on the
audio system to dull your
synapses to sleep. yes, I decided,
he must be a lawyer. There was
something in the confidential
moderation of his manner. He was
addressing the Bench on the
point of law, helping the judge
not to blow the case, soothing!98

Perhaps this is the reason that made Mailer to
introduce pornography as a corrective measure in this novel.

One of the ironies of poronography is that it enables people
to free themselves from chasing sex. A lot of that knowledge
can now be obtained in a secondary fashion, through
poronography. They don’t have to go through the experience
themselves.

Poronography encourages fantasy and romance. Mailer finds some analogy with a kid dreaming about football. If he is going to love football, he has to love it with its punishment. To love with the full awareness of punishment is the nature of profoundity. So, to the degree that pornography encourages people to believe that sex is easy, it is harmful. So it is muddying knowledge.

I won't get into it for a variety of reasons. Years ago a friend of mine agreed to fill out a sexual questionnaire. He had to go through every girl he'd laid, describe her in detail, what they did, their fantasies, their water sports. After he was finished, for the first time in his life, (and this kid was a stud) he was impotent for three months. So one holds onto one's little fantasies. Actually, I have very few left at this point. As you get older, you need fantasy less and less. Let me put it this way: Fantasy gives resonance to sex so long as it's on the threshold of reality. If two people are making love and play a little game, and pretend they're other, well, that's perfectly all right. Finally they have to do the acting job. It is not just simple fantasy. But if a man and woman are making love, and the man secretly thinks that he is fucking the Countess Eloise of Bulgaris, and the woman is visualizing a stud from Harlem
for herself, then they're masturbating. The ultimate tendency of such love-making is insanity.99

Just to make Tim's handover complete, Provincetown's chief of police Regency role is effective in proving Mailer at his best in this novel. At the height of insanity, Tim was made to believe, that he himself had killed his wife, Patty Lareine, who was only an object of lust—the same blonde who ruined Wardley and had affairs secretly with the police Regency. Madeleine is the wife of Regency actually married to Tim earlier. At the end of the novel, it was she who exposed her sadist husband Regency and killed him. Tim's father Douglas, though a sodomite is not either wicked or a troublesome person. He was tough enough even at that age to take care of his disturbed son—Tim. Even Tim's wife Madeleine found him reassuring in her distress. What Mailer points out is that weakness is not a sin and has every chance to come out of such weak state but not wickedness. Hence to be tough is the only way to combat wickedness. Mailer once again has shown how a family gets wrecked and relations could become complicated in the absence of strong emotional ties and ideals of conventions.
However, Mailer once again has taken a stand that crazy people in serious places need to be executed. This concept is shown in this novel by sparing the persons with conscience.
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