

delineated or given major roles until much later), were the commanding General, eventually called Edward Cummings, and a young second lieutenant, perhaps based in part on Horton, but definitely owing something to Lt. Hilliard in "A Calculus at Heaven." At first he was just called "the second looney" and then later, Robert Hearn. He is the novel's titular hero and he is murdered by Croft, the novel's secret hero.



By mid-July, fighting on Luzon was effectively over and Mailer was in garrison learning for the umpteenth time the manual of arms, reading Spengler and discussing books with Fig. He was excited about the new G.I. Bill and the 52-20 Club, which would provide veterans with \$20 a week for 52 weeks or until they got a job. He calculated that the two programs would give him and Bea a combined income of about \$300 a month, plus tuition money. In addition, they had already saved \$2,000. She was able to increase her savings rate because she was living with Fan, having transferred to New York. Barney was still in Washington and Barbara in Cambridge. Mailer and Bea discussed living in Boston and taking graduate courses at Harvard. Influenced by Spengler, he was interested in studying comparative religion and history.

There was but one obstacle, but it was stupendous, and studiously avoided in Mailer's letters: the pending invasion of Japan, which was to be the largest amphibious assault in history. Operation Olympic would land 14 divisions on the southern Japanese island of Kyūshū on November 1, 1945. Four months later, using Kyūshū as a base, Operation Coronet would land 25 divisions on the southern shore of the main Japanese island of Honshū and push north 100 miles to Tokyo. Hiss outfit, ^{Mailer} he learned later, was scheduled to land at Tateyama Naval Airdrome on

Honshū, which was surrounded by gun emplacements embedded in cliffs surrounding the base on three sides. "We would have been massacred," he said.

The invasion plans became moot when atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki three days apart in early August. The Japanese surrendered on August 15.

Approximately 125,000 Japanese died instantly in the two attacks, a figure that within a few months rose to a quarter of a million. Although the casualties were mainly civilians, 10,000 Japanese soldiers were also killed when the first bomb landed on its target, the parade grounds of the Japanese Second Army in Hiroshima. To keep these figures in perspective, one million Allied troops would certainly have died invading Japan, and at least as many Japanese. There was much cheering when news that the Enola Gay had dropped the bomb reached the American troops in the Pacific. On August 8 ^{Mailer} he wrote to Bea that he approved of anything that got Americans home sooner, but he found the prospects for the future to be horrifying.

^{went} He goes on to condemn the sentimental adulation for machines that he had observed, especially among men in the air corps and the navy, ^{saying that he felt "pathological"} and says he feels the same way about machines ^{as his mother does about Jack Mailer}. "pathological." He ends on a Spenglerian note:

"We have come to the age when we love machines and hate women." Mailer's suspicion of all things mechanical and electronic, which would become one of the hallmarks of his worldview, ^{was} ^{by} ~~became deep-seated and~~ irreversible in August 1945. Twelve years later, he would begin his most famous essay, "The White Negro," by pointing to the ongoing, immeasurable "psychic havoc" created by the combination of the atomic bomb and the concentration camps. He was perhaps the first writer to link these horrors in an integral way with the suffering and discrimination felt by ^{African Americans} blacks, the aftermath of slavery.

Doesn't this seem odd for someone who studied engineering?

The invasion force was transformed into an occupation force. He was eager to see Japan and curious about the people, having only seen "starved, grinning, irritatingly polite and friendly prisoners." But his comments on Japan, indeed his comments on all topics (save his novel) were outweighed for some time by speculation about and plans for his homecoming. Using the military's point system, he calculated that he would have sufficient credits to be discharged in about a year. He wrote Bea that he could now think of the months ahead as "milestones instead of a chasm." The knowledge that he was going to survive and that there would be no more campaigns made him think of all the dead, and of the "many summers that had gone by while they had hopes to go home. I could have wept for them."

At the end of August, the 112th sailed on the U.S.S. *Lavaca* (APA 180) for Japan. His ship was with the assembled fleet when the Japanese signed the surrender documents aboard the U.S.S. *Missouri* (BB-63) on September 2. There was a radio hook-up so that everyone could hear the words of Gen. MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz at the ceremony. The 112th was given a place of honor, the 50-yard line, as one trooper put it. All eyes were trained on the Missouri's main deck. He wrote to his parents, "The commentator said, 'The sun has come out and is shining on Tokyo Bay as the surrender is signed and peace is with us.'" This, he said, "was one of the largest, bare-assed lies I'd ever heard." The day was cloudy, with rain threatening. That afternoon the 112th landed at the Tateyama, across the bay from Yokohama.

His unit was now a constabulary force charged with demobilizing Japanese combat units. Tateyama was on the lip of a mountainous peninsula honeycombed with caves and bunkers connected underground by roads wide enough to accommodate jeeps. For a month, the soldiers detonated munitions and destroyed weapons. As they did their work, they saw the big guns that

rolled on rails through tunnels cut to the backside[#] of the mountain. The Japanese planned to elevate the guns and fire over the mountains into the harbor, while remaining unseen and impervious. The troopers shook their heads when they realized how deadly Operation Coronet would have been.

Boredom set in and ^{Mailer}he volunteered to be a cook. Now that fighting was over, he was unemployed as a rifleman, so to speak, and had little to do but stand inspections. He hated the arrogance of Army cooks, but liked the idea of learning to cook. The real incentive, however, was getting every other day off. He captured the raspy relationship between cooks and soldiers in "Chorus: The Chow Line," one of the comic interludes in *Naked*:

The troops file by in an irregular line[...]. As they go by they sniff at the main course which has been dumped ^{to} in a big square pan. It is canned Meat and Vegetable Stew heated slightly. The second cook, a fat red-faced man with a bald spot and a perpetual scowl, slaps a large spoonful in each of their mess plates.

Red: What the fug is that swill?

Cook: It's owl shit. Wha'd you think it was?

Red: Okay, I just thought it was somethin' I couldn't eat. ¹¹[...]

Wilson: Ah swear, don't you ration destroyers know another way to fug up this stew?

Cook: "When it's smokin', it's cookin'; when it's burinin', it's done." That's our motto.

Wilson: (chuckling) Ah figured you all had a system.

Mailer was still a Pfc. (having been promoted a few months earlier), and the chances for further promotion in Recon Platoon were slim. As much as he disliked the army, the idea of a sergeant's stripes on his sleeve—which would come if he became a first cook—was attractive. The mess sergeant liked him, he told Bea, and that augured well.

Despite his exasperation at the delay in getting home, his time in Tateyama, and later in Choshi, 100 miles north of Tateyama on the Pacific coast, was his happiest time in the military. He quickly mastered the army cooking routine and took pride in his work. Off duty, he explored the cliffs overlooking the ocean and made many notes for what he now referred to as "the jungle novel." And he read widely. For the last half of 1945, a partial list includes Eric Ambler's spy novels, Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* (1944) and Koestler's collection of essays, *The Yogi and the Commissar* (1945). He praised Lillian Smith's novel about the lynching of blacks, *Strange Fruit* (1944), but said it would have been better if it also explored the poor whites who committed the lynching. Her novel ends, he says, with the old question, "Why evil, why, why, why?" His answer: "Evil is not hard to understand. It is difficult only when the explanation tries to establish that it is not fundamental to the nature of man." Charles Jackson's novel of alcoholic abandon, *The Lost Weekend* (1944) terrified him "because I have so much in common with the hero." He said *Alice in Wonderland* (1866) "indirectly reveals so much of the child's mind, the perfect ease with which it can appreciate incongruity and horror and cruelty," and found French

novelist Georges Simenon's *Home Town* (1937), to be magnificent. Over the years, Mailer read and reread hundreds of books by the prolific Simenon, praised his ability to construct tight, believable plots and gave copies of the Inspector Maigret novels to friends. But after Spengler, he had the most to say about Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.

He tackled *The Brothers Karamazov* first, reading it at the same time as *Bea*. He wasn't at all impressed, he said, with the saintliness of Dostoevsky's Alyosha or by any of Tolstoy's peasants in *War and Peace*. The men he had liked in the army because of their goodness struck him even more because of their lack of force. "[T]heir goodness had no radiation," he said. For the "jungle novel," he planned to present each character in the manner of Tolstoy, that is, in "the self-beloved circle of his own mind." He rhapsodized about *Anna Karenina*, finding it to be much greater than *War and Peace*. Throughout his life, he remarked on Tolstoy's deep knowledge of humanity, his severe and unsentimental compassion, which he said later "reminds us that life is like a gladiator's arena for the soul and so we feel strengthened by those who endure, and feel awe and pity for those who do not."

Tolstoy's Kitty reminded him of *Bea*, and he pictured *Anna* with *Bea*'s face and body. He recalled their meals at Petitpas, a table d'hôte restaurant on West 29th street where they engaged in "the language of knee against knee." While he aimed for Tolstoyan scope and severity in his writing, his letters to *Bea*, now that their reunion was certain and near, often gushed with tenderness: "I adore thee sweets. Ever. I miss you as hard and clearly now as I did ten months ago. I shall never learn to live without you." He would, of course, but he could hardly have foreseen it at the time

Cooking for 160 men in Tateyama was hard physical work. He liked it, felt useful. He put on some weight and hiked on off[^] days. He was now one of the senior men in the 112th, as most of the Texans had rotated home. The unit itself was due to return to Texas in January 1946 and be de-activated. Mailer was suspicious that he might be kept overseas because the military wanted to ^{maintain} keep troops in the Far East to counter Russian expansionism. In the meantime, cooking increased his self-confidence. "I feel very strong," he told Bea. "I feel perfectly capable of telling a guy to blow it out his asshole if I don't like what he says." At the end of December 1945, he was transferred to the 649th Ordnance Ammunition Company in Choshi, and when the first cook was sent home, he was made acting first cook. A month later ^{he} was promoted to sergeant, Tech-4. Although he told his parents that he felt like "a peon in a fascist organization," he had his photo taken in his dress uniform, with his three stripes and combat infantryman's badge, and sent it home to the family.

Around the time he was transferred, one of the key characters of the jungle novel, Sgt. Croft, began to emerge. Mailer called him the "vision sergeant," because of his deep yet inchoate desire to conquer the mountain ^{that} which loomed over the jungle, and thus attain some ^{deeper} communion ~~with~~ the Godhead. Like Moby Dick, the mountain is real and symbolic, and he explicitly compares Croft to Ahab in the same letter in which he describes his sergeant as "an archetype of all the dark, bitter, inarticulate, capable and brooding men that America spawns." He had already told Bea the story he had heard about a sergeant and a private in the 112th who captured a starving Japanese soldier. They gave him water, a K-ration and a cigarette, and when he closed his eyes, a bullet in the temple. "He died happy," the sergeant said. He now decided that his vision sergeant would be the one to pull the trigger and Red Valsen would be the private. Life

stated this way it sounds preposterously pretentious

based on Matthieson

is he real or a character?

was again traducing art; the incident would become one of the episodes that define Croft in *Naked*. Except for a tense change, the description of Croft in the "Time Machine" chapter, ~~given~~

2 ~~here,~~ comes verbatim from Mailer's letter.

[He was efficient and strong and usually empty and his main cast of mind was a superior contempt toward nearly all men. He hated weakness and he loved practically nothing. There was a crude unformed vision in his soul but he was rarely conscious of it.

Mailer's buddies had discovered geisha houses and learned the distinction between a geisha—a woman who entertained, poured sake and in some instances had sex with visitors—and a *joro*, or common whore, who lacked the social graces. Before he was transferred to Choshi, he was taken by his friend Nat Ellis to a geisha house where he made what he called "the time-honored American purchase—a piece of ass." It was the first time he ^{had} sex since he last saw Bea in Monterey a year earlier. He went to geisha houses three more times, including once during one of his two visits to Tokyo the following March. He remembered his troubled feelings six decades later:

I had very mixed feelings about fidelity. I thought we should be faithful; I wanted her [Bea] to be faithful to me, I'd go crazy at the thought she might be having an affair. As it turned out later, I think she did have a few unhappy, little affairs—unhappy in the sense that they were to her in her mind not quite right—I was having the same with the geisha girls. Just one or two, and it wasn't right and I didn't feel very virile because I was violating my own standards of, oaths of

fidelity. And what I discovered is that an oath has a great influence upon a hard-on. You know, don't give an oath and think your hard-on can ignore it. It can't. That I learned early and never really learned it.

Unfaithful in ^{all} ~~each~~ of his ~~six~~ ⁵ marriages, Mailer was a serial philanderer ^{and} ~~his~~ ^{Q.E.} affairs caused him and his family much misery over the next fifty years. But that night in Tateyama, when he returned to the barracks, he felt guilty and empty, as he told Bea when he confessed the next day.

Ψ Ψ Ψ

From September of 1945 to February of 1946, his discharge date changed almost weekly. He followed the changing promises of the War Department and watched the news as servicemen all over the world complained and demonstrated for early release. Mailer encouraged his mother and mother-in-law, two formidable Jewish matrons, to lobby on his behalf, and they did. By the beginning of March, he was all but certain that he would be home sometime in April.

Planning the logistics for writing the novel was already underway. He wrote to Fan and gave her instructions on the kind of portable typewriter he wanted, and asked Bea to separate but all his letters dealing with the novel. Given the centrality of the mountain to his novel, he said it would be important to do some mountain climbing, perhaps in North Conway, where they had skied. Provincetown in the summer would be the perfect place to write, and Bea began to look for a suitable place. All the while, plans for the novel spilled out in profusion. He sketched an outline of the events leading to the War and Roosevelt's brilliance in mobilizing the country. With the passing of the President—"a great humanist"—Mailer feared there would be "a fascist

(who would be discharged?)
when was Ben discharged?

backwash" in America after the war, given America's victories and enormous power. He wanted this perspective to be the novel's geopolitical backdrop.

He wrote out the names of 161 soldiers he had known since he had been in the army. He had already selected eight of his principal characters, but needed more and wanted the largest possible pool from which to draw. He wanted his Recon platoon to have 30-40 soldiers in it, but ^{got} worried about the number he could include without confusion, and began counting the number of significant characters in novels at hand. When he found that there were only 16 in a novel he admired, Liam O'Flaherty's *The Informer* (1925), he concluded that he would limit his roster to 15. He ended up with a total of 14 enlisted men as significant characters in *Naked*'s Recon platoon. Only three officers—Gen. Cummings, Lt. Hearn and Major Dalleson—have important roles.

Looking back over his reading of the past year, he selected four books as models. He said he wanted to reread them before he started writing what he thought would be a novel of 90 to 100 thousand words, a huge underestimation—*Naked* is over 300,000 words long. The ^{first} ~~book~~ ^{was} on his list ^{is} *The Informer*, a tightly written story of betrayal and animalistic fear in the aftermath of the Irish Civil War. He prized it for its deft one or two-paragraph character portraits.

Simenon's *Hometown* was next, admired for its "insights into the weakly Evil, the men who are small of soul & afraid rather than malign." Albert Maltz's 1944 novel, *The Cross and the Arrow*, set in wartime Germany, is the story of a factory worker who perseveres as the Nazi regime begins to devour its own. He wanted to study Maltz's presentation of stubborn nobility. Finally, he planned to read *Anna Karenina* again in order "to steep myself in a good humanistic mood."

Is this
the
correct
form?

Yes

p. 126

Mailer was sent to Onahama, another hundred miles up the Pacific coast, in late January on temporary assignment; as mess sergeant for 25 men. At the end of February, he returned to Choshi, where he reported to ^{the top} a ~~more senior~~ mess sergeant. He had excellent relations with his Japanese K.P.s in all of his cooking assignments. "I don't know if it's Harvard or Aunt Nan's instruction in table manners," he told Bea, "but I cannot treat a person as a servant." The K.P.s worked 12-hour days, seven days a week but they considered themselves fortunate because they ate well. He was a kindly boss. The spokesman of one K.P. group said to him: "Sair, there are much joyiness in the hearts of the kitchen boys since you have come to be cook here." Mailer enjoyed joking with them in Japanese, which he had learned a bit of. He also enjoyed writing "Sgt." before his name on the return address of his letters. He kept thinking how nice his stripes would look when he returned to Brooklyn. ~~Later on, after he lost them,~~ he told Bea that he had gotten too proud of ^{his sergeant's stripes.} ~~them.~~

No comment from him on being made Sgt? SEE Below

move to p. 125

On the night of April 3, he was awakened by the mess sergeant. The K.P.s had left the kitchen in a mess, and he ordered Mailer to clean it up. Mailer called him a chicken-shit son-of-a-bitch and the sergeant stomped out. Mailer was summoned to the captain's office. Drunk and angry, ^{the captain} he ordered Mailer to apologize, "crawfish," to the mess sergeant and threatened to court

Wasn't he a mess sg? ?

martial him when he argued back. Mailer apologized and, throbbing with self-loathing, walked out. "I hated him [the Captain] enough to kill him then," he said. After a sleepless night, he decided he'd turn in his stripes, which made him feel better. But the next day when he told the captain he was turning in his stripes, the captain replied with some heat, "You're not turning them in, I'm taking them." Later, the mess sergeant told him the captain had no intention of demoting him until Mailer opened his mouth. He told Bea that his only solace was to feel the joy

Pick up sentence from p. 124

of complete renunciation. "Sweet Sarge is Poor Private again," he said. He left the army the way he came in, as a buck private.

The moment when the captain took away his sergeantcy, he said later, "was when the keel was laid for *The Naked and the Dead*." He transformed the "crawfishing" incident into the pivotal confrontation between Gen. Cummings and Lt. Hearn, which leads indirectly to Hearn's death. But this came much later, in the final draft of *Naked*. His immediate response to the event was to write Bea a letter outlining an episode in which Red Valsen commits an offense similar to his own and is court martialed. Valsen's hatred of officers is so intense that it becomes a blind spot in his otherwise fair-minded outlook. Mailer was not much different in this regard. Even in his old age, he would snap at some slight by saying, "You sound like an officer!"

In this last letter home in April, he announced to Bea that he had received travel orders. A week ^{later} ~~after~~ he was on his way to the 4th Replacement Depot in Yokohama. When he arrived there, he ran into his buddy from basic training and Ft. Ord, Clifford Maseovsky, who now was a master sergeant. When Mailer saw his rank, he said, "Whose ass did you kiss to get those stripes?" The two friends were both aboard the U. S. S. *U.S. Grant* (AP-29) when it left with a thousand-plus G.I.s for the U.S. on April 26, arriving at Ft. Lawton, near Seattle, a week later. Maseovsky was Sergeant of the Guard on the crossing and Mailer asked him for a good detail so he could avoid guard duty. Maseovsky put him in charge of candy distribution, a soft job. He read *Anna Karenina* for the third time on the voyage.

By the time they arrived, Mailer had given away all of his medals, even his combat infantryman's badge. He was the only buck private on the train from Seattle to Ft. Dix. There

was a final ignominy; everyone on the train was drinking and horsing around, and he got into a fight with a much bigger G.I. who broke his nose. On May 2, having served two years, one month and six days, he was given an honorable discharge and mustering-out pay of \$117.91. He got on the train and "went home like a stripped duck."

Mailer often said that the army had been the worst experience of his life, and the most valuable. Trained as a fire control operator, he served consecutively as a clerk, aerial photography trainee, shower builder, wire lineman, rifleman, laundryman, cook, and mess sergeant. Shot at several times, he shot back but probably killed no one. He was demeaned, ignored, humiliated, busted and tested to a fare thee well. By his own admission, he was "the third lousiest guy in a platoon of 12." But he survived 25 reconnaissance patrols and grew as a man and an artist. He knew his army. He summed up his situation concisely in a letter to Bea halfway through his tour: "You know really my only decent function as a man is to be a lover and/or an author." Sustained by his wife, his family and a sturdy belief in his vocation, he was now prepared to become a full-time writer, the only line of work, besides soldiering, he ever followed for more than a couple of months. "Through ~~out~~ most of the Great Wet Boot which was World War II for me," he wrote,

I kept a cold maniacal thing in my heart, sharp as a shiv. I would listen to other G.I.s beating their gums about how when they got out they were going to write a fugging book which would expose the fugging army, and I would think in my fatigue-slowed brain that if they only knew what I was going to do, they would elect me sergeant on the spot.

Ψ Ψ Ψ

The night of his homecoming, Bea and ~~ex-private~~ Mailer went to a Brooklyn Heights hotel. The "unguent" of Bea's breasts, as he said in his letters, was all he needed to heal his ego bruises. The hotel was expensive, however, and after a week they moved into the family's apartment down the street. The clan lavied out solicitude and ~~Fan cooked pot-roast for him~~. After a few weeks, he was eager to begin writing, but before they left for Provincetown, Mailer made an appointment with the senior editor at Random House, Robert N. Linscott, who had found merit in *Transit*. He told the white-haired editor his idea for the novel, and the kindly Linscott said, "Oh, dear boy, don't, don't, write a war novel. We've over-published war novels and you won't be able to get a publisher." Mailer was unsettled by this advice, but knew he had no choice. "[I]t was the only book I had in me, and I had to write it." ^{He had support from} ~~The other supportive person~~ _(nee Lubell) was Adeline Naiman.

Adeline was the former Radcliffe roommate of Bea's sister, Phyllis, and had become a good friend of Mailer's sister Barbara. She and the Silverman sisters, her friend Rhoda Lazare, and Adeline had created what Mailer called "the Norman legend" during the War. After Adeline was hired as a junior editor at Little, Brown, she began corresponding with Mailer in Japan and asked if she could see *Transit*, adding that she believed he was going to be a great writer. By then, he had decided it was a badly flawed work, and replied he would only consent to publication if no changes were requested and it appeared under a *nom de plume*. There the matter rested until mid-June when he, Bea and ^{Fan} ~~his mother~~ went to visit the Silvermans in Chelsea, and a luncheon meeting with Adeline and her mother at the Oxford Grill in Cambridge was arranged. Adeline remembers being disappointed by a slight, short young man "who wasn't dashing

articulate." Mailer was knocked back by her cultivation; he estimated she had read three times as much as he had. "She was a real name dropper, culturally speaking, very sure of herself. Full of stuff, full of vitamins," he recalled. Although he was uncharacteristically reserved at the luncheon, he did tell her about the new novel and they agreed to stay in touch. She became a life-long friend.

After the luncheon, he and Bea took the train to Provincetown. Bea had arranged to rent a cottage. The Mailers thought that the Crow's Nest Bungalows, as the double row of beachfront cottages were called, were in Provincetown, but they were actually a half mile over the line in North Truro. They had no car and pedaled bikes into Provincetown to go shopping. He immediately fell into a routine, writing from eleven to six on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Fan, Barney and Barbara came up for a week in July, and the Silvermans also visited, but the young couple didn't socialize much. By the end of August, he had a 184-page typescript.

It had always been ^{his marker's} a baseline assumption that there would be no hero in *Naked*. This is clear from the sheaf of letters Bea had pulled together, close to 100, from his overseas correspondence. There were as many comments on Martinez, Red and Wilson as on Croft, but fewer on Gen. Cummings and Lt. Hearn. Mailer was writing an ensemble novel about an understrength reconnaissance platoon. Each soldier would have his time in the spotlight and would interact, more or less, with every other soldier. He also intended to write about officers, drawing on his experience as a regimental clerk. By the time he reached Provincetown, he had a 4 x 6 card for each major character, the front side giving a baker's dozen of the soldier's traits and the backside outlining his history. For example, the front of General Cummings' card lists: "love of planning & chess, ambition, love of wife, weight of responsibility, love of ease and luxury,

What
happened
20 on
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out
wonder

maintenance of manner (bonhomie), wise hard knowledge of men, fear (pressure from the top), love of army ethical system, snobbery." The back of Red's card gives his year of birth (1912) and his jobs: "coal miner 1927-1930; hobo, 1930-31—sporadic, 1931-41; short order cook, shingler, plumber, harvester, flop house keeper, painter, truck driver, tailor." All of these occupations are mentioned in Red's "Time Machine" episode; he doesn't change markedly from Mailer's first conception of him. Cummings, on the other hand, while retaining some of the traits listed, underwent a major transformation. He becomes more intellectual, Spartan, sadistic and, most important, more reactionary. And, by the final draft, he has no love for his wife. He tells Hearn, "The truth is, Robert, my wife is a bitch." Mailer makes Cummings a homosexual, as he later stated.

In addition to the cards, which contain the names of the men on whom they are based, he drew up various charts detailing the interactions of the men in Croft's platoon. It is comprised largely of men from all around the country, lower and middle-class who have been beaten down, first by the Depression, and next by the army. Eight of the platoon (Croft, Valsen, Martinez, Gallagher, Wilson, Brown, Stanley and Togliolo) are veterans of the disastrous preceding campaign at the (fictional) island of Motome, where the Japanese blasted them out of their rubber assault rafts with anti-aircraft guns. The other ^{six} ~~five~~ members of the platoon are green replacements: Ridges, a dirt farmer from Arkansas; Roth, an unathletic Jew from New York who falls to his death climbing Mt. Anaka, the peak that dominates the island; Goldstein, a welder from Brooklyn; Wyman, another Midwesterner; Minetta, a malingerer from New Jersey; and Czienwicz, a petty criminal from Chicago known to all as "Polack." Mailer was careful in how he allotted space to his characters. The backgrounds of eight of the fourteen enlisted men

(Martinez, Croft, Valsen, Gallagher, Wilson, Goldstein, Brown and Polack), and two officers (Cummings and Hearn), are given in "Time Machine" flashbacks, a device adapted from the biographical chapters in John Dos Passos' *U. S. A.* The others are revealed in conversation or via his omniscient narrator, who presents the thoughts of nearly every named character in the novel, more than two dozen. Critics have argued, with some justice, that some of the profiles (Brown and Polack, in particular) are stereotypical, although Mailer has been praised for others, generally those that his own background enabled him to handle more surely (Roth, Goldstein, Gallagher and Hearn). On the other hand, most readers agree that the "Time Machine" device is helpful in understanding the actions of the men under duress. They are socio-sexual in nature, again revealing the influence of D.H. Lawrence. The soldiers carry their carnal fears and desires with them, another weight in their backpacks. Mailer saw the biographies as "bi-functional": they illumine motivation and provide pace. He explained one of his guiding beliefs for *Naked*: "One was the product of one's milieu, one's parents, one's food, one's conversations, one's dearest and/or most odious human relations. One was the sum of one's own history as it was cradled in the larger history of one's time." So while there is justice in saying some of the characters are stock and predictable, it is not true of Cummings and Hearn; their heavily worked intellectual conversations "show something of the turn my later writing would take," he said. The two officers and, arguably, Croft and Goldstein, are dynamic characters who change in unforeseen ways in the crucible of jungle warfare.

Roth's original name was Frankenheim. Mailer changed it to Rothberg and finally to Roth. ~~a name, like Mailer, that has been anglicized.~~ He is a graduate of City College of New York, and worked in the city's real estate tax office. The only enlisted man in his outfit with a

Time? Are there English people named Roth? It's a Jewish name that has been shortened

college education, he is also the only character with a 4 x 6 card that has no "Time Machine" episode. Sensitive, lazy and depressed, Roth is the martyred Jew in the novel. Like Mailer, he is recently married. One reason, it can be surmised, why Mailer eschewed a "Time Machine" biography for Roth is to avoid having two New York Jews profiled. The other, perhaps, is so comparisons to his creator would not be as easy to make. There is no mention of a Roth, a Rothberg or a Frankenheim in his master list of soldiers, in his letters, or the recollections of others in the 112th. But ^{Mailer} he was not drawing a self-portrait. As with characters in several of his later novels—Steven Rojack in *An American Dream*, most notably—Roth is a fictional first cousin at best.

A meeting with Adeline was arranged for early September, and he and Bea took the morning ferry across the bay to Boston. He brought his first draft and Adeline sequestered herself to read it, finishing in the late afternoon. Her brief report, written that same day, stated boldly that the novel "is going to be the greatest novel to come out of World War II and we must publish it." Mailer remembered it as an "incredible document." She followed her spontaneous encomium about ten days later with a formal assessment, in which she outlined the novel's loose plot and lauded "the author's marvelous sense of spoken language rhythms and the colloquial idiom." In her conclusion she warns that if the novel is not accepted, "we are passing up the first really important novel to come out of the war and a potentially tremendous author." She predicted that the novel could sell as many as 7,300 ^{hundred} copies, a large number for a first novel, but far below its actual sales figures. ~~Naked~~ ^{cover} sold 130,000 copies in hardback in its first eight months ~~in print~~. ^{in print} She was the first professional to see the importance of *Naked*.

When Angus Cameron, Little, Brown senior editor read it, he was impressed but troubled by the strong language. Raymond Everitt, executive vice president, had the same response. It went to the president, Alfred McIntyre, and he was insistent: a major expurgation would be required. It was decided to get an outside opinion. ^{from} ~~The need went to~~ Bernard DeVoto, a Pulitzer-Prize winning historian of the American West and a Mark Twain scholar. Adeline had heard that the literary guru had a foul mouth and she happily agreed to the choice.

→ ^{also} ~~Meanwhile, Mailer was getting~~ ^{Mailer went along with DeVoto, but offered more arguments for the novel} irritated. He wrote a long letter to Adeline pointing the patrol's attempt to climb Mt. Anaka as the novel's spine, and stating that it would first and foremost be "a piece of realism." He made two more key points. First, the novel would be anti-war, although indirectly: "The terrible subtle evil of war on men is in every page." Second, it would be "a romantic novel concerned with the extraordinary." He continued:

There are going to be troubling terrifying glimpses of order in disorder, of a horror which may or may not lurk beneath the surface of things. Remember when Hennessey is killed, and Croft and Red and Martinez all have primitive glimpses of a structure behind things? That emotion will be recurrent although warped into the style of each man's perceptions. It's the old business of man constructing little tag-ends of a God for himself in his moral wilderness. In war, it's more direct, more impacting on the senses—there is always a familiar unreality to everything you see and do, except for the occasional chilling moments when you feel as if you're on the edge of a deeper knowledge.

His comment about the structure behind the Anopopei campaign, his rough-hewn sense that there was intentionality behind the pasteboard masks of things, was ignored by everyone at the time, and not really noticed by readers or critics after it was published. He told Harvey Breit in 1951 ^{New York Times columnist} that he was on "a mystic kick" when he wrote *Naked*; the primary influence on the novel was *Moby-Dick*, he said. But the novel's thick, textured realism, and the awesome power of nature, overwhelmed any recognition of the subtle intimations felt by Croft and others. Mailer did not forget, however, the transcendentalism he first encountered in Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*. It would come to the fore a decade later.

DeVoto's six-page critique, which Mailer received at the end of October, echoed what everyone at Little, Brown, including Adeline, had said. DeVoto did not question the verisimilitude of the obscenity; he questioned its effectiveness. He found the vernacular offensive and boring and said it would undercut any real consideration of the novel as a work of art. If published without severe pruning, he said, "it is certain to be prosecuted and suppressed in Massachusetts." He allowed that it would be a mistake not to make an investment in Mailer, but that was all the enthusiasm he could muster. DeVoto made one further criticism: the general and his aide, were the "least live characters" in the manuscript and needed to be reconceived, individualized.

In the face of these criticisms, all Little, Brown was willing to discuss was an option contract for a few hundred dollars. This meant that they could reject the book out of hand ^{still} ^{after} ~~no~~ ~~matter what~~ changes were made. Mailer wasn't ready yet to break off negotiations, however, and told Adeline that he was definitely willing to write a ^{new} second draft. In regard to Cummings and Hearn, he said, "DeVoto's criticism is essentially sound." He added that the option offered was a

OK?
Not
"another"
Was this
a first
draft?

miserly hedging of the firm's bet. Although he felt "weak and battered" by the rain of negative comments, he ended by saying that "the best part of the book is to come. There's a chapter I've written since I've come home [from Massachusetts] which has about forty of the best pages ever written by an American. Sayonara, Norman."

He was almost certainly referring to the longest, most vivid episode in the first third of the novel, the Japanese night attack at the river. Recon withstands a lengthy and intense assault, with Croft rallying his platoon each time it falters. Before the first wave attacks, the Japanese call, again and again, across the river:

'We you coming-to-get, Yank.'

He shivered terribly for a moment, and his hands seemed congealed on the machine gun. He could not bear the intense pressure in his head.

'We you coming-to-get Yank,' the voice screamed.

'COME AND GET ME YOU SONSOFBITCHES,' Croft roared. He shouted with every fiber of his body as though he plunged at an oaken door. There was no sound at all for perhaps ten seconds, nothing but the moonlight on the river and the taut rapt buzzing of the crickets. Then the voice spoke again. *'Oh, we come, Yank, we come.'*

Croft pulled back the bolt on the machine gun, and rammed it home. His heart was still beating with frenzy. *'Recon . . . RECON, UP ON THE LINE,'* he shouted with all his strength [. . .]

In the light of the flare the Japanese had the stark frozen quality of men revealed by a shaft of lightning. Croft no longer saw anything clearly; he could not have said at that moment where his hands ended and the machine gun began; he was lost in a vast moil of noise out of which individual screams and shouts etched in his mind for an instant. He could never have counted the Japanese who charged across the river; he knew only that his finger was rigid on the trigger bar. He could not have loosened it. In those few moments he felt no sense of danger. He just kept firing.

Mailer
 He probed more deeply into the psyches of Sgt. Croft and Gen. Cummings than he did with any of his other characters. DeVoto's critique made him realize that his initial depiction of them was trammelled by their pre-determined traits. They are the only two characters in the novel who believe that they can affect events, the only two who feel they have the inner sanction to act. Croft is best seen as Cummings' demonic underling—what Fedallah is to Ahab—although the two never interact, or even meet.

Mailer was educated by Croft, much as Shakespeare drew on Brutus for Hamlet. Marion Faye, Mailer's hipster hero for a post-Hiroshima world in *The Deer Park* derives from Croft, as do Rojack in *An American Dream* and Gary Gilmore in *The Executioner's Song*, among others. He was profoundly fascinated by Croft because his Texas sergeant was trying to get to the bottom of his own violent and divided nature. "I hate everything which is not in myself," Croft says at the end of his "Time Machine" episode. He despises everyone who is weak, phony, lazy or undisciplined. Close to psychotic, he is the finest soldier in the outfit. Robert Ehrlich points

Critic ✓
Critic ?

out that Croft's portrait is in line with D.H. Lawrence's description of the American psyche:

"hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer."

Intellectually, Mailer disapproved of Croft's violence but on another level found him to be the character for whom he had "the most secret admiration." Croft is a test case; he wanted to see how he might channel his violence, and ^{whether} if he could plumb it or sate it or even transcend it. As Alfred Kazin noted of the novel, "[K]illing and being killed become forms of intoxication that get people out of their usual selves—always a prime motive in Mailer." Ostensibly, the assault on Mt. Anaka is to determine ^{whether} if there is a way to outflank the Japanese, but it soon becomes apparent that Croft's crazy attempt is a way of satisfying the "crude unformed vision in his soul." When he is driven off the mountain by the hornets, he is relieved to have found "a limit to his hunger," but nevertheless feels that he has "missed some tantalizing revelation of himself. Of himself and much more. Of life. Everything."

Except for "The Time Machine" episodes, the novel's action is confined to the island.

X This locus ^{is} provided tremendous narrative concentration. The reader knows that the island will ^{be} eventually taken. It must, historically, because the Japanese were defeated on one island before the Americans jumped to the next and the next, ~~moving inexorably up to the Philippine archipelago and then to Japan itself.~~ This focus also imposes a constrained time scheme; we know that the Cummings' island campaign will not stretch on endlessly. As on Prospero's magical isle, the characters will arrive, be transformed, and depart.

Maj. General Edward Cummings invades Anopopei with a 6,000-man force. Shaped like an ocarina, the island is 150 miles long by 50 miles wide, tapering at the ends. The ocarina's

mouthpiece, a peninsula where Cummings lands his troops after naval and air bombardment, juts out about 20 miles from the northwest quadrant of the island, as depicted ~~on~~ ⁱⁿ the line drawing in every edition of the novel. Following the book's title pages, this drawing is the first thing that readers encounter, which is ^{Mailer's} his way of emphasizing landscape as a defining circumstance in the novel. When we have finished *Naked*, we know Mailer's island as intimately as Prospero's or Crusoe's.

Anopopei, for Cummings, is a steppingstone to the apex of political power in the semi-fascistic state he envisions the U.S. becoming. Such a state was Mailer's worst nightmare; like many ex-GIs he worried that World War II would be followed by war with Russia. "General Cummings," he said shortly after *Naked* was published, "articulates a kind of unconscious bent in the thinking of the Army brass and top rank politicians. He's an archetype of the new man, the coming man, the one who's really dangerous." Winston Churchill gave his "Iron Curtain" speech the month before Mailer left Japan, and during the 15 months he was writing the novel the Soviets were seizing power in Eastern Europe. The Cold War was underway. Mailer felt that "people in our government were leading us into war again. The last half [of *Naked*] was written on this nerve right in the pit of my stomach."

Ψ Ψ Ψ

The Mailers returned to Brooklyn in September and rented an apartment at 49 Remsen Street, just around the corner from his parent's place on Pierrepont. During the negotiations with Little, Brown, Bea mentioned a Brooklyn Heights poet she had met during the War; his name was Norman Rosten and she thought he might be able to help. Mailer met him on the street one

got the novel 12/6/54

day in October and they connected. Rosten had published two books with Rinehart Press, but didn't take on any airs. ^{Mailer} He described what he learned from Rosten: "You could be a published writer and still be comfortable." It turned out that they both knew Arthur Miller. He lived in the same brownstone as Fan and Barney, and was writing a new play—*The Death of a Salesman*. When Miller and Mailer would bump into each other, Mailer said, "We would talk and then we'd go away, and I know he was thinking what I was, which was, 'That other guy is never going to amount to anything.'" The paths of the three Brooklyn writers crossed many times in later years, and all three ~~were~~ ^{would become} involved with Marilyn Monroe. ^{Miller} Miller married her; Rosten became a ^{colon} confidante; Mailer wrote her biography.

^{Mailer} Rosten suggested that he meet his editor at Rinehart, Ted Amussen. Mailer, of course, knew Amussen from before the War, but had lost contact. In early November, the two Normans took the subway to Rinehart's Manhattan offices, and ^{Mailer} he gave Amussen his manuscript, now at least 100 pages longer and including the fire at the river. He also gave him a copy of Adeline's ecstatic editorial report and told him, somewhat angrily, "If you give me a contract, you can have it." Amussen ran into some opposition, but got the contract. It was Stanley Rinehart, the president and co-founder (with John Farrar) of the firm who made the final decision, overriding his editor-in-chief, John Selby. Amussen told Rinehart that he'd be a "damn fool if you don't sign it up." A young editor named William Raney was supportive of Amussen, ^{became} and ~~ended up being~~ the editor that Mailer worked with the most at the publishing house. ^{Rinehart's} The advance was \$1250, ^{which was} on the high side for a first novel.

Before the contract was signed, he had to attend a profanity conference. Amussen and Raney were there and the two Johns—as Mailer called them—Selby and Farrar. It is possible

that Stanley Rinehart also attended. Mailer agreed to reduce the profanity to "the irreducible minimum," which meant that an estimated one-fifth of the obscene language would be cut, and the remaining, unwritten part of the novel would use ^{h " " " " " "}fug and shit and cock and pussy in the same proportions. This reduction was deemed sufficient to placate Rinehart's mother, the celebrated mystery writer ^JMary Roberts Rinehart, who was on the firm's board. Amussen left Rinehart to work at another publishing firm soon after the manuscript had been accepted and John Raney took over as ^{Mailer's} ~~AM~~'s chief contact.

notes

In the summer of 1947, Mailer rented Rosten's one-room garret studio at 20 Remsen Street. Bea was writing her novel in their apartment and he needed a quiet place to revise his, based in part on Raney's critique. He also received feedback from family members—his sister, ^{Rember and his wife, sister} Cy and Ossie, Dave and Anne, his parents and, of course, Bea. Living at 20 Remsen was another literary man, Charles Devlin, who became the model for McLeod, one the chief characters of Mailer's second novel, *Barbary Shore*. "A saturnine Irishman," as Mailer described him, Devlin had long, literary conversations with the ^{Mailer} ~~younger man~~, who remembered him as "a dear friend." Devlin read the manuscript of the novel when it was done and criticized it severely. "It's a better book than I thought it would be, but you have no gift for metaphor," he said. "Metaphor reveals a man's character, and his true grasp of life. To the degree that you have no metaphor, you are an impoverished writer, and have lived no life." He never forgot Devlin's lecture ^{and} worked hard on his tropes ever after.

OK?

An unpublished, impecunious writer of the James T. Farrell school, Devlin was a good editor. Mailer hired him for a month at \$50 a week to edit *Naked* because he was running up against a deadline. The manuscript, ^{was} originally due in August, now had to be turned in by the end

of September to meet Rinehart's publication date of May 1948, and Mailer and Bea planned to go to Europe as soon as the manuscript was submitted. Devlin ^{was} suggested many cuts and advised against using the word "very" so much. "He could be abrupt, sometimes cruel in his criticism," Mailer said, "because he had a thoroughgoing, ongoing, viable philosophy that he wrapped about himself." Yet, they got along. When Mailer was in the throes of writing *The Deer Park* in 1953, he wrote to Devlin and recalled their back-and-forth: "Oh, for the good old days of *Naked* when Bob Hope Devlin used to say to Mailer Colonna, 'You can't use that four hundred pages—they're no good,' and Norman Colonna would say cheerfully, 'I can't?'" (Quick look at his watch.) 'I have three days before I go to Europe. Okay, boys, tear her down.' Thrommmpp!" Mailer's confidence was such, he said, that if the novel needed "the Shah of Brat-mah-phur to make an entrance, I'd run to the library, read fifty pages on Hindu philosophy, and come back ready to enter the Shah's mind." Unlike his next two novels, *Naked* was easy to write.

Buttressed by his letters to Bea, his 4 x 6 cards, his charts, and vivid memories of Luzon, Mailer surged along, completing ^{one} the first draft and starting on ^{another} the second. This draft, which he said was "a bonus," was almost 100 pages longer and included the nuanced ideological debates between the general and his aide. His style shifted in these scenes, became "less forceful and more articulated." The last thing he wrote was the "crawfish" scene in which Lt. Hearn is ordered to pick up a crushed cigarette the General has thrown down. He does but is still reassigned to take over Recon platoon from Croft. Without these additions, he said, *Naked* "would have been considered an interesting war novel, with some good scenes." He wrote four days a week, five hours a day, producing about 30 typed pages a week. In the mornings, he

we've already had a first + second draft

I hope you will have explained this meaning of crawfish

would usually read a few pages of *Anna Karenina* before starting; in the afternoons, he would prime himself with a can of beer.

Mailer's family was around the corner and he was able to take days off to go to the beach or to a baseball game. Jackie Robinson, ~~the player who broke the color barrier in big league~~

~~baseball,~~ was playing his first season as a Dodger, and Mailer said it was the most exciting year Brooklyn fans could remember. Occasionally, he would meet with a group of writers at the

Manhattan apartment of Millie Brower, his old friend from Long Branch, where works-in-progress were read aloud. He hired Millie's husband, Harvey Anhalt, to ~~produce~~ ^{type} a clean copy of

the *Naked* manuscript, after the changes suggested by Devlin had been made, paying him \$150 to

^{for} ~~type~~ the 900-plus page monster. On New Year's Eve, 1946, Barbara gave a party at her parents' apartment. Among those attending were ^{Alison Laurie} ~~Alison Laurie~~, her college classmate. She was amazed

to see how jolly Mailer was; most of the writers she knew were anxious and unhappy. Barbara said that her brother's success seemed at the time both miraculous and expected.

Sometime in the weeks before the party, he took a break from writing to make a film. He had seen two of Fritz Lang's classic ~~horror~~ films, *M* (1931) and *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*

(1933), before he was drafted, and after the war, he saw a number of surrealist films such as Jean Cocteau's *Blood of the Poet* (1930) at the Museum of Modern Art. Over the course of a week,

Mailer and Harvey Anhalt made an eleven-minute, silent, experimental film, shot with a camera bought by Dave Kessler. According to film critic Michael Chaiken, who helped restore the

untitled film, it is quite well done for an amateur effort. Chaiken says Mailer makes use of

"several in-camera tricks: lap dissolves, stop motion, iris-ing of the lens. Also, thematically, it's fairly bold for its time. A young, middle class girl, played by Millie Brower, is held in a trance

"I'm going to bet that even reader already knows this"

Lurie?

who?

state of dread over an unwanted pregnancy as she contemplates abortion. The repressive atmosphere of her domestic life is brought into relief by her inability to connect to her family, who sit at the dinner table and eat robotically." It was the beginning of a filmmaking career that would resume in 1967, when Mailer made the first of three experimental films.

At some point in the writing of *Naked*, he and Bea attended an adult education class ^{in which} ~~the professor outlined~~ ^{that discussed} all the major theories of history. ~~He then said,~~ ^{The professor said,} "I think we Jews have a separate theory of history which I would call the catastrophic theory of history." It was a form of history, he said, "that the Jews knew all too well." While Mailer was long past the point of specifically applying the theory to *Naked*, it definitely resonated with him, as he wrote in a 1997 letter. The conclusion of *Naked* might be seen as a manifestation of this theory, although the endurance and sacrifice shown by the men on the platoon qualifies the impact of the ~~chain of~~ suffering in the last quarter of the novel. ^{which one point} ^{The profes-} ^{sor? Or} ^{Mailer?}

In response to criticism that that novel paints a bleak picture of humanity, he ^{made} ~~offered~~ the following ^{comment} shortly after publication:

Actually, it offers a good deal of hope. I intended it to be a parable about the movement of man through history. I tried to explore the outrageous proportions of cause and effect, of effort and recompense, in a sick society. The book finds man corrupted, confused to the point of helplessness, but it also finds that there are limits beyond which he cannot be pushed, and it finds that even in his corruption and sickness there are yearnings for a better world.

At the end, the men move off to a new island campaign. Soon they will be in the Philippines and six months later the war will be over. The reader gets the sense that while the campaign and the novel have been conclusive, and the men tested in the harshest ways without succumbing, they will now face new challenges. The Japanese on Anopopei have been ~~utterly~~ ^{utterly} vanquished, and American casualties have been comparatively light, but what lies ahead in the peacetime world is uncertain. The experience of being at war and writing about it led Mailer to develop a corollary to his anti-war belief, as Alfred Kazin has pointed out, one that would plague him ever after: "[W]ar may be the ultimate purpose of technological society." The corollary would become the chief premise of his next novel.

Mailer ~~worked past the deadline~~ ^{made} making changes to the novel right to the end of September when it was submitted to ~~Bill~~ ^{it} Ranev at Rinehart. Both novelist and editor would continue working on its ~~final shape~~ ^{it} long distance, as he and Bea were leaving for Paris. After ~~an~~ ^{mailed} On October 3, after a ~~October 1~~ ^{it} bon voyage party at 102 Pierrepont, they boarded the R.M.S. *Queen Elizabeth* for the crossing.

you told us above that the deadline was extended to end Sept.

Chapter 4

Paris and Hollywood: Prominent and Empty

The Mailers shivered through their first few weeks in Paris. They were staying at the Hôtel de l'Avenir, at 65 Rue Madam, on the Left Bank of the Seine, not far from the Luxembourg Gardens. Their room, with a fold-up-Murphy bed and a bathroom down the hall,

cost one dollar a day. About the time that they began French classes at the Sorbonne, they moved a short distance to a three-room apartment at 11 Rue Bréa, a few blocks from the intersection of the Blvd. Montparnasse and the Blvd. Raspail—a part of Paris that Hemingway knew well. The three-room apartment, for which they paid *less* than a dollar a day, had red wallpaper, an orange rug and a bathtub in the kitchen. It was small, but warmer than the hotel, and the Sorbonne, where they began classes in early November, was only a short walk. His most vivid memory of his early months in Paris was walking the streets conjugating subjunctive verbs.

Along with several hundred other ex-G.I.s, the Mailers were enrolled in *Le Cours de Civilisation Française*, concocted to garner American tuition dollars. It was essentially an introductory language course and attendance was not always taken. Nonetheless, the couple worked with moderate diligence on their French skills with the knowledge that the combined \$180 a month from the G.I. Bill they received would cease if they flunked. They also had the Rinehart advance and a remnant of their wartime savings ^{Q. Thus} and were (well off / comparatively) speaking, in a city still exhausted from the war. There were electricity shortages and strikes and everything was restrained and gloomy, as he wrote to Fig. "You get to longing pretty hard for America and its ballsy kind of noise and excitement," he said. Lonely at first, they soon met several Americans: Mitchell Goodman and his English wife, the poet Denise Levertov, and a friend from Dunster House and the *Advocate*, Mark Linenthal, and his wife Alice Adams, who later became a well-known *New Yorker* writer. Linenthal and Adams remained friends with Mailer over the years. They also met Stanley and Eileen Geist, expatriates who hosted an American salon. Geist graduated from Harvard the year Mailer entered, and had written a critical study of Melville while working as F. O. Matthiessen's research assistant on *American*

Renaissance, which of course interested Mailer. Geist read the manuscript ^{copy} of *Naked* and told him it wasn't bad, perhaps the first comment he received on the novel from a professional critic. Mailer said he felt "ennobled" by this response.

not exactly effusive

There was no way to share his manuscript with Fig Gwaltney, who was in Arkansas attending college and trying to write novels. But they wrote to each other regularly during the ten months the Mailers were in Europe. Mailer always needed correspondents with whom he could be frank about his projects and problems. Fig was the first of these. Writing to him from the ship on October 7, he gave an unvarnished summary of his political views, which were exacerbated by his detestation of the Red-baiting that was going on in the U.S. Grossly inflated fears of Communist influence and infiltration had prompted President ^{Harry} Truman, on March 21, 1947, to institute a Loyalty Program, ^{one} which required all federal employees to swear they had never advocated or approved "the commission of acts of force or violence" that would "alter the form of the United States government." Mailer wrote:

I've gone quite a bit to the Left since I've gotten out of the army. I'm a Jew Radical from New York now. And one of the areas of disagreement would be or perhaps would be—you may agree with me for all I know—that (1) we, that is, the leaders of the United States (I'm including the whole scurvy lot from the industrialists & state dept. to muff divers like Uncle Harry) want to go to war, and are doing everything in their power to bring us to war. And (2) I don't think Russia is the villain it's made out to be. I don't know what the hell they're like but when I find the worst fucking scum in the country (American Legion, Hearst press, etc.) going all out against them, I begin to doubt the whole works.

A few months after he got to Paris, in early 1948, he met someone who would ~~up-end his~~ ^{convictions about Russia, Red-baiters and fellow travelers and} school him in the ~~refined~~ quintessence of ~~the~~ revolutionary socialism. Through the Geists, he was introduced to Jean Malaquais, a Polish Jew from Warsaw (born Wladimir Malacki) whose parents had presumably perished in the Holocaust. Fifteen years older than Mailer, he had fought with the Lenin International Column of POUM, an anti-Stalinist Communist Party, against Franco in the Spanish Civil War, was almost captured by the Germans as a French soldier, escaped and fled to Mexico in 1943 where he participated in the political debates of the émigré circle there. A short, wiry man who looked a bit like Picasso, Malaquais had left Warsaw in 1925 and after many travels found himself in France in the depths of the Depression. He was able to find work in the lead and silver mines of La Londe-les-Maures in Provence where a polyglot crew of Europeans and Russians fleeing from totalitarian oppression worked as day laborers. Malaquais' first book, *Men from Nowhere* (1939) described the workers' horrific working conditions and rough camaraderie. It won the Prix Renaudot. Like another Polish emigrant, Joseph Conrad, Malaquais taught himself to write with elegance in a non-native language. He moved to Paris in the mid-1930s and immersed himself in French literature at the Bibliothèque Saint-Geneviève while working nights unloading crates in the marketplace, Les Halles, the "belly of Paris."

This is misreading because as the latter shows, NM was already skeptical about vld writing etc. Malaquais was formerly a student not changed his mind

"Morally and intellectually I was a tramp," Malaquais said, "a companion of the dispossessed." But he was also a sophisticated radical thinker who had been associated with writers such as André Gide and with Leon Trotsky (who praised *Men from Nowhere*). Proud and severe as ~~only~~ a stateless, formidably cultured Marxist intellectual ~~could be~~, he had worked for

stet

years as a manual laborer. In a preface to a reissue of Malaquais' 1954 novel, *The Joker*, Mailer summed up his acumen:

Malaquais loathed formula, propaganda, or any variety of thinking which deprived a situation of its nuance. So he was capable of advancing a new thesis, anticipating your objections, stating them with clarity (like Freud disarming his critics) and then would overtake his own verification of your position in the return swing of the dialectic. He would do this with such power that when he argued, the veins in his forehead would throb as though to demonstrate that the human head was obliged to be the natural site if not the very phallus of Mind.

~~The Father~~
~~In 1948~~ ~~Mailer later~~
 He recommended Malaquais for the yearlong task—he had a good command of written

English—and added \$1,000 to the paltry \$2,000 paid to Malaquais by Mailer's French publisher, Albin Michel. By the time that the translation was completed in late 1949, the two men had become fast friends. But their meetings the year before in Paris were sometimes testy. ~~He~~ ^{Mailer} told Malaquais about his hopes for Henry Wallace's presidential campaign as the Progressive Party nominee. Malaquais said that Mailer's voluble comments resembled those of "a boy scout or a young Kibbutznik," and proceeded to ~~deconstruct~~ ^{demolish} Mailer's notion that Wallace represented a legitimate peace movement, or "any kind of . . . incipient revolutionary starting point."

Malaquais told him that the Communists would "exploit him and then they would drop him and cover him with dirt." ~~He~~ ^{Mailer} "disliked me very strongly," according to Malaquais, especially when he told him that the Wallace campaign had been infiltrated by Stalinists. Unable to refute

^{Mailer}
Malaquais, ^{he} was yet unwilling to desert Wallace. At first he thought Malaquais was "an arrogant bastard. He was a little guy, very, very well knit and very determined and very superior, very haughty." Things were cool between them until they met again in Brooklyn in the fall of 1948.

Through a "long leaky French winter," he waited anxiously for reports on how *Naked* was faring at Rinehart. He was particularly concerned that Stanley Rinehart might want to cut the novel's profanity. Finally, near the end of 1947, he heard from Raney that Rinehart was in love with the novel. He relayed the good news to Barney in Warsaw, where ^{his father} he had a position with the American Joint Distribution Committee, a Jewish charity. "I have never heard such hosannas," he wrote. Rinehart intended to write a letter praising the novel to the book trade, a tactic he used only rarely. Much relieved, ^{Mailer} he told his father that he planned to start a new novel immediately, and hoped to get a lot written "so that I won't be scared if *Naked and Dead* gets a big reception."

~~At this point, he no inkling of the dimensions of the approaching triumph~~

Just tell the story

Before he began, he and Bea went on a skiing trip over the holidays in St. Cergue, Switzerland, and visited the cities of Ouchy, Geneva and Lausanne. He came back with two ideas: one a novel about a rich young California man who spends a year abroad, supporting himself by carrying money between France and Switzerland for black marketers; the second ~~would be~~ about Jews in Europe, focusing on an American Jewish couple who work for the Marshall Plan. He also kicked around the possibility of writing what he called "a collective novel" about people he knew in New York. None of these ideas gained traction, ^{and he began to fret} "Maybe I'm not scared," he wrote to Barney. His inability to decide on a new novel, one that could take several years to complete, is completely understandable given the choices before him. He summed up his

choices: "If my past had become empty as a theme, was I to write about Brooklyn streets, or my mother and father, or another war novel (*The Naked and the Dead Go to Japan*), or was I to do the book of the returning veteran when I had lived like a mole writing and rewriting seven hundred pages in those fifteen months?" So, through the wet winter of 1947-48 he worked on his French verbs and waited to hear from Rinehart.

~~to hear from Rinehart, he had~~
While waiting, he decided to read some non-American novels, although they jangled him as much as they inspired. Right after he had submitted *Naked*, he started reading E.M. Forster's novels, and in Paris he tackled his 1924 novel, *Passage to India*. He also read an unnamed work by Jean-Paul Sartre as well as Stendhal's classic *The Red and the Black*, a novel that would have a large influence on him. He also read something by Evelyn Waugh, about which he wrote to Fig, grudgingly: "That English fairy can write, much as I hate to admit it." The book that affected him most was Christopher Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin*, especially Sally Bowles, Isherwood's charming, decadent floozy, who is oblivious to the rise of the Nazis. She would become the model for Mailer's first memorable female character, Mrs. Guinevere, in his next novel.

~~When he did hear from Raney,~~ ⁵ the letter was vague about possible cuts. ^{Mailer} He wrote back on January 23, and again the next day, saying he anticipated "emasculatation" and, worse, that he would have no recourse because changes would be expensive to make after the galleys went to the printer. If that was the case, he would "have a shit hemorrhage." Most distressing to him was his fear that Polack's reply to Wyman's question about whether there was a God ("If there is, he sure is a sonofabitch"), which he linked to Croft kicking over the hornet's nest as manifestations of divine meddling, had been cut. "Without that line, it is no longer my book as far as I am

concerned," he said. He was willing to be overridden on the design of the book jacket, with its line drawing of a shell-shocked infantryman, and he was prepared to make other concessions, but he drew the line on Polack's ^{remark} ~~line~~. He ended the second letter by noting that he wanted to rewrite a few passages and asked what revisions would cost, closing with "I remain suspended, Norman."

Apparently, his volley of "howls and sulks," as he called them, acted as a purge because over the next two weeks he wrote the first fifty pages of "Mrs. Guinevere," the beginning of which centered on an ex-burlesque queen of the same name who runs a boarding house in Brooklyn Heights. In her self-absorption and flirtatiousness, she resembles Sally Bowles. Bea ^{now} ~~was~~ ^{new} ~~writing~~ ^{about} a novel about Russian immigrants, but she spent more time playing the piano in their apartment and enjoying Paris. The Mailers now had a fairly wide range of acquaintances, including some poor French artists. One was so destitute that ^{Mailer} ~~both he~~ and Bea, and Barbara when she arrived, took painting lessons from him. In early February, Raney wrote again to say he was coming to Paris, but ^{did} ~~still~~ not saying when the galleys would arrive. Mailer wrote him back a single-spaced, three-page, margin-less letter in which he ^{Went through Raney's} ~~deployed~~ ^{made} all his concerns. He makes his points reasonably, emphasizing that he is burning no bridges and hopes to maintain his friendship with Raney, and includes tips on things to see during Raney's upcoming visit. After recounting the history of the manuscript in regard to obscenity at both Little, Brown and Rinehart, he got to the heart of his argument about why profanity was integral to *Naked*, saying it was not merely for authenticity;

was this the novel she had been writing if not it read what had happened to her earlier novel

[I]t is a tone which creates a sub-stratum of mood for the whole thing, and there is a limit to how much can be cut out without altering its context completely, and making the

dialogue cute and 'tough,' and placing the most disgusting kind of emphasis on it. I refer you to abortions like 'A Walk in the Sun,' or any number of unmentionable plays where a laugh is aroused because someone roars, 'Damn' or 'Hell' or 'Bastard.' There is a psychological process to reading where the reader's attention sinks to a second cruising level, and there profanity does not strike him directly providing attention is not called to it by its spacing. He will notice it in time no more than articles and prepositions, and it will affect him the way it should affect him, an element in war experience.

He also questioned the decision-making process at Rinehart, and asks for a full list of profanity changes. He also wants to know if any substitutions for fug have been made. Finally, ^{he} ~~there is a good deal of~~ ^{described} complaining about the infantryman drawing on the jacket, which he ^{as} ~~says~~ is a sentimental, Ernie-Pyle version of combat fatigue (Mailer missed entirely the appeal of the now-iconic ~~G.I.~~ ^{whose line sketch by Joseph Karoy} is riddled with what appear to be bullet holes). His insistence on authentic speech—vocabulary and cadence—and the details of book design, both of which he belabors mightily to Raney, would become abiding concerns over the course of his career.

As his sister later pointed out, even as Mailer was agonizing over his next book and Rinehart's actions, he "always had an aura that projected a love of life." In all but the worst circumstances, "he had an ability to have a good time, and good times meshed with everything else. [✓] ~~So while Norman was needling over what to write next, he was also in a kind of limbo, waiting for *Naked* to come out.~~" During the ski trips, she said, he was especially animated and full of play. "We took ourselves very seriously while we were there, but we were really playing." ~~It is possible that the European sojourn was the longest vacation of Mailer's life.~~ ^{This may have been}

This last observation seems obvious

On February 26 page proofs ~~(not galleys)~~ arrived. He found to his great relief that there were no significant deletions or changes. He wrote back to Raney on March 1 that he had "no bitch" and apologized for all his complaining. The number of swear words dropped was not great and in one place at least, he said, the change, "crap" for "shit," was for the better. He included a list of over a hundred small corrections and a few changes and offered to pay for them. Considerably relieved, he and Bea left on March 6 for a week's skiing in the French Alps, near the town of Valloire. Upon their return to Paris, Mailer wrote letters on St. Patrick's Day to Barney in Poland and Fan and Barbara in Brooklyn about the family reunion planned for the end of April. Barney was to join Norman and Bea in Paris and they would drive to the port of Cherbourg to pick up Barbara and Fan. They would be driving a ⁶ ~~six~~ *chevaux* Peugeot, purchased for \$1100 with a loan from Fan to be paid out of ~~expected~~ *anticipated* royalties. Both letters were as sunny as Paris, which had warmed up considerably. "Around dusk, with everyone in the outdoor cafes," he said, "you get some awful happy feelings." All was well at Rinehart, he informed them, and the first printing of *Naked* would be 25,000 copies, a big press run for a first novel. The date of publication was set for May 13 at a price of \$4.50 (changed later to May 6 and \$4, ~~still~~ *still* considered high). He and Bea were planning to drive to Barcelona and Madrid in April, and later to Italy. The winter of discontent was over.

In her memoir of her first visit to Europe, Mailer's sister explains that the trip to Spain came as a result of the contacts her brother and Bea had made with a group of anti-Franco Spanish students and refugees. The Spaniards convinced the Mailers to assist them in extracting a couple of their friends from a prison work camp in Spain.

unless
you're
going to
explain
the
difference
between
shit
and
crap
worth
doing

An American-owned car could prove a formidable weapon. Particularly persuasive was Paco Benet-Goitia. A bright twenty-one-year-old, very intellectual and passionately anti-Franco, he was the only one of the Spanish students who was not a refugee and could therefore travel back and forth. He also had a network of contacts in the small world of anti-Franco resistance that still simmered inside Spain. He would accompany Norman and Bea. They decided to go.

With a stash of anti-fascist leaflets hidden in the Peugeot, they drove with the Linenthals to Barcelona, where they passed ~~them~~ ^{the leaflets} on to Paco's friends. Mailer was asked if he wanted to see the brothels in the Barrio Chino. As a young man, Picasso had been a customer. In *Portrait of Picasso as a Young Man* (1995), Mailer recalled his visit to the most famous whorehouse in the quarter, one which he surmised the painter had visited.

In a large bare room, along a dais some sixty or seventy feet in length, forty or more women in bras and panties were bellowing out the catalogue of their specialties before a near mob of a couple hundred men, just about all of these putative customers puffing away on cigarettes as if to raise a wall of smoke between themselves and the cacophony of sexual advertisement bombarding them. The density of smoke in that room cannot be exaggerated.

From Barcelona they drove to Madrid, but the situation had changed and they were unable to help Paco's friends. After a few days and their first bullfight, they drove back to Paris. Later on, after his family arrived on April 21, Mailer learned that an escape was now possible.

~~After~~ mission
The trip was successful, and the
two Barbara Rosenthal Paco's friends.

He was getting preoccupied with pre-publication activity and so asked his sister, who didn't know how to drive, if she wanted to go to Spain, to try again with Paco. Barbara, who had been having an affair with a Marxist in the U.S., was "thrilled" by the prospect of romantic venture to assist leftists. Mailer, never a proficient driver himself, gave her some driving lessons. A young woman named Barbara Probst (later married to Mailer's Harvard classmate, Howard Solomon), whom Fan and Barbara met on the boat from the U.S., was enlisted to go along. Probst, who had a driver's license, was eager to go. Mailer thought he should first test her driving skills, and his sister's, so they took a trip to Chartres. Solomon recalled:

me, to
B.S.
moments

What pleased me was that he treated me as an adult. He was awestruck by Chartres yet at the same time juggled with other thoughts, other ideas. He wondered—what would my Spanish experience be? How would it affect me? There we were, two Americans suddenly stunned by the Rose Window. Architecture, when it's amazing and has soul, affected Norman (he was enthralled by the visual) as profoundly as politics and literature, and in that magical golden spring afternoon, he talked and talked, telling me tons of stuff about Chartres.

Mailer

He was in good spirits that spring, and enjoyed alternating between family gatherings and dealing with a wave of publishing correspondence. To Adelaide Scherer of the Sam Jaffe Agency in Hollywood, who contacted him, he said would consider having them represent him and was willing to work on a screen treatment of the novel. He also asked for Scherer's advice on hiring a literary agent. Since losing Berta Kaslow, he had had his cousin Cy Rembar had been representing him, but professional help was now needed. He also agreed to hire a clipping service and asked that all reviews be sent to him at Rue Bréa. From Rinehart, a copy of a letter

Did the
two
Barbara:
go to
Spain?
Did they
bring
people
out?

Why?

After he
had parted company, amicably
with

from John Dos Passos arrived. Mailer's literary hero had read an advance copy of *Naked* and written to Stan Rinehart to praise the book as "a courageous piece of publishing," calling the author "a first rate novelist." *Mailer was immensely pleased* When asked years later what American novels affected him the most as a young man, Mailer said, "U.S.A. meant more than them all."

In early May, around the time of publication, the Mailers drove with Barbara and the Linenthals to Mont St. Michel, built on a tidal island in the eighth century after St. Michael the Archangel, it is said, burned a hole with his finger in the skull of the dilatory local bishop who he had instructed to build a church there. They spent the night and the following day admiring the architecture of the church. *he* "Norman was flush with success and was doing a southern accent," Linenthal recalled. They played a game called "The Naked and the Dead," with Bea as Wilson and Mailer as Croft, ~~"running around yelling, bullying. It was all in jest, but it gave him a chance to be a southern son-of-a-bitch."~~ *It was a role that he always enjoyed, especially after a few drinks.*

Gore Vidal and Tennessee Williams were in Paris in April 1948. Mailer did not meet them or Truman Capote, who visited Vidal and Williams at the Hôtel de l' Université. Over the next four decades, he would have complex and often rocky relationships with all three. Vidal recalled that the publicity about Mailer's 721-page novel reached them in Paris. He wrote, "I remember thinking meanly: So somebody did it. Each previous war had had its big novel, yet so far there had been none for our war, though I knew that a dozen busy friends and acquaintances were grimly taking out tickets in the *Grand* ~~Great~~ War Novel Lottery." Mailer was by no means certain that he had, indeed, *done it*, not so far, but the first reviews that crossed the Atlantic certainly augured well. In mid-May, before *his* month-long trip to Italy began, they began arriving. He was

restrained when he wrote to Fig in late May, saying that while the reviews were good enough, only one in five understood the novel. "All they could do was choke over the profanity and while that gave me a bang in the beginning it ended by boring the shit out of me." He was eager to leave the city with Bea, Barbara and his mother, even though he told Fig that he loved it as never before. It was too easy to do nothing in Paris and "drown in inertia."

The quartet spent a few days in Lucerne and Lugarno and then passed into Italy on June 4 via the San Gotthard Pass. They moved through Turin, Milan and the lake country, staying one night at Desenzano on the Lago di Garda on the way to Venice. When Fan called Barney in Paris, ~~he told her that both Bill Raney and Lillian Hellman had cabled with an offer~~ ^{While Mailer was traveling he learned that} Lillian Hellman wanted to adapt *Naked* into a play on Broadway to be produced by Kermit Bloomgarden, who ~~(the following year~~ ^{he} ~~would present~~ ^{Arthur} Miller's *Death of a Salesman*). Excited by the prospect, he wrote to Raney from Venice that he was empowering Rinehart, working with Dave Kessler (who had his power of attorney), and Cy Rembar, to make whatever financial arrangements they saw fit. "I have no worries ^[about] that a flop hurting a movie sale because I don't see it selling to the movies anyway," he wrote. The chance to collaborate with one of the country's most important playwrights clearly excited him. syntax ?

After Venice, the Mailers drove on to Florence where they visited the major museums, and then moved on to Rome. The weather was perfect, and they went to the Coliseum, the Forum and walked around Trastevere. They had the serendipitous excitement of running into Barbara Probst and her mother. Fan took the train back to Paris from Rome and the remaining trio drove north and west, first to Nice where they picked up the huge packet of mail containing the news of *Naked*'s top spot on the best seller list. They left Nice and went a few miles further west to

Villefranche-sur-Mer, where they stayed for two nights. They had a stunning view of the sea below, and Mailer reread the reviews and notices in a pensione "dripping with Bougainvillea."

From there they traveled to Cap Camarat where they spent three days camping out in a bombed-out villa with their painter friend from Paris. Barbara recalled that her brother wanted to savor

~~his last weeks. He had told Raney that they planned to return to the States in mid-August, but he and Bea from their trip to Italy~~ after they returned to Paris at the end of June, he decided to leave a few weeks earlier. He wanted

to meet with Hellman, see friends, and play a role in the Wallace presidential campaign. Most of all, he wanted to celebrate. ~~He'd killed the lion and now he wanted to eat it. After signing over~~

~~the car to his sister and substituting her photograph on his international driver's license,~~ he and Bea flew back to the U.S., arriving on July 21st.

Ψ Ψ Ψ

He did not tell anyone at Rinehart about his early return; he wanted time to take Hellman's measure before being caught up in promoting *Naked*. He met with her within a few days of arrival and found her to be "a tough baby, but very pleasant and direct." ^{would later} He described her as being "what the French would call *joli-laide*, that is, she was not at all pretty or beautiful, but she was attractive, and there was a vitality . . . an intensity." Hellman liked him as well; he was young, handsome and energetic. When he went to her Manhattan apartment, she received him in her bedroom. She was in a sexy nightgown and showed him a "truly formidable bare breast." When someone called from downstairs, Hellman answered, "Come on up. What did you think we were doing? Fucking?" There was always a bit of sexual electricity between them.

Hellman knew next to nothing about army life and had a long list of questions: "What is a carbine?" "What is a squad tent?" "How do you dig a latrine?" Mailer drew sketches of weapons and tents and explained the rank structure and army organization from division to platoon. Hellman had done a 23-page outline of the novel before they met, and begun identifying scenes. He drew maps of Anopopei to show Gen. Cummings' tactical options. The Cummings-Hearn debates were inherently dramatic, but they saw no easy way to stage the ascent of Mt. Anaka. Hellman didn't want Hearn to die, and Mailer agreed to this ~~not~~ significant change. Then he and Bea made arrangements to go to Maine for a week with the Linenthals, now returned from Paris. On August 5, the day before they left, Mailer went to visit with Sinclair Lewis in Williamstown, Massachusetts, at the elder novelist's invitation. The visit went well and two months later Lewis praised him to an interviewer: "Speaking of newcomers in the field—one of the greatest writers today is young Norman Mailer—author of *The Naked and the Dead*—an amazing bit of writing. That boy has talent worth preserving. There's nothing petty about Mailer—he's the author of the hour—the greatest writer to come out of his generation." Mailer's books carried this last phrase for many years.

reached *on June 20 / Mailer*
 With *Naked* in first place on the *Times* best seller list, Rinehart wanted him to meet with the press, and he submitted to interviews with the *Times*, *Cue*, *New York Star* and the *New Yorker*'s Lillian Ross, with whom he remained friendly. But at Bea's urging, he had turned down a request from *Life* for a photo at the airport, saying, "Getting your mug in the papers is one of the shameful ways of making a living," a remark that drew chuckles in later years. It appears that *Life* wanted the photograph to accompany a full-page editorial on August 16 calling for "a

novelist to re-create American values instead of wallowing in the literary slums." The piece was unsigned but had Henry R. Luce's imprimatur. The core complaint is that

Both Anopopei and Mr. Mailer's stateside U.S. team with riotous, essentially meaningless life. But does Mr. Mailer really mean that life is meaningless? What he seems to tell us is that such purposes as marrying and procreating and raising a family or mastering an art or a profession or building a business or beating the Japs are without value to anybody now living.

^{is} The attack was the beginning of decades of predominantly negative reviews and commentary from the Time-Life organization. Three years later, *Life* referred to *Naked* as "insidious slime." Among national publications, only William F. Buckley's *National Review* had a ^{higher} ~~better~~ batting average in berating Mailer.

In late August, the Mailers flew to Arkansas for a two-week visit with Fig and his new wife Ecey. The Gwaltneys liked Bea, who was her usual frank, earthy self. Fig remembered that when the Mailers were ready for bed, Bea would ask if she needed to install a birth control device, hollering out in a voice "both vulgar and innocent, 'Norm, do you want to fuck me tonight?'" The foursome went on picnics, swam and relaxed. ~~It was a precious interlude before the presidential campaign. At the end of the month, they flew back to attend the wedding of Bea's youngest sister, Lorraine, in Chelsea.~~

Rinehart's extremely effective marketing campaign was aided by strong word-of-mouth support and generally superlative reviews. A postcard went to top editors and publicity staff at all the major publishers heralding the novel's publication and stating that "all but the tough-

skinned" will turn from the book's "unrestrained accuracy of detail in speech and thought"—code for plenty of profanity and sex. Posters with Karov's drawing of the infantryman were ~~set~~ ^{displayed} in bookstores. Initially, they carried no information, just the face of the soldier with a thousand-yard stare and nine bullet holes. According to Adeline, "Everyone was ^{both} startled and shocked," but the tactic worked and "by the time the book was published, the jacket had become famous." As reviews appeared, snippets from them were added to the poster: *Time*: "the best novel yet about World War II"; *New Yorker*: "closer to Tolstoy [...] than to Crane or Remarque"; *New York Times*: "its total effect is overwhelming"; *Newsweek*: "powerful [...] brutal [...] astonishingly thoughtful"; *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*: "a prodigal and brilliant talent." Within two weeks of publication Rinehart had ordered two more printings, bringing the total to 65,000; the Book Find Club ^{chose it as the} made it their July selection, ^{and printed} and ^{did a first run of} 35,000 ^{copies}. When reviewers found anything to complain about, it was usually the profanity. Orville Prescott, in his *Times* column, said it contained "more explicitly vile speech [...] than I have ever seen printed in a work of serious literature before." But the vast majority of reviewers believed Mailer's language was an accurate reflection of the way G.I.s in barracks and battles had actually spoken. The preponderant view was that he was a pioneer of free speech, although the book was banned by many local libraries and in several foreign countries.

The negative reviews troubled him. "I think I suffered more over the reviews of *The Naked and the Dead*, even the good ones, than over the reviews for any other book. I wanted to sit down and write a letter to every critic—they had misinterpreted something I said even though they liked the book." But he had no time for rejoinders. He was busy making speeches for Wallace. In September and October, he made over thirty, mainly in the New York area, but also

in Hollywood. Bea also worked on the campaign and both of them became associated with the Progressive Party's unofficial newspaper, the *National Guardian*. At the end of September, Mailer traveled to Evansville, Indiana on assignment from the *New York Post*, a liberal paper that gave extensive coverage to the Wallace campaign. A young instructor at Evansville College had recently been fired for heading up the local Wallace committee. He spent four days there, interviewed about twenty people, and then wrote a 2,500-word feature article built around a devastating interview with the college's ~~red-faced~~ ^{indignant} president. (The strong feelings and occasional violence against the Wallace campaign is indicative of the depth of anti-Communism in the U.S. at this time. ^H The ~~Post~~ story was his first piece of professional journalism.)

In mid-October, he flew to Hollywood to enlist movie stars as Wallace supporters. At a party at the home of Gene Kelly and his wife Betsy Blair, Mailer gave a speech to a large crowd, ^{that} which included Montgomery Clift, Farley Granger, Edward G. Robinson and Shelley Winters, who said, "Everyone who was anyone was at this party, AND I MEAN EVERYONE, in Hollywood." Mailer, reflecting the influence of Malaquais, ^{who} who he had been meeting with regularly, said that America's huge institutions—the government, corporations and labor unions—were commensurate with Russia's equally large and oppressive bureaucracies. The Progressive Party, he argued, was the only way to prevent the drift toward war with Russia. He recalled that he had been "unintentionally eloquent," although it was clear that many in attendance weren't going to endorse Wallace. At one point, Robinson stood up and said, "See here—who do you think you are, you little punk? You know, I'm known all over the world, I'm world famous, and you're telling me how to vote? I'll keep my vote to myself, if you don't mind."

I hope
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quote
is accurate
cause
it sounds
exactly
like Ed
G. Robn
son

A second purpose of the event was to raise money for the "Hollywood Ten," a group of current or former Communist producers, writers and directors who ^{refused} ~~were convicted of refusing~~ to tell a congressional committee whether they were or had been members of the party. All ten were eventually sent to prison. Mailer asked those present to sign an *amicus curiae* brief to be used when the convictions were appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Many at the event responded by giving cash, but only two—Winters and Granger—signed the brief. They also gave Mailer checks for \$100. Granger recalled that Mailer, "unbeknownst to us [. . .] probably saved Shelley and me from bringing our careers to an early end." The Hollywood blacklist was now in force and Mailer, fearing that their checks could be traced, returned them. He also tore up the brief containing their signatures. A month earlier, he had signed another such brief, along with 200 other writers and film industry figures, including Charles Chaplin, John Garfield, John Huston, Dorothy Parker and Burt Lancaster. ~~He would get to know all of them better when he returned to Hollywood the following year.~~

On October 17, he was the keynote speaker at a fundraiser at the El Patio Theatre on Hollywood Blvd. His speech, titled, "Ballots vs. Book Burning," hammered on the point that the Progressive Party, he concluded, was the only way to oppose a third world war. He gave the same speech several more times after he returned east, and may have garnered some support in New York, where Wallace received almost half of his 1.1 million votes, ^{a total} slightly less than Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat Party. Truman, against all expectations, soundly defeated Wallace, Thurmond and the GOP candidate, Thomas E. Dewey. Wallace, who was mocked for allowing Communists to infiltrate his party's ranks, was quoted as saying that "Communists are the

closest thing to the early Christian martyrs." He retired after the election, ^{and} Mailer became
 disenchanted with electoral politics ~~as a way to save the world~~. He didn't vote again until 1960.

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Just before the election, the

The Mailers had ~~rented~~ ^{lived} a furnished apartment at 49 Remsen, the same address where they
 had lived when he was writing *Naked*. Malaquais had moved to New York and was lecturing at
 the New School for Social Research, where ~~was a man named Dan Wolf~~ ^{was a man named Dan Wolf} who was
 one of his students and also a friend

of Mailer's. Later, with Edwin Fancher, Wolf and Mailer would found the *Village Voice*.

Through Wolf Mailer re-connected with Malaquais, who lived around the corner on Montague
 Street. They met often and Mailer, ^{who now found Malaquais' ideas more appealing} asked him

to translate *Naked*. At his request, Mailer drew up a reading list for him. "When I met Norman in
 Paris, he knew nothing about the history of the Russian Revolution, of the Russian movement
 going back to the 1880s. In Western Europe all students are political animals but in America a
 writer is a writer is a writer," Malaquais said. "But that curiosity began in Paris, and he became

interested. Being young and perturbed on an intellectual level by the cold war, he was open-
 minded to a degree. He was willing at least to confront and combat." One of the books

Malaquais suggested was *Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet "Bloc of
 Right" and Trotskyites* (1938), a verbatim transcript of the Moscow show trials of Stalin's
 enemies, real and perceived. The show trials and the executions that followed led many

Communist sympathizers to turn against Russia. Another title Malaquais recommended was

Stalin: A Critical Survey of Bolshevism (1939), which traced the tumultuous history of Marxism
 in Russia up to the outbreak of WWII. It was written by Boris Souvarine, a fervent anti-Stalinist

Malaquais knew in Paris. These two books and several others on Malaquais' list obliterated what

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remained of Mailer's belief in the Soviet Union as the foundation of a new world culture. For the rest of his life he referred to Russian history, including the history of Russian Jews, with ~~great~~ ^{OK?} familiarity. ~~Occasionally, when he was criticizing some blockhead politician or public figure, he would compare himself, with a wink, to Georgi Plekhanov, Lenin's teacher and one of the first revolutionary Bolsheviks, who was unafraid to scold his former student.~~

Malaquais' flinty geopolitical analyses impressed Mailer, but not his friends. Irving Howe, the founding editor of *Dissent* and a long-time flag-bearer for socialism, admired Malaquais' *War Diary* (1944), but found ~~him~~ ^{the man} to be "opinionated, cocksure, and dogmatic." He thought Malaquais was joking when he said there were only two genuine Marxists left: himself and Marc Chirik, a key figure in Malaquais' novel, *World without Visa* (1948). When Mailer brought Hellman and Malaquais together, "it was a disaster," he said, "They couldn't bear each other." Cy Rembar didn't much care for Malaquais, and Mickey Knox, a young Hollywood actor ~~who became a close friend when Mailer returned to Hollywood~~ ^{would become}, found Malaquais to be "unrelenting." Before Mailer met Malaquais, his guide to Marxism had been Charles Devlin, and back in Brooklyn after the election, he arranged for ~~him~~ ^{Devlin} to meet Malaquais. He said that Devlin was a specialist on the Russian economy, but Malaquais found him to be "a thoroughly constipated Stalinist hack." It was "child's play," he said, "to destroy him." The meeting with Devlin reinforced Mailer's recognition that he had been ~~led down the primrose path~~ ^{misused} by the communists who had infiltrated the Wallace campaign.

Wallace's horrendous showing, coupled with the ongoing popularity of *Naked* (19 weeks in first place on the *Times* best seller list, through November 19) led to a period of self-reflection. When he went out in public admirers surrounded him, and given the wonderful reviews *Naked*

had received, he felt like a champ, bulging with self-esteem. "There were times," he said, when *Naked* seemed like "the greatest book written since *War and Peace*." But in his sessions with Malaquais, he was painfully reminded of the limitations of his knowledge, and when he looked in the mirror, he saw someone ^{who} he said, who was "a bit of an imposter," as much a fraud as a champ. Many times over the years, Mailer looked back at that young man who felt unworthy, for example, in 1979: "You're 25 and you've written one good book that you wrote on a streak that was a natural book, and then you don't know what you want to do with yourself after that. It was a terribly tricky time." He began to examine the assets and liabilities of fame. Two things were certain: First, women were attracted to him as never before. "Celebrity," he said, "was great for one-night stands." Second, fame "cauterizes ^S a lot of your past". It was, he said, using another medical term, "a lobotomy to my past." ~~Although the phrase had not yet been invented, he was~~ [≡] ~~having an identity crisis.~~ There were two Norman Mailers. One enjoyed the attention and savored what he called the "ego-gobblings" of celebrity, while the other suspected that the compliments he received were ploys of phonies. "Once I had been a young man whom many did not notice," but after the success of *Naked*, "I was prominent but empty."

I was a dependable pain in the ass to a great many people, because all through the first year I'd keep saying, 'Oh, now I will never know the experience of other people.' [. . .] I kept wanting to go back to what seemed like a sweet past when only a few people knew that I had talent. A young writer, if he is unknown, can be at a party and watch what everyone is doing. If he has a marvelous ear for dialogue, he can wake up the next morning and remember all that was said and how it was said. He is a bird on a branch. Sees like a bird and writes books that

can be extraordinarily well observed. But once you are successful, especially if it happens quickly, it's as if the bird is now an emu. It cannot fly. It's big and it grows haunches and fore shoulders and a mane: Lo and behold, it is a lion. And everyone is looking at the lion, including the birds. But it is a lion with the heart of a bird and the mind of a bird.

He wrote to Sinclair Lewis in mid-November and told him he was getting started on a new novel, "a big fat one." ^{But} although it does not appear that he began until after he and Bea moved to Jamaica, Vermont, near several ski resorts. ^{where} They leased a house from January to May of 1949. ^{Sketch} Mailer spent November and December in Brooklyn reading and meeting with ~~Malraux~~ ^{on new novel} who later came for long visits in Vermont. After six weeks of research and outlining, he began ~~work~~ ^{novel} in mid-February. The idea ~~novel~~ came from the week in October that he had spent in Indiana gathering information on the case of the college professor who was fired. The working title was "The Devil's Advocate," but he also referred to it as the "strike novel." For raw material, he relied on notes and clippings ^{referring to} on a contested strike and subsequent blacklisting of Indiana union workers. Cy Rembar sent him material on the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, which labor leaders viewed as unfairly restricting the right to organize and strike. Mailer struggled to embody the strike in narrative form, but finally, realizing that he didn't know "a damn thing about labor unions," abandoned it. The 21 pages he eked out tell the story of the death of the matriarch of a Ukrainian union family, and the visit of a labor organizer. His name is William McLeod, the ^{Mailer would} same name ~~he will use~~ for the central character of his second novel, *Barbary Shore*, which would grow out of "Mrs. Guinevere," begun in Paris. ^{Full of second-novel panic,} he worked on the manuscript through April, interrupting it only for a brief visit to New York at the end of March to

participate in an international peace conference, sponsored by the National Council of Arts, Sciences and the Professions. It was called the Waldorf Conference, after the Waldorf -Astoria Hotel where it was held.

The conference, which ran from March 25-27, brought together close to 3,000 delegates from around the world to discuss ways to promote peace. Although this sounds benign, America's attitude toward Russia at this moment was one of fear and loathing, and all the newspapers and magazines of the day, with few exceptions (most notably the *New York Times*), attacked the gathering as a communist front designed to alter American foreign policy. The hotel was literally surrounded by right-wing groups such as the American Legion and Catholic War Veterans, but also by refugees from Eastern Europe protesting Russian-backed takeovers of eastern European countries.

right-wing
The protestors had come, Mailer wrote, "out of the dream that the doors of the Waldorf might open to them, and they could smash some motherfucking Reds, loot the silk of that overrich hotel and perhaps drag back to Queens or Staten Island a real live Russian to char over a slow fire on their barbecue pit." The Russian delegation included the world-famous composer, Dmitri Shostakovich, who was pale and nervous in all his appearances. It was reported that he agreed to attend only after Stalin *told him to* ~~made a phone call to him~~. The American delegates and sponsors, many of whom Mailer knew, were well-known Russian sympathizers, "Stalinoids," as Dwight Macdonald referred to them: Henry Wallace, Langston Hughes, Arthur Miller, Lillian Hellman, Dashiell Hammett, Dorothy Parker, Charles Chaplin, Frank Lloyd Wright and many others. Several Harvard professors attended, including his psychology instructor, Henry A. Murray and F.O. Matthiessen, with whom Mailer had campaigned for Wallace. *Life* magazine, *new* rabidly anti-

Soviet, ran a five-page story about the conference that included a double-page spread, "Dupes and Fellow Travelers Dress Up Communist Fronts," consisting of photographs of 50 prominent conferees. A smiling Mailer, in a white T-shirt, was one of them.

Mailer's ten-member panel on writing and publishing in the Starlight Roof Room drew a packed audience of over 800. It was chaired by Louis Untermeyer, who had been involved in a public debate with Sidney Hook, a strident anti-Stalinist and head of a new organization, *Congress of Cultural Freedom* ^{political philosopher} ~~Congress of Cultural Freedom~~ ^{CCF}. Some members of A.I.F.—Robert Lowell, Mary McCarthy, Elizabeth Hardwick and Dwight Macdonald—were in the audience and challenged the Russians on the panel. Malaquais was also there. When Untermeyer made a comment about Hook being a dirty four-letter word, Lowell, ~~treacherous, full of rage,~~ ^{best} objected strenuously. As each speaker was introduced, including Matthiessen, there were cries of "Mailer, Mailer." ^{for Mailer.} When he did speak, he said that he was at the conference as a Trojan Horse and had been uncertain about whether to come at all. ^{Immediately after the conference} Later, he called his speech a "melancholy debauch" and recalled that he was almost ^{In his speech, he} weeping. He said that "both Russia and America are moving radically towards state capitalism, and that the differences between them finally will be cultural differences, minor deviations, and that actually there is no future in fighting for one side or the other." He concluded by warning that if the movement continued, "we would be put in concentration camps." The only thing writers can do, he said, is to tell the truth and perhaps what is written will affect "the next turmoils of world history."

^{a writer and editor who became Mailer's friend} Norman Podhoretz, ^{late} in an oft-quoted comment, ^{wrote} said that Mailer "must always work everything out for himself and by himself, as though it were up to him to create the world anew over and over again in his own experience." Podhoretz's insight is accurate generally Mailer

was a lifelong autodidact. But the exception that proves the rule was the political tutorial Malaquais conducted for Mailer from October 1948 through March 1950. ^{These} his conversations with ^{Malaquais} ~~the younger man~~ ^{Mailer} and the books he gave him to read, convinced ~~him~~ ^{that} Stalin was a monster and—the central point—that the Russian and American economic systems were implicitly geared for war. He was now ready for immersion in the bible of revolutionary socialism ^{the} ~~writings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels~~. At Malaquais' urging, he began reading *Das Kapital* after the Waldorf Conference. By his own accounting, he spent a year "living more closely in the history of Russia from 1917 to 1937 than in the events of my own life." It should be remembered that Mailer never took a history course in college, and until he met Malaquais, Spengler was his chief historical guide. The model of cultural growth, blossoming and decay that he absorbed from *Decline of the West* was amply confirmed by Malaquais' interpretation of the revolutions, wars and catastrophes of the twentieth century.

Mailer said that he "felt like a rodent" at the conference because he was leaving the Progressive Party. Indeed, he was booed at the end of his speech just as vigorously as he had been cheered before he began. He was unsure if he had spoken "out of a new and deep political conviction," or if he was "afraid of the final wrath of those psychically starved hoodlums on the street outside." When Irving Howe praised his bravery and candor, therefore, he was quite pleased. "I was immediately able to recognize the intellectual fingerprint of who was behind that speech—Jean Malaquais," Howe said. When Mailer went outside, Dwight Macdonald came up to him on the street and told him he liked his speech. As Malaquais' influence waned ~~somewhat~~ in the mid-1950s, Macdonald would become one of his intellectual godfathers. McCarthy,

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Robert
 Lowell and, especially, Howe also became close to him after the conference. ~~He had made new~~
~~friends.~~

Back in Vermont, he tried to work on *Barbary Shore*. There were no money worries. *Naked* had sold 197,000 copies in eight months, earning him about \$80,000 in royalties. Only Lloyd C. Douglas' book about St. Peter, *The Big Fisherman*, sold more copies. ^{that year.} The Mailers banked most of the royalty money. Hellman was still working on the play, but said she wouldn't have anything ready until the fall. The plan was to ski, write and watch Bea grow larger. ^{that year?} She was about three months pregnant by the end of March. Mailer had written to Fig requesting him to address mail to him as Kingsley Mailer so he could "stay incognito to avoid all the literary teas." Progress on the novel was slow; he was having difficulty finding the right tone. As he had explained in a letter to ^a his Harvard friend Larry Weiss, his approach alternated between "the theoretical and empirical," or between the realistic methods employed so successfully in *Naked* and the abstractions delivered to him by Malraux. He had also been stirred by Kafka's *The Castle* and told Fig he saw it as "an adult fairy tale." He would attempt to meld all of these ~~elements~~
~~approaches~~ in *Barbary Shore*.

There was something else on his mind: Hollywood. He had been lionized there and met celebrities like Hedy Lamar, Burt Lancaster and John Garfield as well as up-and-coming actors like Shelley Winters, Farley Granger and Marlon Brando. Winters always claimed that she introduced Mailer to her roommate, Marilyn Monroe, in 1948, but he could not remember meeting her. He did remember another woman ^{had} that he met, ^{Chick} Lois Mayfield Wilson, a blonde graduate student from Kentucky, ^{Lamarrr} whom ^{yes} he met at a Stanford party given by the Linenthals. She recalled that she left the party with him, and they had an erotic wrestling match in the car, ^{one}

which
 that became the basis for Sergius O'Shaugnessy's tussle with Lulu Meyers in *The Deer Park*. He
 gave her the pseudonym of "Junebug." ^(on his letter to her) They were deeply attracted to each other, and ^{they would} went on to
 have a very ^{lengthy} long, long-distance affair.

① M^{ailor} decided to spend some time in Hollywood and asked
 who Malaquais had worked as a screenwriter in Mexico and France. M^{ailor} asked him and his
 wife Galy to join them in California. Bea, who loved films as much as her husband did, and was
 equally gregarious, was eager to go. His desire to sell *Naked* to a film studio was another
 consideration. In late April, he wrote to ^{Rembar} ~~her~~ about sale possibilities and also asked for help getting
 screenwriting jobs, noting that Malaquais had "a good flair for plots which I do not." His
 conditions were \$2,000 a week and a start date of September so that he could finish *Barbary*
Shore. Because of Bea's pregnancy, she would fly and he would drive.

Barbara Probst Solomon ^{recalled} told M^{ailor} that one night in Paris after *Naked*'s extraordinary
 success was known, she was present when Barney said to Bea, somewhat bluntly, "You're going
 back to America, Norman's going to be famous, and you're going to have a lot of competition."

He advised her to dress well and look attractive if she wanted the marriage to work. Bea
 blanch^{ed}. ^{But Barney was a bit of a womanizer himself and knew what he} Whether her clothes had anything to do with their marital difficulties is doubtful, but ^{was}
 after they returned from France, their marriage ^a ~~did~~ become "iffy," M^{ailor} recalled. When Bea got ^{talking}
 pregnant, he said, "I thought maybe that would improve the marriage, and it didn't, of course. In
 fact, the marriage probably was worse afterward, because I hated having a baby; I felt trapped. I
 wanted freedom, I wanted to be screwing a lot of girls and here I am stuck. So it was all of that.
 So we ended up with this ... and then after she [daughter Susan] was born, it just kept getting
 worse and worse. And I kept having more and more affairs on the side, whenever and wherever I

could." One of ^{them} ~~the women~~ was Lois Wilson, who ^{with} ~~he~~ ^m ~~got in touch with~~ ^{contacted} when they reached California. ~~Barney, a bit of a womanizer himself, was correct about the competition.~~

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1949 ^{where he visited}
 Mailer left in early June for California, driving via Chicago. ~~His sister was working in~~
 Chicago and, for a few days, he visited with her and Adeline, ^{new married}. At his request, she
 took him to the Union Stockyards, which gave Carl Sandburg the opening line—"Hog butcher
 for the world"—for his poem, "Chicago." The vast abattoir was fascinating and horrible. Adeline
 wanted to go right home after the tour, but he insisted, she said, on "eating some meat to prove
that he had not been tarnished or damaged by the experience." After a week's visit with Fig and
 Ecey in Arkansas, he drove through Texas, New Mexico and Arizona to California. In late June,
 he arrived in "the ugliest city in the whole world," as he described it to Fig. He rented an
 apartment ^{at the} in Chateau Marmont, the castle-like hotel overlooking Sunset Blvd. where celebrities
 have ^{acted up} ~~misbehaved~~ since 1931. When Bea joined him, she was more than seven months pregnant.
 Mailer wrote a cheerful letter to Malaquais in early July saying that he thought they had a chance
 to "reap the wind yet, the golden wind." He had been seeing Montgomery Clift and interested
 him in the idea of making Stendhal's *The Red and the Black* into a film, with Clift as Julien
 Sorel. ~~Bea flew in shortly after he found housing,~~ Malaquais would not arrive for a couple of
 months; he was only at page 380 in his translation of *Naked*.

Shortly after the Mailers left Vermont, the British edition of *Naked* was published by
 Allan Wingate. There was an immediate ^{spike} ~~spike~~ of criticism, led by the *Sunday Times*. On May 1,
 in a front-page editorial, the paper said that the novel was "incredibly foul and beastly." It should

be suppressed, the editorial continued, adding that "no decent man could leave it lying about the house without shame that his womenfolk were reading it." Mailer responded in a telephone interview with the Associated Press by saying that the London paper was entitled to its opinion, but that the obscenity in the novel "is like a bell ringing in the background while you work. Before long you don't notice it." The British Attorney General, Sir Hartley Shawcross, speaking on the floor of Parliament, called the book "foul, lewd and revolting," but declined to prosecute it. Many British reviewers called the book brilliant, and the ~~oil and water of~~ ^{attention generated by} indignant condemnation and unqualified praise led to tremendous sales ~~in England after it was published on May 9.~~ ^{sold the book} By the end of 1949, 80,000 copies had been sold. Mailer took note of how the controversy ~~increased sales.~~ ^{increased sales} The fight against suppressing *Naked* was led by his Wingate editor, André Deutsch, a Hungarian Jew ^{who} ~~who irritated the British publishing establishment by making end runs.~~ Mailer said winning the fight to publish *Naked* was "the biggest move" of Deutsch's life. The novel's success encouraged Deutsch and another Wingate editor, Diana Athill, to form ^{the eponymous} their own firm, André Deutsch, with which Mailer would later affiliate.

Perhaps the shrewdest British reviewer was V.S. Pritchett, the eminent short story writer and critic. He found the obscenity flap overblown, noting that "respectable society cannot expect to indulge in two major wars in one generation without getting a flood of raw documents about what goes on in the minds and comes out of the mouths of ordinary men who are sent out punctually to these slaughters." Pritchett praised the novel, especially the long patrol, which he said was done perfectly. But he found ~~it to be~~ ^{the book} too long and thought the "Time Machine" episodes could have been cut entirely. Criticism about Mailer's ~~long-windedness~~ ^{verbosity} would be heard again.

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The length of *Naked* did not trouble George Orwell, who called the novel in a 1950 letter "the best war book of the last war yet." Mailer admired Orwell's work and praised his "profoundly prophetic" vision of the future in his 1949 novel, *1984*. ^{Mailer} ~~his influence is obvious. He~~ said that Orwell had accomplished what he was trying to do in *Barbary Shore*: "combine the political essay with fiction." ^{Mailer} ~~He~~ ^{the new novel} worked hard on it for his first two months in "Lotus Land," as he called it, and finished the first draft on August 16 as Bea approached term. Hellman was visiting Hollywood scouting for male leads in the play and met with Mailer several times. Most of his time, however, was spent trying to work out a final agreement with Norma Productions, which had optioned the film rights of *Naked*. The company was a joint effort of Burt Lancaster, whom Mailer liked, and Harold Hecht, who handled the business side of the partnership. Hecht wouldn't give Mailer the level of script oversight that he wanted and the haggling went on for weeks. Lancaster ~~was slated to play Lt. Hearn, but even this casting was insufficient to break the logjam.~~ ^{Mailer} He finally got the approval he wanted, but when he saw the script, written by two Hollywood veterans, he didn't like it. The deal ultimately fell apart, hastened in part by war clouds over Korea, where fighting broke out in June 1950.

Sometime shortly after the Mailers arrived, Shelley Winters asked for his help. She wanted desperately to get a role in an upcoming film, *A Place in the Sun* (1951), based on Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* (1925), which George Stevens was directing and producing for Paramount. According to Winters, after a dinner at a Mexican restaurant with Mailer and Burt Lancaster (with whom she was having an affair), she asked Mailer to explain the novel to her, especially the character Roberta Alden, a factory girl who is murdered by the protagonist, Clyde Griffiths (played by Clift in the film). After Lancaster left, Winters asked him

(Mailer was introduced to them by a young Mickey Knox, & he became close friends with him. Noh Wood)

to come to her apartment. Mailer remembered that he had his "own little agenda tucked into the middle of it. Hey, I'll be alone with this blonde actress and maybe good things will come of it," but Winters was "totally unsexy" that night. She was very worried and looked "ready to go in for a strong case of the weeps," he said. Winters was impressed by his blue eyes, and for several hours, she said, "the young handsome Norman Mailer talked to me about the inner workings of that girl's mind and what Dreiser wanted the reader to feel about the whole American syndrome of success at any price. Norman knew so much about Dreiser that I got the feeling he had been his protégé." Mailer gave her the key character trait: Alden is "a girl completely without artifice." Winters used the line with Stevens, got the role, and did a magnificent job in it. The film won seven Academy Awards, including best director, and Cliff and Winters were nominated for Oscars. She told and retold the story of how he coached her many times, always acknowledging with gratitude his role in launching her career.

~~Barbara was visiting when Jean and Galy arrived on August 22.~~ ^{IM} The Mailers ^{MOVED} were now ^{to} living in a seven-room house at 1601 Marlay Drive in the foothills just beyond Sunset Blvd. Jean ^{Malaquais} and Galy moved into the small apartment over the garage. ^{On August 28} ^{a daughter} Six days later Bea gave birth to Susan. ^{OK?}

Malaquais was named godfather. Mailer told his parents that, the six-pound baby "looked like a prize fighter at the end of a fight," but the swelling quickly disappeared and now she looked "astonishingly like you, mother." Writing to Fig a few weeks later to announce the birth, his tone was different. He said he had been "running to the hospital, dicking around, getting bawled out by my wife who acts infinitely superior to me now, and just generally suffering." No scriptwriting jobs had turned up; negotiations with Hecht were inching; *Barbary Shore* needed

more work; and the new father was, temporarily, a satellite. He continued reading *Kapital* ^{and} ~~discussing it with~~ intellectual ballast, Malaquais ^{who} was still translating *Naked*, ~~but had time for political discussions~~

When he was at Harvard he had dreamed of being a screenwriter and now he had his chance. Sometime around mid-October, Cy and Mailer's new agent, George Landy, arranged a meeting with Samuel Goldwyn at MGM. Malaquais said that the first meeting with the legendary producer was "high comedy." Goldwyn met them in his bathrobe in a huge living room with dummy books on the walls. Malaquais gave an overview of the script they wanted to write and Goldwyn asked for a two-page outline, which they refused, knowing it could be stolen. Shortly afterwards, they got a \$50,000 contract—a \$5,000 advance and \$15,000 for each of three revisions. They were also given offices and secretaries. "The day after the contract was signed," Malaquais said, "a notice appeared in *Variety*, and I became overnight a VIP of sorts, trailing in Norman's shadow, doors swung open, and there I was, invited to all the parties." The working title of the script was "The Character of the Victim."

Inspired by *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1933), Nathanael West's novel about a ^{depressed} ~~compassionate~~ advice columnist, the Mailer-Malaquais script is the story of two disc jockeys, Peter Pity and Victor Vision. By happenstance, the two receive a record from someone seeking advice. Eventually, they solicit records on the air, and their show becomes a tremendous success—anticipating the "reality" television shows of the 2000s. ^{eventually} ~~Complications ensue,~~ and Pity, the Good Samaritan, is killed by a guest on the show. They worked on the script for a month and produced 90 pages. When they showed it to Goldwyn, he had already begun conversations with Montgomery Clift and Charles Boyer about playing the lead roles. But as Malaquais recalled, "He wanted it changed so that good sentiments would be rewarded and bad sentiments would be

fatally? doesn't he die?

punished." Mailer remonstrated with Goldwyn, telling him that he was a professional writer and would not have his work tampered with by hacks. He harrumphed on for a good while until Goldwyn said, "Mailer, please stop this professional writer shit, and start writing," a comment Mailer came to relish. Then Goldwyn offered to buy the script. They refused and retained the rights. In retrospect, Mailer said that the script "stank. It was half-art, half-commercial, the sort of thing you can delude yourself about for a long time." After Goldwyn's death, ^{Mailer}he said that he "treated me well—if eccentrically—hurrah!—and I remain outrageously fond of his memory." The same week in late November that the break with Goldwyn occurred, he got a letter from his father.

Given his huge royalties and his father's unquenchable gambling habit, ^{Mailer}he had been half expecting the letter. Barney's opening line was: "I want you to give me a loan of \$3,000.00! OUCH!!" He went on to say that he knew he was putting his request "rather brusquely and this carries with it the appropriate sense of alarm. Well, there is no alarm, and if I put it this way, it's only that I want to get around that old characteristic of mine of being timid when it comes to asking a favor of my son—or anyone else. Call it false pride—or what you will, but I always seem to go through a sense of shameful emotions when I have to ask you for a monetary favor." He drops his indirections only once, and that is in a doubly underlined and vehement injunction not to tell Fan of this request. The reason for his loan is never mentioned. Mailer answered immediately, on Thanksgiving Day 1949:

If I ever had any doubt as to where I got my writing ability from, I know now finally that it comes from you. Your last letter was a masterpiece in which

every line and every word is perfect—I doubt whether I have ever written two pages as good as that myself.

However, being a practitioner of the written word myself, I have come to understand a little about the emotional processes that go into writing, and so I find that I cannot accept your letter completely. For while it is a masterful document of the English colonel writing to his son about one of those bagatelles—a gambling debt—I finish it by reminding myself that you are not an English colonel but a Jewish accountant in Brooklyn, and that it is time you grew up.

I must confess that I have little hope in this direction. If I had I'd probably spend a great deal of time upbraiding you—I would scream about the three thousand dollars, would appeal to you as a grandfather (the money represents two years of college for Susan) would complain as a son (I figured out today that when I work in Hollywood for a thousand dollars a week, it represents after paying agent's and lawyer's fees, income tax, and subtracting living expenses, no more than three hundred dollars each seven days are saved. Thus this sum represents ten weeks of very unpleasant work to me.) But actually, I've always understood you better than Mother. There's no use upbraiding you because your eyes look away, your mind wanders, and your mouth gets sullen. One's a fool to nag a little boy.

Mailer tells his father he will pay the \$3,000 but insists that Barney tell the bookies that this is the last time he will pay. He adds that if Barney tries to invade any of the accounts of the customers of Mailer and Troll, Barney's new accounting firm, "I shall probably let you go to prison, but in any case I shall never speak to you again. And I shall tell Barbara everything." He

ends by noting that "my own vices are quite the equal of yours—but because the situation is intolerable, and I do not intend to be burdened with it for the rest of my life." The letter infuriated Barney and he promptly ran up his debt to the bookie up to \$5,000. Dave had written Barney off after years of backstopping him and now Mailer, with his new wealth, became Barney's guarantor. He paid his father's debt.

Barney was adamant about keeping Fan in the dark because he had avoided any significant gambling debts during the war years, and now hoped to establish that he had beaten his addiction. Fan was still vigilant, but whenever she tried to ferret out evidence of Barney playing poker or betting on the ponies, he would parry her probes. On one occasion, Mailer, in a pseudo-British accent, imitated his father's feigned irritation: "Oh Fan, are you going to bring that up again? What's the use of us being together if you are always referring to that former problem?" He used a similarly indignant tone when he was questioned about his infidelities by Norris, his last wife, as she recounts in her memoir, *A Ticket to the Circus* (2010). His infidelities are, in fact, the vices to which he refers in his letter. They are also the reason he believed that he was exactly like his father: he was also a secret addict, not to gambling, but to women.

A few months before his death, he told ~~Lenon~~ ^{his biographer}, "When in doubt about motivation, *cherchez la femme*." Barney's double life gave Mailer a model and even sanction for his own. His infidelities were numerous, but they were not motivated solely, or even mainly, by his desire for sex, although it was always strong. His thirst for knowledge and new experience ^{was} ~~was~~ at the bottom, the final cause, ^{excitement} ~~the telos~~ of his duplicities. If risk ^{was} ~~was~~ involved, so much the better; it added ^{same} ~~same~~. Lust partnered with curiosity. In his mind, the veins that novelists had been mining for over a century were petering out. Sex and violence were the last lodes. This meant exploring

every kind of sexual activity and every sort of violence. There were countervailing factors, of course, and his children and wives (Norris especially), his sister Barbara, and Fan, the rock of family solidarity, would have a moderating influence on his philandering. Barney played an emblematic role, one not incongruent, as Mailer might have put it, with a comment he made toward the end of his life: "Whatever value my works have comes from my Dad going against the tide. My mother was in the center of the current."

Barney and Fan came to Hollywood in the late fall to see their granddaughter. Mailer squirmed them around and introduced them to Chaplin, which pleased Fan greatly. ^{But} Their visit marked the beginning of the Hollywood experiment going sour. Barney pinched a few girls, according to Knox, including his ^{Mickey} first wife, Georgette, which raised hackles. Malaquais' self-importance and his influence on her son angered Fan. She said he was "a sponger" who was taking advantage of her son. ^{him} ~~Knox, who Fan also disliked, found Malaquais to be "very hostile and aggressive," although he conceded that he knew his Russian history. Barbara, who had come earlier, also found fault with Malaquais because he was harshly critical of the occasionally~~ ^{But who} ~~redundant style in *Naked*. Bea didn't like Malaquais at first, finding him to be pompous, but then~~ came to admire his intellectual qualities. "I even fell a little bit in love with him," she remembered. At the same time, she seemed to be falling out of love with her husband. ^{Fan believed Bea} According to Fan, she "was the unhappiest woman in the world" because of the adulation her husband received. ~~Thinking back to that time, Mailer remembered the weather: "Smog rose every day,"~~ ^{Was Fan correct?} he said.

At Christmas, the Mailers threw a party and invited a large crowd. "It was," Mailer said, "the nearest I ever came to having a Hollywood celebrity party." He sent telegrams to anyone he thought might want to meet the author of *Naked*. ^{Humphrey} Bogart was there, as were Chaplin, Goldwyn, Clift, Ginger Rogers, Cecil B. DeMille, Elizabeth Taylor, Adolphe Menjou, Frederic March, John Huston, Jean and Galy, Knox, John Ford, Victor McLaglen, Gene Kelly and Betsy Blair, ^{Marlon} and Winters, who came with Brando. Before the night was over Malaquais had gotten into an argument with Chaplin about the U.S. and Russia. Chaplin's position was that each country should have its own sphere of influence, which Malaquais found laughable. "Look, Mr. Chaplin," Malaquais said, "as far as being an actor, you are [a] genius, but when it comes to politics, you are a nincompoop." Malaquais' candor seems to have endeared him to Chaplin, ^{who} and ^{and} he later invited Malaquais to dinner. Accounts of the party do not entirely agree, but one incident, reported by Winters, points to the ambiguous position that he now occupied in Hollywood. When Brando started to leave, Mailer came up to him and encouraged him to stay. Brando responded, "Norman, what the fuck are you doing here? You're not a screenwriter. Why aren't you on a farm in Vermont writing your next novel? What kind of shit is this?" ^{But he} He did not ^{He still hoped to see *Naked* made into a film.} immediately take Brando's advice. Shortly after the party, the Mailers rented a 14-room house at 7475 Hillside Drive, in the Hollywood Hills, where the parties continued.

"Norman had an enormous reputation in that town," Knox said, "as the first young writer to come out of the war." In poker terms, his reputation was his stack, and he was prepared to bet it. After Mailer ^{returned Goldwyn's advance} ~~bought back~~ the screenplay from Goldwyn, ^{he planned the screenplay with Goldwyn} his plan was to sell it elsewhere. But word got around that things had soured at MGM, and its appeal diminished. When the deal with Lancaster and Hecht disintegrated, he tried to sell *Naked* to the big studios or independent

I'm wondering why the same thing. What exactly was this Hollywood advance all about?

producers, but had no success. ^{He and Malaquais} They also looked for more screenwriting work and almost landed a job at Twentieth Century-Fox, but that also fell through. There were daily meetings and lunches with actors, executives and producers, all to no avail. When Hellman told him in late 1949 that she was abandoning her effort to turn *Naked* into a Broadway play, it was just one more disappointment. Mailer was learning ^{was a} ~~about the~~ ^{that} bubble ^{called reputation}.

He knew he had to finish *Barbary Shore* and got back to work on it in mid-March. Malaquais had finished translating *Naked* by then and in early April he and Galy left town, hastened perhaps by the discord ^{sour mood} in the house. The Mailers knew their time in Lotus Land was coming to an end. At the end of March, he told his parents that "the whole Hollywood venture has turned out to be a fairly sad mistake." To Fig, he was more direct: "Hollywood stinks," he said, and then opened up to about his deteriorating relationship with Bea. She has become "the Mother," he said. "Never sleeps at night, pushes me around. I just carry a fucking guilt complex all the time." The baby, however, gave him cheer. Susan is cute, he said, and laughs a lot. They left California in early May, driving to Chicago ^{where} to see Adeline for a few days. Mailer was introduced to Nelson Algren, who took him to see a police lineup. He wrote to Barbara that *The Man with the Golden Arm* ⁽¹⁹⁴⁹⁾ "is the best novel written in America" since *Naked*, and he and Algren saw each other more than once when Mailer visited Chicago. After a brief stay in Brooklyn, ^{Mailers} they went to Provincetown ^{where they rented a big house at 1 Miller Hill Road from June 1 through the end of September.}

Over the next six decades, he would summer on Cape Cod all but a handful of years.

~~From 1952, the year he and Bea divorced, until 1962, he also spent part of almost every summer in Mexico, where Bea had gone to live with Susan.~~ The house where he stayed in 1950, and

again in 1960, the Joseph Hawthorne house, stands at one of the highest points on the ~~peninsular~~ ^{on Miller Hill Road in}

~~that is~~ Provincetown. He described it in "Advertisements for Myself on the Way Out" (1959), the

prologue to a novel about a hipster named Marion Faye that he never finished.

The house Marion purchased was on a sand dune behind the last hill overlooking the town, and it was isolated, especially in fall and winter, reached by a sandy road that dipped down one dune and up another to give a view of rolling furze, rain water ponds, and the ocean and beach of the back shore. In bad weather the wind was a phenomenon, a New England wind of the lost narrow faiths that slashed through open doors, tempted shutters loose from their catch and banged them through the night, vibrated every small pane in every Cape Cod window and came soughing out of the sky with the cries of storm water in its vaults—on such nights the hundred years of the house were alive with every murderous sleep it had ever suffered: it was the kind of house in which the dogs barked insanely in bad weather, and the nurse could not rest, and the baby awoke in hysterical terror at one in the morning while the mother would feel dread at the hundred rages of her husband beside her in marriage sleep, and the house shifted and swayed to the wind like a ship in the north Atlantic seas, yes it seemed to contain every emotion that had died a frustrated death in its rooms and walls through a hundred New England winters [. . .]

The passage reflects the pain and regret Mailer remembered from those months in Provincetown ^{in 1950} and none of his delight with the town's quirky beauty. Writing to his sister a few weeks after arrival, he said that Provincetown, unlike the rest of New England, was not "quaint goy but has a certain vigor and vulgarity of its own." Over the years, he often remarked on the freedom and energy he found in this slightly nutty, whirligig resort, where lovers were lost and found in the bars and joints along Commercial Street. When he went into The Old Colony Bar, he was surrounded by admirers, young women among them, who were as interested in one-night stands as was the handsome young author with a wife and a baby waiting for him in the house on the hill. ^{having abandoned novel writing} Bea was working seriously, ~~he told Barbara~~ on piano playing, and was also translating a long political document, "Socialism and Barbary," written by Malaquais and some Trotskyite associates.

what had happened with the novel(s) she had worked on? Abandoned?

^{Norman} ~~However distracted~~ he pushed ahead on the novel, working in the mornings and producing three pages of typescript a day. When Fan and Barney came for a visit in July, they ^{wrote to him in Chicago} "almost drove me nuts," he ^{old} Adeline, "and I acted like a complete bastard, almost incapable of being civil to either of them." ^{In a letter to his sister he} After the opening comments about Provincetown in his letter to ~~Barbara~~, he castigates her for spending time reading Henry Miller, who, he said, "fulfills none of the qualifications of the serious writer." This is precisely what Mailer was straining to be in the summer of 1950: a class-conscious, committed-to-social-change writer. As he told Harvey Breit in 1951, "If a writer really wants to be serious he has to become intellectual, and yet nothing is harder." Henry Miller was a serious writer and social critic with a prose style that Mailer would come to envy, but Miller loathed politics. When Mailer rediscovered him in the 1970s, he would

elevate him to the high plateau of literary eminence occupied by his literary heroes: Farrell, Dos Passos, Hemingway and Melville. But ^{in 1950} ~~at that moment~~, he saw Miller's Rabelaisian adventures as frivolous.

He finished the second draft of *Barbary Shore* on August 15 and ^{in October} ~~a few weeks later~~, they moved to Putney, Vermont, not far from where they had lived in 1949. It was a last attempt to salvage the marriage. For \$9,000, they bought a 150-year-old farmhouse with a dozen rooms and a big barn. ^{you said they were in P-town to end of Sept} "such a bargain," he wrote to Adeline. But it put the left-wing couple into a guilty mood: "To own something! Oh, Christ. We'll probably have to be psychoanalyzed." Undergoing psychoanalysis was something that Mailer began to consider during this period. His absorption in the failure of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath is reflected in the novel's lengthy debates between McLeod, an ex-Soviet agent now to the left of Trotsky, and a sadistic F. B. I. agent, Leroy Hollingsworth's ^{Hollingsworth's protracted effort to gain McLeod's confession finally succeeded} ~~contracted effort to gain McLeod's confession~~. But he had also become aware of ^{Mailer felt as he said later,} ~~promptings that had nothing to do with Marx, Engels or Malaguais~~. He felt as if he was "not writing the book myself," but that it was being written by his unconscious, which, he said later, "was much more interested in other matters: murder, suicide, orgy, psychosis, all the themes I discuss in *Advertisements*. Since the gulf between these conscious and unconscious themes was vast and quite resistant to any quick literary coupling, the tension to get a bridge across resulted in the peculiar feverish hothouse atmosphere of the book."

The gulf was hardly bridged and even Mailer's most enthusiastic readers were disappointed. Speaking of the novel's bad reviews, he said, "What nobody has ever understood is that *Barbary Shore* is my most autobiographical novel." Among the first three novels, there can

~~be no debate~~ The novel is set in Brooklyn Heights and the narrator, Mickey Lovett, an amnesiac war veteran, whose roots are as cauterized as Mailer's, lives in an attic room identical to the one where he wrote *Naked*. Mrs. Guinevere, described by Philip Buftith as "brazen, touchy, touching, trifling, pathetic and gamey [. . .] bewildered and bewildering," is modeled on Mailer's buxom, redheaded Irish landlady, whose curves, according to Norman Rosten, were hard to miss. McLeod's political philosophy is derived root and branch from Malaquais, but his self-lacerating Irish wit, obsessive neatness and "quinine tongue" came from Charlie Devlin. He later said that he put "Malaquais' philosophy in Devlin's body." McLeod's long-windedness also belongs to Malaquais, who could hold the floor for hours in debate. What completely destroyed any small chance the novel had for a sympathetic reception was timing: it was published on May 24, 1951, almost exactly at the start of the Korean War, a period when anything that offered a socialistic alternative was abominated.

Critic ✓

Who?

Didn't war start in 1950? yes

and to The novel's mash-up of a plot, ~~and~~ the anti-communist sentiments of the time, ~~resulted~~ ^{to produce} the worst reviews he would ever receive. There are no satisfactory links between the realistic but wearisome disquisitions of McLeod and Hollingsworth on "[s]tate profit and state surveillance, state-enforced poverty and state-endowed wealth," which comprise most of the latter part of the novel, and Lovett's surreal dream visions. For example, he remembers living in a barracks surrounded by wire and marching at five a.m. to a breakfast of bread, hot water and porridge deprived of salt.

to favor

combined

Milk; 17 to mid-18 please condense to one paragraph

That done, we marched beyond the enclosure and saw the dawn from down a long road lined with sentries and barbed wire. It was a cruel walk and at the end was a

tremendous factory, almost new, but the windows were shattered, the roof of one wing was stripped, and the machinery did not always function. There we worked, hand on a lever to punch and press, and next to us, though in the range of our eyes, were other workers with a card, and they lived in a dormitory on the far side of the factory, and were free to walk to town once work was done. We were always promised that we would be allowed to join them if only . . . if only we would produce more than our fellows.

This Orwellian evocation, one of several, and half-dozen others reminiscent of Kafka, have an oblique relationship, at best, to the novel's implausible plot. Consider: three ex-Trotskyites (Lovett, McLeod and Lannie Madison, a mad Cassandra still in mourning for the murder of "the man with a beard"—Trotsky—by "the man with a pipe"—Stalin) are all sexually and/or romantically linked with a Brooklyn housewife, Mrs. Guinevere, who writes hilarious movie treatments about a doctor with "the biggest whang on him in the whole town, and maybe he don't know it." She is married to one of the three, McLeod, and they have a three-year-old child, ~~Mina~~, but she cannot decide how she feels about any of them, or her other lover, ~~Hollingsworth~~. The five chief characters visit each other's rooms at all hours to smoke countless cigarettes and talk about politics and history until the last third of the novel, where McLeod makes an interminable, polemical-hortatory, confession speech (the last thing Mailer worked on before submission), after which Hollingsworth offers him a slot in a protection program if he will surrender the unnamed but priceless object—Guinevere calls it a "thingamajig"—that he stole from the F. B. I. office where he worked after giving up his job as one of Stalin's hangmen. After much back-and-forth and gnashing of teeth, McLeod refuses, passes the revolutionary torch and

the object to Lovett, and is shot by agents. Guinevere and Monina run off with Hollingsworth; Lannie, who has also had trysts with Lovett and Hollingsworth, disappears, and Lovett flees into the future. With the little object in his pocket and McLeod's socialist blessing on his head, he will attempt to become "the Lenin of tomorrow," the social theorist who will energize "even the most inarticulate peasant" with a revolutionary message "that will sweep the earth."

Mailer

The uniformly strong praise that ~~he~~^{in *Naked*} had received for the debates between Hearn and Cummings led him to build his second novel around another debate, albeit a far more protracted one, between McLeod and Hollingsworth. In one sense, the Lovett-McLeod discussions are a recapitulation of Mailer's political education under Professor Malaquais, who was brilliant on Russian history but uninformed on American. Both he and his student underestimated the resilience and creativity of American economic system—all excesses conceded—and the native tradition of resistance to abridgements of civil liberties—which, admittedly, at the time was weak. Finally, one need only compare the symbolic power of the objects on which the plots turn—the hornet's nest and the thingamajig—to see how Mailer, honorably and in places brilliantly, stumbled in his second outing.

Nevertheless, *Barbary Shore* was an advance in one important way. He had begun to use language differently. In *Naked*, there are masterful descriptions of physical action, but there are also turgid and repetitive stretches, as Malaquais noted in his critique of the novel, and his style is greatly dependent on Dos Passos, Farrell and Wolfe. In his second novel, style shifted.

Previously, Mailer was scornful of style. In *Barbary Shore*, it became more important and he began to see prose as more than a conveyor of content and prose as a stylistic invention.

Not sure what you mean, Skylas inherent importance

While he would always have reservations about style for ^{its own} style's sake, he now saw that a style ^{as a considered reflection} tied to a deep sense of self was a great, if elusive, good. He would not fully achieve his characteristic style until several years later.

Not sure
what you
mean here.

The completion of the ~~third~~ and final draft of the novel in January 1951 coincided with the breakup of the marriage. Bea was reading Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex* (1949) and trying to write a book that Mailer said "would have been a precursor of Women's Liberation" if she had finished it. She tried painting and gave it up. They had visitors in Vermont—Norman Rosten, Knox and the actress, Eva-Marie Saint, whom he was dating, Robert Gorham Davis and ~~his wife Hope, and the Mailer family~~, but Bea was miserable. "Here I was with this darling little girl, the house was so gorgeous, and we had very interesting friends—writers and artists," she said, but "I was a very depressed woman. It just wasn't my bag to be the wife of a famous man without a life of my own." At Mailer's suggestion, she began to think about a career as a doctor, and eventually became an ~~M.D.~~ psychiatrist. He was similarly miserable. Later, he said that one reason the marriage fell apart was that Bea "was a very strong woman."

See
earlier
entry re
Bea's
novel(s)

All psy-
chiatrists
are M.D.s

She was perfectly prepared to go out and work for years in order to make enough money for me to stay at home and write a good many books. And if that happened, we probably would have been a happy couple of that sort, she the strong one, I the gentle one. Then what happened? I became successful so suddenly I got much more macho. My God, nothing like success for increasing the size of your muscle! I literally went from 140 to 180 pounds in one year—it

wasn't all fat, it was muscle. I suddenly felt like a strong man. That altered everything between us.

Ψ Ψ Ψ

There were several meetings at Rinehart about *Barbary Shore*. The ~~meetings~~ ⁴ were not happy occasions, but trips were an excuse to leave Putney. Sometimes he brought Susan with him and ~~they~~ ^{she} stayed with his parents in Brooklyn. He was drinking more now, Scotch, and his friends noticed a change in him. Adeline ~~was~~ ^{Norman remained} still in touch with him and she saw "a growing braggadocio, lots more confidence and an ability to spar, the realization that he didn't have to try to please anybody." One evening in February 1951, he and Dan Wolf were deep into a bottle at the East 64th Street apartment that Mailer had borrowed. "Norman was making one of his big moves," Wolf said. The breakup with Bea was impending and he could smell freedom. "I missed it, ~~and I wanted it.~~" Wolf told him about a beautiful Spanish-Peruvian woman he knew named Adele Morales, an aspiring painter who made her living constructing papier-mâché displays for department store windows. She and Wolf had been lovers for a short time and Wolf's friend Ed Fancher ^{(later Mailer's partner at the Village Voice).} had more or less lived with her for three years. She was just coming off a brief affair with Jack Kerouac. Mailer was intrigued. It was late, but Wolf called her and invited her over for a drink. Mailer got on the phone and read her a quotation from Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, *The Last Tycoon* (1941). Monroe Stahr, the novel's movie-director protagonist, is beginning an affair with Kathleen Moore, the ex-mistress of a king. He feels something stirring: "[H]e listened inside himself as if something by an unknown composer, powerful and strange and strong, was about to be played for the first time." Adele was moved and agreed to take a cab and meet him.

Have you told us how he and Wolf met?

"How could I know that Scott Fitzgerald, Norman Mailer, and that cab ride would change my life forever?" she later wrote.

Because he was thinking about writing his next novel about Hollywood, it is almost impossible to imagine that *The Last Tycoon* did not give Mailer a push in that direction. His portrait of Francis Eitel, the movie-director protagonist of *The Deer Park*, clearly owes a debt to Fitzgerald's Stahr. Several weeks earlier, he had written to George Landy ^{his agent} about getting him a screen-writing job in Hollywood. He would prefer something light, not a war film, he wrote. "A thriller, a western (Sam Croft is my credentials) and preferably a polish job, although I don't care. Actually, I'll take anything." What he really wanted was ^a ~~another~~ chance to get more material for the novel.

remember
who
Landy
is

Experience for Mailer and many of his contemporaries—James Jones, Saul Bellow, William Styron and Jack Kerouac, certainly—had a talismanic quality. Dust jackets of American novels from the 1930s to the early 1960s typically bragged about the author's experiences as a short-order cook, reporter, fisherman, hobo, farm worker and, after World War II, veteran. A college education wasn't a drawback, but a working knowledge of Crane, London, Lewis, Steinbeck, Hemingway, Dos Passos and—the key figure—Thomas Wolfe was much more important. Coming from Boston or Philadelphia was suspect. Brooklyn or Chicago or Middletown, U.S.A. was much better. The idea was to rebel against mean-spirited Puritanism, do a hitch in the service and then bum around the country, working here and there, loafing and observing your soul, reading tattered copies of the Viking portable authors and writing lyrical but realistic prose about the view from boxcars as you rumbled through the great, mysterious

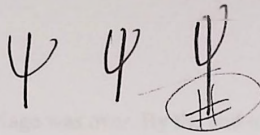
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ing(?)
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American night. Then, as a matter of course, came discovery, publication, white-hot fame, Hollywood and a long happily-ever-after. ^{If no writer ever had} Did anyone ever have such an experience? ^{experiences} No, not in such a storybook way. But Mailer and James Jones came closer than anyone else.

^{Mailer} He learned that a first novel by Jones ^{that} was receiving the kind of intense publicity from Scribner's that *Naked* had received from Rinehart, ^{the} the kind that *Barbary Shore* was not getting, as he ruefully noted. When he read the galley of Jones' *From Here to Eternity* (1951), he was more than routinely impressed. "It knocked me down, almost knocked me out," he said. "All the while I was reading it, I had a sinking feeling, 'Well, you're no longer the most talented writer to come out of World War II. You've been replaced.'" He gave it a blurb:

It's a big fist of a book with powerful virtues and serious faults, but if the very good is mixed with the sometimes bad, those qualities are inseparable from the author. Jones writes with a wry compassionate anger which is individual and borrows from no writer I know. I think his book is one of the best of the 'war novels,' and in certain facets is perhaps the best.

They met soon afterwards in New York and enjoyed each other's company. "[I]t always gave me a boost to know that Jim was in town," Mailer said. They almost had to become friends, he said, because they shared unique experiences. Both were young and had written war novels set in the Pacific; both books ^{writers} had enjoyed fantastic sales and reviews; both became famous overnight. "So in a certain sense," Mailer said, "we felt like the touchdown twins." Although it would be brief, his relationship with Jones would be the most intense male friendship of his life.



He and Adele were immediately attracted when they met that first night. After Dan Wolf went to sleep, they made love. In the morning, Adele had an impulse to leave, but then she recalled the "incredible explosion" of the night before, and wanted "this half-stranger all over again, his sweet-smelling body and his beautiful cock inside me." She decided it was not a one-night stand. "What I gave and took was not to be discarded with last night's drinks. He was happy, I could see it in his face, and so was I." His recollection was much the same: "It was intense on the first night, very. Very. It was a memorable first night."

I'd had a few affairs while I was with Bea, but almost always these affairs, the sexuality was sort of analogous to my own, in other words, you could pump it up, you could tone it down, you could control it. It was very much under one's control. With Adele, there was this feeling that it was never under her control. There was a power that took her over. And so it was the first passion I'd really encountered. And mind you, a lot of people [would] say, "What? There he was, what was his age?" Most people don't realize there's very few passionate women in the world. Especially in modern times, I don't know about ancient times, or medieval times or the Renaissance, or the Enlightenment. But by now, given the double impact of religious orthodoxy and civilization itself, a great many women see sex as something that is best controlled. And so that was the startling element in the relationship with Adele.

The affair was headlong; his marriage was over. By the end of March, he and Bea had agreed to separate and sell the house in Putney. He sub-let the 64th Street apartment and was spending the majority of his time there, with Adele sleeping over regularly.

All during this time, he was mulling over his idea for a Hollywood novel, but didn't want to begin it until *Barbary Shore* came out and he had absorbed the blows that he was anticipating. In the meantime, he needed to work. In January, he had done a longish piece, "The Meaning of Western Defense," written in "the third-rate Eighteenth Brumaire style" of Marx, for an English symposium on the West's military preparedness against a possible Soviet attack. Mounting a strong defense would only enrage the Russians, he argued, ergo, "Western Defense has the ultimate and abominable meaning of Western annihilation." A month later, he again confirmed his ^{anti-Stalinist} Marxism when, in answer to a question about the nature of his humanism, ^{he} said he was an atheistic humanist, and added that "the particular equipment of writers like myself, to wit, Marx and Freud, are more of a cross than a crutch when it comes to embodying what one has learned from them in one's work," a point made less gently in the reviews of *Barbary Shore*.

The Mailer and Silverman families learned of the split in April when Mailer wrote to Dave and Anne to announce it. "We had a good marriage," he said, but now it is best we part." They divided the money in the bank, and Bea went to Mexico with a new boyfriend, Steve Sanchez, a student at the New School that she had met through Dan Wolf. Susan, who was not yet two, would remain for a time in Brooklyn with Fan and Barney. While Mailer was absorbed with Adele, he still had time to answer a letter from Lois Wilson who had asked him to come to San Francisco for a visit. He said that he found himself "liking you immensely, maybe even

So he was an anti-Stalinist Marxist like Howard Marderfeld?

We need to know more about Wolf.

loving you a little," and would "love to have your round sweet ass under my hands." But, he concluded, "I find it not possible to love two or three girls at once." Adele had ~~for the time~~ captured him.

Neither Mailer nor his editors at Rinehart were prepared for the almost unrelieved nastiness of the reviews, which ran ten to one, unfavorable to ~~favorable~~. Time labeled the novel "small-beer *Nineteen Eighty-Four*" and called the novel "paceless, tasteless and graceless," a phrase that became etched ~~on the tablets~~ ^{into} of Mailer's memory. Anthony West in the *New Yorker* said that the novel had "a monolithic, flawless badness, like Mussolini's play about Napoleon." Even the tepid praise of leftist critics like Irving Howe and Harvey Swados was mixed with negatives. The novel's over-elaborated political debate and dithering plot pleased no one, although some of the characters—Mrs. Guinevere, especially—were found to be imaginatively drawn. The British reviews, coming after the book's publication by Jonathan Cape in January 1952, were slightly better. V.S. Pritchett praised it, saying that Mailer was "the most interesting American novelist to appear since the war." In some of the reviews, in both the U.S. and England, there was some tentative cheering for a novelist trying to break new ground. Trying to make lemonade out of lemons, someone at Rinehart had the idea of running excerpts from the best and the worst reviews side by side. It was a technique that ^{Mailer} he would rely on for the remainder of his career, usually with excerpts that he personally chose. In the case of *Barbary Shore*, it may have helped a bit: the novel did make the bestseller list for three weeks after it was published on May 24. ^{Jones's} ~~From Here to Eternity~~ ^{had} made number one two months earlier and remained in first place for a month after Mailer's novel had disappeared ~~from view~~. The success of

Eternity would give Mailer the desire to write a new novel that would ~~over~~^{top} that of Jones, his

~~follow in fantasy man-and-touchdown twin.~~

Mailer had hoped that Malaquais, to whom the novel is dedicated, would find some merit in the ~~novel~~^{book}. After all, he and Malaquais belonged to "a party of two," on the left wing of

Trotskyism. "I took up that position with great relief because it was an island," Mailer said. "You really could be against everything, but with an inner purity of soul." But his mentor was also a ~~critic~~^{critic}

~~novelist~~^{critic} of exacting standards, and he found fault. "It's a political tract, not a novel," Malaquais

said. "You don't make a novel with political themes or you have to be a genius. I didn't like the

book and I told Norman so." But he did not give his opinion until almost two months after the

book and the reviews appeared. Malaquais said he had not written earlier because he didn't know

what address to use. Mailer responded by noting that Malaquais could have found it easily

enough: "But I rather suspect that your most infuriating vice—the pomp and false dignity of a

third rate Central American diplomat came to the fore—and you probably thought, 'I, Jean

Malaquais, do not write a letter to be forwarded like a common beggar.' The reviews angered

and depressed him, he told Malaquais. He called the reviewers "first-rate cocksuckers," and

ended defiantly, "Fuck them. If I'm any good, I'll last no matter what they write, and if I'm not

any good, it doesn't matter." He began to wonder for the first time since his sophomore year at

Harvard if he was really a writer, and if he shouldn't consider other occupations. He signed his

letter, "The Misunderstood Genius." The fall of 1951 was one of low points of his life.

He had recently rented a loft at 85 Monroe Street between the Brooklyn Bridge and Grand Street on the Lower East Side. It was a tough neighborhood and he used to carry a roll of

his version of brass knuckles
 quarters in each hand when walking home at night. One hundred feet long, twenty-five wide and
 four flights up, the loft cost \$30 a month. ~~He would use~~ such a loft, with rows of windows
 overlooking the East River, ~~as the place~~ ^{would be where} Sergius O'Shaughnessy lives and runs his bullfighting
 school in his 1958 short story, "The Time of Her Time." From March to mid-June, Mailer
 divided his time between the loft and the ~~borrowed apartment in mid-town Manhattan~~ ^{sublet on 64th Street}. Until the
 Putney house sold the following spring, he let Jean and Galy use it. Adele thought Mailer
 handled the reviews well, but saw "an underlying anger and depression." He bought her new
 clothes, a lot of black velvet, she recalled, and took her to a party where she met ~~Charlie~~ Chaplin,
 who told her she was beautiful. She said she got a good idea of what Bea had gone through at
 parties; "women flirted with him, boldly," Adele said, "as if I wasn't there."

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To prepare for the Hollywood novel, he decided he needed to ~~see~~ ^{go there} again. Knox was
 driving to Hollywood to see his girlfriend, Lois Andrews, and Mailer joined him, planning to see
 Lois Wilson. Years later, he said he had another reason for going. He wasn't ~~ready~~ ^{commit} ready to
~~make any commitment~~ to Adele and was "looking for action," women. When they got close to
 California, Mailer asked if they could detour so he could see the resort town of Palm Springs,
 where Hollywood stars and moguls often vacationed. Knox said that they spent only about 20
 minutes in the town and then got back on the highway. When he read *The Deer Park* a few years
 later, he saw that Mailer had caught the town's architecture, landscape and character with
 amazing accuracy.

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^{and}
 In Hollywood, he Knox rented an apartment on North Vine, where Mailer saw old
 friends. Knox introduced him to Andrews, who he used as a model for Dorothea O'Faye in *The*

Deer Park. He took notes, and soaked up all he could over the two weeks he was there, but was unable to find any studio work. Shortly after he arrived, he spent a night in bed with two women and told Adele about it in a letter. She was upset and retaliated by going to bed with a man and his wife. She wrote to Mailer about it and when he returned in mid-July, they fought. She told him that she had done it out of jealousy. As so often happened, they made up in bed. "Later," she said, "he told me he had walked around for so many years feeling dead inside, feeling nothing, but I had changed that." Within two weeks of his return, they decided to have a party in the Monroe Street loft so Adele could meet all his friends.

According to Malaquais, about fifty people came to the party. He and Galy had driven down from Vermont, and Fig and Ecey had come all the way from Arkansas. Dan Wolf was there and several actors attended, including Montgomery Clift, Kevin McCarthy, Marlon Brando and Rita Moreno, who came with Brando. Lillian Hellman came, and also a young southern novelist named Calder Willingham, art dealer Richard Bellamy and other of Adele's friends from her painting classes. Adele said the party was "a mingling of personalities, painters, beat poets, writers, actors, critics, a lot of brains, sex appeal, beautiful women, and extra men, good talk against a background of laughter, the clinking of ice cubes in glasses and jazz on the radio." The party went well until about two a.m. when four or five local thugs crashed in. They were looking for a woman who had said something negative to them on the street, a guest at the party. Mailer tried to reason with them to no avail; one of them had a hammer and ^{Mailer} he took two whacks to the head. He was staggering and bleeding, but still able to fight, he said later. ~~Brando, Malaquais~~ recalled, ~~watched the whole thing without moving.~~ Adele screamed and chased the gang out. M

Mailer
 He wore a bandage on his head for a time and told his mother he'd gotten hurt it in a taxicab accident. After that night, Adele was terrified of the neighborhood and wanted to move. *Five up 710
 maine
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In August, they went to Provincetown and stayed in a seaside apartment on Commercial Street. Because of her painter friends, Adele was as well known as Mailer. He took part in a Provincetown Art Association panel on censorship with Dwight Macdonald, *William* William De Kooning and Edmund Wilson, the esteemed literary critic and friend of F. Scott Fitzgerald, who summered in nearby Truro. At the time, Mailer said, Wilson "was the nearest thing to Jehovah" in his mind. ~~They went to literary parties, to the Atlantic House to hear jazz, and mixed with the locals at The Old Colony Bar.~~ Dwight Macdonald had nude beach parties in Truro (later satirized by Saul Bellow in his 1975 novel, *Humboldt's Gift*), and Adele remembers "the sight of paunchy, aging bodies, sipping martinis, engaged in conversations as if they were fully dressed." Macdonald, she said, "with his white goatee, a long string bean of a body, and his cute little pot belly," was a sight. For a month, Adele painted and he worked on *The Deer Park*. After Labor Day, they returned to New York and moved to a "grim apartment, renovated in battleship grey" at 14 Pitt Street, not far from the Williamsburg Bridge. For his living space, Mailer alternated between beat-up bohemian lofts and handsome country houses.

Shortly after moving in, he was cheered by a letter from a young novelist, Vance Bourjaily, who wrote to him with praise for *Barbary Shore* *community about* and the difficulties of writing second novels. Mailer had read about Bourjaily's 1947 novel, *The End of My Life*, in John Aldridge's *1951* book, *After the Lost Generation: A Critical Study of the Writers of Two Wars (1951)*, in which he and Bourjaily had been affirmed as important writers, along with Vidal, *Gore* expatriate Paul Bowles, *Truman* author of *The Sheltering Sky* (1949), and Capote, whose slim gothic novel, *Other Voices, Other*

Rooms, was published just a few months before *Naked*. Aldridge's study had been ~~impossible to~~

~~ignore, as it was~~ ^{Mailer's} praised by his Harvard mentor, Robert Gorham Davis, on the front page of the same issue of the *New York Times Book Review* that contained a surly review of *Barbary Shore*.

When Aldridge's study was reprinted in 1985, Mailer wrote an introduction in which he said that Aldridge's study had given him a much-needed sense of identity ~~needed~~ at the time. It made "a

talented, mixed-up, beleaguered, near-genius of an unworthy" feel as if he had been "entered

onto the formal lists of literary endeavor." Aldridge soon became a friend—introduced by

Bourjaily—and Mailer's most important admirer in the critical world, ~~a position he held~~ for over forty years.

^{Mailer} He wrote back to Bourjaily with thanks for his kind words on *Barbary Shore*, adding,

"The reviews were depressing, economically as well as psychically," and that he made himself go though his novel again "to remind myself that it's not all bad." A few months later when

Jones was in New York, Bourjaily telephoned him and said that Jones was visiting him. Mailer

invited them over to his cold-water flat ^{on PTH St} for a drink. He recalled their first meeting: "In those days," Mailer recalled, "Jones was an avatar of energy."

His presence could certainly fill any small room. The variety of his small-town personality was not only canny and overbearing, but also as warm as your best buddy. It felt like a great new kid had just moved onto the block. How rich was his simplicity—his was the wisdom of a good redneck. No doubt about it, he made Vance and me feel pale, establishmentarian, and much too modest by comparison.

But we all got drunk. That equaled us out. By twilight, we were the best of friends. And on the rise of this good musketeer spirit, three good writers ready to tackle all the ugly asinine powers above, we got candid with each other. Finally, Jones asked, "Vance, do you ever cheat on your wife?"

Now you had to know how cool Vance was in those days. He never showed his hand. [. . .] We had, however, forged a mood. Vance's belief in those days (it may still be active) was that there were few things as unattractive and dispiriting as being the man to kill a good mood. So he looked up, and a glint of divine or diabolical light came into his eye, and he said, "Yes! Whenever and wherever I can," and these being the lost years of rampant male authority (it feels like a millennium ago!) we all roared and hit another belt of booze and felt for a godly half-hour like the swashbucklers we were not, not quite.

A few weeks later, Mailer introduced Jones to Montgomery Clift at a party at Bourjaily's ^{Greenwich} apartment in the Village. Clift always claimed that it was at that party that Jones ^{he and} and Clift talked about making a film of *From Here to Eternity*. ~~It was made in 1953 and was a sensational success, winning eight Oscars, including best picture.~~ ^{It won eight Oscars including Best Picture} The film's huge success undoubtedly helped reignite Mailer's desire to see *Naked* made into a film.

By October he had 240 pages of the new novel, but he was dissatisfied with the draft, which he later said was "the worst writing I had ever done." He then turned "dispiritedly" to short stories. The easiest topic for him was the army, and by the end of 1951 he had turned out three stories, "The Paper House" (based on a story about ~~prostitutes~~ in a geisha house told to him

by Bourjaily), "The Dead Gook," for which he drew on his memory of the Filipino Huks he had fought with in Luzon, and "The Language of Men," a story about an army cook, his most autobiographical short story. He wrote all three in a day or two each, his idea being that if he couldn't finish a story in one day, it wasn't meant to be written. If one made a bad bet on the direction of one's plot, he said, it could mean the wastebasket and new beginning. Therefore, when writing a novel, he said, "I move ahead like a banker, careful not to lose the investment of my work." Cy Rembar ^{unsuccessfully} tried to sell the stories to some of the most prestigious fictional outlets of that time: *New Yorker*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue* and *Mademoiselle*. (0127)

Mailer turned a small *contretemps* with Adele into another story, "The Notebook." They had exchanged angry words after an old friend of hers paid too much attention in a restaurant. When he began recording the incident in the small notebook he always carried, Adele ^{became} got more upset and told him, "You were just watching yourself be angry, taking notes on your emotional condition." She sulked for the rest of the walk home. He turned the situation into a gem, the narrative equivalent of a mirror held up to a mirror. The story's narrator is castigated by his girlfriend, much as Adele snapped at Mailer, for being "nothing but a notebook," after which she stomps off, "her high heels mocking her misery in their bright tattoo upon the sidewalk." He asks himself if he started the fight so he could record it, and then "considers this, priding himself on the fact that he would conceal no motive from himself, no matter how unpleasant." As he runs after her, he rehearses how he will justify his incessant notebook jottings, and then asks himself if his explanation is for her or for the notebook. He stops and makes another entry. The story also underlines one clause in his credo, traceable all the way back to the notebooks he kept at Harvard: a promise never to hide his motives from himself, no matter how ignoble.

~~Worth Adele~~ Ψ Ψ Ψ
~~Worth Adele~~ 1952 a brief OK? x2
 After a weeklong ski trip in early January to Stowe, Vermont, he started an untitled

journal. He was still working on the short stories, and Lillian Ross had promised him a reading by a top editor at the *New Yorker*, but he devalued the stories to Ross. He always believed he was a "journeyman" in the form. He was experimenting with marijuana a bit, the beginning of a long love affair with the drug, and the journal has some entries about his experiences while smoking it. His actions puzzle him: "I will be so nice to people, so desperately determined to make them like me, and yet will be driven to give false romantic pictures of my own degeneration. How deeply I must be convinced of how uninteresting I am." The journal is studious in detailing what he called his "irrationality." The two chief topics of the journal, however, are his relationship with Adele and his ideas for a new novel. The two are more than just temporally linked, as the following excerpts from the journal demonstrate. He interrogates his feelings about Adele the day after asking her to stand naked before him.

She is so beautiful, her pointed breasts, her firm buttocks, her long back, her dark skin which does look golden even though I always feel as if I'm lying when I use the word to her. And yet she's beautiful as a Gauguin and all fuck. It is the adolescent hungers which never die, the idea that I am making love to a woman who is all fuck, who exists only to deploy herself sensually for me which furnishes such excitement. I suppose always we make love in obeisance to our adolescent archetypes. Certainly Adele does. She enjoys sex so much because it is dirty to her, because she is raped, ravished, taken, ground into nothing, and repaid with the sweetest kind of pleasure. It is probably the nature of women when all

superstructure and complexity is cut away to be naturally, amoral whore and tender mother. It is why Adele is so womanly.

In the next paragraph, he says that what he has written is false to a degree because he has left out something: "I hate her often for her social inadequacies which make me feel bound (how romantic!) to a lower level of the world than I aspire to—dinner parties in the East Sixties which I give?" After this admission, he says that "even if I hurt her often, I like her, I wish her well, I feel tender toward her." Through several more long entries through the end of March, when the journal ceases, Mailer traces the sinuousities of their relationship. He ^{never mentions} ~~does not use the word~~

"Pygmalion," although in her memoir, *The Last Party*, Adele says that he had "an intense need to play Pygmalion" but that she "resisted the role of Galatea." *From Mailer's journal:*

January 14: As a writer, these have been the worst months of my life.

Nothing breaks through, no ideas with any fluency, nothing seems to develop. I'm living in a vacuum. How long can it possibly continue.

January 15: Idea for a novel. About Adele written in first or third person, somewhat in the manner of [Alberto Moravia's 1949 novel] *The Woman of Rome*, about a Greenwich Village girl, and what happens to her, the milieu she passes through, the qualities and lacks she feels in her life.

January 16: Adele told me last night that she's been having fantasies of going into a convent, i.e., getting religious first and then convent—probably from [Graham Greene's 1951 novel] *The End of the Affair*. Also of dropping

everything, job and all, and going to a strange city. Also, of murdering me, and then committing suicide.

January 17: In comfort station in subway, a man taking a piss wonders if the man next to him is a homosexual, then wonders if the man next to him suspects him in turn. Then has a moment of interest in the fate of poor driven subway homosexuals, remembers an episode from his childhood when a man had sat next to him, and had wanted to suck his cock.

February 5: For the omnibus novel: One of the lives—the life of crime. The end of the novel might be found in the life of resistant action to the powers that be—take the quote from Zola—but the problem is to find the definite action. Always the problem for today's novels. The quote: 'Ah, to live indignant, to live enraged at treacherous arts, at false honor, at universal mediocrity! To be unable to read a newspaper without paling in anger! To feel the continual and irresistible need of crying aloud what one thinks, above all when one is alone in thinking it, and to be ready to abandon all the sweets of life for it'

Toward the end of February he rented a studio in the Ovington Building on Fulton Street,

and he took the subway to ~~Brooklyn~~ from Pitt Street most days to work there. He was seeing James Jones a lot and had recently met William Styron. Dan Wolf was someone else he saw a lot of during this difficult period. Mailer admired Wolf and confided in him. They also did a fair amount of drinking and carousing together. The new novel still had not come into focus and his affair with Adele was reaching a critical juncture.

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February 22: Right now, today, the thing with Adele seems hopeless, with ~~no~~ future. I cannot conceive of myself as married to her. We drag upon each other so, we exhaust each other like leeches turned sucker to sucker. Without sex, I wonder if there would be anything at all in the relationship other than need. Yet a week ago, I felt very much in love with her (for me), I felt no sense of loss in emptying the house in Vermont, I felt warm and close to Adele. Was it only because Jim Jones obviously admired her?

I'm always so afraid of stops on a train, afraid someone will sit next to me, and I shall be forced to talk. It is even more irrational than that—I just don't want a body next to me. This hasn't changed in all the year. In social life I have a crutch, I am Norman Mailer, and I get a false sense of ego, but to be alone on a train, eat in a train diner, and everything intimidates me, including the hostess, the waitress and the other passengers. Once again I am little and ugly.

March 3: It's ironic. I sit here and plan a novel or at least the beginning of one, so vast, so comprehensive, that the amount of energy, invention and determination to see it through would be staggering. Yet, never have I felt as lackadaisical, flat, and spiritless. From such beginning could a book come? I note this, only for the odd chance that I may follow it through.

Am I fucking too much? Can this account partially for my washed-out dispirit?

Mailer was not a huge admirer of the women's magazines where Cy was peddling his stories. In 1947, when he was writing *Naked*, Adeline had introduced him to Pearl Kazin (Alfred's sister), an editor at *Harper's Bazaar*. "She irritated the hell out of me. She was so super-superior," he recalled. "She read more books; she was more on top of things." When Kazin later wrote to ask if he would care to submit something to the magazine, he wrote back: "Dear Pearl Kazin, I'm still too young and too arrogant to care to write the kind of high-grade horseshit you print in *Harper's Bazaar*." He was "very happy" to mail that letter, he said. But in early 1952, his arrogance was on a leash. At a cocktail party in early March that he hosted, he met Cyrilly Abels, the managing editor of *Mademoiselle*, where his stories were being considered. A close friend of Katherine Ann Porter, she was responsible for publishing new young writers such as Baldwin, Capote, Carson McCullers and Flannery O'Connor. But she was not immediately taken by his stories. "What a horror she was. I felt like screaming Shit while talking to her about my stories which [she said] were very interesting but not quite right for them," he said. "At one point I had to say something about, 'I know editors always want blood, but what color blood do you want?'" He got drunk after the party and his stories were later turned down. He ends his account of the failure to connect with Abels by saying that he wished he could "forget all this shit connected with short stories." What he really wanted was "to get my teeth into a novel."

Chapter 5

The Deer Park

The next day, a Sunday, he woke with a hangover. Dan Wolf had been at the party and he too was hung over, as he informed Mailer when he called to tell him that he had obtained "a dirty film" from Ed Fancher. Mailer went to Brooklyn to borrow his mother's projector as Adele, her friend, Irene Fornes, Dan Wolf and Rhoda Lazare (who he would later marry), gathered in Wolf's Village apartment. The DC current in the building blew out the motor and when they put new fuses in the projector, it blew out the power in the entire building. "Just Kafka," Mailer wrote in the journal. Adele remembered that Norman Rosten had a projector and Mailer rushed back to Brooklyn Heights to borrow it while the rest of the party went to the Pitt Street apartment, which had AC current. They ate, drank and watched the film several times and after the others had left, he and Adele watched it again while making love. But the film had "depersonalized us," ^{Mailer} he said, and the lovemaking was "without personal heat."

After confiding these "hilarious" events to his journal the next day, he had a thought. Perhaps what happened the night before could be recast as a comic prologue to the omnibus novel he was trying to conceptualize. He began making notes. It would be told from the point of view of a novelist thinking about the nature of his profession:

[H]ow the novelist must be paranoid and therefore seeks to fuse with the entire world, how he must have a feminine component to his nature and be obsessed with his masculinity; how he must be terrified of experience and intensely hungry for it; how inferiority and megalomania must alternate in his conception of himself. Is this sufficient to project the novel? Also he must want power, and have no capacity to gain it. Be a narcissist, too.

Mike
I'm no electrician, but is this correct that electrical current can vary from one building to another?

The vast ambition of this novelist-character (who, it must be said, has a good deal in common with his creator) would be realized in a sequence of eight interlocking novels that would explore the following worlds, in this order: pleasure, business, communism, church, the working class, crime, homosexuality and end with mysticism. The narrator, he wrote, "dreams or conceives of himself in many milieu, and traces out his adventures in each milieu with the same set of characters." This scheme, which he said would require "the seat of Zola and the mind of Joyce," was ~~the ladder Mailer used to climb out of the depression that followed the failure of *Barbary Shore*. Several times over the next half century, including his final years, he came up with ambitious, skeletal plans for multi-novel projects as a way of getting started on the next one.~~ The projects were huge, daunting, but not to him; he was energized by their scope and complexity. Robert Lucid called Mailer's bootstrapping efforts "exercises in 'imagination-isometrics'; they are also reminiscent of Baron Munchausen pulling himself out of the swamp by his own hair.

~~plunged into it~~
 Mailer retained the novelist as the unidentified narrator, but he is a step removed. The protagonist of the prologue is "a small frustrated man, a minor artist manqué," one Sam Slovoda, who makes his living writing continuity for comic strips, but toys with the idea of writing a novel. The eight novels are to be stages of the dream he has after watching a pornographic film with his wife and friends. Aided by encouragement from Adele, his sister, Lillian Ross and Dan Wolf, he wrote "The Man Who Studied Yoga" in a month of hard work, finishing it in early April (the title refers to the old joke about the man who goes to India to study yoga and is told to unscrew his navel whereupon his ass falls off). The 29-page story, perhaps his finest, opens with his ghostly narrator speaking: "I would introduce myself if it were not useless. The name I had

OK?

Has Lillian been ID'd?

OK?

that grew out of the alando prologue

last night will not be the same as I have tonight. For the moment, then, let me say that I am thinking of Sam Slovida." We soon see that Sam is nothing close to a heroic figure, ~~not by any~~

~~means~~ but he has one redeeming virtue: he doesn't like himself; he wants to grow.

Over-stimulated by the film, Slovida is displeased with himself for wasting another day. His vision for the enormous novel he hopes to write "lies foundered, rotting on a beach of purposeless effort." As he ~~does~~² off, the narrator, who seems to be the shade of a novelist now turned muse, gives Sam an idea: "Destroy time, and chaos may be ordered." Inflamed by this idea, Sam will now dream the first novel of the sequence, which will be devoted to pleasure. He remembers reading about ~~the~~^a garden of Louis XV⁵ where beautiful virgins were brought to be despoiled by the king. It was called The Deer Park, and Sam's meditation on it in "Yoga" reappears as the epigraph to Mailer's pleasure novel of the same name.

Adele will serve as the model for the female protagonist, Elena Esposito, who has affairs with two friends of Eitel, the male protagonist, before settling into a complicated affair with him.

John Huston is ~~the kind of~~^{the} director — beholden to the studio system, but with a deep maverick streak — ~~that~~ (Mailer may have drawn on) for some of Eitel's traits. Whatever the case, he now had all he needed to make a new start on *The Deer Park*: a prologue, a vast narrative scheme, and a first novel ~~which~~^{that} would draw on his time in Hollywood, his current Latina lover, and his 20-minute visit to Palm Springs with Knox. As he was finishing "The Man Who Studied Yoga," he wrote in his journal that he had the strength and optimism to work on the project for years to come, "going into obscurity if that is necessary, indeed even looking forward to that." Most of his energy for the next three-and-a-half years would be expended on *The Deer Park*.

In April 1952 Bea married Steve "Chavo" Sanchez in Mexico, and when Mailer wrote to congratulate her, he said that he had not been in touch earlier because he was revamping the novel. The effort was "agony," he wrote to Fig, but by early May he had established a foothold of 30 pages. He was determined not to go back to the 240-page draft he had shelved; he wanted the new version to be markedly different. Writing to Adeline in late May, he described its style as "quiet, witty, sad." He mentioned to her that he had an article in the May-June *Partisan Review*, his first contribution to what was then considered ~~to be~~ one of the most significant literary-political journals in the U.S. ~~Somewhat to the right of *Dissent*, it was also somewhat~~ *more literary*. Founded by William Phillips and Philip Rahv in 1934 as a platform for what was sometimes called the "independent left," it became anti-Soviet in the late 1930s. With a circulation that never got much above 10,000, it was a major force in American intellectual life until the late 1960s when it was overshadowed by the *New York Review of Books*. *PR*'s notable contributors (most of whom migrated to the *NYRB*), included a number who became friends and/or sparring partners with Mailer: Macdonald, Howe, Rahv, Lowell, Mary McCarthy, Bellow, Baldwin, Diana Trilling, Leslie Fiedler, Cynthia Ozick, Susan Sontag and Norman Podhoretz.

His inaugural contribution was part of a symposium titled "Our Country and Our Culture." The 25 participants were asked by the editors to expound on the current role of writers and whether the ~~old~~ *tradition of non-conformism* ^{or} could/should be maintained, as exemplified by exiles like Henry James and Ezra Pound, whose hostile statements about the barrenness of American life preface the editorial statement. Mailer stated boldly: "I think I ought to declare straightaway that I am in almost total disagreement with the assumptions of this symposium." He derided American intellectuals for moving from social protest to writing uplifting pieces for

Time and Life. The American writer, he said, "is being dunned to become healthy, to grow up, to accept the American reality." Mailer was having none of it. The writer works best in "opposition," he said, and integration into society was "more conducive to propaganda than art."

Of the 25 participants on ^{the} Mailer's panel, which included Howe, Margaret Mead, ~~Delmore~~ Schwartz, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., ~~Louise Bogan~~, Leslie Fiedler and Lionel Trilling, only Howe was as truculent as Mailer. Howe contacted him after seeing the symposium in print, and asked him to write something for a new left-wing magazine that he and some others — Lewis Coser, Stanley Plastrick, Emanuel Gellman, and Meyer Shapiro — were founding. Howe and his colleagues recognized that a mass socialist labor party modeled after those in Europe had ~~no~~ ^{could not} chance to compete with the Democrats or Republicans in the U.S., not in the 1950s. *Dissent*, therefore, would try to work within the Democratic Party for some of the goals of socialism, while standing firmly against totalitarian regimes. The first issue appeared in winter 1954 and Mailer's name was on the masthead as a contributing editor. He published three pieces there in 1954, and in 1955 became a member of the Editorial Board.

In early 1952, Mailer saw Jones and Styron several times. Mickey Knox often joined them, making it a quartet. They hit the bars of the Village and Eighth Avenue in Manhattan, boozing and playing liar's poker for dollars. "We did a prodigious amount of drinking, and there were always flocks of girls around," Styron later wrote. Given his doubts about his writing and ~~his depression~~ ^{confining}, Mailer got a kick out of these outings with his peers. Styron said later that there seemed to be "a moratorium on envy" among writers at the time, and much camaraderie, "as if there were glory enough to go around for all the novelists trying to fit themselves into Apollonian niches alongside the earlier masters." Envy may have been absent, but not

If this
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Dissent,
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on p. 24

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competition. Knox described a contest Mailer had with Jones: "At the last bar one night, the match finally took place. They sat in a booth facing each other. Their forearms held the middle position for endless seconds." The look on ^{Jones's} Jim's face was concentrated determination. He was not going to be put down. He wasn't. He slowly pushed ^{Mailer's} Norman's arm up until they reached the middle position again and it was over: a tie. They unclasped at the same time without a word being said. >>

One night walking in the Village, Knox recalled, Styron put his arms around the shoulders of his two novelist friends, "joyously announcing, 'Here we are, the three best young writers in America.' Neither Norman nor Jim objected, but let it be noted that they did appear both pleased and embarrassed." "Moving about at night with Jim," Styron said of the writer who would become one of his closest friends, "was like keeping company with a Roman emperor." When the partying wound down, the group would settle into a corner of the bar with their drinks and talk about writers and books, often until the sun came up.

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still
with whom he had warm relations

He wrote to Bea about his slow progress. "I seem unable to recapture the kind of simple humanity I had in the best parts of Naked," he said, and characterized his new style as "a kind of lush gargyle." The root problem, he continued, was that for most of the previous year, "I was convinced that I was through as a writer" which, in turn, made him reflect on the pain Bea had felt at the time of their breakup when she didn't know what to do with her life. Now she was in medical school and committed to a career while he was "irritable, gloomy and feeling quite

hopeless in my distaste for myself." He was, however, able to keep the same schedule he had kept for *Naked*: four days a week, seven hours a day.

In early July, he had his appendix ^{removed} ~~out~~. He told Bea that he was "seriously fagged" by the operation, and needed time in Provincetown to recuperate. "I need this vacation physically, emotionally, spiritually, and what have you," he said. He and Bea had promised to state frankly in their correspondence any gripes they had, and he ended his sour letter by laying into Bea for telling Fan that "Danny Wolf is a procurer," which was, apparently, her interpretation of Wolf's role in introducing Adele to him. ^{Bea's} The comment was turning Fan against Adele, ^{about} ~~his mother~~ ^{whom she already} ~~already~~ had a low estimate of Adele. "I felt very antagonistic to Adele" Fan wrote in 1971. "To me she was an interloper, a plain ignorant girl ready to satisfy Norman's physical needs. How could she ever measure up to my son, a Harvard graduate, a famous author." Mailer's love of his mother was unshakeable; he revered her always, ^I but ignored her judgments about his male friends and female companions. Fan called the former "bums" and "spongers"; for the women she had harsher language. Adele "was just a plain common sucker," and marrying her, she said, was the first big mistake of her son's life.

After his vacation, he learned that his three war stories had been accepted: "The Paper House" by *New World Writing* and "The Language of Men" by *Esquire*, the magazine that Mailer would write more words for than any other over the next half century. The third story, "The Dead Gook," after being rejected by the *New Yorker*, was taken by a new periodical, ^{Vano John} *Discovery*. Its co-editors, Bourjaily and Aldridge, sent out a statement of the periodical's goals that tweaked the nose of Time-Life publications by saying that the editors would reject the sort of material that appeared in large-circulation magazines, writing that was "inoffensively general,

(Did?)

meeting the romantic needs of the pabulum set at both ends of the human life span." The inaugural issue of *Discovery* was printed as a 300-page paperback, and distributed by Pocket Books.

Styron had the longest piece in the collection, a novella titled ^{The} Long March, an account of the killing of eight Marine recruits by misdirected mortar fire during basic training at Camp Lejeune. Mailer admired the story extravagantly and wrote to Styron to tell him so: "I've been meaning to write ever since I read Long March about a month ago. I think it's just terrific, how good I'm almost embarrassed to say, but as a modest estimate it's certainly as good an eighty pages as any American has written since the war, and really I think it's much better than that." Styron wrote back a warm letter thanking him and said that he had been influenced by *The Naked and the Dead*, although not revealing where or how. The friendship of the Brooklyn Jew and the Tidewater Wasp took a leap after this exchange and would grow even stronger ^{until} before it blew up in another exchange of letters exactly five years later.

Lillian Ross had continued to encourage Mailer, and he wrote her with praise for her controversial "Portrait of Hemingway" that the *New Yorker* had published two years earlier. He knew she would be aware of *Life* magazine's recent publication of Hemingway's short novel, *The Old Man and the Sea*. He liked Hemingway's idea of the old Cuban fisherman's Homeric struggle to land a huge fish, "but I just can't bear his prose," which he said was ripe with "affectation." But what really bothered him ^{was} that Hemingway was always implying the following: "I am a great man who happens incidentally to be a great writer. I know that all of you will be interested in my noble, strong, and beautiful attempts to exercise myself as a great man, and will be happy when I succeed except for professors, other writers, and assorted cocksuckers." This ^{was} is the first time he had put his feelings about the elder writer into words since

his Harvard parodies. The earlier work, especially the short stories, *A Farewell to Arms* (1928), and *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), were close to sacred texts, but he had reservations about Hemingway's later books and distaste for his enormous public presence, ~~as the above words~~ from Hemingway's mouth indicate.

By the late 1950s he would reverse himself, however, and praise Hemingway for struggling to "make his personality enrich his works." Looking back at the time when he was rewriting *The Deer Park*, Mailer realized that he was now "one of the few writers of my generation who was concerned with living in Hemingway's discipline, by which I do not mean I was interested in trying for some second-rate imitation of his style, but rather that I shared with Papa the notion, arrived at slowly in my case, that even if one dulled one's talent in the punishment of becoming a man, it was more important to be a man than to be a good writer." A good deal of Mailer's self-reflective writing from *Advertisements for Myself* (1959) to *The Fight* (1975), would explore the web of relations between personal valor and virtue and literary growth and mastery. In regard to Hemingway, he ~~always rode a seesaw~~ ^{was inconsistent}, lauding him here and socking him there. mixed metaphor

from Pitt Street

In September, he and Adele moved again, but only a few blocks away, to 41 First Avenue, between 2nd and 3rd Streets, in the East Village. The rear windows of the apartment overlooked the ^{New York} Marble Cemetery, the oldest public cemetery in the city. The apartment was near Dan Wolf's and next door to Adele's—she had kept her place there even though she was spending most of her nights with Mailer. The First Avenue apartments were 60 feet long and eight to eleven feet wide. ^{what were known as "railroad flats."} He and Adele knocked down some of interior walls between the apartments, added bookshelves, and painted the walls white. Then he borrowed plumbing tools

and with the help of Mickey Knox ran forty feet of gas pipe through three walls, hooked the pipe to a heater, and installed a hot water line and a bathtub. When Lillian Hellman came to a party there one night, climbing six flights up to the ^{apartment} ~~railroad flat~~, he proudly showed off his handiwork. She told him that it was "more impressive than *the Naked and the Dead*," a remark he never forgot. Having learned the skills of carpentry, wiring and plumbing, he now believed he could make a living with his hands, if necessary. "I don't think Norman was ever happier than he was in that cold-water flat," Adele said. When he wasn't improving the apartment, he was in his Fulton Street studio writing. He still saw *The Deer Park* as the first of eight connected novels, and he intended to start on the second one—devoted to the business world—before polishing the manuscript of the first, leapfrogging in this manner through all eight in the series. The "overall scheme is so grandiose," he wrote to Graham Watson, his British agent, that it was possible he would "steal away from it in terror." By October 1952, he passed the 200-page mark in the manuscript.

He pushed on through November and at the end of the month turned in a manuscript to Rinehart of approximately 300 pages. It carried a subtitle—"The Search for the Obscene"—crossed out on the title page. He accomplished this while entertaining Susan, who had been visiting for a month. The three-year old enjoyed her time with her father and Adele and visits with both sets of grandparents. Mailer flew her home to Mexico on December 1—Adele remained in New York—and he enjoyed his first visit there, ^(as did they) ~~staying~~ with Bea and Steve for a week, and then stopping off for a weekend with the Gwaltneys in Little Rock. When he returned, he found out that the Rinehart editors had some large reservations about his manuscript. He pushed back, asking for another reading by an outsider. John Selby ^{his editor} accepted his recommendation

of John Aldridge, who Mailer thought would naturally side with him. Aldridge agreed to do an objective report, despite his friendly relations with Mailer. He was writing as critic, not novel doctor.

The editors agreed, Aldridge recalled, "So I wrote the report in that way, and then with great glee they went waving it in ^{Mailer's} his face." The frank sexual scenes in the book—it was after all a novel about pleasure—didn't bother Aldridge. He wrote that there was nothing in *The Deer Park* that would trouble "anyone above the level of 16-year-old daughters and 70-year-old grandmothers." But the episodes of casual fornication in the novel did bother Rinehart's top editors, and partly because of his mother, they bothered Stanley Rinehart even more. Mailer always believed that behind the scenes, ~~Rinehart's mother, the world-famous mystery writer,~~ Mary Roberts Rinehart, had much to do with her son's intense dislike of the novel. A 76-year-old grandmother of six, and also a director of Rinehart, Inc., Mrs. Rinehart, it can be surmised, detested the idea of seeing her last name on the title page of *The Deer Park*. Aldridge assumed that the crossed-out subtitle revealed the real theme of the book. "Mailer is careful ^{never} to deviate" from his search for the obscene, he wrote. The result of "his singlemindedness is that the experience he presents is precisely ^{as} dull, mechanical, monotonous, passionless and unobscene to the reader as it is to the characters." Aldridge also said that Mailer had made a terrible mistake in sharing the manuscript with 20 friends and relatives. The fact that he sought such extensive feedback made Aldridge conclude that Mailer "felt an uncertainty and insecurity." These criticisms angered Mailer. She was
ID'd
earlier

He wrote back to Aldridge that "The Search for the Obscene" was meant to refer to the all eight interlocking novels, not merely the first one, which was about the disasters and

corruption that flow from a search for mere pleasure. Thus, the strikeover of the words. "You have hardly acted toward me like a friend," he said. In fact, you act "like a sort of literary General MacArthur [^{a similar} Aldridge had ~~the~~ profile] delivering harsh pronunciamientos from your high and lonely peak, deriving your pleasure I suspect from the bitter notion that you have been true to yourself, and hang the consequences. The worst of it is that like the good General it gives you such pleasure." Mailer argued vociferously, and defensively, that it was a writer's sole prerogative to show or not show early work-in-progress. It was none of the critic's business and "Jehovah" Aldridge was unfair to object. But he didn't forget what Aldridge had said, and by the late 1950s had come around to the idea that it was a mistake to let anyone see his manuscripts at an early stage. When work jelled—polished first draft—he would share it with his family, editors, agents and secretaries, most notably Judith McNally, who worked from him for almost three decades. In later years, he shared his manuscripts with some of his older children and friends, most notably, Jean Malaquais; Mickey Knox; scholar-critic Bob Lucid; his lawyer, Ivan Fisher; writer and filmmaker Richard Stratton; and Walter Anderson, editor of *Parade*. Norris, ^{his last wife} saw all of his first drafts from the time they met in 1975 until his death. His sister is the only person who read every one of his major books before publication.

While he was mulling over what revisions he would make, he learned that his father had been contacted by the Civil Service Commission and told that there was a "reasonable doubt" about his, Barney's, loyalty to the country. This allegation was made because his father, an accountant at the War Department, was said to have a "continuing close association" with a person who was a "concealed Communist, that is, his son." ^{allegation} This occurred at the height of Sen. McCarthy's campaign to expose and ^{punish} ~~exterminate~~ secret Communists and fellow travelers. Cy

better word? punish?

Rembar was brought in, and with his counsel, Mailer drafted an affidavit in response. It began by addressing the question of whether the son had influenced the father.

My father is a man of conservative stable temperament, and though we have many of the relations proper to a father and a son, I think I may say with assurance that he has never had any political influence on me nor I upon him, nor for that matter have I ever made any attempt to influence him. He is not in the habit of ever speaking about the details of his work, nor have I ever had any interest in asking him about his work. Our political ideas are in great disagreement, and I should like to submit to the members of the Loyalty Board the notion that disagreement between fathers and sons is a human phenomenon which has been long remarked.

~~He was~~ "concealed communist"
The second allegation, that he was a Party member, Mailer dealt with by pointing out that for years the Communists "have been calling me a Trotskyist; the Trotskyists call me a 'so-called splinter Socialist'; the splinter socialists call me an anarchist; the anarchists call me a capitalist," and now the Loyalty Board has brought it full circle by calling me a "concealed Communist." In actuality, he continued, he was "admittedly and openly a dissident from the conventional and generally accepted attitudes about America and its position in the world today" and "had influenced exactly no one." He ended with a dramatic fragment, the Mailer family at dinner arguing:

THE TIME: (one of those rare times when politics is discussed.)

NORMAN MAILER: I think the whole thing in Korea is hopeless. It's a pilot-light war. Ignorant Americans and ignorant Orientals are just butchering each other.

I.B. MAILER: I don't know where an intelligent boy like you picks up such idiotic rubbish.

FAN MAILER (the mother): Don't call him an idiot.

NORMAN MAILER: Well, he's not so smart himself.

I.B. MAILER: I never talked to my father the way you talk to me.

The charge was dropped without a hearing and Barney continued his position with the War Department.

A few weeks later on his 30th birthday, January 31, 1953, Mailer was in a black mood. He and Adele had just returned from two weeks of skiing in Canada. He was unsure how to respond to the calls for revision from Rinehart. He had written his Gen. MacArthur letter to Aldridge before the trip, but had many afterthoughts during the vacation. Bernard DeVoto's evaluation of *Naked* had convinced him to fill out the characterizations of Gen. Cummings and Lt. Hearn, and now Aldridge's critique was making him reconsider the lineaments of Eitel, the novel's protagonist. In a flurry of letters to friends and family over the next few months, he laid out the problems: Eitel verged on being a flat character; his narrator was somewhat unfocused; the story was too tightly focused on sex. The eight-novel scheme, he concluded, would have to be scrapped because he wished to add material planned for the later novels in the first one, material about business, corruption, the media, and the blacklisting and Red-baiting rife in Hollywood. To

accomplish this, he would have to write a new draft, not just improve the old one. That, he told Bea, was something that required "precisely the courage I could never get up on Barbary." *The Deer Park* would have to be redone from "top to bottom, made much bigger, much rounder, more story." He also felt an inner pressure to introduce "some sort of evil genius," as he later put it, who could challenge Eitel, and bring him into greater relief.

The idea for such a character came to him when he read the reports of the Manhattan trial of 22-year old Minot "Mickey" Jelke, a high society procurer, which dominated the New York media during the first half of the year. Jelke was the son of John Faris Jelke, whose family had become enormously wealthy selling Good Luck Dutch Girl Oleomargarine. Short of ready money until he inherited a fortune on his 25th birthday, ^{the young} Jelke turned to pandering and was tried as a "common pimp." What intrigued Mailer was that Jelke took up his line of work not merely for the income and the pretty girls, but because he liked the excitement. He was tried twice. The first conviction was thrown out because the judge had cleared the court at the start of the proceedings, saying it would be "steeped in filth." ~~Reporters and the public were kept out of the courtroom because, as the judge stated, the judiciary was not required "to satisfy a widespread and avid appetite for 'lurid and salacious details.'"~~ A higher court ordered a new trial after virtually every newspaper in New York City joined in a brief protesting the abridgement of the defendant's constitutional right to an open trial. ~~Such secrecy would lead to Star Chamber proceedings, the papers argued piously, but the public's "avid appetite" was obviously the root motivation.~~

Like everyone else, Mailer was eager to get a glimpse of the café society pimp, as the press called him. He ^{could not} ~~tried to~~ attend the first trial, ^{because} ~~but~~ the courtroom was sealed. Two years later,

Jelke was convicted at a new trial and served 21 months in Sing Sing. ^{Mailer} He kept a clip file on the story, and Jelke became the rough model for the philosopher pimp / Marion Faye, the "evil genius" of *The Deer Park*. Faye, however, would prove to be much more complex. He makes his living the same way as Jelke did, but he also detests sham, false piety and knee-jerk patriotism. Before he plunges into near-terminal sadomasochism, Faye's chief purpose in the novel is to serve as Eitel's conscience, shaming him into not naming names when he is called before a House of Representatives Red-hunting committee. He tells Eitel that giving the names of former or current Communists to the House Un-American Activities Committee would only grant him the license to make more trashy sentimental movies. Like most of the dark characters in Mailer's fiction, there is an enclave of virtue in his evil, and future redemption is possible.

Finding his "evil genius" was an important advance, but he had a more fundamental problem: should Sergius O'Shaugnessy, a former Air force pilot in Korea, be a first-person narrator, similar in many ways to Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby*, or should he be depicted by an omniscient, anonymous narrator, such as he used in *Naked*? ^{and the Dead} All through April, as he explained to Styron, "I've been rushing virtually on alternate days from third person and back again, disgusted in first person by the artificial barriers I set up on a book which shouldn't have them." With Sergius telling the story, there was no way to detail the complex affair between Eitel and Elena Esposito, ^{her} a fiery flamenco dancer ^{who is patently modeled on Adele}. Eitel is a "boudoir Pygmalion" and his fascinating affair with her is at the heart of the novel. Yet when Mailer switched to the third person to gain access to their thoughts and their bedroom, another problem arose: "I find that when I write in the third person I'm so bound, so constipated, that I can't seem to enter people's heads—I write as if the damn thing were a play, scene, dialogue, entrance, exit."

no spot

Hobbled by both perspectives, he told Styron that the third person had the additional misery of possibly revealing what he feared might be a "fundamental poverty of imagination." The impasse persisted until the summer when he returned to the first person draft that Rinehart and Aldridge so disliked. For the length of his career, Mailer would be hypersensitive to the challenges and opportunities of point of view. In 1963 he said, "The most powerful leverage in fiction comes from point of view." He wrestled with how to employ this leverage for over a decade before finding a way, in *The Armies of the Night*, to escape from the subjective-objective dilemma, to gain the advantages of first person immediacy without relinquishing the detachment, the aesthetic distance, provided by the third. But in the spring and early summer of 1953, he was nearly paralyzed with the problem. ^{by} So he wrote the first chapter of *The Deer Park* over and over and over.

Ψ Ψ Ψ

A summer trip to Mexico to see ^{Susan} ~~Suzanne~~ had been planned for some time; the unavoidable break from writing would be a boon. He and Adele made the long drive in a new Studebaker convertible, stopping in Marshall, Illinois where Jones lived. Jones and his mentor and lover, Lowney Handy, ran a writers colony in the small town not far from the Indiana border. She and her husband Harry had supported Jones while he wrote *From Here to Eternity*, and he had repaid them by putting up the lion's share of ^{his earnings} ~~the money~~ into the colony. The colonists lived in small cabins and earned their keep by doing manual labor under ^{the supervision of} ~~the~~ Lowney, who was a tough taskmaster. Everyone had to copy, word for word, passages from Hemingway, Dos Passos, Fitzgerald and other writers in the morning before turning to their own work, a pump-priming technique that

OK?
Suzanne
Susan

Mailer thought might have some benefits. Jones had invited him to see the colony, meet the Handys and talk shop. He was now embarked on writing a novel about a returning G.I. and a postwar society moving into commercial overdrive. It was titled *Some Came Running*, and when it appeared in 1958, it was, at 1266 pages, perhaps the longest novel by a major U.S. novelist ever published.

Mr. Handy
was aware
of his
wife's
relation
ship w/
Jones?

The film version of *Eternity*, starring Montgomery Clift, Deborah Kerr, Frank Sinatra, Burt Lancaster and Donna Reed, was due to be released in the fall. Jones had been paid \$85,000 for the rights to his novel by MGM, and had learned just before Mailer's visit that he would receive \$100,000 from New American Library for the paperback rights to the novel, a larger sum than Mailer had received from the same publisher for *Naked*. Mailer was slightly in awe of all this, as he wrote to Styron:

Lowney Handy and Jones are people whom one can satirize so easily, and yet one's missed it all, for both of them are such extraordinarily passionate people, that their errors as well as their successes have a kind of grotesque to them.

Lowney Handy burns—I kept thinking of fanatics like John Brown when I looked into her eyes. Jones like all of us is having his troubles with the second book, but everything that happens to Jonesie on so big a scale that his troubles are flamboyant next to ours, and involve money, movie scripts, gymnastics, obscenities, raw insecurity, triumphant phallicism, and wham, wham, wham, it's all explosion. With it all, I like him tremendously. I suppose I have a kind of friendship with him that I had when I was a kid with other kids on the block. He's

really worth knowing. I've never come across anyone so intelligent and stupid, so penetrating and insensitive all in one.

The young, unpublished writers at the Colony were also dazzled by Jones, who lived in a silver Airstream trailer ⁶⁴² did flips on a trampoline, boxed, and drank martinis at lunch to loosen up. When Mailer arrived and then was joined by Montgomery Clift, the colonists were agog. John Bowers, in his wry memoir, *The Colony* (1971), described his reactions when he witnessed the arrival of Mailer and, at his elbow, "the beautiful, raven-haired woman introduced as Adele." When no one was looking, Bowers returned to the Studebaker and took a quick look:

There was still an indentation in the front seat. By God and Christ, his ass had sat on that veritable spot. The steering wheel showed palm prints, and I pictured the dark-haired man on the book jacket tooling along with an intelligent, Harvard-grad countenance. I couldn't imagine him stopping along the highway for an Eskimo pie; and when he got gas somewhere, it must have been in such a holy manner that the attendants were left faint. At the *ramada* entrance I caught a glimpse of dark curls, a sharp boyish profile, and someone with hands confidently on hips like a general. He was talking to Jones—not listening, *talking*.

Adele and Jones, who had met in New York, had uneasy relations; Adele sensed that they were competing for Mailer's attention. Lowney and Jones were polite enough, but she felt ignored. It was hot and she remembered walking around ⁱⁿ as little as possible, a tiny bra and a pair of brief shorts. I don't think Lowney was too pleased by my seminakedness tempting her

monks." Mailer and Jones got drunk every night and then arm-wrestled and had pushup contests. Jones, in better shape than Mailer, won the latter. During the day, they spent long hours talking about writing and the pluses and minuses of celebrity.

After three days, they left and drove to New Orleans, where they fell in with some local literary bohemians. One night at a party they both drank peyotl, made from peyote cactus buttons and used in religious ceremonies by Southwestern Indians. Afterwards, they went to hear Max Roach and Charlie Parker play at a jazz club. Adele got nauseous and vomited violently. She had a synesthesia experience and saw beautiful colors as "the music ripped into my open mouth, down my throat through my stomach to my groin pressing against the silken crotch of my panties, pressing against the fabric of my dress, and against the chair seat. I felt like the cat, I thought, who nibbled the cheese that was on the plate that lay on the table that was in the house that Norman built." Mailer, who remembers getting very sick, had a vision of an Aztec sacrifice with Indians atop a pyramid holding ceremonial knives, followed by hallucinogenic Disney cartoons. The drugs took a long while to wear off.

They arrived in Mexico City in early July. Susan was happy to see them and Mailer wrote to ^{Dan} Wolf that "deep down, I feel that in ten years I'll love her more than anyone or anything else. Except perhaps Adele." There were difficult moments on the trip, he continued, times when "I could have murdered her for infantile relapses," but "she's in my flesh, and to be extravagant I've got my cross and my salvation—for she keeps me alive, dumb little Mo with her amoeba heart that pushes like a tentacle into everything I say, and feel." By the end of the month, they were settled in a place just outside Mexico City called the Turf Club, a former country club that

Suzanne?
This is Susan
is rather
risky to
right?

wealthy Mexicans, he told Styron, ~~formerly~~^{used} "as boffing huts for their mistresses." Here he settled down for the next ten weeks to revise the novel.

He worked steadily, with breaks to tour Cuernavaca, see some bullfights and watch jai-alai matches. Jones' successful sale of *Eternity* to Hollywood remained on his mind and he wrote Cy at the end of August that he wanted to restart the process of selling *Naked*, even though he thought that advance publicity for *The Deer Park* might have put him on the blacklist. Cy was instructed to ask for \$200,000, but be willing to accept \$100,000, the amount paid for *Eternity*. Selling it for less, "what with the income tax and other deductions, plus Dad's go-ahead to gamble a little more will mean that I'll be very little richer a year or two from now." If the novel was going to be "crapped up" by Hollywood, then a big paycheck and financial independence would be requisite compensation. "It's the old business of if you're going to be a whore, you ought to be the most expensive one in the land." He also expressed concern about Stan Rinehart trying to get out of the contract, ^{for *The Deer Park*} and the necessity of a lawsuit to get the \$10,000 advance. His apprehensions were ~~exactly~~^{exactly} correct.

As he was preparing to leave Mexico at the end of September, feeling somewhat relieved at having made some progress, he ^{answered my mail} wrote a long letter to Bourjaily in which he looked back at his career to date and gave what amounted to his novelistic credo at age 30. He adhered to it, more or less, for the rest of his life.

[M]y experience with all three novels now has been one of starting with characters, finding things for them to do, and then sometimes after I've finished,

as with Naked, or else at the $\frac{3}{4}$ point as with Barbary and Deer Park, I discover what my damn theme is. And to hell with the theme in a way, for I always know even before I start something what the connected theme is between all the books, the thing which makes us write I suppose, and for me it's probably never been anything more profound than, 'Itch, you bastards, I hope I make you uncomfortable to the death.' In that sense, perhaps all I write is political (short stories excepted) and my themes are political.

In his letter, Bourjaily had made the point that he wrote from a set of well-considered principles. Mailer countered with the primacy of experience.

Maybe you're right, probably you're right—I've had the argument with Malaquais many times—but to me the fact remains that the more experience the better the chance to come up with something fortunate. I don't even know quite how, but at its best experience can give you ideas for other things, so that maybe working as a stevedore for a year might help one write a novel about priests. There's something somewhere about proportion, and seeing everything in its place. Besides, one can go after experience consciously, determinedly, and in a funny way not disqualify oneself for writing about the material. [. . .] I think it can almost be put that one feels the need to say certain large things and takes for the purpose whatever world one is capable of throwing up at the moment, and the theme rides as a kind of bridge, an afterthought, between the two. Therefore, the better the world one can throw up at the moment, the better the book. I didn't

write Naked because I wanted to say war was horrible, or that history is complex, resistant, and almost inscrutable, or because I wanted to say that the coming battle between the naked fanatics and the dead mass was approaching, but because really what I wanted to say was, 'Look at me, Norman Mailer, I'm alive, I'm a genius, I want people to know that; I'm a cripple, I want to hide that,' and so forth.

While he felt some disquiet about what Stan Rinehart and ^{his} Rinehart's mother might say about the next draft of *Deer Park*, he knew that Amussen, who had returned to Rinehart as vice president, was on his side. Mailer had charmed and cajoled Rinehart's editors into approving his first two novels without making any major concessions, and felt fairly confident he could do it again, although he was certainly upping the ante with his description of his Hollywood producer, Herman Teppis, getting a blowjob. But the publishing world was now ^{much} less prudish than in 1948; the walls had cracked with "fuck," and were breached three years later when Jones used "fuck" repeatedly in *Eternity*. Trail-blazing writers and wily editors could usually find ways to undercut the last bulwarks of Comstockery. Mailer was feeling something close to these sentiments when he returned to New York with Adele and Susan in mid-October. He was anxious to get back to work and the last day on the road, they arose at three a.m. and drove 800 miles. Susan remembers sitting in her little car seat in the front, peering at the stars, watching the sun come up, and then stopping for breakfast at a diner.

For the next eight months, he regularly predicted that he was close to finishing the novel, only to find that there was more to be done. A re-write of one section created problems elsewhere; change begat change and the manuscript began to resemble Penelope's shroud:

finished here, unraveled there, always in progress, never completed. When Howe asked him for a contribution to *Dissent*, he replied that he was no socialist scholar and (only) had time for *The Deer Park*. "I'm sick of writing it, I want to be quit of the thing," he told him. Writing to Styron, he reported that *New World Writing* had put out a new issue that contained a piece by Vidal written under the pseudonym "Libra." Titled "Ladders to Heaven: Novelists and Critics," the essay names and praises the greatest living U.S. writers: Paul Bowles, Tennessee Williams and Carson McCullers. "We don't even get mentioned," he told Styron. "Another small delicious victory for the fag axis," Mailer concluded, "but I boiled that they get away with it by pseudonyms." In ~~Styron's~~ ^{Styron} reply, he called Vidal "that talentless, self-promoting, spineless slob."

Styron had met Vidal in 1951, but had little contact with him over the years. Mailer and Vidal intersected regularly, not only because they were East Coast novelists of the same generation, but also because they were gregarious, ambitious, ornery and permanently critical of the imperialistic streak in American foreign policy. The two met at Millie Brower's apartment on East 27th Street in 1952. In slightly different ways, they both recalled that at their first meeting Vidal was eager to know at what age Mailer's grandparents had died. Mailer said around 70. Vidal announced that his grandparents had died ~~at a~~ ^{at} much older age and, therefore, he told Mailer, "I've got you." He went on, saying that the one who lived the longest would have the best purchase on literary fame. Brower remembered that Mailer told her that Vidal was "gornisht," the Yiddish word for nothing. According to Vidal, years later Mailer told him that when they first met he thought Vidal was the devil. Mailer apparently remembered what he had said because in 1993, and again in 2002, Mailer directed and acted in George Bernard Shaw's

Don Juan in Hell. Mailer was the Commodore in the first performance and Don Juan in the second. Vidal, wearing a wine-red vest, played the Devil and stole the show both times.

Two things, not unrelated, were on Mailer's mind as 1953 drew to a close: his unfinished novel and his relationship with Adele. He was telling everyone that the novel was done, but that he needed to redo "fifty pages in the middle (the central chapters on Eitel and Elena) which are fairly tepid and too expository." He knew that delineating their intense, guilt-ridden relationship from the inside was imperative, even if he had to temporarily resort to omniscience and marginalize Serguis as a narrator. He called this work the "half third draft" and thought it would take him the first three or four months of 1954 to complete it. Susan was living with his mother now, and he and Adele saw her every day. She and Adele got along well and this had temporarily reconciled Fan to Adele. Susan remembers feeling that she had two sets of parents and loved them both. The upset, he told Adele, was that he and Adele would probably marry in a few months. He went on in greater length about the marriage situation in a letter to Devlin, saying he was definitely getting domesticated. Although he was ready to tie the knot, he had reservations. "I go off dreaming of all the women I will never enter," he said, "all the adventures I will never have, all the . . . ah, we were meant to end by cutting the family turkey." Adele, he adds, is leery about getting married after pressuring him earlier. "[S]he knows that the guilt which holds me so faithful will change to the gallant bucko the moment we're legally stitched." It is a prescient statement, for henceforth Mailer would swing irregularly between sexual adventuring and family responsibilities, the gallant bucko alternating with the serious pater carving the bird at Thanksgiving.

Mailer got involved in a literary group ^{at} in the fall of that year, ~~one~~ that Vance Bourjaily established. It met on Sunday afternoons at a place chosen by Mailer or Dan Wolf, the White Horse Tavern on the corner of Hudson and West 11th Streets in the West Village. According to Dan Wolf, "Norman found that if you invited people to your house, it was not that easy to get rid of them," a problem avoided by going to the White Horse, which was a quiet neighborhood bar frequented by local Irish. Aldridge, who was co-editing *Discovery* with Bourjaily, attended some of the meetings, as did Herman Wouk, whose novel of the U.S. Navy in the south Pacific, *The Caine Mutiny*, along with Jones' *Eternity*, was one of the leading best sellers of 1951. Calder Willingham, whose southern accent Mailer would sometimes imitate, came, as did Styron. Dan Wolf, attended, and Lewis Allen, ^{a film producer} who Mailer later saw a lot of in Mexico. Bourjaily brought his wife Tina, but Mailer—who generally presided—always came alone. Louis Auchincloss, an ^{Wall Street} uptown lawyer who published a string of best-selling novels about the legal world in the 1960s, as well as the archetypal prep school novel *The Rector of Justin* (1964), came to several of the gatherings, although he said he felt somewhat uncomfortable at first because of his Wall-Street ~~and~~ Republican affiliations. Mailer welcomed him, however, and then told him that he admired a story, "The Gem-like Flame," ^{that} which Auchincloss had recently published, saying he would have been happy to have written the story. (Auchincloss beamed. "I was so pleased," he said, "that I went right home. I wanted to leave one such assembly with a happy impression." Part of his ^{Mailer's} welcoming attitude towards Auchincloss was his ^{invariable} refusal to stereotype people; part of it was his curiosity about the wealthy. He said more than once that he agreed with F. Scott Fitzgerald that the rich are indeed different from the other classes. The White Horse group lasted through the early spring of 1955.

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Excepting Jones, Mailer's most important friendship during this period was with Robert Lindner, a psychoanalyst who had written a sharp critique of psychoanalytic practice. After their initial exchange of letters, they got together in New York after Mailer returned from Mexico. Three months before he died, he remembered his first meeting with Lindner, a tall, handsome man with a "rusty, soft moustache." He was "a guy I could *talk* to. His head was fertile, full of ideas. I was full of ideas. We just yakked, which I needed." They continued their correspondence and for a time talked almost every day on the telephone. Initially drawn together by their disgust with Sen. McCarthy's hunt for Communists in government, and the dull fog of conformity rolling over the country, as well as ^{mutual} distaste for ~~its leader~~, President Eisenhower, their relationship deepened when they recognized ^{the depth of} each other's ambition and how they might help each other. Both recognized Freud's genius, but chafed under the yoke of repression, renunciation and compromise that he believed made civilization possible. Lindner was an establishmentarian and worked from within; Mailer was a rebel with a cause: the spontaneous expression of feelings, including the violent and the sexual. Kindred spirits, they were joined by their belief that people could transform themselves, become bolder and more creative, and that society itself could be renovated. Both were tremendously ambitious and competitive, but their spheres of interest were adjacent, ^{only} partially overlapping, and thus neither had to worry about being outshined.

^{Mailer} Earlier, he had read Lindner's sharp critique of psychoanalytic practice, *Prescription to Rebellion*. Lindner was convinced that most of Freud's theories were sound, but he parted

company with his peers on the merits of getting along by conforming. It has "become axiomatic with our culture and in our society that adjustment is the highest good and the absolute right," he said. "A way has to be found to unbind the Prometheus within each one of us, to unloose the rebelliousness of our natures, and to give full sway to that instinct upon which our survival as free individuals depends." Lindner made this same point a variety of ways in several others books: *Rebel without a Cause* (1944); *Fifty-minute Hour* (1955); *Must You Conform* (1956). The gist of his argument is simple: "The alternative to adjustment is rebellion." Although Mailer was eight years younger than Lindner, his relationship with him was nothing like the one he had with Malaquais, whose views were secure and settled.

Mailer + L were both more open to new ideas.

Mailer had also been reading the work of Wilhelm Reich and was much taken with his ideas about the pernicious effects of repression on sexual potency. The following passage, taken from Charles Rycroft's brief study of Reich, ^{is} ~~are~~ apposite, if not identical with Mailer's ideas. Reich was "surely right," Rycroft states, "in asserting that no neurotics are orgasmically potent and that the great majority of human beings suffer from a character neurosis. His theories of character armor and orgasm constitute, therefore, a sweeping indictment of the sexual life of civilized man, an indictment similar in many ways to that made by D. H. Lawrence." Mailer's infatuation with Reich would grow throughout the 1950s, and he would later build his own version of Reich's infamous ^{"orgone box"} ~~box~~, a telephone-booth-sized chamber where one repaired to replenish or accumulate orgonic, or life energy, but also rumored to promote erections. ^{But} ~~at~~ this point, Reich was only one of several theorists that interested ^{Mailer} ~~him~~.

His friendship with Lindner grew to the point where they discussed their own sexuality.

Lindner, like Mailer, ^{had} had extra-marital affairs and was sympathetic to Mailer's mixed feelings about Adele, *as Mailer recalled: which he described many*

years later.

He thought she was very sexy. He understood that entirely. He also thought she was kind of—how to put it—that spiritually speaking she was a very expensive wife for me. Not because she cost me money, but because—he understood my social ambitions, which were high. I wanted to be feted as the number one writer in America, and there were new sprouts coming up all over the place. The torch was being handed over in other places and that had me irritated. And Adele was no help socially to me. In fact, she was a drawback. She knew it and I knew it and there was a tension between us.

He confided his most private feelings to Lindner and although he believed that undergoing psychoanalysis would harm his work, he asked Lindner if he would take him on. Lindner said it would ruin their friendship ^{and} ~~and~~ that was the end of it. Mailer later said that one of the things he was most proud of in his life was that he had never gone into analysis. Nevertheless, he still talked to Lindner about his problems. "One of them," Mailer said, "was a buried fear that under everything I'm a homosexual. That was always a fear. He would just say, 'Look, On the basis of my experience, you're not. What you're suffering is latent homosexual anxiety, which is common to all of us.' And so forth and so forth. Occasionally, I had an episode when I couldn't get it up and that bothered me." Lindner listened and told him to shrug it off.

Another matter he brought up with Lindner was his friend "Bernard" (his pseudonym for Barney), a compulsive gambler. Lindner responded by sending his article, "The Psychodynamics of Gambling." It argues that gamblers are compelled to both win and lose, suffering either way. Mailer told Lindner that he was struck by how well it explained his father's addiction. "While I read your monograph a fund of rare compassion for him began to form in me—I understood how terribly compulsively neurotic Bernard is, how helpless he is, and I felt more tender toward him." Recalling Barney's 1949 English-colonel letter, he went on to recount how "Bernard" had asked to borrow three thousand dollars and how after ~~he~~ ^{Mailer} had chastised him, "Bernard succeeded in punishing me by running the debt up to five thousand dollars" and then wrote him a highly abusive letter, the only one of its kind he had ever received from his "friend."

Chipping away at the novel four days a week, Mailer also found time to demonstrate bullfighting in his loft. Writing to Lew Allen in Mexico, he announced that he has become a "renowned toreros de salon" with sufficient dexterity "to pass a young lady carrying the horns without sweeping a single highball glass from the coffee table which serves as barrera." He also began experimenting, quite seriously, with the ~~Tarot~~ ^{on "Major Arcana"} deck, and came up with his own interpretations. He wrote them out, giving plus and minus characteristics for each of the 21 Trump cards (the oppositions intrigued him), and noting that the meanings were dynamic and "always dependent upon the constellation of the cards." He revamped the rules slightly—as he was wont to do with all the games he played.

Jonathan Cape, whose firm of the same name had published *Barbary Shore*, wrote to Mailer in January 1954 for a progress report on *The Deer Park*. Mailer replied that he was only four or five weeks away from finishing the new draft, but didn't want to rush the conclusion. He

had done that on his first two novels, he said, and now regretted it. He also said that no one had seen the new draft. That changed on the weekend of January 16-17, when Mailer took the train to see Lindner in Baltimore. Adele did not join him; there was friction between her and Lindner's wife, ^{Johnnie} Johnnie. Mailer described her as "a sort of pepper pot blonde, pepper pot fire. WASP, very strong in a breakable way, in other words vulnerable, vulnerable as hell. She was in the best sense of the word, a dame. She was full of strong feelings, full of love, full of lust, full of fire, full of the inability to pardon." Mailer brought the manuscript along and Lindner read it, as did Johnnie. They both gave him warm feedback. Lindner was intrigued with Marion Faye, who he called the novel's "evil principle," a description that Mailer said was close to his own feelings about the pimp.

Lindner was the staff ^{psychologist} psychiatrist at the local women's prison and, had a collateral interest in criminology. He and Mailer discussed the gamut of mental illnesses, especially schizophrenia and the range of behaviors linked with criminal psychopaths. Lindner was the adept and Mailer the catechumen, questioning, parsing his answers and challenging Lindner, ^{for Mailer} who was to psychology what Malaquais had been to politics. But Mailer was more willing to challenge Lindner—he had after all studied abnormal psychology at Harvard under the redoubtable Professor Murray, read Freud, Reich, Karen Horney and Theodore Reik, and spent most of his adult life observing and writing about human personality, its structure and fault lines, how it cohered, developed and disintegrated. Creating memorable characters was the *raison d'être* of his writing life. ^{and ~~read~~ ~~breakfast~~ two figures in the early psychoanalysis movement} Recently, ^{with} with Marion Faye, he had opened up a new line of inquiry. He had begun reading Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* (1843) ^{which} and it helped him decide that the psychopath and the saint were more alike than different. Dostoevsky had charted the path

from sinner to saint, and Marion Faye, after plumbing the depths of sadomasochism, could become as selfless as Dorothy Day. Sin was not an end, but a beginning, a cathartic experience. This emerging belief was sharpened when he accompanied Lindner to the prison during his visit to Baltimore.

He sat in on Lindner's brief interviews with 15 inmates and took notes. "The experience was just fantastic," he said. "I left there boiling with rage at the injustice of a sort I haven't felt since I was eighteen," referring to his experience at the Boston State Hospital. Observing the woman inmates, Mailer said, was one of the great discoveries of his life during this period. They were, he said in an interview in his final year, "not only much like you and me, but in a certain sense had a little touch of intensity that was more than you and me, because they'd been through the prison experience." He asked one woman what she was in for, and she said she almost killed her husband with a knife, and went on to tell him about it. Her statements, he said, gave him a profound sense of

how deep, *how deep* were the roots of what was commonly called crime. And how human they were, and how *natural*. And for people who were not living as I was, gussied by all sorts of protection, ah, crime was very easy, it was instinctive; it was something you did, it was one of the arrows in your quiver; it was one of your answers to your environment; it was a way of continuing to live. And so very early in life, my thinking life was shaped by the notion that no crime is ever too bad not to be explored, that no judgment is to be made on a criminal for too little. And that stayed with me always, and it was invaluable, absolutely invaluable.

The whole idea of prison, he concluded, was "absolute idiocy." His visit and subsequent conversations with Lindner reawakened the idea of getting a non-literary job after *The Deer Park* was published, a job in a prison. He thought he would like to write a book on convicts and prison life.

Adele accompanied him to see the Lindners only every third time because of her lack of ease in social situations, Mailer said.

Adele could never have entertained the people, at that point—later Adele could—that Johnnie had over for dinner. So Adele stood out like a sore thumb. You know, "There's Mailer with his slum kid," was almost the attitude. But Adele wasn't from the slums; she was from the lower middle class, working class, but she was seen that way. It was awkward. You know, "You've brought the wrong person into the room," sort of. And she was very aware of that and Adele's worse fault was that when things got bad, she got worse. She did not respond to crises; she fell apart. And so if somebody handed her a drink and she received it with the wrong hand or something—I'm making this up—it would be something of that sort, whatever the code was, she'd broken it. Sure enough, she'd drop the glass a minute later.

Lindner and his wife had two young children and for this reason rarely came to visit the Mailers in New York. They did, however, attend the Mailers' wedding reception a week after the April 19 ceremony at City Hall.

According to Adele, "I didn't exactly nag Norman about getting married, but I would introduce the subject at every opportunity." ^{But} Yet Mailer felt she had reservations, as did he. Similar in age, New York City backgrounds and hair-trigger tempers, they were different in education, and worlds apart in ambition. Before their children were born, sex was the strongest bond. Finally, they took the leap. He arose late on the morning of his wedding and then sat naked on the bed making notes in his notebook. She stifled her annoyance, thinking, "after all, I was in love with a great writer, and living with genius had its price." At the City Hall ceremony, witnessed by Barney and Fan, Mailer gave Adele a \$13 ring, later replaced by a gold band. After the wedding, he carried Adele over the threshold, and said: "Well, Mrs. Mailer, it's the beginning of a new chapter." The next day he went to work at his studio in Brooklyn.

Several days later, Dan Wolf and another First Avenue neighbor, Toby Schneebaum, planned a party back at the flat. Besides the Lindners, a number of literary friends came: the Rinehart crowd, Lillian Hellman, Harvey Breit, who wrote about literary matters for the *New York Times* and summered in Provincetown, Ed Fancher, Rhoda Lazare and James Jones. Jones got drunk, as did Toby, who took a bath in the tub Mailer had installed in the kitchen. Adele, ^{because I was} "happy to be Mrs. Norman Mailer," cut the cake with Toby's machete.

At the time of the wedding, *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial*, adapted from Herman Wouk's novel was an enormous hit on Broadway. It was ^{directed} produced by Charles Laughton and Paul Gregory and starred Henry Fonda. Tickets for the show, which ran for over a year, were difficult to obtain. Hoping to capitalize on its success, Gregory got in touch with Mailer to see if he would be interested in dramatizing *Naked*. Mailer was dubious for three reasons: Lillian Hellman had taken him down this road, and it had gone nowhere; he didn't want to take the time to work on

check
a kitchen
tub was a
common
feature of
railroad
plants

the adaptation; and Gregory had praised *Naked* as "an extraordinary story of the Marines," adding that he'd read it five times. Lying was bad enough, but mixing up the two service branches nearly destroyed Gregory's credibility. But the opportunity to work with Laughton, whose acting skills Mailer admired, was tempting. If the deal went forward and made anything close to the huge sums Wouk was earning from *The Caine Mutiny*, that would be splendid, but whatever happened, he wanted to try another line of work, perhaps as some sort of factotum in prison administration. But first, he had to finish *The Deer Park*.

repeats
something
said on
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Writing on April 30, he told a Hollywood friend, Chester Aaron, that "by dint of pushing, nudging, sandpapering, worrying, and as my ex mother in law used to say—gidgying," the novel would be ready in two weeks for final typing, which he planned to do himself. Aaron was thinking about getting married and Mailer gave his friend some advice on what he called "a monster of an institution." Live together, not just sleep together, for at least six months, he said, because a good part of marriage is "the whole business of congenial room-mates." He went on to fault himself for being "old Polonius Mailer," especially because "I'm often convinced I'll be married six times in my life." Adele didn't like to hear her new husband talk about future marriages, he said, although neither of them could have known that his prediction would prove accurate 26 years later.

By this time, he had shown the novel in near-final form to someone at Rinehart, probably Amussen, because he told Fig and Bee that "they" liked it, but it is clear that the manuscript had not yet reached Stan Rinehart's desk. He repeated his news to Lew Allen and for the first time in

months sounded upbeat, in part because Jones was back in town. Mailer was unequivocal: "[L]ife with Jonesie has been great," he wrote; "with that loud brawling animal quality of his which loves life so instinctively and so warmly, I begin to feel a little warmer myself." When Jones is around, he continued, "you have the feeling that things are going to happen, as indeed often they do." He gave this example:

There was a party at Styron's last night, and we all got drunk and decided to send a telegram to [Senator] Joe McCarthy. So here's how it went:

DEAR JOE, WE DIG YOU, BUT GET THE BROWN OUT OF YOUR NOSE!
VANCE BOURJAILY, JAMES JONES, NORMAN MAILER, JOHN
PHILLIPS, WILLIAM STYRON.

Despite our mirth and our drunkenness, I think deep down we were a little aghast. It's exactly the sort of thing you go to a concentration camp for three years later.

The Jewish catastrophe theory of history, learned first at his mother's knee, was never far from his mind, especially when things were going well.

The Mailers had hoped to leave for Mexico on June 1, as soon as he typed and submitted the final manuscript to Rinehart for copy-editing. But before he began, he learned that the rough manuscript submitted earlier, and carrying the unambiguously glowing endorsement of Amussen, ^{had been} was read by his boss. "Something in the sex has gotten a neurotic hair up Stan Rinehart's ass," Mailer wrote to Devlin. He met with Stan and they had an argument, but a