CHAPTER THREE

Barbary Shore

Mankind in Barbary

Barbary Shore (1951) is of more interest as a stage in Mailer's development than as an artistically effective work in itself. Certainly it fits well into a chain of five novels, dealing as it does with the two basic issues with which Mailer always concerns himself: the state of American society and the problems of the crisis of identity in it. But the second novel, for several reasons, marks a flattering in Mailer's progress. This is not to say that it is a retrogression, for though it falls short of the artistic success of ND, Barbary Shore represents a step in the direction of an increasingly monderivative art.

Perhaps Barbary Shore can be better understood in light of the circumstances under which it was written, and of Mailer's own retrospective understanding of the book. He had already used up his most engaging autobiographical material in his first novel and its spectacular success deprived him of the careful novelistic habit of being an anonymous observer and of gaining new experience. Mailer explains, "My celebrity made it impossible to gain that experience," which is required to sharpen social and political vision:

I was blasted a considerable distance away from dead center by the size of its success.... My farewell to an average man's experience was too abrupt .... There was nothing left in the first twenty-four years of my life to write about; one way or another, my life seemed to have been mined and melted into the long reaches of the book. And I had to begin life again ....

This peculiar development forced existentialism upon the novelist as he himself maintains:

I was free .... I could seek to become what I chose to be and if I failed I would have nothing to excuse failure. I would fail because I had not been brave enough to succeed. So I was much too free. Success had been a lobotomy of my past, there seemed no power from the past which could help me in the present, and I had no
Mailer, in fact, was having a form of twentieth century experience; he was successful and alienated, separated from his roots. He realized if his past had become empty as a theme, he must write about an "imaginary future." Jean Malaquais's revolutionary teachings helped him in forging that imaginary future and that formed the basis for his second novel. The book, he decided, would be called *Barbary Shore* because the only alternative to mankind in barbary is revolutionary socialism. Mailer elucidated the title of the novel in an interview with Harvey Briet:

I may as well tell you what the title of the new book means. It has a double meaning, 'Barbary,' for me, is very rich word. One of the meaning is barbarism and the other, not in the Oxford dictionary, has romantic connotations. You think of the exotic, of pirates, or romantic things.

In the novel, Mailer expresses his dissatisfaction with the Marxian version of reality which depends on a constant recognition of the primary importance of the material world and cultivates his philosophy of hip while he believes that Marx offered a highly elaborate system to examine social and political reality, he was distressed at Marx's failure to deal adequately with psychological experience. Mailer therefore sought a

Calculus capable of translating the economic relations of man into his psychological relations and then back again, his productive relations and thereby embracing his sexual relations as well, until the crisis of twentieth century capitalism could be understood as the unconscious adaptation of a society to solve its economic importance at the expense of a new mass psychological imbalance.

Mailer continues to use Marx's dialectical method in seeking a synthesis which will embrace more facts and contradictions than any conservative view could allow. But he has stated that it "might be more 'Marxist' to recognize
that the super structure of society has attained vast autonomies outside productive relations, psychological under-currents which often clash with material economic realities..."7 In using the psychological insights, he is more influenced by Reich than Freud.8 Reich maintained that society was destructively hostile to fuller instinctual development, especially sexual fulfilment. Reich's emphasis upon the need for emotional purgation in a therapeutic atmosphere which encouraged the expression of feeling was transformed by Mailer into a stress upon the preservation of one's emotional integrity in the face of social restrictions. Ultimately Mailer came to place a great deal of emphasis upon a transformation of the self which might take place without a corresponding alteration of society.

The action of the novel takes place around 1950 in a dingy, run-down rooming house on the cliffs of Brooklyn Heights that overlook the East River. This is Mailer's Barbary Shore, to which Lovett has come to write a novel and seeks the opportunity to live, as Mailer did while writing ND, 'like a mole.'9 Every moment is spent inside the purgatorial rooming house, which reminds of Eliot's people existing, as they do in "The Dry Salvages," "among the breakage, each a separate sphere of existence."10 How well Eliot's choric lines from The Family Reunion bear upon the ambience of Mailer's world:

In old house there is always listening, and more is heard than spoken./ And what is spoken remains in the room, waiting for the future to hear it./ And whatever happens began in the past and presses hard upon the future.11

Eliot's chorus declaims that catastrophes have come about because we have lost our way in the dark. It is the nature of that dark and exploration by different characters in their own specific way that Barbary Shore dramatises.

Mikey Lovett, the protagonist/narrator, is a man without any bearings and leanings. Like Mailer, Lovett is deprived of a past and committed to the
present, but in his case the situation is more drastic and therefore more symbolically significant. For Lovett has literally no past: he is an amnesia victim, a product of the war who is thrust with no emotional connection whatever into a nightmarish postwar world. The entire novel appears to be Lovett's attempts to come to grip with the reality -- the encroaching totalitarian menace and to carve out some meaningful niche for himself. The tone of the novel and of his personality is set in the very first paragraph of the book:

Probably I was in the war. There is the mark of a wound behind my ear, an oblong of unfertile flesh where no hair grows. It is covered over now, and may be disguised by even the clumsiest barber, but no barber can hide the scar on my back. For that a tailor is more in order.

When I stare into the mirror I am returned a face doubtless more handsome than original, but the straight nose, the modelled chin, and the smooth cheeks are only evidence of a stranger's art. A classic product of the war, Lovett has not merely been deprived of his past, but literally, physically scarred as well. His identity is irrecoverable because his very face is not his own. The anxiety, despair and bewildered self of Lovett is deeply rooted in his inability to comprehend his past, which is so clouded that he "could never judge whether something had happened to me or I imagined it so." Barry H. leads rightly maintains that "Lovett is the spokesman for all post war cripples, a man of his generation, cut off irrevocably from the past."14

Because Lovett is apparently not hemmed in by the emotional weight of the past, he has much more of a possibility giving himself fully to the present and discover himself. He gets involved with the people in his apartment house. In the series of interwined relationships into which he is drawn, sexuality plays an important part. These relationships mark the progress in Lovett's search for his self. The first of these relationships begins with Mrs. Guinevere.
In a series of vulgar, but knowledgeably coy confrontations, she teases and refuses him, ultimately proposing that he spy on the other boarders for her. Lovett, controlling his desires for her, refuses to comply with her wishes and this places their subsequent dealings on a cooler footing. This experience teaches Lovett to be direct and frank about his loyalties and proceed very carefully in further relationships if he is to grow in any meaningful way.

McLeod, Lovett's next acquaintance, is perhaps the most important character in the book. A very, cynical man who works in a department store, he describes himself as a self-educated Marxist-at-liberty, claims never to have travelled beyond New Jersey, and leads a life of monastic isolation:

In everything he did there were elements of such order, demanding, monastic. He was unyielding and sometimes forbidding. Dressed in the anonymous clothing of a man who buys his garments as cheaply as possible....And his room, clean as any cell could have been in our aged mansion....

He is ultimately revealed to be, first, Guinevere's husband, and second, a former high-ranking international communist operative sought by the American Government. During the course of their talk, McLeod assumes the role of tutor to Lovett's tyro. It is through him that Mailer is able to introduce long passages of Marxist theory, but it is more important that after much confused vacillation Mikey's loyalties are directed entirely to Mcleod. It is Mikey's progress towards understanding and embracing McLeod's theories that represents the central movement of the novel.

Just as Guinevere and McLeod are not what they appear to be, Leroy Hollingsworth, secret policeman, and grand inquisitor, presents a very deceptive first impression. Invited casually into Hollingsworth's room for a beer, Lovett finds it unbelievably messed. In contrast, Hollingsworth himself is so neat that Lovett observes, "He seemed to have no relation to the room."
In light of Hollingsworth's later role in the novel this description is significant. Mailer seems to be saying, as he does repeatedly in the later books, that the primary threat of totalitarian takeover in this country lies in internal fascism. His ultimate commitment is to expedience, and towards the book's end he is ready to desert his country for personal gain. He is finally despicable because he is so unquestioning in his assurance that what he does is right. This attitude is early demonstrated in his attitude towards sex. In his sexual dealings with Guinevere, with Lannie and with a waitress, he is vulgar and sadistic. Even the "phosphorescent cross printed on cardboard" which glows "in the darkness when the lights were out" — the universal symbol of selflessness and brotherly love — is, in Hollingsworth's world, a shoddy, mass-produced ornament. The cross glows mute witness to every act of unfeeling seduction and self righteous persecution which its owner perpetrates.

Lannie, another boarder who comes after Lovett, is somewhat mad, living within a nightmare world of her own. She is tormented, inconsistent, railing, nearly incomprehensible but often frighteningly perceptive in her vision of human brutality and betrayal. She has sexual contacts with Lovett, Hollingsworth, McLeod, Guinevere but all these alliances are without exception sordid, one-sided in motivation, and significant primarily in terms of negation rather than affirm- ation. There is no enjoyable sex, no sex for love, no real commitment of communi- cation between sexual partners. Hence, the sex does not lead to the growth of the characters involved, as it does in case of hipster.

Unlike other characters, Lovett is truly desirous of sex as a means of communication. But in this, he is continually frustrated. The abortive encounter with Guinevere and Lannie seems to acquire some symbolic import when, later in the book, it becomes clear what these characters represent. But in the first
part they only serve the function of throwing the discouraged Mikey back into the isolation of his own mind. The most vital part of Lovett's life has been denied any meaningful fulfilment which he so earnestly seeks and this negativity points out toward the utmost dehumanization of life and its vital forces. Lovett remembers an incident of the war, in which, having crossed into the enemy's country as part of the invading army, he shared with the rest of his squad the willingly sold favours of a farmer's daughter. The incident is related in terms of the brutal dehumanization:

There was moonlight on the field, and I made love from the hip and looked across the meadow with open eyes, for I was also on guard. I never saw the girl. Above my head in magnification of myself the barrel of the machine gun pointed toward the trees, and once, hearing a noise, my fingers stole up to the trigger handle, and I was surprised to find it cold.

My ration consumed. I went back to the hay and stretched out in a nervous half asleep which consisted of love with artillery shells and sex of polished steel.²¹

This episode marks the lowest point of dehumanization to which Lovett had been brought by the war. Part of a massive war machine, he had himself become mechanized, making love mechanically without love or even passionate hatred. The impending victory over the enemy is also implicitly robbed of moral significance by the fact that the bovine farm girl whose face Lovett sees responds to the invaders without hatred, fear, or any other emotion. An act which, were it accompanied by gratitude or passion, might be romanticized into a reaffirmation of the basic humanity of all people is instead shown as a matter of cold economic trade, and thus the insignificance of individual human emotion in the shadow of grinding international movement is made clear. It is in this sense that Lovett fails in his search for "apocalyptic orgasm and all of his sexual encounters are either incomplete or not satisfying."²² But Lovett nowhere tries to evade his failures in these sexual confrontations. He
is too painfully honest with himself, too concerned with finding some truth and therefore some true conception of his own role in the world, and so he plumbs his mind ceaselessly. The farm girl episode, which occurs almost at the exact center of the novel, culminates in a major breakthrough. His ability to face the memory marks the turning point in a sort of auto-psychoanalysis in which he has been aided by McLeod's prodings, and from this point on, Lovett's mind moves progressively towards human commitment. And in next painful reverie of the girl of the weaklong idyll, Lovett comes to a crucial knowledge:

Frustration put me on the rack, with the frustration came something worse. For I would never meet that girl, and if I did I would not remember her and she would not recognize me. And if all these impossibilities one by one were to be solved and the wheel presented a double miracle for the same chip, then undoubtedly the girl and I, having changed, would be magical no more to each other. So, that was done and that was dead. There could be no solutions from the past nor duplicates found in the present, and I could have cried out in resentment against the implacability of the logic...Whatever I was to find could not come from the past.23

Lovett's concern with the past has, finally, yielded up the inner kernal of his personal alienation from humanity and its problems. Having achieved this much in his quest for his true identity, Lovett recognizes the limitations of the past, and for the first time becomes truly committed to the present as he has claimed to be from the outset. He sets out, as did Mailer, "to begin life again...to force (himself) to step into the war of the enormous present.... setting out by (himself) to cut a track through a new wild!"24 The forward movement of his now unfettered mind will not let him rest, however, and his preoccupation with present issues is ultimately to lead him to think of the future, and finally to assume the responsibility of his own role in the future.

It is interesting to note that the farm girl episode, so central to Lovett's switch in commitment from the past to the future, is rendered in
terms of the two primary preoccupations which govern his mind throughout the
novel: sex and politics. In the war time episode, sex is shown to be not an
act of self-definition or even a temporary refuge from the dehumanizing regi-
mentation of war, but a final proof of the extent to which the impersonal
force of national interest can stifle the individual personality, rendering the
act of love and procreation a merely mechanical function. Mikey dwells
no longer on that girl, nor does he attempt any further sexual liaison with
either Guinevere or Lannie. It is at this point that Lovett turns from the
sexual occupation of the first half of the book, to the devotion to political
issues which drives him thereafter. As in The Naked and the Dead war
presents a context in which different characters struggle to find their true
caracter, in Barbary Shore different political ideologies serve the same pur-
pose and alliance of different characters with one or the other ideology
represent their growth or decay.

Different characters engaged in different political issues make the novel
an allegory of political life. Hollingsworth is an agent of monopoly capitalism,
of the United States, of the 'free world' McLeod—at least McLeod's past is
the Marxist-Leninist tradition—as it has been perverted and corrupted into
Stalinism, or State capitalism. Lannie represents the other offshoot of the
tradition, originally powerful but which degenerated into the small band of
followers who clustered around and worshipped Leon Trotsky. Lannie is an
aide to Hollingsworth, while Lovett becomes involved as McLeod's witness
and conscience during the nightly cross-examination of McLeod. It seems
that McLeod had left the Bolsheviks after the non-aggression pact between
Stalin and Hitler and had reacted to the loss of his political identity by
joining an arm of American Government, for which he worked until he
became disenchanted with that too and disappeared. Before he dropped out of sight, however, he stole a "little object" from the agency for which he worked. Since the value of this object is immense, Hollingsworth has been ordered to retrieve it. He interrogates McLeod, who finally says he will give it to Hollingsworth if he is allowed to make a final speech—a speech apparently aimed at Lovett. During interrogation the personal history of McLeod which unfolds shows his rapid rise in power which is paralleled by a progressive dehumanization, an increasing commitment to expedience at the expense of betrayal and assassination gives way to sins of commission: the physical murder by McLeod, first of an idealistic young subordinate and then of a personal friend who becomes unable to accept the methods of the party. The degree of ruthlessness of these acts increases in direct proportion to McLeod's own disillusionment with communist policy, prompted by a stated brief: "It is better to carry through a blunder with all one's energy, than attempt to halt midway and retrace one's steps." The culmination of this philosophy is reached in McLeod's role in the murder of Trotsky, as he painfully relates in a confession reserved for Lovett's ear alone:

"...I was at the height of a crisis for it was the time of the pact, and I no longer believed a minute in what had been the external and objective reality of my life." He had begun to mutter. "This detail taken care of and that. I could have not known who it was for, and yet I knew it was him out in Mexico, and on the dark sky I was reading his works behind my barricaded door. I knew", he shouted suddenly, "I knew. There's the crime. No longer believing and I went ahead. I let him be murdered you see." McLeod did what he thought to be right at every juncture of his life and has the courage to confess it and face the consequences. As a result, he emerges wiser from his past and thinks of the broader issues than only about himself. This is well reflected in his attitude with his wife, Guinevere, with
whom he has been trying to reconcile even at the cost of renouncing the moral responsibility that goes with the "little object" he is carrying. But the crass bluntness of her offer to sell the object to some foreign hand made this course of reconciliation impossible for him to accept and it is finally to Lovett that McLeod passes the object and the moral mission that goes with it. He does not remain alive to see the result of his actions as he is murdered. McLeod's quest assumes greater proportions than any other character in this novel and in *The Naked and the Dead* but it also falls short of total success.

Hollingsworth is an important media through which McLeod realizes his theory of individuality and the desire to influence the future. It is amply clear during interrogations that the secret policeman is being used by his victim, rather than vice versa. McLeod, confused, weary and guilt-ridden finds it necessary to confess and reevaluate his life; and so he speaks, nominally to Hollingsworth, actually to Mikey, heedless of whether Hollingsworth can or will understand the theoretical and moral issues involved. But Mikey understands and profits from experience of McLeod. Finally certain that the past is significant only in what it can teach for the future, McLeod states:

One of the small benefits I can permit myself is to spend no time apologizing for my past. It is what it is, and in the time permitted me here, I should prefer to indulge in the only meaningful defense, to transmit the intellectual conclusion of my life, and thus to give dignity to my experience. I shall not treat the past as personal history, and I will attempt to delineate what I believe to be the future, for it is only as ideas are transmitted to someone else that they attain existence.30

The role which Mikey must play in the future has been explained by McLeod. The hope for mankind is that both of the corrupt systems presently existing, Western Capitalism and Eastern Communism, fail, and that a new, just society be established. But for this to happen, it is essential:
...that the socialist theorist will once again find language to reach the many.

That there will be theorists at such a time is of incalculable importance.....not too many of us will be alive. Yet there must be some to participate, for revolutions are the period of history when individuals count most.....and if some nucleus of us rides out of the storm, we shall advance to the front of any revolutionary wave, for we alone shall have the experience and the insight so vital for the period. Then we shall be the only ones capable of occupying the historical stage.31

Thus, what hope there remains for mankind resides primarily in the individual intellectual theorist who can teach his fellows. Finally the future rests upon the synthesis of the experience of McLeod and the youthful dedication of Lovett. Both have been dehumanized by involvement with international forces and each has withdrawn from the world, cut himself off from his past, attempted to avoid moral responsibility. But each wants to reevaluate his life in terms of his identity and come into contact with characters bearing different ideologies. The mutual confrontation between McLeod and Lovett, brings moments of 'nakedness' for both of them and with each other's support the two men regain a sense of faith in humanity's future and thus a commitment to their own lives. Without Lovett to pass the object and quest on to, McLeod might have succumbed to Hollingworth's or Guinevere's temptations. Without McLeod to present an alternative, the confused and groping Lovett might have listened to Lannie when she said, "Come with us. There's no place else to be!"32 To the extent that McLeod and Lovett commit themselves to future of humanity, they are the existentialists who must continually create themselves through their own action.

The fruitful quest of McLeod and the extent of his renewal of faith in humanity's future is made explicit in his will:
To Michael Lovett to whom at the end of my life and for the first time within it, I find myself capable of the rudiments of selfless friendship, I bequeath in heritage the remnants of my socialist culture.

Almost as an after thought he had scrawled:

And may he be alive to see the rising of the Phoenix.

The commitment to humanity which McLeod installs in Lovett and which is exemplified by the feeling of selfless friendship toward the younger man, forms the basis for some hope. McLeod points out:

Existence warps us too much. But in the abstract, in essence, any two human beings can find warmth together. It's a primitive notion, and history won't set it free again until socialism is established. That's the human assumption of socialism, to find relationships with everybody.

McLeod does all this not under the duress of circumstances but because he thinks that to be the right course for himself and others. Stanley Gutnam comments that "the only ladder from the pit of despair of modern times is revolutionary socialism" because it can instil the spark of love in men. In addition to resurrecting love, socialism will bring men "two principles, freedom and equality and without them we are nothing." Such is the dream but it remains far distant, since the revolution has failed. The "little object" is man's hope for solvation. McLeod passes it on to the narrator, but its future is dubious. Here it must be emphasized that Mailer's advocate of revolutionary socialism is different from the conventional interpretation of any revolution which presupposes an alteration of society as fundamental and essential to any meaningful revolution. But in case of Mailer, the emphasis is always on the maintenance of emotional integrity and the transformation in the consciousness of the individual which may or may not bring a corresponding alteration of society. McLeod and Lovett, despite their sordid past, gradually come to grips with enormous present and truly and genuinely commit themselves
to humanity in the hope of bringing about love and socialism in the society, which appears to be quite far off in the face of Hollingworths. In fact, McLeod and Lovett come much closer to the radical hipster as they continually search for an ideology and a lifestyle which are adequate to their needs. At first, both maintained organizational ties, but then they refuse to submerge their individuality for the sake of greater cause. They sense that the individual's moral, psychological, and intellectual freedom is just as important as the demands of the party or war. In addition, they come to believe that the revolution must alter man's consciousness along with material conditions.

It must be emphasized, however, that what McLeod teaches Mikey is not a rigid commitment to static systems or values, but a sense of the dynamic principle in human history. The loyalty he is to embrace is to his own self and to mankind, but not to any country or political party or even any single political or economic theory. This attitude is well reflected in his understanding of history as depicted in the first chapter of the book. A man climbs into a taxicab and gives the driver directions. The route he takes seems strange, but the man is too tired to tell the taxi driver to change direction. The city becomes stranger and stranger, but the man decides it must be a dream and does nothing about it. "I shout at him. You are wrong. I cry, although he does not hear me; this city is the real city, the material city and your vehicle is history." The realization that history is a vehicle, one which moves so rapidly as to make men strangers in their own world, is central to Mikey's movement towards understanding what the future demands of him. The traveller has been left behind by history, and in this respect he may be seen as representative of most men.
in this era of rapid and complex historical development. Thus, history does not allow for any stagnation and demands a constant revision of one's idea. It is "out of control, and only by an effort of will can men change its direction away from perpetual war and unfulfilled desires and towards a socialist future of equality, freedom and love."40 It is in this interpretation of history that Lovett is truly worthy of McLeod's trust and a man of future.

In the evolution of McLeod and Lovett, the role of Lannie Madison cannot be ignored. Lannie has been deeply involved, in the past, with the communist movement, but she is now disillusioned by the amoral inhumanity of its policies. She sees McLeod as the symbol of the worst expedience in the movement, and wishes to help destroy him in retribution for the death of a utopian dream. The idol and spokesman of that dream was Trotsky, and he (although his name is never used) is a crucial pivotal point in the loyalties and hatreds of Lannie, Lovett and McLeod. Lovett, before the war, was a youthful, idealistic follower of Trotsky,41 as he imagines or remembers in one of his train of reverie. And at the point we meet him, Mikey has lost his passion because, we may assume, of the disillusioning events following the death of the Trotsky dream. For Lannie, Trotsky was even more important than he was to Lovett and his murder was the unforgivable sin which has prompted her renunciation of communism and her hatred of McLeod. She shouts at McLeod:

He was the man I loved, the only man I ever truly loved with heart and not with body, the man with the beard - because he was a fool — a brilliant man and I loved his beard, and there was the mountain ax in his brain, and all the blood poured out, and he could not see the Mexican sun. Your people raised the ax and the last blood of revolutionary mankind, his poor blood, ran into the carpet.42
This accusation is more valid than she realizes, for McLeod later admits that he has not merely been guilty of tacit consent but that he actually played a part in the bureaucratic paperwork which led to the assassination. What is more important than McLeod's guilt is the difference in reaction between Lannie and Lovett.

Her illusions destroyed, Lannie is devoid of hope for the world, and rejects any possibility for the individual to change it. She is thus in direct contrast to Lovett, who at this point has begun once again to believe in the potential of his own will and looks to McLeod for guidance. For this she derides him:

Oh, Mikey, I'm convinced. It's only you who is still the fool as I was once the fool, and you will not recognize that all these years, ever since the greatman set on his piles in the British Museum and let us think there was a world we could make, when all the time he was wrong, and we've been wrong, and there's no world to make for the world devours. "We still don't know," I muttered.43

In her militant helplessness, Lannie does not feel it sufficient to renounce the communist movement. In addition she embraces (figuratively) a reactionary ideology and (literally) its representatives, Guinevere and Hollingsworth. These alliances are somewhat perverse for an erstwhile idealist and the sexual unions which symbolize them are therefore also somewhat unnatural (lesbianism with Guinevere, brutal abasement at the hands of Hollingsworth).44

Further Lannie intentionally assumes the role of a passively adoring object of exploitation to each of these partners, thus fulfilling her belief that the will of the individual has no place in this world. The passivity is given symbolic depth by at least one of several metaphorical patterns which attach to her, that of the mirror.45 Lannie tells Guinevere late in the book:

And that is why you love me, for I would be a mirror to you, and we escape only when we follow our mirror and let it lead
Another echo of the mirror motif occurs after the second and final episode of love-making between Lannie and Lovett, when she calls him Narcissus. The partial truth of that accusatory label, as well as the nature of the abortive sexual affair between the two, leads to a clearer distinction between their values. The fact that Lannie and Lovett turns to one another at first, in an attempt to escape the pain of alienation is no mere accident of proximity. Rather, it may be seen, on a less literal level, as the final attempt of the splintered forces of the pre-war idealistic left to reunite in some valid basis for common belief. It is desperate attempt; doomed to be vain as well, for neither can offer what the other needs. They are proceeding in opposite directions. This polarity is made obvious the second time they are together sexually. Groping for some feeling outside himself, Mikey attempts to convince himself that he loves Lannie:

"... I heard my voice say. "Don't you understand? I think I love you."

"Let me love you," I pleaded. "I want to, don't you understand?"

(She replies) "But I Can't. I can't love you."

She tried to push me away.

"I don't like you. And you don't need me."47

Not out of desire, but in an attempt to convince both of them of the truth of what he has said, Lovett makes love once again to Lannie, and ".... she lay beneath me stiffly and suffered it with a smile, her face calm and patient, sweet suffering Jesus upon the Cross."48 Because Mikey is not sufficiently selfish, harsh and insensitive like Hollingsworth and Guinevere, she cannot
be a martyr with him, and so she attacks him. When he repeats, with less assurance, that he loves her, she replies:

You can't love anybody. Mikey, for you're Narcissus, and the closer you come to the water the more you adore yourself until your nose touches, and then you're alone again.\(^49\)

Certainly, this is a partial truth, but it is no more than that. Mikey's self-involvement is one from which he hopes to escape. His involvement with his own mind is, finally a constructive preoccupation, out of which will grow his new capacity to become involved again with mankind. Lannie is rather perverse Christ surrogate, for in her determination to become the footstool of the most selfish reactionary elements, she cannot countenance a man who aspires to goodness and to the humanitarian ideals which have so disappointed her. In her next unjust accusation, she even uses the terms and values of Guinevere and Hollingsworth. She tells Lovett, "You came to me because I was easy and you thought it would not cost you anything."\(^50\)

Lannie's rejection of Lovett is mild, however, in comparison to her vitriolic attack on McLeod, in which she consciously rejects all Christian mercy in favour of an insatiable vengeance:

"I know", she cried, "that I could sit by and watch cutthroats club you to the grave and I would shout them on, for I know you are wholly irredeemable .... You have buried the revolution, and it is fitting that they who exist because of you, they who rise to eminence here because you destroyed the revolution there, should have the right to flay your bones. And I shall cheer them on....\(^51\)

This attitude is not, however, to be her final evaluation of McLeod. As the interrogations proceed, much is confessed that justifies and reinforces her condemnation of the man. But soon, mitigating and even selfless actions in McLeod's career are revealed, and she frantically refuses to accept them as true, in her determination to cling tenaciously to the black and white
system of moral values she has adopted. Thus, she deprives herself of those moments of nakedness in which false pretenses and assurances fall down, leaving the individual to evaluate his/her ideas in the light of new knowledge and evolving a new style of life. Lannie is incapable of understanding the necessity for a dynamic rather than a static ethic within a history which itself is dynamic and outstrips old ideals. This is what Mikey learns from McLeod. But it is not till the very end that Lannie forgives McLeod, and by then it is too late for her to play a part in the future.

With the death of McLeod and confinement of Lannie to a mental hospital it is left to Lovett to pursue his enormous present and his quest to realize his true self, which will eventually lead him to a fuller and stronger commitment to humanity. He accepts the responsibility and the long and lonely wait. "So the heritage passed on to me, poor hope, and the little object as well, and I went out into the world." Lovett, alone, friendless, without history, is indeed a "poor hope" for the future. But at least now he has a future, and despite the paucity of hope, it is nonetheless better than the world of war and alienation and unfulfilled desire that surrounds him. There is at least the hope that Lovett, after suffering all the mental dilemma and atrocities of system, will pursue his path on the basis of his own understanding of the situation, find others, brothers in his cause and that after the major powers have exhausted themselves in a futile way, another opportunity will arise for revolutionary socialism. The hope is small, Mailer tells, and it demands sacrifice and will from each of us.

The novel ends where it began, with the traveller still moving through the strange world in the taxi of history. The last line of the novel is also the last line of the first chapter. It is warning to the reader, for BS is
Mailer's indictment of the blindness and deafness of modern mankind:

Meanwhile, vast armies mount themselves, the world revolves, the traveller clutches his breast. From out the unyielding contradiction of labor stolen from men, the march to the endless war forces its pace. Perhaps, as the millions will be lost, others will be created, and I shall discover brothers where I thought none had existed.

But for the present the storm approaches its thunderhead, and it is apparent that the boat drifts ever closer to shore. So the blind will lead the blind, and the deaf shout warnings to one another until their voices are lost.53

Keeping in view, the two thematic perspectives—psychological and political, the implicit conclusion of the novel appears to be that the individual might be better off seeking salvation without making any political commitment. If the individual is true to his needs, desires and his own self and is capable of transforming the mutilated self in the encroaching totalitarian atmosphere, the corresponding transformation and revolution in the society will automatically be affected. Speaking before the Progressive Party in 1949, Mailer stated that neither Russia nor the United States was close to his conception of socialism, and that "people should not believe in countries and socialism anyway."54 Here, Mailer comes quite close to E.M. Forster who maintains, "If I had to choose between betraying the country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country."55 What Forster emphasizes is that the individual must be true to himself and his response to any external stimuli should be based on Heart's Affection56 and not on a collective faith.

Mailer is trying to depict the same fact in BS that the only solace for mankind in barbary is the individual will to struggle against their own psyche and sordid past. In his concern with the limitations of Marxian theory, despite his constant preoccupation with the deteriorating economic, social, and political conditions in the United States, and in his sense of the importance of the
violent and the orgiastic, it is evident in BS that Mailer is moving toward his notion of hipster, an emphasis upon the transformation of the self rather than of society.
NOTES AND REFERENCES.


4. ADV, p.94.


6. ADV, p.358.

7. ADV, p.364.

8. ADV, p.273.

9. ADV, p.93.


12. Norman Mailer, Barbary Shore (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1951) All subsequent references are to this edition. The novel is referred hereafter BS.

13. BS, p.4


16. This relationship is echoed by Sergius/Eitel situation in The Deer Park.

17. This is the title by which Mailer refers to Hollingsworth in ADV.

18. BS, p.29.
19. BS, pp. 31-32.
20. BS, p. 29.
23. BS, p. 115.
24. ADV, pp. 91-92.
25. In this respect and others (notably the terror evoked by the state spying on citizens) the novel is reminiscent of George Orwell's 1984 (1949).
26. BS, p. 133.
27. BS, p. 165.
28. BS, pp. 175-176.
29. There is particular irony in that today's royalty achieve their position not through courage and nobility, but through greed and treachery.
30. BS, p. 195.
31. BS, p. 204.
32. BS, p. 140.
33. There may be some significance in the fact that this is the first time Lovett has been addressed by his full first name, rather than the diminutive nickname, Mikey. Perhaps, it is an indication that he has come to manhood.
34. The passing on of one's essence for the future is echoed clearly in The Deer Park. The idea of selfless commitment to another person looks ahead not only to Eitel/Sergius, but even to Rojack/Cherry of An American Dream.
35. BS, p. 223.
36. BS, p.125.
38. BS, p.204.
39. BS, p.7.
41. BS, p.90.
42. BS, p.136.
43. BS, p.152.
44. The implication of a passage she writes and later shows to Mikey is that she has performed fallatio upon Hollingsworth. The act in itself is not considered perverse by Mailer in light of sexual attitudes clarified in the later works, but the passive acceptance of harsh, loveless sexual exploitation certainly is, and this is clearly such a case.
45. The others, which are somewhat confused, include her momentary function as a Christ figure and her part in several symbolic father/child patterns, notably in relation to Lovett and to Trotsky.
46. BS, p.186.
47. BS, p.110.
48. BS, p.110.
49. BS, p.111.
50. BS, p.112.
51. BS, pp.135-136.
52. BS, p.223.
53. ibid, p.223.
54. ADV, p.410.