

NORM,

7-1-03

I DON'T THINK
I SENT YOU THIS —
5,000 words for the
Oxford Encyclopedia
of Am. Lit.

See you soon

Mike C.

P.S. I wish I had
10,000 words, but had
to stick to their limit.

oxford Encyclopedia contains
W. Mailer's corrections
and footnote.
of Am. Lit. (2004)

American Literature

Mailer, Norman

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5273 words

Norman Mailer is one of a handful of postwar writers to achieve a larger measure of popular success and yet warrant consistent attention from critics. His novels and nonfiction narratives have been seen by many as sufficiently compelling to place him among those writers who will come to represent an era, and to warrant continued attention. But his extra-literary exploits and the diversity of his works, not to mention his outspoken positions on a range of contemporary topics, have made it difficult to reach any critical consensus. The only consistent identity he has is that of novelist, although he has redefined this occupation, especially since the late 1960s, through his cross-fertilization of fiction and non-fiction writing modes. Mailer has been perhaps the central figure in developing these hybrid narratives, often called the "new journalism," a method of apprehending the turbulent events of American life since the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy using a variety of fictional techniques. Few twentieth-century American writers have written about a wider range of people and events with such intelligence, including portraits of every American president after Eisenhower and six sets of political conventions and elections. He has also provided reportage and commentary on the Apollo 11 flight to the moon, the Women's Liberation movement, contemporary architecture, technology, the media and the Vietnam War; and has written biographies of several major famous and infamous Americans: Marilyn Monroe, Muhammad Ali, Lee Harvey Oswald, Gary Gilmore and Henry Miller, among others. Each person or phenomenon has elicited a shift, often a surprising shift, in his narrative method. Form follows function for Mailer. To understand his place in American literature, the various ways he has combined and reconstituted the assumptions and methods of the novel, journalism and historical narrative must be considered.

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2 Another key to an overall assessment of Mailer is his idiosyncratic cosmology, which
3 posits a cosmic war between good and evil and elevates human participation in this struggle by
4 its extraordinary emphasis on free will. Mailer's God is limited, imperfect and fighting against a
5 powerful, wily Devil. All of humanity, knowingly or unknowingly, is part of this struggle,
6 which encompasses virtually all of human activity—not just religion, but politics, business,
7 technology, education, sex, sports, the media, the environment and so on—thus elevating human
8 action and inaction to a perilous height. Like Leo Tolstoy and Herman Melville (two of Mailer's
9 literary heroes), Mailer believes that the novelist is a teacher, a pundit and sometimes even a
10 prophet, certainly someone who can play a role in the cosmic war. He has held to this
11 theological scheme, which also includes a belief in reincarnation, with few changes since the
12 mid-1950s. It is a sustaining system for him, a bulwark against nihilism, and one that helps
13 explain such enormous horrors as Hitler's Holocaust and Stalin's gulags, while still holding out
14 hope for boldness, wit and compassion in human evolution.

15 Brooklyn and Harvard

16 Born in Long Branch, New Jersey on January 31, 1923, Norman Kingsley Mailer grew
17 up in Brooklyn in a middle class Jewish neighborhood. He has always celebrated his roots in
18 Brooklyn and used his early experiences there as a test for the authenticity of people and
19 phenomena he encountered later. Both of his parents were immigrants, his mother from
20 Lithuania and his father from South Africa. His only sibling, Barbara, was born in 1927. Mailer
21 was indulged by his parents and by several aunts; his early writing efforts were always
22 encouraged. His high grades in high school gained him entrance to Harvard, where he planned
23 to study engineering. But two events turned him from the field, although he did graduate with an

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honors degree in engineering in 1943. The first was encountering modern American literature—Thomas Wolfe, John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell and John Steinbeck and later Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner and F. Scott Fitzgerald—and enrolling in creative writing classes where he turned out scores of stories and sketches and a novel, still unpublished. The second event was World War II—the German Army invaded Poland in September 1939 during his first semester, and by the time he graduated the U.S. was at war on two fronts. With the experience of World War I novelists clearly on his mind, he began writing about the war in the Pacific while wondering which front would be most likely to produce a great war novel. His novella on early Pacific combat, "A Calculus at Heaven," appeared in a 1944 collection during the time Mailer was in training at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. Life follows art for Mailer was drafted and shipped to the Pacific, where he saw combat in the Philippines in 1945. The army was a difficult and transforming experience for the individualistic Mailer. He loathed its heavy-handed power structure, inane routines and corrupt bureaucracy, but relished the opportunity to observe its effects on citizen-soldiers from all parts of the country in and out of combat. The army was a much bigger melting pot than either Brooklyn and Harvard and Mailer was determined to capture it all. When he was discharged in May 1946, he had an ambitious plan for a novel based on many letters filled with incident and description sent to his wife (he married Beatrice Silverman in January 1944) and relatives.

Famous at 25

In May 1948 *The Naked and the Dead* was published to critical and popular acclaim and Mailer moved from obscurity to the spotlight of celebrity where he has since remained, another

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3 transforming experience. His first published novel was on the *New York Times* best-seller list for
4 over a year. Set on a fictional island in the Pacific, the novel traces the campaign orchestrated by
5 Gen. Edward Cummings, a brilliant, ruthless and quasi-fascistic division commander, modeled
6 partly on Herman Melville's Capt. Ahab. On the macro level, the novel follows Cummings's
7 frustrated attempts to maximize the efficiency of his troops and minimize their resistance and the
8 elapsed time of the campaign. On the micro level and in painful detail, it portrays the ethnic
9 variety of the enlisted men and the obscenity, tedium and miseries of life at the bottom of what
10 Cummings calls the "fear ladder." The army, he tells his aide, Lt. Hearn, is a "preview of the
11 future," a near-totalitarian America in which Cummings hopes to be a key figure. Hearn is the
12 link between the novel's two arenas; he is assigned to lead a 14-man reconnaissance platoon
13 after rejecting his role as Cummings's protégé and, it is hinted, homosexual Pygmalion. His
14 task is to determine if there is a way behind Japanese lines, a project he undertakes with the
15 sullen cooperation of his platoon leader, Sgt. Croft. Often seen as Cummings's visceral double,
16 Croft, in effect, murders Hearn so that he can lead the platoon, which he now directs toward the
17 peak of a symbolic mountain, Mt. Anaka. Mailer later explained that the mountain was for him
18 not only a mass of stone, but a symbol of intransigent nature equivalent to the white whale, while
19 Cummings-Croft equaled Ahab. The second half of the novel records in excruciating detail the
20 platoon's climb up the flank of the mountain, an odyssey of exhaustion, fear and death that
21 ultimately fails when a hornet nest is kicked over. Chapters describing the climb up alternate
22 with others depicting another journey, this one away from the mountain. Four soldiers are
23 detailed to carry a wounded comrade, the hallucinating Wilson, who dies before they can reach

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3 the beach and safety. Two of them, Ridges and Goldstein, do so with a quiet heroism that
4 partially balances the evil and suffering of the rest of the novel. Mailer's ability to present with
5 assured clarity the platoon's agonies under the masochistic Croft and juxtapose it with the
6 seductive Faustian rhetoric of Cummings is a remarkable achievement for a 25-year old.
7 Although these two figures are, formally, the novel's villains (both are ultimately unsuccessful—
8 a bumbling member of Cummings's staff defeats the debilitated Japanese during his temporary
9 absence), they are really its ^{protagonists} secret heroes. It seems clear that Mailer was more interested in their
10 energies and ambitions than the weak liberalism of Hearn or the leftist sympathies of several
11 other members of the platoon, Red Valsen, most notably. Although Mailer had not yet
12 conceived his vision of a universe at war, his fascination with how power is obtained, wielded,
13 squandered and lost is apparent in *The Naked and the Dead*, which is generally seen as one of the
14 finest modern novels depicting Americans at war.

15 Cold War Novels

16 In his next novel, *Barbary Shore* (1951), Mailer decided to tackle the Cold War and the
17 philosophies of its opponents, represented by an FBI agent, Hollingsworth, and a former Soviet
18 party official, McLeod, both living in a Brooklyn rooming house. Their protracted exchanges
19 are reported by Mickey Lovett, a traumatized war veteran. Mailer was, apparently, trying to
20 follow up on the keen-minded colloquies of Hearn and Cummings, but in the new novel he did
21 not balance debate with sharply etched description, as in *The Naked and the Dead*. Under the
22 influence of Jean Malaquais, his French translator, Mailer had become fascinated with Marxist
23 dialectics and the history of the Russian Revolution, but was unable to find a way to dramatize

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this material. Consequently, the novel is claustrophobic, although its exploration of the nature and appeal of spies and spying is often trenchant. Mailer was conducting his continuing education in public and the public was not appreciative, although the hallucinatory memories of some of the characters were a development of his art. *Barbary Shore* received the worst reviews of any Mailer book, and Mailer's confidence was weakened. He turned in his third novel, *The Deer Park* (1955), to Hollywood, where he had gathered impressions during a year (1949-50) spent writing screenplays. The Cold War and, specifically, the FBI and congressional witch hunts for Communists and sympathizers of the early 1950s, form the background of the novel, but its chief concern is a portrait of the artist—director Charles Eitel—in search of lost artistic integrity. Blacklisted for his leftist activities, Eitel has retreated to a southern California resort town to rebuild himself and write a new screenplay, one not based on meretricious commercial formulas. He has a new woman, Elena Esposito (modeled in part on Mailer's second wife, Adele Morales, who ^{he} married in 1954) in his life and the bounty of their affair rejuvenates him, at least initially. His old handlers want him to provide identities before a congressional committee, but Eitel (I-tell) balks. Still, he misses his former stature and the emoluments of fame. The narrative follows Eitel's interactions with the town's pimps, drunks, actors, producers and call girls—good and evil angels—each of whom make him reflect on his quest for renewed confidence and energy, which he does with honesty and humor. It is narrated by 23-year old Sergius O'Shaughnessy, former Air Force pilot, and another burned-out case, who drifts into an affair with Lulu Meyers, a young, beautiful and wacky actress. Eitel eventually tells all, sells out, and breaks off with the passionate Elena, but only after an intense internal struggle.

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3 His relations with Elena are brilliantly detailed by Mailer, although he has to drop Sergius as a
4 narrator to present the interstices of their complex and near-tragic affair from an omniscient
5 perspective. It is, perhaps, the most memorable portrait of a woman in Mailer's work. Eitel's
6 final descent into the maw of Hollywood corruption is offset by Sergius's rise. Aided by the
7 wisdom and negative example of Eitel, he successfully resists the baits offered by Herman
8 Teppis, the head of Supreme Studios and one of Mailer's finest comic portraits. Because of a
9 few explicit sexual scenes (which seem very tame today), Mailer had great difficulty in finding a
10 publisher, although it is clear that the novel's intentions are the opposite of salacious. Indeed, as
11 several critics have noted, *The Deer Park* is a modern morality play.

12 Greenwich Village

13 Mailer's anger at the treatment of his third novel and his general dismay at the dull
14 conformities of the 1950s made him seek a new identity for himself. He got interested in jazz,
15 marijuana and the night life of New York City's Greenwich Village and began writing for a
16 variety of magazines—*Esquire*, *Dissent*, *Partisan Review* and perhaps most important, *The*
17 *Village Voice*, which he named and co-founded in 1955. His column, "Quickly," appeared there
18 for several months in 1956. Attempts to write a new novel stalled, but his urban experiences and
19 his emerging belief in an embattled God led him in 1957 to write his most anthologized and
20 controversial essay. "The White Negro" presented a philosophy based on the life of urban
21 hipsters who emulated the existential experiences of African-Americans living on the dangerous
22 knife-edge of ecstasy and violence. If Mailer's first three novels dealt with larger social
23 realities—war, warring ideologies and Hollywood, respectively—"The White Negro" was all

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about the "rebellious imperatives of the self." In a world threatened by nuclear annihilation, the only recourse was to trust the body and religiously follow one's deepest instincts. American blacks, he argued, had been forced to do this and their lives, while painful because of racism, were also more authentic than those of white suburbanites. The essay became the heart of Mailer's next book, *Advertisements for Myself* (1959), a sampler of previous work surrounded by extended and edgy commentary. Here Mailer created his characteristic narrative voice: direct, acerbic, self-referenced, digressive and free-wheeling with a good deal of sardonic wit. This watershed volume led to two similar but less powerful collections, *The Presidential Papers* (1963) and *Cannibals and Christians* (1966), both derived from his magazine writing of the early 1960s. Intervening was an event that still resonates in his life, the penknife stabbing of his wife at a drunken party in November 1960, and his subsequent incarceration ^{for three weeks} in a mental hospital. He later pleaded guilty to assault and received a suspended sentence, but the marriage to Adele was over. Mailer's varied forays of the late 1950s and early 1960s had only dampened his ability to get a new novel going. His frustration led him in late 1963 to up the ante by announcing that he would publish a novel, titled *An American Dream*, in monthly installments (January-August 1964) in *Esquire*. It ~~is~~ appeared in book form in 1965.

A New Hero

Until *An American Dream* Mailer's major fictional characters were unsatisfactory in one way or another. None of them, not Hearn, Croft, Cummings, Lovett, McLeod, O'Shaugnessy, Eitel nor Elena Esposito, were invested with his deepest concerns: the desire to grow at all costs, a distrust of mechanistic reason, a willingness to take risks, a belief in the authority of the senses, faith in courage as the cardinal virtue, and fear and loathing for the rampant technology and

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the incipient totalitarianism he saw in American life. Stephen Richards Rojack, the protagonist of *An American Dream*, has these concerns, and he also shares Mailer's theological beliefs. Rojack is a war hero, ex-congressman, college professor and a near-alcoholic. Open to omens and portents and susceptible to every premonition, he hears voices, studies the moon and waits for cancer to strike him. His wife Deborah taunts him with her infidelities, driving him to a physical attack that ends with her death and a plunge from her apartment window. Rojack claims that her fall was suicide and the brunt of the story is devoted to his attempts to convince his friends, the police and Deborah's father, Barney Oswald Kelly, the "solicitor for the devil," of his innocence. Narrated in a brisk, rococo style by Rojack, the novel shows Mailer at the height of his word power as he delineates the dread-filled inner life of his embattled protagonist. The air of the novel is haunted, filled with demonic and angelic presence^s, especially in the final scenes when Rojack confronts Kelly in his penthouse apartment. *An American Dream* was an advance in several ways for Mailer. First, his existential cosmology of a warring universe is fully deployed; second, for the first time in Mailer's work the narrator and the chief protagonist are one; third his energetic, lyrical style is now fully developed; and finally, all the spiritual dichotomies of the American urban landscape, Mailer's own New York City, are presented. Reviews of the novel were sharply divided, but the book was a best-seller and Mailer was lifted and empowered by its success.

Over the next ten years, 1966-75 Mailer was in constant motion. He was arrested for protesting the Vietnam War, covered prize fights and political conventions, staged a dramatic version of *The Deer Park*, appeared on countless television talk shows and college campuses,

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ran (and lost) for mayor of New York and made three experimental films. Married and divorced several times, he was by 1975 the father of seven children. He published 19 books during this long spurt of productivity, ^(how many years) only one of which, *Why Are We In Vietnam?* (1967) is a novel. Set in Alaska during the hunting trip of Texas corporate executives, it is narrated by D.J., the teenage son of the senior executive. D.J.'s jazzy, scatological style again demonstrated Mailer's comic abilities and linguistic inventiveness, but the descriptions of the hunters and the hunted in Alaska's majestic mountains are the novel's greatest achievement. It was nominated for the National Book Award, the first of five for Mailer.

Creative Nonfiction

For the most part, however, Mailer was unwilling or unable to transform the fantastic cultural eruptions of the 1960s and 1970s into fiction. He needed a new way of seeing these events, and the optics of conventional journalism was too clumsy. Along with a number of other writers—Truman Capote, Joan Didion, Tom Wolfe and Hunter Thompson are the most important—Mailer recognized that the well-refined techniques of modern fiction could be adapted to the task of capturing the unpredictable events of the post-assassination years. He added a twist, however: he wrote about Norman Mailer's involvement in these events; he described himself in the third person, a rare usage, used most notably by classical historians such as Xenophon and Julius Caesar. Sometimes he called himself "Mailer," but more often he came up with a new name such as "the Participant," "the Beast," or "Aquarius." From 1968 to 1975 he published seven full-length works of creative nonfiction dealing with the "double life" of Americans, which he described it in *The Presidential Papers* as "the history of politics which is concrete, factual, practical and unbelievably dull" and "a subterranean river of untapped,

superman

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ferocious, lonely and romantic desires, that concentration of ecstasy and violence which is the dream life of the nation" (38). More specifically, three of these—*The Armies of the Night* (1968), *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* (1968) and *St. George and the Godfather* (1972)—examine the ways that the American political system dealt with, and did not deal with, the Vietnam War, as well as analyzing the tumultuous presidential campaigns of 1968 and 1972. *The Armies of the Night* is the most important of these because Mailer's third-person self-description lends itself perfectly to the account of his personal involvement in the anti-war March on the Pentagon in October 1967, including his arrest for crossing a police line at the Pentagon. This unique, best-selling narrative had a catalytic effect on subsequent anti-war activities, and garnered Mailer the Pulitzer Prize, the George Polk Award and the National Book Award. Part of the strength of the anti-war narratives comes from Mailer's ability to interleave personal testimony with analytic descriptions of complex social and political movements. His

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focused on it during the latter half of the decade, with only one major interruption: *The Executioner's Song* (1979), an account of the life and death of Gary Gilmore, the Utah murderer who created a media sensation when he insisted that his death sentence by firing squad be carried out posthaste. To trace the tragic arc of Gilmore's life, Mailer saw that he must remove himself as an intrusive, self-referenced narrator. To highlight Gilmore, he banished Aquarius. Using a Hemingway-like style consonant with the open landscape of Utah, and a point of view reminiscent of *The Naked and the Dead*, Mailer's grounded his narrative in interviews with the

9 principals of the story and examination of thousands of pages of legal and psychological records.

10 He was aided in this groundwork by Lawrence Schiller, a photographer, journalist and film
11 producer, with whom he has ^{on the research} collaborated on a total of five books, including *Marilyn*. Mailer
12 won his second Pulitzer for *The Executioner's Song*, which was later turned into a feature film
13 using his Emmy-nominated screenplay. Some readers feel that this "true life novel," as Mailer
14 calls it, equals or surpasses *The Armies of the Night* in stature.

15 Return to the Novel

16 Re-energized by the success of *The Executioner's Song*, Mailer spent the next three years
17 working almost exclusively on the Egyptian novel. He was now the father of nine children, all
18 told, and since 1980 married to his sixth wife, the former Barbara Norris (later Norris Church
19 Mailer). A painter, actress, novelist and theatrical director, Norris "created a domestic climate
20 that not only allows one to thrive at work but even to love the idea that there is work to do and it
21 is worth doing," as he put it in the acknowledgments to his 1998 collection, *The Time of Our*
22 *Time* (xiii). Unlike many of his earlier works, *Ancient Evenings* could not be written under
23 deadline pressure. Mailer intended it to be his greatest work and did extensive rewriting and

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2 research on the customs, especially the military and funerary customs, of the Egypt of two
3 millennia past. The remote temporal setting of the novel gave him freedom to explore matters
4 such as magic, religion, telepathy and reincarnation. His protagonist, Menenhetet I, lives four
5 consecutive and very different lives in the course of this 709-page novel, having learned the
6 secret of personal reincarnation from a Jewish slave. But the most powerful chapters of the
7 novel deals with a well-known historical event: the battle of Kadesh near the Orontes River in
8 ancient Syria. Here Menenhetet's Pharaoh, the great Ramses II, defeated the Hittites around the
9 year 1300 B.C.E. The earlier sections of the novel dealing with the social customs and ruling
10 ideas of the Egyptians, high and low, especially their violent and carnal religiosity, prepare the
11 reader for his stunning depiction of the battle, which focuses on the chariot squadrons led
12 personally by Ramses II. Other portions of the novel, however, are less compelling, especially
13 the long description of Menenhetet's service as the Pharaoh's harem master. Mailer's method of
14 narration, which requires the entire novel to be told during one long evening many years after the
15 chief events have taken place, had been criticized for its unnecessary detachment and
16 convolution. But the novel's labyrinthine complexity has yet to be fully grasped by
17 commentators: Mailer's most ambitious work may yet be seen as his masterwork.

18 In 1984 Mailer published *Tough Guys Don't Dance*, a gory and complicated murder
19 mystery set in Provincetown, Massachusetts, the town at the tip of Cape Cod in Massachusetts
20 where he began to spend the majority of his time from the mid-1980s on. In 1987 he took a
21 break from his next major effort, a novel focused on the CIA, to direct a feature film based on
22 *Tough Guys* that used his own screenplay. The CIA novel, *Harlot's Ghost*, appeared in 1991.
23 The seven-year period between books is the longest such gap in Mailer's career to date. But

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Harlot's Ghost, at 1300 pages, is also his longest work. It is also a crucial work for him in that it brought together two of his abiding interests: the power structures of the Cold War and the epistemology of identity. Forty years after *Barbary Shore*, Mailer returned to the world of false identities, dirty tricks, coded messages, intrigue and covert operations. The novel follows the early life and CIA career of Harry Hubbard, son and godson of two CIA paladins who guide and test him as he advances through the ranks. He is stationed in Berlin and Uruguay and, in the novel's climax, takes part in the aborted CIA invasion of Cuba in 1961. Paralleling his agency work is his love affair with his godfather's young wife, Kittredge Montague (also a CIA operative), who he later marries when she divorces Hugh Montague, the fabled "Harlot" of the title. The disappearance of Harlot in 1983, which sends shudders through intelligence organizations around the world, is the novel's culminating event. We learn of it early on, however, because the novel begins in the 1980s and after 100 pages turns back to follow Harry's early life and beginning years as an agent. This 1200-page chronicle ends shortly after the 1963 assassination of President Kennedy with the words "To be continued." Presumably, we will learn of Harlot's fate if Mailer writes the sequel to what is his most ambitious work, excepting *Ancient Evenings*. Even if Mailer does not write the sequel (working title: *Harlot's Grave*), his even-handed anatomy of the CIA, his deft portraits of both fictional and historical figures (including Kennedy and CIA Director Allen Dulles), and his powerful depiction of some of the most cataclysmic events of the mid-twentieth century assure the novel a prominent place among his works and American fiction generally.

Oswald, Picasso and Jesus

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It is not often noted that Mailer is an accomplished biographer, although not in the usual academic or historical modes. Mailer's biographies read like novels, which is, of course, his intention. He is not afraid of research or footnotes, and his biographies use both when necessary, but he relies more on his intuitions than on any archive. In addition to the fictive tone of his life studies, there is another commonality: they are all portraits of promethean figures, overreachers with divided souls. It might even be said that in their ambition, risk-taking and radical doubt about their fundamental identities, they resemble Mailer. Each of his subjects from the 1970s—Marilyn Monroe, Muhammad Ali, Henry Miller and Gary Gilmore—and those of his second biographical period—Lee Harvey Oswald, Pablo Picasso and Jesus Christ—have artistic sensibilities, a thirst for fame and a hidden life that is both an asset and a burden. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that Mailer's magnificent seven all share Picasso's desire "to reach into mysteries of existence that no one else had even perceived" (357), as Mailer put it in *Portrait of Picasso as a Young Man* (1995). The Picasso biography was completed in 1993, but because of various production problems was not published until October 1995, four months after his study of Oswald appeared. *Oswald's Tale* is arguably Mailer's finest biography, partly because of his obsession with the question of Oswald's role in President Kennedy's death, and partly because he and Lawrence Schiller were the first to gain access to KGB documents and agents who knew Oswald during his year in Russia. In *The Gospel According to the Son* (1997), Mailer retold the four Gospels from the point of view of the resurrected Jesus. Although it received mainly negative reviews, his depiction of several of the novel's characters—Judas, John the Baptist and Satan—were praised, as was the authenticity of the voice of Jesus.

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A Continuing Career

Mailer turned 75 in 1998 with no signs of diminished productivity. His birthday was marked by the publication ^{of} his largest collection, *The Time of Our Time*. This 1286-page anthology includes selections from all of his important works arranged according to the dates of the events depicted, rather than, as is customary, the dates of publication. Mailer thus defers to history rather than his own writing life. He followed this well-received volume with another collaboration with Lawrence Schiller. *Into the Mirror: The Life of Master Spy Robert P. Hanssen* was published in April 2002. ^{Didn't write it - just the} Mailer had earlier written a television screenplay depicting the life of Hanssen; Shiller used it as the basis for *Into the Mirror*. Both the book and the four-hour television program (broadcast in November 2002) show that Mailer's skill with dialogue and his profound fascination with questions of identity continue with vigor. On January 31, 2003, his 80th birthday, Random House published Mailer's 42nd book, *The Spooky Art: Some Thoughts on Writing*, a compilation of insights from over 150 different interviews, reviews and essays of the past forty years, along with several new pieces. Mailer is now working on another narrative; it may be the sequel to *Harlot's Ghost*, or something entirely new.

Mailer has surprised us countless times in the past and may do so again. He has challenged, beguiled, angered and amazed three generations of readers world-wide. After fifty-plus years, he still resides at the pinnacle of the American literary world, often castigated for his extra-literary activities but just as often praised for his ongoing construing of our national life and his relentless, brilliant narrative innovations.

- 1
- 2 American Literature Mailer, Norman 17
- 3 List of Works
- 4 *The Naked and the Dead*, 1948
- 5 *Barbary Shore*, 1951
- 6 *The Deer Park*, 1955
- 7 *Advertisements for Myself*, 1959
- 8 *The Presidential Papers*, 1963
- 9 *An American Dream*, 1965
- 10 *Cannibals and Christians*, 1966
- 11 *The Deer Park: A Play*, 1967
- 12 *Why Are We in Vietnam?* 1967
- 13 *The Armies of the Night: History as a Novel, The Novel as History*, 1968
- 14 *Miami and the Siege of Chicago: An Informal History of the Republican and Democratic*
- 15 *Conventions of 1968*, 1968
- 16 *Of A Fire on the Moon*, 1971
- 17 *The Prisoner of Sex*, 1971
- 18 *The Long Patrol: 25 Years of Writing from the Work of Norman Mailer*, 1971
- 19 *Existential Errands*, 1972
- 20 *St. George and the Godfather*, 1972
- 21 *Martlyn: A Biography*, 1973
- 22 *The Fight*, 1975
- 23 *Genius and Lust: A Journey Through the Major Writings of Henry Miller*, 1976

- 1 *The Executioner's Song*, 1979
- 2 American Literature Mailer, Norman 18
- 3 *Pieces and Pontifications*, 1982
- 4 *Ancient Evenings*, 1983
- 5 *Tough Guys Don't Dance*, 1984
- 6 *Conversations with Norman Mailer*, 1988
- 7 *Harlot's Ghost*, 1991
- 8 *Oswald's Tale*, 1995
- 9 *Portrait of Picasso as a Young Man: An Interpretive Biography*, 1995
- 10 *The Gospel According to the Son*, 1997
- 11 *The Time of Our Time*, 1998
- 12 *Into the Mirror: The Life of Master Spy Robert P. Hanssen*, 2002
- 13 *The Spooky Art: Some Thoughts on Writing*, 2003
- 14 *Why Are We at War*, 2003
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