

VERNON
VR
ROYAL

COMPOSITIONS

J. Lennon

IV

U.R.E. English Dept Aug 1971

Cannibals + Christians

(1-26)

Mailer in "chance" (45)

Gen. notes on Mailer - ~~85-93~~

Managing Mailer (27-31)

Twilling (32-37)

IV

MARILYN (47-

NOTES ON SONG CRITICISM
(80-84, 94-108)

ADJECTIVES USED
TO DESCRIBE MAILER
+ HIS WRITING
(38

CLASS PROGRAM

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

SCHOOL _____ CLASS _____

		PERIOD 1	PERIOD 2	PERIOD 3	PERIOD 4	PERIOD 5	PERIOD 6	PERIOD 7	PERIOD 8
TIME	FROM TO								
MONDAY	SUBJECT								
	ROOM								
	INSTRUCTOR								
TUESDAY	SUBJECT								
	ROOM								
	INSTRUCTOR								
WEDNESDAY	SUBJECT								
	ROOM								
	INSTRUCTOR								
THURSDAY	SUBJECT								
	ROOM								
	INSTRUCTOR								
FRIDAY	SUBJECT								
	ROOM								
	INSTRUCTOR								
SATURDAY	SUBJECT								
	ROOM								
	INSTRUCTOR								

THE COVERS OF THIS BOOK HAVE BEEN TREATED WITH A SPECIAL VARNISH THAT PROTECTS AGAINST MOISTURE AND RUBBING
NOTICE HOW SMOOTH THEY ARE



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Cannibals + Christians hardback edition

✓ 7 "The country had never been the same since Kennedy was assassinated... some process of desecration, began with Hemingway's death and the death of Marilyn Monroe, had been racing on now"

7-8 m plastics

21 Goldwater's men - "full of moral indignation and moral vacancy" [recalls Yeats' "Second Coming"]

25 "There are sounds which seem to pass through all the protective gates in the ear and reach into some nerve where the eschatology is stored" [bagpipes, infants]
"the Faustian rage of a white civilization in those Highland wails, the cry of a race which was born to dominate and might never learn to share, and never learning, might be willing to end the game, the end of the world was in the sound of those pipes"

✓ 25 1/2 "if Goldwater won" will then at last a true underground might / form [up the ante - extremes]

26 "I had been leading a life which was a trifle too pointless and a trifle too full of guilt and my gullet was close to nausea with the endless compromises of an empty liberal center" MORE*

(2)

27 on the Press + the Establishment

28-29 More on the Renaissance here - his attributes

29 on Ghe - a love

31 "Success in politics comes from putting one's seat to a chair and sitting through dull wrangles in order to be present after midnight when the clubhouse vote is cast."

31 on Romney "a handsome version of Boris Karloff"

32 Rockefeller "he had a personality which was never in high focus (in the sense that Bobby Kennedy and Jimmy Hoffa are always in high focus)"

34 Maier on the promiscuity (Gothic-like) of the Right-wingers

35 "the New Yorker and the blank ordered harmoniums of her circles + text"

✓ # 37 politics + brothels

40 Goldwater "He would be breadwinner, husband and rogue to the underprivileged of the psyche, he would strike a spark in many dry souls for he offered release to frustrations deeper than politics"

41 Maier's dream "for secret armies" p 25-26

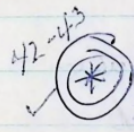
✓ "What blessing to know the face of the enemy by the end of the second third of the 20th century"

(3)

b41 [Maier sees the full horror of totalitarianism coming if G. is elected - He almost wishes G. were elected, believes he has a good chance to be elected. He wants the ante raised so badly he is tempted to predict it]

42 America: "There was nothing in our growth which was organic"

"was the country extraordinary or cursed?"

42-43  [capsule of the Kennedy murder, Ruby, Markol etc - our absurd art]

✓ 44 "Goldwater elected, America would stand revealed, its latent treacheries would pop forth like boils. Johnson elected, the drift would go on, the San Francisco Hellions would display among us"

45 "Extremism in the defence of liberty is no vice" Goldwater's words - ironically Maier's credo

47 Review of LBJ's Book

* 47 the state of the nation ~~the state of the nation~~ - architecture, ecology, etc

(11)

47 "Prosperity was Communism's poison, but attack from capitalism was to transfusion of blood."

48 "the prose style of Jack Kennedy (and his ghost writers) is to the prose style of L.B.J. (and his ghost writers) as de Tagueville is to Ayn Rand"

49 "that long stream of political engineers who dreamed of changing a material world by material means to make all men free + equal"

50 Trade against Johnson's style

51 "The essence of totalitarian prose is that it does not define, it does not deliver. It oppresses. It obstructs from above. It is profoundly contemptuous of the minds who will receive the message. So it does its best to dull the consciousness with sentences which are nothing but bricked-in power structures"

(5)

51 "There is one expanding horror in American life. It is that our long odyssey toward liberty, democracy and freedom for all may be achieved in such a way that utopia remains forever closed, and we live in freedom and hell, debased of style, not individual from one another, void of courage, our fear rationalized away."

52 "Which is why we love the memory so of F.D.R. and J.F.K.. For they offered high style to the poor. And that is worth more than a housing project. That is the war against poverty."

Chap 3

55 "all extremes in American politics decamped or absconded after the Second World War"

"some notion that the personality of the candidate was not separate from the history he would make"

56 Kennedy "embrace[d] the emotional complexity of our lives"

"No one in political life had a personality so glittering as Buckley's"

58 "to vote for a man who is waster is to vote for the petting"

(6)

58 "a hero, even a failed-hero, or a hero as monster, is more likely to create other heroes by his example or by opposition to him, than a man who gains power and has never been anything at all"

✓ 64 "became reputation, kids, kills the soul"

✓ 65-66 - good prem

Chap 4 Berkeley speech.

✓ 67 "Science, of course, the only true religion Americans still have left: like all true religions it is worshipped abjectly by those who know it least" MORE (MUST)

"Where science is exact, it is vastly insignificant; where it is significant, it is open-ended, not certain, prey to reasoning by analogy, torn by debate, sustained by darkest mystery, and when all is said about as scientific as literary criticism"

(X) 71

"Then it came to the President Hot damn. Vietnam"

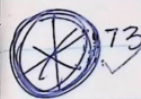
(7)

✓ 71

"some optimistic love affair with the secret potentialities of this nation" MORE - MUST

72

Mauller remarks on the shallowness of the drama theory - as in Armies



73

"the ~~the~~ ill of civilization is that it is removed from nature & disproportions abound everywhere [Emersonian]"

74

"We are a conservative property-loving nation obsessed with the passion to destroy other nations' property"

78

"A future death of the spirit lies close and heavy upon American life, a cancerous emptiness at the center which calls for a circus" Mauller wonders whether "capitalism could not survive without an economy geared to war"

79-80

Communism + Capitalism are "malignancies upon the spirit of honest adventure and open enquiry which developed across the centuries from primitive man to the Renaissance, and that therefore there is no man alive who can say at this point which system will perpetrate the greater harm upon mankind"

(9)

80 "No philosophy of government can occupy $\frac{3}{10}$ of the globe without being altered to its roots. The health of Communism, its secret necessity, is an enemy external to itself; [Truwellman] war is indeed the health of the totalitarian state."
[Excerpted in Armies]

82 fine ending

86 Vietnam - "right out of the naked - lurching heart of the Wasp in his fivers"

88 Truwell mentioned

89 "Only great art can penetrate into the tomb of the modern soul and bring a moment of cease to the braced-up murders of the modern heart" [now we are superior to Communists]

"Were the greatest country ever lived for speaking up the time"

Mailers gladiator - style wars (as in Playboy)

90 The VN war as a happening as in WAW:VN

(*) pp 95-103 Mailer's MLA talk - explanation of cannibal + Christian metaphor

(9)

p103 "Who can swear there has not been something catastrophic to America in the failure of her novelists"

104 "people we know seemed to care much less about novels" "it was always an essay in some magazine"

107 "Every novelist who has slept with the Bitch (only poets and writers of S.S. have a Muse) comes away bragging afterward like a G.I. stumbling out of a warehouse"

✓ "A man lays his character on the line when he writes a novel. Anything in him which is lazy, or insouciant, or unthought-out, or complacent, or fearful, or ambitious, or terrified by the ultimate logic of his exploration, will be revealed in his work."

108 "The writer, particularly the American writer, is not usually - if he is interesting - the great master of his craft; he is rather a being who ventured into the jungle of his unconscious to bring back a sense of order or a sense of chaos"

✓ - Hemingway "each time he passed through death the swell of new creativity was offered."

(11)

f.p. p. 219

(11)

115 "He [Baldwin] knows what he wants to say, and that is not the best condition for writing a novel. Novels go best when you discover something you did not know you knew."

"the dictum that prose about imaginary people but between book covers is a novel."

116 "If a hundred patients on terminal cancer read Naked Lunch, one or two might find remission, bet money on that. For Burroughs is the surgeon of the novel"

117 "God gave us pain for the same reason the discovery of tranquility was undertaken by the Devil: if we have an immortal soul some of us come close to it only through pain. A season of sickness can be preferable to a flight from disease, for it discovers the brush of a death which begins in the center of oneself."

120 "The trouble is that young John, like many a good young writer before him, does not know exactly what to do when action lapses, and so he cultivates his private vice."

The
American

(11)

123

"But the SS has a tendency to look for cleavages of permanence — an event occurs, a man is hurt by it in some small way forever. The novel moves as naturally toward flux. An event occurs, a man is injured, and a month later is working on something else. The S.S. like to be classic. It is most acceptable when one fatal point is made. Whereas the novel is dialectical. It is most alive when one can trace the disasters which follow victory or the subtle turns that sometimes come from a defeat"

Reread pp 123-124 - brackets

125

Salinger - "There is a taste of something self-absorptive, narcissistic, even puerile in his long contemplation of a lentless novel"

127

(*)

Mauber on his "objective" criticism on Heller "It is possible that the faculty of imagination is opposed to the gift of grasping relationships"

128

Heller "not too likely to seize the temper of our time and turn it"

128 "The serious novel begins from a fixed philosophical point - the desire to discover reality - and it goes to search for that reality in society, or else must embark on a trip up the upper Amazon of the inner eye."

MORE

129 "man was turned by the 20th century into mass-man rather than democratic man"

"The Tolstoyan novel begins to be impossible"

Read 129 - 130

130 "these infantile men of the arts, the novelists"

read prep 131-32

137 "Facts and categories are always the predictable refuge of the passionless, the mediocre, the timid, and the bowel-bound who will not make another move until they have exhausted the last."

"The work of reason was done for the nineteenth century, but whether it can be done for the middle of the 20th century we shall indeed not know unless the attempt is made"

138 "Maler's continuous criticism of other novelists is that they do not go far enough"

139 Mary McCarthy "like any good Catholic - born she is afraid to unloose the demons"

"as if a wall were being stacked up rather than seeing the metamorphosis of a creature"

MORE

139 "Mary's vice is her terror of being ridiculous"

140 "the gentled lords and ladies who manage America are the psychic descendants of Conrad's Kurtz"

1156 Punching Paper

151 "Fitzgerald was one of those men who do not give up early in the search to acquire more manhood for themselves"

158 "It is possible Hemingway lived every day of his life in the style of the suicide. What a great deal is that"

excellent summary of Maler's views of Hemingway's bravery, etc

158 "For the life of his talent must have depended

on living in a psychic terrain where one must either be brave beyond one's limit, or suffer alone

into a bad illness, or, indeed, by the ultimate logic of the suicide, must advance the hour in which one would make another reconnaissance into one's death."

"Each time his physical vanity suffered a defeat, he would be forced to embark on a new existential gamble with life"

162 "I do not think there was an occasion in my life which did not leave me fatally insipid."

173 An American Dream ^{begin} ~~with~~ & who before Kennedy assassinated - Barney Isidore Kelly is the villain

194 "There is everywhere now a passion to dislocate the mood of an event"

195 "There does seem to be some relation between sexual repression and the increase of productivity" [deterministic]

196 "It is no good for a writer to retract anything he's written that's good."
[Mailer does not seem to be one to destroy

manuscripts. He is possessive and particular about his creations. Undoubtedly, a great deal of gleaning could be done]

196 "I think this bad art that one gets on the mass media, on television, in the movies, does the nation far more harm than if one were to remove all controls from pornography and obscenity"

197 "Cortus interruptus is evil"

197 Lady Chatterley's Lover "changed my life. It was the first thing I'd ever read that gave me the idea sex could have beauty. I learned from Lawrence that the way to write about sex was not to strike poses, but be true to the logic of each moment"

198 Lady C.L. "has nothing to say about the violence which is part of sex"
"Lovers not only create but they also destroy one another; lovers change one another; lovers resist the change that each gives to the other."

"When we read Lawrence there's a certain
westfulness, we feel. Most people don't
find sex that pure, that organic. They
find it sort of partial and hot & ugly
and fascinating and filled with all sorts
of day-to-day details. (It like to achieve
something between Miller [ethics] and
Lawrence [westfulness])

200- short bit on the instinctive feminine
aversion to contraception

200-01 "I think there may be more homosexuals
today than there were 50 yrs. ago. If so,
the basic reason might have to do with
a general loss of faith in the country,
faith in the meaning of one's work,
faith in the notion of oneself as a man."
[Mailer seems locked in Chronological time;
~~the~~ newspaper-headline time; he should
read Whitman, get some cosmic vibrations]

201 ✓
"This country's entering into the most desperate,
nightmarish time in its history. Unless everyone
in America get a great deal braver, everything
is going to get worse" [crux of Mailer]

205

"^{poor} Universal Cure for Worry
Don't go to bed
until you
fall
in
it"

224

"It is bad to take a flush of adrenaline for
nothing. All that murder and nowhere to go"

225

"Whenever I get a haircut, I have this feeling I'm
losing possibilities I never got around to taking
care of. Put it this way: when I comb my
hair it changes my mood"

More on Architecture pps 233-

234 ✓

"To live in the old slum jungle left many
half crippled, and others part savage, but it
was at least an environment which called for wit
the landscape of modern man takes on a sense
of endless empty communications"

235 ✓

"to uproot the past too completely is a danger
without measure" MORE

(6)

Architectural Forum

238

"The essence of totalitarianism is that it beheads. It beheads individuality, variety, dissent, extreme possibility, romantic faith; it blinds vision, deadens instinct; it obliterates the past"

240 MUST

238

✓ Mailer wants "the ~~same~~ forms of which lived in the centuries before us, none of their arrogance, their privilege, their aspiration, their cunningness, their creations, their vulgarities"

Part Four

245

"Where an art work had been measured once by skill and daring, or consummate grace, or extraordinary insight with which a theme was developed and made lived, now its measure was in the facts and tone of its interruptions"

246

"The absurd is an art which is built not only on interruptions but annoyance"

247

on "Playboy" rose and cinnamon lito, marshmallows, butter-ess"

248

the upcoming "The First Days Interview" attempts

(19)

"to discuss the nature of mood"

248

✓ "We live, remember, in a time which interrupts the mood of everything alive" MORE

249

Mailer - the performing self

250

"In an essay you must obey formal concerns which I have not the enthusiasm to obey any longer"

251

"I feel the truth of the theory first, and discover the explanations later"

252

"The underlying assumption [of existentialism] is that nothing in one's metaphysical scheme is as important as one's sense of the present"

253

"Gestalt, as I use it, is the harmony or discord of the life present in the context"

✱

Ref to Heidegger + Barthes's book Existential Man

"Existence precedes essence. Emotion determines causality"

254

"My character is such that I must confess a small viciousness in order to prime a new thought"

255

✓ "My ambition at the moment is to seduce all those readers who distrust what they think are my ideas"

(20)

- 256 mature sex - delicate sex - "Sex as mood"
is a conversation with respect for nuance"
- 258 "wood is a psychic organism. Like all
living things it reacts to each new breath
of the environment" MORE
- 262 "The Metaphysics of the Belly" reprinted
from L.P.
- ✓ 264 "I write often of the enormous present, of
psychopathy, of how mass man has
no sense of past or future, just Now"
- ✓ 265 "Then unconscious [mass man] doesn't
crisp into the conscious routine acts
of this daily life, as does mine. They
save all the larger thoughts for sleep, which
is the tidy way to do it."
- 266 "Beauty - so runs this argument has its root
in any being which is harmonious, imaginative,
adaptable, brave, artful, daring, good for
life, good for the continuation of life"
- 267 "Most of the artists who believe in art for
art's sake are over-elegant greedy sorts"
- 269 "the modern condition may be psychically so bleak,
so overextended, so artificial, so plastic - plastic
like styrene - that studies of loneliness, silence,

(21)

- corruption, scatology, abortion, monstrosity,
decadence, orgy, and ~~def~~ death can give life,
can give a sentiment of beauty"
- MUST
cf 269 used 270 the modern condition - "A soul ~~which~~
PP, p. 165 ✓ takes antibiotics when ill, smokes filter cigarettes,
drinks proteins, minerals and vitamins in a
larged diet, takes sedative to go to sleep,
benzedrine to awake, and tranquilizers for peace"
MORE - READ due to be reborn
- "It is a deadened existence, afraid precisely
of work, of course / labor, loneliness,
invidiousness, hell, perversion, and mess
because these are the states which in some way
must be passed through, digested, transcended,
if one is to make one's way back to life"
- 271 used "The first art work in an artist is the shaping
of his own personality"
- 271 On Hemingway - two "dirty ape"
- 271 "encounters with danger were not self destructive
but healthy for Hemingway"
- 274 the force-as-lost-possibility theory see exp. p. 282-3
- ✓ 281 used "life seems to come out of the meeting of opposites"

[all actions, operations, physical & mental have a significance for Man. He sees the hand of God in every capsize, in every sick cow. Broader form of Platonism and completely at odds with the basic tenets of existentialism]

[cf p 283]

284 [the unconscious is the master interpreter of the sense information we receive - how convenient -] "the unconscious is close to the senses, it is the animal part of myself"

285 "People who go to hear their fortunes are not existentialists, but essentialists. Full of self-pity, they wish to believe that their fortune is already written, and to their advantage, of course."

✓ 287 "A being is anything which lives and still has the potentiality to change physically and to change morally. A person who has lost all capacity for fundamental change is no longer a being."

287 M. believes in reincarnation

297 "the secret emotions of one's being, the basic emotions, courage and cowardice betray their presence in odor. And greed as well, or cupidity, ambition, compassion, love, trust, tenderness, savagery."

(X)

14 "Our Argument at last Presented"

307 "Science has built a wall across the route of metaphor: poets whom before experts"

308 "Science was founded originally on metaphor, would go our argument, and the twentieth century has shipped metaphor to the ghetto of poets"

"good metaphor could only regenerate in the deepest experience of a man"

"it was not the original desire of science to convert nature, rather to reveal it. Faust was still unborn when Aristotle undertook his pioneer observations."

[experiment] "began at that point where a poet looked for a means to measure the accuracy of his metaphors" [and then ran amuck]

309 "Metaphor had been replaced by gross essay"

309 "Such an approach might have wished ultimately to demonstrate that a malfunction of the liver and an inflammation of the eyes were both connected to despair at one's position in society."

CRUX 309 "Let us suppose that each specific ill of the body is not so much a dull evil to be disposed of by any chemical means whatever, but is, rather, a theatrical production presented by some company in oneself to some audience in oneself. To the degree then that our illness is painful, detailed, clear, and with as much edge as a sharply enunciated word, the particular disease is a success; the communion of the body (the statement sent from stage to audience) is deep, is resonant. The audience experiences catharsis -- at the end of the drama, the body is tired but enriched. By the logic of our metaphor, that is a good disease. The illness has waged conflict, drama, and distress through the body, and has obliged the body to sit in attention upon it,

309 but now, but now the body knows more. As experience has become more profound, its intimate knowledge of its own disharmony is more acute."

→ By this reckoning, a disease is the last attempt (at a particular level of urgency) to communicate from one part of the body to the other, a last attempt to tell us that if we do not realize the function before us is now grievously out of harmony, then we will certainly sicken further."

310 "metaphor is not to the present interest of science" MORE

[a most comprehensive statement - and a revealing one - for it shows that at the heart of things, at the heart of being, Marler sees "harmony," a self-adjusting harmony which has its several signs and warnings of impending destruction. This is absolutely anti-existential, for if we can only read the signs, get to the heart of the puzzle we can be fulfilled, aware. Marler is saying that if we are brave we will be healthy - he

senses or beliefs in no void to be feared.
The world, being, is linked by a massive
series of harmonies and metaphors which
only need to be apprehended.

For the existentialist death is the end
so the ultimate in courage is demanded
to live. For Mailer ~~death~~ death is not the
end, there will be some sort of transmigration
of the soul, good or bad depending on our
conduct on earth. The only thing in doubt
is whether God will win or not and this
seems fallacious for how can he ^{lose} if
he is God. Mailer is a transcendentalist

The Political Economy of Time

"A man, for example, might possess an
ideal form"

"ideal form is a treacherous hypothesis"

Managing Mailer by Joe Flaherty

16 "Rubin couldn't understand why Mailer wouldn't
run as an independent. 'I don't care about these
people [Democrats]. Why have anything to do with
them?'"

Mailer quivered in the tones of a father confessor:

"Jerry, do you believe in electoral politics?"

Rubin, delivering the doctrine of the dropout, gently
replied, 'No, Norman, electoral politics is not
relevant.'

"What do you believe in, Jerry - spirituality?"

"Yes, Spirituality, Norman."

"Then what about the spirituality of the machine? To
make it hum, hum, hum..."

Suddenly, Rubin looked like a convert as the Puerto
graced the air like so many Kerie Elensons."

56 "I couldn't understand why Mailer would tolerate
such gibberish [black ^{negative} militance], but during the course
of the campaign I was to find out he [Mailer] had
a one-way love affair with street types. If someone
had been part of an experience foreign to his

own (Benny Book, a convict, a prizefighter), Marlow found in him occult powers located upon the children of the gutter. Their awareness of threat and their lack of performance in any function assigned to them made no difference to him. Two embankment had to do with Marlow's high sense of duty and his romantic notion of the streets. But the gutter was a spawning ground which produced darkness far more than genius ever could.

It was a character & found unattractive, similar to that of society breeds who chose atmosphere (playa and luncheon)

[God creation. Marlow's tendency can be a kind of romanticism (as Elzabity would have it) or it could be Marlow's continuing attempt to understand and partake of the unknown of the experience of groups foreign to him. Marlow takes moderate pride in his stand as "Kipling", his Howard Joyce, his novelistic craft, his ability to speak in public and defend himself. The Renaissance man was, first of all, camera - Marlow asks that informing path in the lives of others he can turn to use in his own.

71

[Marlow with his campaign, when] "One could conjecture that this was Marlow's revenge on the residents of 'the Avenue of the Mad', as he once called it, but it was a larger manifestation than that. Marlow was willing to submerge himself in the political role to a point, but he demanded that one keep with eyes open as that the literary figure, the celebrity, also be kept in focus. This duality kept him from becoming the ancient political art of dealing with people."

"The damaging part was not his occasional bad manners but his missed opportunities: the courts that could have been his, the winters who could have been inspired — if he had mastered the little touches instead of relying on the magnetism of his name and reputation."

78 "The Middle, Marlow strongly suspects that in the end evil will dominate."

116 "Marlow had wanted the adopted glamor of Adams' [wilderness] presence, a glamor to which he, as another isolated voice, also had been vulnerable. Marlow remained his own man and would carry his dark

(30)

time no matter how offensive it was to the collective ear. What is generally ^{mis}understood about Marler is that his many midnight rides against America are taken in the spirit of Paul Revere, a cry, an alarm to his countrymen. Unlikely as it may seem, the man in the saddle is a patriot.

120 Marler on the cities - "our cities, close to inoperative, heavy, sullen, dangerous as wads of oil-soaked rags; wait for conflagrations and massive applications of law and order to follow, that law and order which will produce sabotage and underground movements in reaction." MORE

142 "the adverse conditions seemed to please Marler - they were a test of his stamina and a reassurance of his sincerity. At times, he would talk about the toughness of his days, the heat, the brain-deadening repetitive speeches, the 24 hour schedule, his voice seemingly a reminder to the Lord to log these days as payment for more prophetic ones."

183

(31)

"It was then I realized the darkest irony of the campaign. The things I cherished in Marler as a writer - his daring, his unpredictability, his gambling, and his bluffing - were the very things that made me want to strangle him as a politician."

originally published in Am. Quarterly Fall 1949
and The Liberal Imagination, 1950, under the title,

"Contemporary American Literature in Its
Relation to Ideas" by Lionel Trilling
The American Writer and the European Tradition
ed. Margaret Denny and Wm. H. Gilman
Haskell House Publishers Ltd. N.Y. 1968
originally published by Univ. of Mass Press, 1950

135 "Whether we deal with syllogisms or poems, we
deal with dialectic - with, that is, a developing
series of statements"

"Dialectic, in this sense, is just another word for
form, and has for its purpose, in philosophy
or in art, the leading of the mind to some conclusion."

136 "A speaker knows our culture - it is that people
will eventually be able to say, 'They fell in
love and married' let alone understand the language
of Romeo and Juliet, but will as a matter of
course say, 'Their individual impulses being
reciprocal, they activated their individual erotic
drives and integrated them within the same frame
of reference.'

Now this is not the language of abstract thought

"The Meaning of a Literary Idea"

on any kind of thought. There can be no doubt ~~that~~
whatever that it constitutes a threat to the emotions
and thus to life itself.

The specter of what this sort of language suggests
has haunted us since the end of the eighteenth century.
When he speaks of the mind being violated by an
idea, Mr. Eliot, like the romantics, is simply voicing
his horror at the prospect of life being intellectualized
out of all spontaneity and reality."

We are the people of the idea, and we rightly
fear that the intellect will dry up the blood
in our veins and wholly check the emotional
and creative part of the mind. ^{and} Although
I said that the fear of the total sovereignty of
the abstract intellect De/zam in the romantic
period, we are of course touching his upon
Pascal's opposition between two faculties of
mind, of which l'esprit de finesse has its
Renaissance powers no less than l'esprit de
géométrie, powers of discovery and knowledge
which have a particular value for the education
of man in society and the universe."

"Ideology is not the product of thought; it is the habit or the ritual of showing respect for certain formulas to which, for various reasons having to do with emotional safety, we have strong ties but of whose meaning we have no clear understanding."

"This anxiety lest the work of art be other than totally self-contained, this fear lest the reader make reference to something beyond the work itself, has its origin, as I have previously suggested, in its reaction from the earlier impulses - it goes far back beyond the nineteenth century - to show that art is justified in comparison with the effective activity of the systematic disciplines."

"Say what we will as critics and teachers trying to defend the province of art from the dogged tendency of our time to ideologize all things into 'gayness', say what we will about the 'purely' literary, the pure esthetic values, we as readers know that we demand of our literature some of the virtues which define a

successful work of systematic thought. We want it to have - at least when it is appropriate to have, which is by no means infrequently - the authority, the cogency, the completeness, the brilliance, the hardness of systematic thought."

"Intellectual assent in literature is not quite the same thing as agreement. We can take pleasure in literature where we do not agree, responding to the power or grace of a mind without admitting the rightness of its intention or conclusion - we can take our pleasure from an intellect's cogency, without making a final judgement on the correctness or adaptability of what it says."

"Hemingway and Faulkner have insisted on their indifference to the conscious intellectual tradition of our time and have acquired the reputation of achieving their effects by means that being the least possible connection with any sort of intellectuality or even with intelligence."

147

"We feel that Hemingway and Faulkner are intensely at work upon the recalcitrant stuff of life; when they are at their best they give us the sense that the amount and intensity of their activity are in a satisfying proportion to the recalcitrance of the material. And our pleasure in their activity is made the more secure because we have the distinct impression that the two novelists are not under any illusion that they have conquered the material upon which they direct their activity."

148

"the extreme rationalist position ignores the simple fact that the life of reason, at least in its most extensive part, begins in the emotions. What comes into being when two contradicting emotions are made to confront each other and are required to have a rational life with each other is, as I have said, quite properly called an idea. Ideas may also be said to be generated in the opposition of ideals, and in

the felt awareness of the impact of new circumstances upon old forms of feeling and estimation, in the response to the conflict between new exigencies and old pictures. And it can be said that ~~the old pictures are firmly held~~ and a work will have what I ~~the~~ have been calling exigency in the degree that the old pictures are firmly held and the new exigencies strongly apprehended."

149/50 Allen Tate's idea "that religion in its decline leaves a detritus of pictures, of strong assumptions, which afford a particularly fortunate condition for certain kinds of literature: these pictures carry a strong charge of intellect, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they tend to stimulate the mind in a powerful way."

152

"think of ideas as living things, inescapably connected with our wills and desires, as susceptible of growth and development by their very nature, as showing their life by their tendency to change, as being liable, by this very tendency, to deteriorate and become corrupt and to work harm, then we stand in relation to ideas which makes an active literature possible."

(Adaptation used to describe Marlow and his writing in reviews of Soy)

romantic turn of mind
witty, trenchant
penetration, energy
the wonderful describer
a scary vitality
a charismatic prose
lostling, more intrusive
Bardic

Baroque
the most literary of living novelists
master of suspenseful narration
a great and obsessed stylist
ripe style, existential
unmasks the overcharacterizing
[of previous works]

immense narrative powers
phenomenal feat of narrative
howitzer shot, flamboyance, sensationalism, sentimentality
Barometer of the Zeitgeist
most overwhelming creative ambition
keen sense of Am. social
immensely talented, knowledgeable, energetic
a romantic

self exposure + self assertion
brilliantly intrusive narrator
quandem existentialist

violent + irregular passion - his consuming interest
his other great infatuation: coolness
a watershed of viewpoints
overthought style

- unprecedented restraint
- vigorously monochromatic
- his normally overwhelming personality
- extraordinary demonstration of his narrative skills
- Dreiserian fascination

one of the most successful writers of the 20th century
sounds like Dashiell Hammett or E. Hemingway
most prominent living Am. novelist
"notorious Am. novelist"

- Stanza
- All's under non fiction:
"splendid facade of narrative, scene, portraiture, and comment"
 - glittering intelligence
 - flashing judgment
 - half-wild but enchanting comparisons
 - uncommon ambition
 - uncommon achievement
 - sublime credibility
 - momentous achievement
 - one of America's greatest modern writers

psychoidetaphysical bombast
slangy unadorned style
a Dreiserian classic
I-am-a-camera-technique

5-3-91

(40)

(41)

Aug 12, 1971

cf Vol. IX:
67-69

Does Mailer believe in chance? Yes, of course but it seems less a factor for concern, seems to exert less leverage on human possibility in his later work than in TNATO. In TNATO the protagonists (esp. Cummings + Croft) discounted chance. They tried to be instruments of their own policy and felt ^{any} increasing the exigencies of their will they could grasp their goals. They forgot chance, which has "the last featuring below at events"

Mailer, in his later works, accepts chance as apparently aimless in human affairs, but actually a part of the bitter feud between God and the devil. God is locked in a struggle in which he ~~can~~ ^{may not} win and we are his pawns or the devils, as we choose. Our senses and ~~our~~ intuitions tell us how to choose good or evil - these choices will be the crucial movements of our ~~of~~ lives - chance is irrelevant, not a factor. The world ~~is~~ perversities and evils are not random any more but ^{factual} ~~strategic~~ choices of God and the Devil. For the mass of mankind chance is not important

MARILYN: A BIOGRAPHY

- 15 "a very Stradivarius of sex" no woman in her sex
- 15 "What a jolt to the dream life of the nation that the angel died of an overdose."
- "Her death was covered over with ambiguity even as Hemingway's was exploded into horror."
- the 60's From Hem. to Warhol
- 16 "the last of the myths to thrive in the long evening of the American dream"
- 18 quotes V. Woolf - had not read her in 1959
- 19 some good talk on role playing, true selves
 "the psychological lift of a role has more existential presence than daily life (and in fact the role creates real reactions in everyone who sees it), so the twilight between reality and fantasy is obliged to become more predominant for a great actor than for others." [compare to Wild 90 essay in Essays]
- factoids defined: "facts which have no existence before appearing in a magazine or newspaper"

creations which are not so much lies as a product to manipulate emotion in the Silent Majority. (It is possible, for example, that Richard Nixon has spoken in nothing but factoids during his public life.)

19 "In journalism the labor of cross-checking is equal to love"

"Not having known Per was going to prove, he knew, a recurrent wound in the writing"

- calls the book "a work of psychohistory"
- Miller & Marler lived in same building in late 40's

20 speaks of ^{his} marriages as failures
M. describes himself as "a man with a calibrating turn of mind"

* It is possible there is no instrument more ready to capture the elusive quality of her nature than a novel?
Set a thief to catch a thief, and put an artist on an artist."

20 M calls it "a species of novel ready to play by the rules of biography" [uses same term in "Up the Family Tree"]

"with the sanction of a novelist was going to look into the unspoken impulses of some of his real characters. At the end, if successful, he would have offered a literary hypothesis of a possible Marilyn Monroe" [reminiscent of remarks in Paris Review self-interview in 1961]

22 ~~the~~ the roots of insanity: "frustrated ambition"

"Formal psychiatry is a maze of medical disciplines that seek to gear, stupefy or pulverize madness, ~~it~~ it is another kind of inquiry to search into the uncontrollable ambition to dominate one's own life, the life of others, or the life of communities not yet conceived, that seeks rage to put its signature on existence."

22-23
~~22~~

"The concept that no human being has ever existed before or will be reincarnated again"

is a philosophical rule of thumb which dominates psychiatry; yet all theory built upon this concept has failed - one is tempted to say systematically - in every effort to find a consistent method of cure for psychotics."

23 "Some karmic virtue or debt some of us (or all of us) acquired by our ~~past~~ courage or failure in lives we have already lived"

suggests that

"we are not all conceived in equal happiness or desperation"

NOTES ON THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG (CRITICISM)

"The Ballad of Gary G," New York (Oct 15, 1979), 67-68.
by Tim O'Brien

67 "... Gilmore seemed a clear candidate for admittance into that curious pantheon of outlaw legends. All he needed, finally, was a sanctioning ballad."

"The book's effect is stunningly novelistic."

Other writers would present "motivational analysis or speculation. The heart of nonfiction, after all, is to dispel mystery. But the heart - and art - of fiction is better to generate and to celebrate human mystery, to allow ambiguities and contradictions to resonate, to explain little of a character's inner drives but rather to show those drives operating in a dramatic context. This is Maer's strategy" (Yes it is his strategy, but I can't agree that fiction does not wish or strive to explain a character's inner drives - just

the opposite. Of course, the mysteries will continue, but they will be deeper, more subtle mysteries. Novels explain through the success of their delineations - excepting the French new novel, of course, which believes ~~that~~ that the inner drives are chemical or electrical]

[O'Brien makes the same distinction between understanding + explaining, on the one hand, and knowing, on the other. Well, there is a question of degree here - Just how detached can a novelist be? Robbe-Grillet scoffs all explanation of motivation as worthless. Proust does the opposite and yet leaves mysteries. Not to present an explanation is which may be correct, plausible, possible is to abrogate the duties of a novelist - perhaps. There is something for ~~some~~ not getting in too deep, in certain cases. At any rate, the question of how far in to go is one of the novelist's

82

central decisions, a series of continuing decisions.]

68 "Throughout the correspondence two themes consistently interweave - death + love - and, as in any great ballad, the tiring of Thanatos + Eros do their erotic death dance right up to the end."

Review in The New Republic (Oct 27, 1979), 28-30
by Frank McCannell

28

"From his first, towering novel The Naked and the Dead (1948) on, he has been telling us that the two passions, for winning and for losing, imply one another, that the personal and political myth of ultimate success has to include, and recognize, the chance of ultimate failure, or degenerate into a comfortable and inhuman kind of "winning" which is really the second, and worse, death."
[For Mailer, America is great only insofar as it recognizes this connection and is willing to dare to attempt the ultimate]

28

Mailer: "~~the~~ Catholicism champion of ^{contemporary} 83
letters"

28

"But Mailer is a romantic, and it is characteristic of romantics, from Byron to Camus and beyond, that they often produce their greatest work when they themselves aren't fully looking."

29

[McCannell compares Gilmore to Mailer's novelistic heroes, including "Mailer" in Memis. Good correspondences, but Gilmore lacks all and any sense of social proportion. G's experience as a prisoner was the shaping experience of his life - not so of M's heroes.]

[Rogack in Dream says that he wants to write a book called "The Psychology of the Hangman," which he never does. Mailer does in Song. Also, Mailer said it did not occur to him that Gilmore was also the executioner]

29

Good stuff in how G. is depicted by the

very society against which we rebels —
partially anyway — bearing out Marcuse's
point that all revolutions in capitalist
culture are so coopted]

30 "Barry Farrell, a fine journalist and a
theology - ridden Catholic who composed most
of the tortuous, and crucial, questions
put to Gilman in his press interviews."

"(Gilman incarnates the idea of the Mailer
Duo, Schuller and Farrell between them
incarnate the contradictory halves of Mailer's
own career as a writer, the beach PR
man touched by metaphysical yearnings
and the existential theologian suffering
in the marketplace. " [Good, but fails
to note that Schuller ~~and~~ also stands
in for ^{the} Mailer who wrestles with
~~the~~ ^{himself} as observer, Postman
in Armies. In other words, Gilman = Mailer
the actor and Schuller = Mailer the observer]

(CONTINUED ON p. 84)

Aug 24, 1971

[We still ~~live~~ ^{labor} under the pretentious Johnsonian
yoke of "kinds" of literature. In our lust for
order we separate an author's poems and plays,
his letters, essays, and novels. The ~~sub~~ genres are
reduced into various phyllo and orders and
the prejudices, especially in the academic community,
against non-fiction or non-creative literature are
enormous. In discussing the work of an author
like Norman Mailer the usual tendency is to
divide his fiction from his non-fiction, and to
assume that whatever permanent worth his
~~work~~ possesses resides in the fiction, whereas
the non-fiction is merely a menagerie
of egotistical rantings, publicity plays and
tedious confessional harangues. Germaine
Greer makes this implicit criticism of Mailer
when she calls ~~him~~ ^{Mailer} "Superhawk", and Robert
Fowell's compliment ^{to} Mailer as the country's
best journalist is a left-handed compliment
~~of the same nature~~. Of course the long tradition
of ~~non-excellence~~ in American journalism, the
ability to convey ~~only~~ ^{only} notions which are "conformita-
ally simple simple like phallois simple," as Mailer

he sees the change as a result of will and ego and not just the edge of ^{the} deterministic glacier. Mailer writes of the unexceptional man, mass man, in TNATO, not in Baron.

(here to
and TYPED
UP)
begin with
p. 119
of Michael

Whether Mailer realizes it or not his switch from fiction to non-fiction is the logical result on a creative level of his belief in existentialism. For the non-existential writer the world exists thus and so and his job is to record it in all its complexity. If he is good he is Henry James; if he is pedestrian he is Steinbeck or James T. Farrell. The existentialist, as Sartre notes, is aware not only of the world about him but on a deeper level (cf. 32, vii) he is aware of himself as well. This is Mailer's role in the later work. The ultimate distinguishing characteristics of the existentialist point of view are its emotion (cf. 32, viii) ~~and~~ ^{subjectivism} ~~and~~ ^{tradition} and its ephemeral quality. The novelist operates in a world of Platonic verities - "this is how the world has always

been," he says, "despite the troubling apparent differences we see." The existential novelist sees the world as it was then and only for him and always with the qualification that it is no longer like that now. He records the truth of the mood, he catches nuance and dynamic. His world is more concrete and subjective and ephemeral because he is not reading universal symbols which have unvarying meaning. [But Mailer is!] 

There is an unspoken belief that the present is too complex and chaotic to be written about now. Instead most novelists turn to the past, immediate or distant, and ~~present~~ present a supposedly unclouded view of "how it was." Implicit is the belief that now we shall be able to see how things really are, that the emotions and passions of the moment which clouded the view then ~~are lost~~ are ~~gone~~ or merely smoldering and that reality can now be grasped. Mailer's method is to seize upon the passions and

emotions of the now in his remembered self so that we get the chaos and complexity of the event and not a view from a distant peak where all precision is lost (as well as complexity) with distance. It is the opposite of the Hawthornean view which saw distancing as crucial. If reality is intricate and jumbled, hot and indiscriminate then only by ~~immersing~~ immersing oneself in the element (to paraphrase Conrad's *Marlow*) (cf. p 55 Vol III) by putting the novel's smacked dab into the welter of actuality, the heart of the now can a recreation of the mood of the time occur.

He does not describe events on the 15th person because he recognizes that he has undergone some change. Experiencing the event and writing about it are two diametrically different experiences. It is his tribute to the existential awareness of the self of itself. It also unlocks all the resources of the Jamesian novel for his use.

When the novelist assumes (as Hawthorne

But Mailer does see it as crucial!

did) that the blurring effects of time's passage will allow the essential to come forth. He is ultimately going to fall back on some a priori conception of how the world should be. It is no accident that we are more sure of the whys and wherefores of the past than of the present. We are lulled into believing the past was thus and so when our experience of the present should tell us it was false.

Capote's unspoken assumption is that the Clutter murders ~~are~~ ^{completely} are interpretable events. During his peripateticism in Kansas he was merely sifting, observing waiting for the pieces to fall into place. Mailer never assumes they will and so never supports a final interpretation of how things were (cf p 56 Vol III)

that reality can be dissected & like the jigsaw of a page.

mood or emotion as an index to reality
cf pp 41+57 Vol III and pp 174+177 C+C

Mailer, like T.S. Eliot, is a borrower. He takes his idea of "Faustian" western man from Spengler, his concept of dread from Heidegger, his idea of emotion as an index of reality from Sartre. His sexual theories are drawn from Reich and Lawrence etc.

Aug 25, 1971

Sartre insists [p60 vol III] that to believe that our characters are formed from birth or by the circumstances of childhood is completely fallacious. Mailer, an avowed existentialist, seems to violate his own philosophical beliefs by attempting to bring about architectural, ~~political~~ political and social and media reform. The change must come from within and not from the institutions. This is a deep inconsistency at the heart of his working philosophy. Does he believe, like TIME magazine that adjustments in the environmental controls will solve man's problems? I cannot believe that these reforms if effected would satisfy Mailer.

For ultimately he believes, as did Faulkner and Hemingway that being brave is the only answer. Let us say that the present state of affairs is not conducive to authentic existence and so he cannot refrain from speaking out [CP pp 60-61 vol III]

Sept 25, 1971

A primary cause for the turn by the literary readership to non-fiction is perhaps, a growing inability to "suspend our disbelief." Without making the effort we are so stunned, awed, purged etc by incandescent fact and we do not have to say at the end - "But it's only a story." The world is getting to be a more remarkable place, perhaps it always was and we just didn't notice it.

an question:

Is the nature of the fiction as to
Spiral Remedy Knight's Journal of an Old Beloved
to know of the right - or some such
kind of

94

(continued from p. 84)

30 "For Gilmore (like Jim in Lord Jim) is both the center of this book and its least visible, least knowable character. Mailer never once allows himself to narrate events from Gilmore's own point of view."

[Ditto for Gatsby. But Jim + Gatsby may be empty-headed romantics upon whom others project their hopes + fears. But Gilmore is as interesting as Julien Sorel and half as interesting as Ras Kolumbar. Mailer gives us Schiller as a replacement, but he is not as good. We need Mailer - unfortunately he was not involved with Gilmore during his last 9 mos. - so perhaps Mailer was wise in keeping himself out. It is also worth noting that all those around Jim + Gatsby try to enter his head. Lord Jim and The Great Gatsby are not primarily about these central characters, but about

"we have many considered interpretations of Jim + Gatsby to apply to - so we do not as interpretations do we might be."

95

the ^{perceptions} of others. Mailer must observe Schiller because he ~~is~~ (Schiller) is Gilmore's chief observer. Mailer could not observe ~~himself~~ himself observing Gilmore and to record himself observing Schiller observe Gilmore would have been exceedingly awkward]

"True Life Story" by Earl Rovit, Nation October 20, 1979, 376-78

376

also M's "Wortzer rhetoric" and his role as "barometer of the Zeitgeist"

Says the Gilmore saga contains all the themes of interest to Mailer: "the dramatic confluence of the private + public spheres in spasms of force and repression"

"What astounds me about this book is not that Mailer should have been seized by the material but that he should have exercised such restraint in his treatment of it"

Mailer "is not there as a ranting, reacting
commenting 'I' and he is not there (for the
most part) in the ^{imitation of} language & allusion"

"Concealed in the convention of 'objective'
camera eye... Mailer can shape
his desperate material... adding
increments of reality by the gram
and centimeter"

"What is the 'message' that Mailer
has discovered in this melodramatic
shard of our contemporaneity?"

compared to Dreiser's An American Tragedy
but notes that Dreiser "transmutes"
"a truth about reality into a truth
of his imagination" while "Mailer
seems to espouse a kind of artistic
submission to reality which appears
to be far humbler than Dreiser's
stance"

notes that Song imitates the trad. structure of 97
books where crime + punishment intersect:

Mr. Brown, ~~Case~~ The Trial, The Stranger,
Natural Sin but more for convenience's
sake than "to deal scrupulously with
the issues of justice + culpability which
the Gilmore case works"

After spending ten years explaining to
myself and others why Mr. is justified in
inserting himself in his reportage-fiction,
now it is necessary to explain or justify
why he left himself out of Song.
My hunch, at the present, is that he
could not find a way to put himself
in without ripping the fabric of
the narrative, a narrative of Barnacle
clusters of 100 testimonials to
G's good and evil and instincts +
history, etc. It was not a simple
decision, nor a satiating one,
but it was perhaps the right one.
It paid \$\$ to leave himself out,
enabled him to accommodate the

material collected by Schiller and gave him a way to break from his method of presenting his own dramatized mind. Also for the first time in years, he felt secure in leaving himself out. If he had met Gilmore, he might have devised a different tactic. Rorit is excellent in his article, but is guilty of the same sin ~~that~~ that M's critics have been guilty of for years: judging and measuring him by previous successes. In sum, the "givens" of the situation (which M. has used, admittedly, as a crutch in the past) forced him, in this case to write the book as he did. Whenever a narrative artist ~~writes~~ writes about real events and aspires to accuracy, each new Breuerian transmutation, he must live with the constraint those givens pose - or write a novel about

the situation.]

377-78 Rorit finds 3 separate lines of action in Song: (1) the moves of the special order to convert and to defend G. from execution; (2) Schiller's wheeling + dealing; (3) Gilmore's determination to be executed

378 Maule "gets hooked on the bars of his own romantic obsessions into an exaltation of Gilmore's intrinsic significance"

378 "Maule does not even pretend to understand or want inner attitude or felt truth his sense of selfhood rests [Gilmore's]. The Executioner's Song is finally a 'true life history' in which the keys to understanding are missing. The reader is left at the end of this exhausting exploration of the character and destiny of Gary Gilmore unguided by the author and unopposed with a meaningful shape of experience."

378

"Mailer - immensely talented, knowledgeable, energetic - is frantically depending on life, unmediated by the passionate imagination, to announce meanings which he so well knows only man can provide"

"Norman Mailer and Gary Gilmore" by Walter Karp Esquire Dec 1979, 25-26.

His technique "gives each of them [the characters] ~~the~~ his chance to speak, to remember, and to judge and thereby reveal who he is."

[Note that we do have G.'s letters, which compensate for, substitute for the lack of internal exploration]

"every character... has revealed the spark of something admirable about himself-- sheer vitality of nothing else"

→ see typed notes on M's comments on Sony

"Norman Mailer" Publisher's Weekly (Oct 8, 1979)¹⁰⁸¹ 8-9
by Kenneth C. Davis
(quotes Mailer)

"The ways things work in America are not unusual, as sinister as I always assumed. There may not be this grand paranoid return after all"
[recalls M's admission to me that LBJ was not what he had previously thought. Reading Davis Keams' book changed two words]

"I can hardly be much of an outlaw with nine kids, can I?"

"I had to do the book. I thought I really understood why this guy wanted to be executed" - - - - "I thought, 'I can do this book in six months and get out of debt'"

300 interviews and 15,000 pages of transcript
"a 2½ year miscalculation"
calls Gilmore "another major American protagonist" - Someone who ~~contradicts~~

8 "comprehends a deep contradiction in this
9 country and lives his life in the crack of
that contradiction"

Schumpeter was "malignant at his worst
and heroic at his best" with
enormous desire for "revenge
upon the American system"

Heiner explains that he intended to
"write an essay about why certain
people choose to die rather than
live + about the liberal concept
that human life is immensely
valuable. . . . When you realize
how complex things are, you lose
your desire to editorialize"

His "lame style" permitted him
"to move very quickly through
a great number of events"

Still he was tempted to "write a little
essay or to address the reader"

We came to know G. "as well as I
know some of my ex-wives"

"The 70's have been too much for me. They
appall me the way the 50's appalled me.
Only then, I was full of youthful fight"
[recalls his comments on the Kinysee
that the even decades of his life
and the ~~odd~~ even decades of the century
have been the best for him]

"Doom as Theater" Time (October 22, 1975) 102-03
by Lance Morrow

102 "Old Aquarius has silence, his busting, music,
intrusive voice." "a Cornucopia of American
plain style"

"The book is like an immortal issue of the
National Enquirer being endlessly replicated
until it is forced to yield some truth. G. Linn's

story is a sort of immoral white-trash saga." "Death For Sale," N.Y. Review of Books

(Dec 6, 1979), 3-5. by Jeanne Johnson

- 3 "... there are reservations we may feel about the genre and about its social implications — of only what to make of the literary ambivalence — choosing that the true-life novel encourages

"M's ambivalence about whether to take a journalistic or novelistic direction with this fascinating material" [there was never a doubt]

"Maurice's romantic turn of mind" [M. is forever being whipped with this term, as if it were good to be a romantic]

"poor Nicole had been trying to give everyone everything they wanted"

the people in the story "Maurice ^{wisely} neither judges nor sympathizes with" he avoids "associating them too obviously with his own known preoccupations with violence..."

"a matter-of-fact tone perfect for the longer tale"

"no one can make things up better than the things people actually say"

"But maybe it's all made up and Mailer infinitely artificial. Its text is mined with Mailerisms when you look closely" [cheap shot]

Schiller "the central consciousness for much of the book"

"Sometimes one misreads the witty, trenchant Mailer of other books, and Mailer the wonderful deceiver"

"It's just that you keep wondering which are the true parts" [cheap shot]

"It is finally the fact that all this really happened that moves us most" [recalls Carlyle's line]

- 4 - Gatsby's Brown friends + family = cohesive, naive, rectitude, very well meaning, believe in love curing criminal tendencies

- says M. kept out of the book because he must seem innocent of the appalling exploitation of G + his relatives.

4 Says M. does a job on Schiller - NO - the fact that both Maule + Schiller don't buy this doesn't sway for

4 says M. + S. are "projecting on to past, energy
Gave a code of Hollywood Western Gang
couldn't see less about" more cheap shots
[There is a general rule among Maule critics
to say kind words about Maule, his past
books, energy, talent etc, while letting him
for the current one. Not one of his books,
except perhaps Naked, has escaped this. It
is almost as if the reading public must
continually convince the critics that they were
wrong about the past - because his books
last, are read + reread - and then they
measure the new different book by the
standard expected in the past. There is no
doubt, however, that M. appeals to critics
as a "whopping boy."]

4 "Playing neither by the rules of fiction nor by the rules
of fact, he is in danger of sinking into facile sensationalism"

Commentary
Pearl K.
Bell,
for example
And Ted Morgan
S.R.

[Whose rules? Whose are they given? Of course, they want
it both ~~the~~ ways - narrative artists must be loyal
only to the truth of the story - fact or fiction]
"Maule: Settling for Less" Commentary (Feb, 1980), 65-68
by Pearl K. Bell

65 "Maule never overcame a fatal ambivalence about both the
material and the method of The Executioner's Song."

67 " - follows Diane Johnson's opinion that M. leaves
himself out to distance himself from Schiller

67 "moments : - - when one can feel Maule struggling
against his self-composed stout-jacket, as an
image leaps off the page with a rhetorical power
entirely his own..."

"It is even more curious that this least characteristic
work has received the most unqualified praise Maule
has had in years" [what is a characteristic
work of Maule's?]

68 - Follows Diane Johnson again in asking who
will divide the royalties]

"Maule's Cool Killer" New Leader (Nov 19, 1979)
17-18 Daphne Merkin

"yet the work retains the opacity generally
associated with fiction, rather than the translucent

quality of bonafide journalism"

"suggestion rather than explanation.... a style that is not so much flat as with Gold."

- "his implied identification with both Gilmore and ... Schiller"

- notes that G.'s relationship with his mother is portentously developed + then dropped
"Mauler conspires to leave us wondering instead of knowing"

"Mauler enters a new trail following Gilmore/Bryn" Pres. Sam.

Journal Arts + Travel (Oct 29, 1979), H-16 Carol McCabe

- "The reader occasionally longs for the kind of end papers sometimes found in historical novels, charts of names..."

- Mauler is a virtuoso of viewpoints

- "Schiller, wonderfully drawn here, comes of as a ~~flat~~ ^{character} from a Stanley Elkin novel, a gloomy fat man who has standards, which might not be yours"

CONTINUED VOL X

19th Century Am. Novel

Brockton Brown - Walden

Cooper

- The Prairie

Hawthorne

Scarlet Letter

House of 7 Gables

Melville

Moby-Dick

Confessions of a Man

Billy Budd

Poe

Gordon B. Pym

Twain

Huck Finn

Novis

McTeague

Chopin

The Awakening

Crane

Red Badge

Stevenson

The Jungle

James

Daisy Miller

Portrait of A Lady

The Ambassadors

322
70
140

H. Garland

E.W. Howe

W. Cather?

S.A. Jewett?

Howells