

# Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* as a Novel of Manners

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**Abstract-**Norman Mailer (1923-2007) is one the most important figures among the American Writers, an extremely influenced personality in the post-world war II American Literature. He is best known for his first war novel *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), which is a commentary on the American society. Hence, the present study is an attempt to investigate and reflect the social ills and fragmentation, misery and the overwhelming social and political restraints that formed the American atmosphere at that time. Mailer is interested in what happens in the contemporary American society. His aim is to depict the national rituals of American life. The researcher in this study seeks to identify the literary aspects reflected and drawn in *The Naked and the Dead* that make us categorize it as a novel of manners for it is satiric and realistic in depiction, in which Mailer unprecedentedly characterizes the social mores, evils and customs that are characteristic of a particular class of people in a specific historical context. The descriptive approach along with detailed analysis is utilized in conducting the present study. The conclusion sums up the most important findings of the study.

**Keywords-** Norman Mailer; *The Naked and the Dead*; novel of manners.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1944, Mailer spent his Army service in the Philippines. He recounted his experiences there in his first novel, *The Naked and the Dead*, which earned much critical and popular acclaim. *The Naked and the Dead* (1948) is regarded by most critics as one of the best war stories ever written, which praises Mailer's realistic depiction of men at war. The novel handles the adventures of a fourteen-man infantry platoon stationed on a Japanese-held island in the South Pacific during World War II. In the course of the novel, the men struggle to survive and find meaning in their lives. The researcher found that most studies conducted into Norman Mailer's novels and style didn't handle categorizing them as novels of manners or even calling Mailer a novelist of manners. For example, the study of Wilson, Andrew J. (2007) entitled "Norman Mailer: An American aesthetic", University of Essex (United Kingdom) conducted a comprehensive study of the work of the American author Norman Mailer, charting his response to critical events in his country's development since 1945. Focusing on Mailer's descriptions of World War II, 1960s counter-culture and the Vietnam War. The study of Andrew Marino (1992) entitled "Heroic image in three American writers: Norman Mailer, Saul Bellow and Philip Roth" revealed the conception of hero among three American writers. The study of Sanders (2007) entitled "The art of existentialism: F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Norman Mailer and the American existential tradition" at University of South Florida, classified Mailer as an existentialist novelist. Mailer's *American Dream* by Ettelson, Charles D. points out that The American dream

has been in existence almost as long as America (as a political entity) has. Americans have been convinced that the individual can transcend earthly evil and decadence, and attain a state of perfection. The American dream is the visionary ideal that is represented in social form by utopian thinking. A personalized ideal would appear easier to attain than a social one because of its apparent relative simplicity, yet this is not the case. Personalization does not simplify the American dream.

Thomas Lawson Altherr (1971) carried out a study titled "History as Metaphor: John Dos Passos' and Norman Mailer's Concepts of History". Master of Arts, the Ohio State University, in which he analyzed the period of post-world war II in the novels of Mailer and depicted them as a commentary of the atrocity of the American society during that period.

The study of Andrew Wilson (2010) titled "Pentagon Pictures: The Civil Divide in Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night*" focuses on Norman Mailer's treatment of the 1967 March on the Pentagon in his Pulitzer Prize-winning work of non-fiction *The Armies of the Night*. The visual and linguistic properties developed by the author throughout the first book of *The Armies of the Night* are identified and assessed in relation to the anti-war movements and counterculture temperament of the 1960s. Comparisons are made with post-war writers and earlier North American authors as a means of clarifying "American" aspects of Mailer's handling of his material. Mailer's journalistic techniques, his often spontaneous and engaged responses, are also defined within the context of the social conflicts of the late 1960s.

## 2. OBJECTIVE

The present paper is an attempt to investigate the literary aspects that depict and categorize *The Naked and the Dead* (1948) as a novel of manners, in which Mailer reflects the evils of society and satirizes them for the social uplifting. The novelists of manners show the familiar social, national tie among the common class people. They also depict what happens in the world of high society.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive and analytical approach used by the researcher to conduct the present study.

## 4. THE NOVEL OF MANNERS

The novel of manners is a fictional work that presents values, conventions, mores and social customs of a specific society, which means that society is a central theme in this kind of novels. Characters' behaviors are controlled by their deal with the customs and traditions. The rules and manners of the society affect the protagonists. The novel of manners is a realistic work; it relies on everyday life. The novel of manners shows how the customs and values of society affect the characters. Hugh Holman (1980) asserts that "the novel of manners is often, although by no means always, satiric; it is always realistic in manner, however. The Historical Novel is sometimes called the novel of manners laid in the past" (p. 303). The novel of manners explores the manners of the society and how these manners control the actions and intensions of the characters. It presents the moral concern and the effect of the moral and immoral behaviors on the society.

The novel of manners not only focuses on the social side, but it also focuses on political, military, civil and many other sides. It is sometimes a kind of satire of the society. The uniform social behavior is the thing that controls people and judges their success or failure. Consequently, persons should cope with these standards. The writer usually observes and reports well in order to enable the reader to know why and how the world is such a state. The novel of manners presents the pressure that the individual suffers from because of the clash between his desires and the conditions imposed upon him by the surrounding environment. The author of the novel of manners needs experience to be able to determine the taboos, and principles "relying on manners to outline the ethical and moral underpinnings of the social fabric" (Weld, 1992, p. 8). An important characteristic of the novel of manners is that it involves the reader in the moral life, it makes him examine his/her motives, and it shows the value of the human variety.

In fact, environment plays a vital role in establishing the atmosphere of the novel of manners. Consequently, the reader "must be alert to nuance, sensitive to culturally shifting mores, and appreciative of the consequences of proper behavior" (Weld, 1992, p. 11). These novels examine the difference between classes, the economic

differences, and the industrial and rural regions. Helge Ridderstrom (2012) asserts that the novel of manners is characterized by the following: firstly, such a kind of novels prefers depending on reason to passion, which means that feelings are controlled by reason. Secondly, characters must respect the standards of society, that govern it, and those who do not follow them are exposed to criticism (p. 4).

### 4.1 The Naked and the Dead

*The Naked and the Dead* brought Mailer instant fame. Mailer published it at the age of twenty five. When it was published, *The Naked and the Dead* occupied and attracted great attention. It is considered one of the best novels of the twentieth century. Mailer was able to collect the material of this novel from his personal experience where he was inducted into the USA army in 1944 and served in the Philippines as a rifleman.

Many critics praised the novel and considered it the best novel about the Second World War. *The Naked and the Dead* has a good story and a remarkable style, and the time it was published in was very suitable, it was published three years after the Second World War, and people were prepared for this kind of novels.

The novel talks about the American invasion of the fictional South Pacific Island of Anopopei. Americans want to attack the Japanese forces. *The Naked and the Dead* consists of four parts: Wave, Argil and Mold, Plant and Phantom and Wake. It presents many characters, but there are three central characters in the novel: General Cummings, Sergeant Sam Croft and Lieutenant Robert Hearn. General Cummings is the commander of the American forces that invade Anopopei. He is a brilliant, totalitarian and ambitious fascist. He believes that all people are guilty. He practices all forms of abuse on his men in order to obtain victory. Inas Abdul-Munem Qadoos (2011) asserts that Cummings is "a coldly calculating machine" (p. 4). Qadoos adds that he is the "military system's principal instrument of theory" (p. 11). His thoughts affect all those who are around him. He exploits the experience of his men to achieve the plans of the system. He is intelligent.

Croft is the General's aide who was educated in Harvard. He is the leader of the Infantry Regiment. He is a strong character who hates weakness, and he is thirsty for power. The most remarkable characteristic that distinguishes him is his love for blood; killing makes him feel satisfied and strong. He is called the hunter. Croft is Cummings' servant who executes all his orders.

Hearn is Cummings' young aide. He is from a rich aristocratic family. Hearn's father is a factory man and a materialistic. His family is involved in a confused humanism, so he leaves his family. He is a good heart person who is usually contradicted by those who are thirsty for blood, which makes him unable to deal with those tyrants like Cummings and Croft. He is alienated and feels self-pity.

## 4.2 The Naked and the Dead as a Novel of Manners

Before analyzing any work by Mailer, one must notice that Mailer deals with his issues from a religious point of view in addition to being an existentialist psychologist (Tien, 1985, p. 3). This makes one judge that Mailer's novel tends more to the novels of manners in addition to the other characteristics. Mailer asserts that "the reason I write is to reach people and by reaching them, influence the history of my time a little bit" (as cited in Rodríguez, 2008, p. 97). Mailer (1992) adds that making a revolution in the consciousness of his time was the reason for his imprisonment (p. 17). Grabes (2008) asserts that *The Naked and the Dead* is one of three novels that are taken as examples of the war novels that affect the "collective value-system of American society" (p. 11).

Consequently, *The Naked and the Dead* focuses on political issues that followed the Second World War. The novel of manners explores issues and customs of people in a specific time. According to Kinder (2005), *The Naked and the Dead* shows "the contradictions between the nation's democratic ideals and the exclusionary practices deemed necessary to ensure Americans' participation in the war effort" (p. 190). Close examination of the text reveals a remarkable degree of moral, political and aesthetic confusion. *The Naked and the Dead* focuses on the morals and criticizes the bad manners.

Moreover, the novel of manners focuses on global and personal struggle. Whether it is a war novel or not, *The Naked and the Dead* has the characteristics of the novel of manners, which deals with the morals, values, customs of the American society during a specific time. It depends on a deal of satire to the American society. Leigh (1990) asserts that "under the immediate influence of American fiction from the 1930s, *The Naked and the Dead* illustrates Mailer's desire to adapt the social and political concerns of Dos Passos, Farrell and Steinbeck to Second World War and post-war conditions" (pp. 2-3).

An important characteristic of the novels of manners is that it not only focuses on global struggle but it also focuses on the personal struggle. Consequently, one can see that *The Naked and the Dead* investigates global issues concerning the post-world war in America and a personal struggle concerning individuals.

According to Glicksberg (1960), *The Naked and the Dead* deserves the high acclaim it received because it is a remarkable work by a young man, that explores contradicted issues in a naturalistic method like war and sex, life and death, liberalism and radicalism, and evil and goodness (p. 26). In fact, these contradictions may lead to confusion in the moral, political and aesthetic sides (Leigh, 1990, p. 1). Glicksberg (1960) adds that Mailer writes with "imaginative power" (p. 26).

Mailer presents the customs, the ways of thinking and the manners that existed during the Second World War. Bailey (1979) asserts that in his first novel, Mailer's "ambition was to 'clarify a nation's vision of itself'" (p. 9). The novel focuses on the adventure of fourteen man during their

mission, who struggle to find a meaning for their life and the war. The events that developed in America during the Second World War explored the meaning of war and the social effect of it, showing in particular the problems that come with it. Mailer is the subject of almost unbroken praise for the complex portrayal of what is called "post war novel" captured by supreme concentration on manners.

As a novel of manners, *The Naked and the Dead* deals with the social ills and fragmentation, misery and the overwhelming social and political restraints that surround the American society during a specific time. It deals with issues that are related to the values, mores and customs of the American society. These issues are: struggle for survival and finding meaning for life, the behavior of man within the framework of the military experience, oppression, abuse, violence, systematic forces, brutality of combat, despair, destruction, prophetic vision, figurative image of war, social order, totalitarianism, power, fascism, machine, racism, postwar America, death, individuality and integrity against the mechanistic forces, alienation, nature's war, resisting machines, meaninglessness, irony, clash about political ideology, systemization, fragmentation of the American society structure, and the fatality of human relationships. As a novel of manners, Mailer presents dehumanization as a central theme where the soldiers are dehumanized and treated not as human beings but as machines. All these characteristics and issues place the novel in a long standing literary tradition known as the novel of manners.

*The Naked and the Dead* offers "traditional plot patterns, conventional, even stereotypical, characterizations, constricted settings, and familiar themes- all packaged in the comfortable wrappings of an attractive, recognizable, often aristocratic, social scene" (Weld, 1992, p. 9).

*The Naked and the Dead* shows postwar America, where Michael K. Glenday (2003) asserts that: "in its stress upon deterministic views of human behavior, and its realization of a world in which the individual is dehumanized and subjected to the efficient functioning of entrenched systems of control, *The Naked and the Dead* may seem a somewhat stale recapitulation of a vision and a style inappropriate to a changed postwar world." (p. 199)

According to Glicksberg (1960), *The Naked and the Dead* transformed Mailer into "an enemy of the people", the Cain of American culture" (p. 25) because he tries to pay people's attention to the reality of America and its disadvantages. It seems that this war is not a literal war and the army is just a symbol of the society. This military organization and what happens in it is a symbol of the American society that adopts totalitarianism, prejudice and discrimination. In fact, in his depiction of the soldiers' lives in the United States, Mailer criticizes the American society. During this struggle, individuals try to get their independence. Others submit to such a repressive society, which shows how the American society is fragmented (Qadoos, 2011, p. 6). Mailer (2013) asserts this fragmentation through Cummings' words: "the natural role of twentieth-century man is anxiety" (p.116). The army



and what happens in it represents the future. Leigh (1990) asserts that "to achieve freedom, the repression of power must first be overcome. Thus the army, which is *ipso facto* a coercive systemic power, is a model of society that is anathema to Hearn's moral-political code" (p. 15). Soldiers are afraid of the post war America that it is going to be like the military regime. Characters like Hearn think that post war America is controlled by those like Cummings, Hearn has nothing to do but to "sit back and wait for the Fascists to louse it up" (Mailer, 2013, p.388). Many critics assert that the novel introduces a prophetic vision of America that according to Qadoos (2011), it is a "spiritually dead" (p. 15). Others think that Mailer's first occupation is not the Second World War itself but the post-world war America and the problems following it, so the novel is a prophetic vision. Mailer's concern "is not primarily retrospective, 'not a historical preoccupation with the war itself', but is rather prophetic, to do with 'the crises of the post-war United States'" (Glenday, 2003, p. 199). According to Morris Wei-hsin Tien (1985), Mailer has a sense of self-doubt, inadequacy and fear and this appears in his writings where his characters suffer from these feelings. These feelings represent the struggle of the modern man, which makes Mailer "assume the role of the prophet" (p. 3). Mailer asserts that "America that will follow the war, an America divided between the spiritually 'naked' who insist upon living life as a romantic quest for ultimate values, and the spiritually 'dead' who embrace the Killing blandishments of wealth and power" (as cited in Qadoos, 2011, p. 3). Mailer highlights another important issue; which is the mechanistic system that controls those who are around it. Mailer criticizes technology and machines in his novel where the machine is responsible for people's actions. Machines are not subjects but objects. Mailer deals with the machine here in the novel not as a technology, but as a human being. Adams, Laura Gail (1972) asserts that Mailer's version of the machine has a human face (p. 3). Such a mechanistic system is represented in General Cummings and Sergeant Croft. Men in the novel are controlled by fear and desire for survival. The only way for them to escape is through fantasy and remembering their families. Their desire to survive transforms them into machines that only execute what is required from them. The officers order the soldiers to do that and to reject that, and they have no choice. Leaders program the men in the army the way they like, and they only have to obey. Cummings claims that "the machine technique of the century demand consolidation, and with that you've got to have fear, because the majority of men must be subservient to the machine, and it's not business they instinctively enjoy" (Mailer, 2013, p. 116). *The Naked and the Dead* "clarifies the function of the machine as the controlling metaphor in World War II novels" (Qadoos, 2011, p. 3). The novel presents the central struggle between the mechanistic system and individuals' attempts to get their freedom and keep their integrity.

Both Cummings and Croft aim at using men as machines. They use them to conquer Anopopei. Cummings and Croft use their men as machines for executing what they want and defeating the Japanese. They are inhumane characters who can kill easily. Mailer calls for manners through his rejection of the officers who only fight for more superiority, with no real cause for war. Those officers search only for stars. According to Randall H. Waldron (1972), both Croft and Cummings represent the mechanistic forces of the system (p. 273). Cummings' environmental background led him to be such an oppressive hungry power person. Men in the army are controlled by the sadistic Sergeant Croft, and by the cruel tyrant Cummings who tries to "subtly break down the morale of his men to keep them in line" ("The Naked and the Dead", 2013.). All men suffer in this war. They do not know why they fight.

The modern forces of industrialism are the reason behind producing pressured, hard-nosed driven molded and iron-handed characters. Cummings works like the machine for long hours; "on invasion day, (...) for five, six, eight hours he had directed the opening phases of the campaign without taking a halt" (Mailer, 2013, p. 49).

Hearn asserts that whatever the advantages Cummings has, he is like a machine that has no heart. He is a "apotheosizer of the machine" (Waldron, 1972, p. 273). He is a ruthless person. Cummings' father, Cyrus, is a prototype American financier industrialist. Consequently, Cummings is a product of industrialism. His teachings to Hearn to unfriend soldiers and to be cold-blooded person with men in the army were inherited from his father who taught him that "dog-eat-dog and business and industrial ethic is based on hate and fear" (Waldron, 1972, p. 273).

Hearn asserts that there is a certain vacancy in Cummings' face "like the vacancy of actors who play American congressmen" (Mailer, 2013, p. 52). This vacancy results from his "dedication to systemization" which makes him faceless (Qadoos, 2011, p. 12). In fact, many soldiers and officers are lost in the machine context and Hearn himself represents a whole generation that is lost in the machine context. Hearn usually observes Cummings' behaviors and emotions. During an interview with Cummings, Hearn sees that Cummings has many "personality disguises" (Qadoos, p. 12); "for the reporter, he had been the Professor as he had been The General, The Statesman, The Philosopher to any number of different men. Each of these poses had been a baffling mixture of the genuine and the sham" (Mailer, 2013, p. 52).

Those leaders that represent the mechanistic system do not search for freedom, justice or democracy. Men in this war like Goldstein do not find a reason for fighting; Goldstein writes a letter for his wife saying: "I don't know, honey, I get so sick at the whole thing at times I want to quit (...) Sometimes even with the Jews in Europe I don't know why we're fighting." (Mailer, 2013, p. 136).

Consequently, Mailer shows how the soldiers are angry and unsatisfied. They do not know what the purpose of the war is or what their problem with the Japanese is. One of

them complains: "what have I got against the goddam Japs?" (...) What's it to me if Cummings gets another star?" (Mailer, 2013, p. 83). Soldiers feel oppressed because while they fight, officers sleep in staterooms. One of them complains:

Did you notice how they treated the officers? They slept in staterooms when we were jammed in the hold like pigs. It's to make them feel superior, a chosen group. That's the same device Hitler uses when he makes the Germans think they're superior. (Mailer, 2013, pp. 32-33).

The American forces brought men of different backgrounds: Jews, Christians, Italian and Mexican Americans. However, they seem to agree that war is worthless. For example, Minetta feels anger towards power figures, he hopes to "expose the goddam army" (Mailer, 2013, p. 473). The role of "the annihilating systemizer sits well on Cummings" (Qadoos, 2011, p. 14). Cummings searches for "relocating human value in the soft machinery of the central nervous system and removing it from abstract, subjective mental states (faiths, moralities, and aesthetics)" (Leigh, 1990, p. 9).

General Cummings thinks that "the Army functions best when you're frightened of the man above you, and contemptuous of your subordinates" (Mailer, 2013, p. 115). For him, Men must be "broken, disciplined through poverty and terror, and trained to kill on instinct" (Mailer, 2013, p. 175). Cummings instills hatred in Hearn, he tells him that "in the Army the idea of individual personality is just a hindrance" (Mailer, 2013, p. 118). Through his conversation with Hearn, Cummings asserts that he is not annoyed or he does not care for people if they hate him and Hearn wonders: "I just think it's bad sense to have men hating you" (Mailer, 2013, p. 114). Cummings tells Hearn: "the trick is to make yourself an instrument of your own policy. Whether you like it or not, that's the highest effectiveness man has achieved" (Mailer, 2013, p. 53). Soldiers like to have their individual integrity, but they suffer a lot and are chained by the mechanistic forces of the system. Cummings is:

a man so imbued with the machine, its language, its power, its values, that he not only defends it as the instrument of military and political control, but has allowed it to penetrate to the very depths of his being (...) Thus Cummings' function as symbolic character has crucial implications for the central theme of the novel: that the machine is capable of extending its domination to the most fundamental levels of man's existence, of becoming a threat to his very nature and to his humanity. (Waldron, 1972, pp. 275-276).

*The Naked and the Dead* gives a realistic account in which the oppressive system stands as an obstacle in front of peoples' attempts to keep their dignity, individuality and integrity. In *The Naked and the Dead*, Cummings "seeks external power to regulate society and thereby control man through mechanistic, external systems such as the military and politics" (Qadoos, 2011, p. 13). Qadoos adds that Cummings is the system's king and Croft is Cummings's pawn (p. 14). Cummings "plays the god and his mission on

the island discloses his oppressive character; Anopopei is his "trial cosmos" and the troops are his worshippers. He practices his "mechanical divinity" on them, oppresses and crushes them into his orders". (Qadoos, 2011, p. 14)

Croft is a bad realistic example of such a mechanistic system. He is an iron-handed sergeant. Croft makes many things that show how he is a ruthless person. He is like the machine that has no feeling. Croft's even physical characteristics are like the machine. His "narrow triangular face was utterly without expression (...) he was efficient and strong and usually empty and his main cast of mind was a superior contempt toward nearly all other men. He hated weakness and he loved practically nothing" (Mailer, 2013, p. 102). When one of Croft's men finds a bird, he crushes it in his hand. In an attempt to control the platoon, Croft manipulates Hearn, allows him to walk into the Japanese position intentionally, and orders Martinez to report to him and not to Hearn, and coldly plans his death. Croft "practices violence with enjoyment and kills the Japanese the way a hunter does it" (Qadoos, 2011, p. 8). He enjoys killing; he enjoys manipulating the Japanese soldier. He gives him a cigarette and allows him to drink and makes him think that he is safe and after that he shoots him in cold blood as if he hunts a bird.

When one of the men asks why Croft is that way, another answers:

Oh, there are answers. He is that way because of the corruption-of-the-society. He is that way because the devil has claimed him for one of his own. It is because he is a Texan; it is because he has renounced God. He is that kind of man because the only woman he ever loved cheated on him, or he was born that way, or he was having problems of adjustment. (Mailer, 2013, p. 102)

Although Croft is a strong man, he is an empty character. He is considered by the men to be "the best platoon sergeant in the Army and the meanest" (Mailer, 2013, p. 212). Like Cummings, Croft has no heart. Croft orders burning the Japanese alive upon discovering the patrol. When Wilson is wounded, Croft orders to leave him, while Hearn insists on taking him back to headquarters, but Wilson dies later. Croft insults Roth calling him a lousy Jew, which makes the soldier fall to death. Croft represents the immoral cold-blooded killer of innocence and the psychopath in the novel. Brown says, "I may not have ice instead of blood in my veins the way Croft has" (Mailer, 2013, p. 78).

Finally, such a mechanistic system that has no heart claims through Cummings that "the individual soldier in that army is a more effective soldier the poorer his standard of living has been in the past" (Mailer, 2013, p. 174).

Mailer presents totalitarianism as an important characteristic of the American society; he insists that America is "a democracy of systems, not of men" (as cited in Qadoos, 2011, p. 7). Peter Baehr (2010) defines totalitarianism as "a concept rooted in the horror of modern war, revolution, terror, genocide, and, since 1945, the threat of nuclear annihilation" (p.10). Mailer shows that the Second World War shows the USA as a "a

totalitarian state characterized by military-style hierarchy and rigid social control" (Kinder, 2005, p. 197). In fact, Mailer shows how America is going to destroy itself by totalitarianism. He tries to present how America is a totalitarian society in which the people fall between the forces of the system, and their attempts to keep their integrity are resisted. Jean Radford (1975) claims that Cummings is "brand of fascism, combining individualism and idealism with a dream of totalitarianism" (p. 48). Cummings is a fascist character; he prefers totalitarianism to communism because totalitarianism is "grounded firmly in men's actual natures" (Mailer, 2013, p. 214). He tells Hearn: "understand your class and work within its limits. Marxist lesson with a reverse twist" (Mailer, 2013, p. 110). He invades Hearn's mind and tries to instill in him that "to make an Army work you have to have every man in it fitted into a fear ladder. Men in prison camps, deserters" (Mailer, 2013, p. 115).

Like Cummings, Croft is totalitarian:

Croft's nature subverts crucial features of the totalitarianism which Mailer abhors (...) His urges are irrational, instinctive, influenced by the pull of blood from a primitive ancestry; he too owns his ancestors' meanness, their fronting drive to 'push down' and 'push in' to new, unknown territory. (Glenday, 2003, p. 206)

Croft does not allow anyone to rebel and those who rebel are dismissed. Croft even does not want any leader like Hearn to buddy or talk with the soldiers.

Mailer calls for equality through his attack on racism that he himself was exposed to during the service. Mailer presents the Jews as a target of abuse and slurs in the novel. As a Mexican American, not only did Sergeant Julio Martinez suffer a lot from racism and prejudice during his mission in the army but he also suffered from it in the beginning of his life where he preferred to fly planes, and he could not because of the prejudice which pushed him to be a Sergeant. Polack asserts that in the American society, even taking a good position does not mean that a non-white person is like the whites.

*The Naked and the Dead* is an anti-fascist novel. The novel's central theme is more than the Second World War; the novel reflects Mailer's fear that America is going to be fascist through Truman's election (Glenday, 2003, p. 197). General Cummings and his troops invade the fictional island-Anopopei-to attack the Japanese. Both Croft and Cummings try to achieve the naked ambitions, they are sure and confident of their aims. For Cummings, fascism is a legal right, and there is nothing but power to change the American society after Hitler's Germany has been defeated. Men in the army are controlled by death and fear. They wander on the bodies of the Japanese.

Mailer presents the domestic fascism on the right wing. In an interview with an American conservative, Mailer asserts that he is "left conservative" (Mailer, 2002, p. 8). Cummings attacks Marxism and considers its theory of power as weak. He indicates that "the root of all the liberals' ineffectiveness comes right sprang out of the desperate suspension in which they have to hold their

minds" (Mailer, 2013, p. 114). Consequently, he usually attacks Hearn's ideology and considers his left-liberal perspective as "claptrap" (Mailer, 2013, p. 114). Hearn's weakness and lack of self-confidence make Cummings overcome him.

Mailer is not the only person who was afraid of the spread of fascism in the American society, but all the leftist circles after the second world were also. Consequently, the novel's predominant political theme is the "resurgence of conservative and rightist power as viewed by an increasingly beleaguered and institutionally feeble leftist culture" (Leigh, 1990, p. 5). Cummings does not want freedom; he sees it as harmful and excessive, he wants a more controlled society not an opened one. He does not care about the humans and he wants to form people as if they are pieces of plastic. He asserts, "I don't care what kind of man you give me, if I have him long enough I'll make him afraid" (Mailer, 2013, p. 115). Cummings is "a tyrant with a velvet voice, it is true, but undeniably a tyrant" (Mailer, 2013, p. 50). Croft is another fascist with whom Hearn struggles "to maintain his damaged values" (Leigh, 1990, p. 19). Hearn's death by a machine gun bullet that passed through his chest "terminates the left-liberal inquiry into power" (Leigh, 1990, p. 19). The dramatic manner of Hearn's death "underscores the immediacy and potency of the potential domestic right-wing threat as perceived by Mailer, Wallace and the American left. Since the novel's overall program precludes any endorsement of the right-wing values he is attacking" (Leigh, 1990, p. 21).

Moreover, Leigh (1990) asserts that the most "precise link between the post-war political scene and the fiction of *The Naked and the Dead* is Henry Wallace" (p. 5). Leigh asserts that Mailer, like Wallace, "adopts a prophetic stance in response to the recession of leftist influence, divining a reactionary's century" (p. 7). Mailer was afraid of Truman's election that would bring fascism. Mailer was influenced mostly by Wallace's ideas. Wallace refused Truman's Democratic Party, he had his own party, the progressive party, and Mailer belonged to it in 1948. Wallace's ideas enabled Mailer to deal with political issues in his novel. Wallace was worried because of the "restriction of civil liberties in the United States" (Leigh, 1990, p. 6). In fact, the political influences and events that Mailer shows in his novel do not exactly reflect the historical data that happened in the Second World War as they represent Mailer's political concerns, where he according to Leigh (1990) supports Wallace who was afraid that the Second World War would present "a period of totalitarianism in the American history" (p. 7).

Political power is a central theme in the novel. According to Stanelly Gutmasn, *The Naked and the Dead* is an "attempt to present a dilemma of power from a variety of perspectives" (Leigh, 1990, p. 1). *The Naked and the Dead* shows how modern man lives a dangerous life. He is going to lose his integrity, identity because of those who assume power and consider themselves gods. The power of politics and society is going to destroy people's sense of self. Both



Croft and Cummings think that the "historical forces can be converted to individual power. The individual understands and controls the pattern of power when he "achieves God" (277)" (Bailey, 1979, p. 11).

Beginning with the first symbol of power in the novel, one can find that Cummings is a power hungry person. He obtained "a simple childish joy from seeing the troops march past in clean uniforms, in picking a file at random and inspecting their rifles" (Mailer, 2013, p. 477). Cummings is thirsty for blood, for more wars and fighting to the extent that he refused to acknowledge that the war ended, he wants to fight more and more. Cummings' love for power makes him adore and enjoy the sounds of war, he "was listening to the dull muted tones of the explosion (...) he felt such power that it was beyond joy; he was calm and sober" (Mailer, 2013, p. 375-376).

Moreover, Cummings tries to instill in Hearn that in this moment of a great destiny for America, the only mortality is power. For Cummings, the reason behind the war is not ideals but "power concentration" (Qadoos, 2011, p. 14). For Cummings the "only way you generate the proper attitude of awe and obedience is through immense and disproportionate power" (Mailer, 2013, p. 216).

Cummings does not allow anyone to rebel and if someone did, burning is the result. He asserts that "there's one thing about power (...) When there are little surges of resistance at the middle levels, it merely calls for more power to be directed downward, to burn it out" (Mailer, 2013, p. 215). Cummings represents those leaders in the Second World War, who were hungry for power and whose search for it was their driving force. Cummings is "Mailer's prototypal commercial man to whom power is morality and manipulation is virtue" (Qadoos, 2011, p. 11). Moreover, Croft hates weakness and adores power. He assumes the role of organization where he manipulates the soldiers and they are afraid of him. He exploits them. He "wants to be himself but he struggles with his anti-self; his fear, weakness and surrender to the unknown and unseen" (Qadoos, 2011, p. 9). He thinks that fear must surround his men to prove his power. Whatever he does, he does not regret. He wants to conquer the world and the mountain. According to Qadoos, "Croft's ideals: 'Survival on any terms' is a main issue in the novel" (p. 9). It seems that America is a totalitarian society that turns to violence and calls it power. Consequently, Mailer relates power to violence and he shows this in Cummings, an actor who finds in Hitler the "interpreter of twentieth century man" (Mailer, 2013, p. 209).

The discussions of political issues and the struggle and clash of political ideology represent a main theme in the novel. Mailer presents the struggle between fascism that is represented in Cummings and Croft and liberalism that is represented in Hearn, Goldstein and Ridges. Hearn and Cummings' conflict of ideas about the true political ideology is a central theme in the novel. Both of them discuss the advantages and the disadvantages of such a system.

Individuality against the political system and resisting the machine are apparent themes in *The Naked and the Dead* where the characters attempt to achieve their own integrity and consequently they struggle with this mechanistic forces. The novel shows how people struggle to survive and have a meaning for their life. They try to retain their dignity, which gives the novel a great value.

The novel shows how men in this war search for their psychic needs and work behind their basic drives. All the men in the war are forced to struggle with death, "each man is forced to confront the fact of death and is stripped 'naked' by the experience- forced to confront the most basic questions about man's existence" (Radford, 1975, pp. 7-8).

Mailer attacks the world of machine that makes people servants to it. For Qadoos (2011), Mailer thinks that:

No matter how powerful the system is, man's will is stronger. He rejects robot-like characters whose aim is to systematize life and people and deny man's consciousness, individuality and will. *The Naked and the Dead* presents a view and attitude of man within the framework of military experience. (p. 15)

There are many characters who try to get rid of the chains of machine, and they do not like to be trapped within. They want to achieve their individuality, so they resist the mechanistic forces. Valsen, Hearn and Ridges reject the conventions of the machine. Waldron (1972) asserts that the "principal burden of the novel is to explore the condition of man struggling against the depersonalizing forces of modern society: the forces of "the machine." (...) war, army, and battle stand as a complex of figures for the machine age" (p. 273).

Individuals need to resist the mechanistic system and the forces of totalitarianism. Hearn, Valsen and Ridges as individuals struggle with the American system imposed upon them. Hearn tries to resist such a mechanistic system and refuses its principles, which make him threatened by imprisonment and punishment. He represents Marxism and liberalism in the novel, and he calls for equality and attacks oppression. He tries to get rid of the gap between commanders and soldiers. He "seems ideally positioned to embody the moral center in this desperate society" (Miller, 1989, p. 80):

Mailer's proximity to Hearn performs a vital function. It assists in the creation of a morally and emotionally sympathetic character who is able to counteract the personal and political excesses of the other two major characters in the novel. Hearn witnesses, interprets and opposes the reactionaries on Mailer's behalf. Hearn occupies a middle position, part of the novel's naturalism and realism, yet a reliable guide to the farther reaches of right-wing theory and practice. (Leigh, 1990, p. 114)

When Hearn tries to threaten the power of the machine that is represented in Cummings by putting a cigarette on the General's tent floor "in an act of wildly courageous defiance of that system" (Waldron, 1972, p. 275), Cummings "cannot tolerate the threat to that power that Hearn now represents for him. Hearn is ordered to the

patrol and to his death" (Waldron, p. 275). Cummings not only forces Hearn to his knees, but he also is ordered to the patrol and to death because he just threatened the power of the system. In fact, "General gave Hearn an intimation of dread" (Mailer, 2013, p. 111). At this moment, Hearn feels how he is violated and decides not to be violated again. Hearn resists Croft's and Cummings' fascism. He is considered the most apparent threat and enemy to Croft and Cummings. Valsen and Hearn try to get their integrity and resist the mechanistic forces embodied in Cummings and Croft. They refuse "to be trapped in the conventions of the military machine; they are each examples of extreme individualism, resisting the system's imperative of efficiency" (Glenday, 2003, p. 205). Private Valsen resists authority and often clashes with Croft. Valsen hates the machine and its threat. Croft is like a machine; he is cold. Valsen resists him. His struggle with the mechanistic system is likened to the jungle's resistance to the machine. Croft asks obedience and Valsen rejects being controlled by anyone. Valsen resists dehumanization practiced by Croft. He not only contradicts Croft physically, but also contradicts him in all aspects, Croft represents the machine and Valsen represents the nature that resists the systematic forces. Goldstein and Ridges resist the forces that are imposed upon them by the surrounding circumstances. They "struggle to maintain ideas that go beyond the survival principle" (Radford, 1975, p. 14). Mailer suggests that they behave such a way because they respect their religion. When Goldstein and Ridges saw the storm that uprooted their tents, Goldstein felt "a deep excitement as if he were witnessing creation" and Ridges felt "the throbbing of the jungle as a part of himself, the earth, which had turned to a golden mud" seemed alive to him" (Mailer, 2013, p. 62).

Goldstein and Ridges reject the values of the army: "in their struggles they uphold the distinction between man and beast and achieve a mutual recognition and solidarity which Mailer suggests is valuable" (Radford, 1975, p. 15). Both Goldstein and Ridges like goodness that stems from their religious beliefs, but they are unable to change the world. As a novel of manners, *The Naked and the Dead* shows the contradiction between the individuals and the system, where there is disharmony between the moral choice and the political conditions. Moreover, *The Naked and the Dead* presents nature's resistance to the mechanistic forces as an important theme. In fact, the efforts of Hearn and Valsen "to preserve their human integrity by resisting the mechanistic intimidations of Cummings and Croft are paralleled by the broader resistance of nature to the threat of violation by the machine" (Waldron, 1972, p. 5). In fact, it is apparent that the war is between the Japanese and the American army, but there is another war between the machine and the nature, that is represented in many scenes like rain, mountain and jungle.

The jungle is an apparent obstacle in the platoon way, where it is "damp and rife and hot" (Mailer, 2013, p. 27). The branches of the trees hurt the men seriously.

"Cummings' attempts to penetrate the jungle are resisted by the most elemental forces of nature" (Waldron, 1972, p. 5). Heat weakens the platoon and makes the men exhausted through their fight with the enemy. Rain represents another obstacle during the platoon's advance to the enemy. According to Waldron, it "batters down the bivouacs and washes away the roads" (p. 5). Mountain Anaka is an important symbol of nature's resistance to the mechanistic forces. Mailer asserts that the mountain refers to "death and man's creative urge, fate, [and] man's desire to conquer the elements" (Mailer, 1988, p. 7). Nature opposes Croft when he tries to hike up the mountain. Croft forces his men to advance and hike up the mountain. He challenges it and the result is the death of some men. The Mountain ruined Valsen's health and led to the death of Roth. Croft challenges the mountain and tries to dominate it "but the mountain tormented him" (Mailer, 2013, p. 329). Consequently, one finds that Cummings and Croft's attempts to penetrate nature fail because nature is stronger. Furthermore, death dominates all the scenes in the novel. Cummings and Croft drive the men to death. Croft asks them to do dangerous actions. Soldiers are afraid of these aggressive behaviors. They want to reject Croft's orders and challenge his authority, but Croft threatens to kill them. The following scene shows the fatality of war and how death dominates the novel:

the men wandered through the field (...) In the grass they could see the twisted bodies of a few dead men, and they lay very far from repose, their bodies frozen in the midst of an intense contortion (...) A few yards away a destroyed Japanese half-track and an American tank had careened on their sides, leaning against each other like old houses ready to totter (...) His head was crushed from his ear to his jaw and it lay sodden on the running board of the vehicle as if it were a beanbag. One of his legs was thrust tensely through the shattered glass of the windshield and the other one (...) seemed to have a separate existence from him. Another Japanese lay on his back a short distance away. He had a great hole in his intestines (...) His legs and buttocks had swollen so that they stretched his pants until they were the skin-tight trousers of a Napoleonic dandy. (Mailer, 2013, p. 139)

The novel tells the death of many remarkable members like Hennessey, Wilson, Hearn and Roth. Lieutenant Hearn "was killed by a machine gun bullet which passed through his chest" (Mailer, 2013, p. 400). Men in this army suffer a lot, they remember the scene of death and feel helpless. Gallagher "was remembering how the legs and arms of the Japanese prisoner had twitched for a second after Croft had shot him. "Just like wringing the neck of a fuggin chicken," he muttered surlily" (Mailer, 2013, p. 131). A Japanese man does not find a reason for what happens with them, he says:

I think, I am born and I die. I am born, I live, and I am to die, (...) I am going to die. I am born, I am dead. I ask myself -- WHY? I am born, I am to die. WHY? WHY? What is the meaning? (Mailer, 2013, p. 163)



Fear is an apparent theme in the novel. Mailer presents how soldiers feel fear during war, which represents fear in real life. This period is full of fear in which the soldiers live for months waiting to kill or be killed to defeat or be defeated and to dominate or be dominated, "NOBODY COULD sleep (...) all through the convoy, there was a knowledge that in a few hours some of them were going to be dead" (Mailer, 2013, p. 1).

The novel narrates uncountable scenes that express men's fear. For example, when Wilson calls Goldstein; "his voice was mild, but it had an expectant fearful quality in it as if he knew he would be abused" (Mailer, 2013, p. 134). Hennessey cannot control himself during the opening action scene, he "defecates in his pants during the opening action scene (...) Hennessey was frightened (...) Hennessey pulled his left trouser out of his legging, rolled it up to expose his knee" (Mailer, 2013, p. 18). Stanley asserts that all men are afraid:

I tell ya, I'm scared all the time, and Red is too. And Gallagher (...) he's scared, and Martinez is the best little scout you could ever want but he's even more scared than I am, and even Wilson although he don't let on much is none too happy. (Mailer, 2013, p. 11)

Cummings orders Hearn to treat the soldiers inhumanly and tries to convince him that war has no morals, it equals killing and death. He asks him to instill fear and hatred in his soldiers, but Hearn rejects these immoral notions. Even Stanley wonders "how he could lead men in combat when he was so terrified himself" (Mailer, 2013, p.198). Most men in the war feel alienated. They also feel oppressed, they work like machines and there are no equality between them and the leaders even in mission and the place of the sleeping or staying where leaders sleep in staterooms, while the soldiers stay crowded in small rooms.

Goldstein feels alienated:

at night in his tent he would lie awake and plan for his future, or think of his son, or try to imagine where his wife would be at that moment (...) Once his eyes filled with tears and he shook his head angrily. Why did they hate him so? he asked himself (...) He was tired of hoping to make friends with them; they didn't want to get along with him, they hated him. (Mailer, 2013, p. 135)

Hearn is an alienated character. Although he usually fights the oppressive power of Cummings and does not trust Cummings' ideas about imposing fear on their men and tries to bridge the gap between commanders and soldiers, he is not a totally positive character. He is a passive one; according to Mailer, Hearn is "a despised image of myself" (as cited in Manso, 2008, p. 101). He is an idealist, but he is weak, he cannot challenge Cummings' authority. Hearn is a Jewish man whose physical appearance and immobile face and "its effect on others belong to the cultural stereotype of Jewish alienation" (Leigh, 1990, p. 13). He is socially uncomfortable and distrusted by those who are around him: "he was above all the kind of man other men love to see humiliated" (Mailer, 2013, p. 218). Hearn is alienated. He cannot involve with others. The men around him do not depend on him and distrust him. He does not

try to have friends. Hearn and Valsen share a weakness in their response to Cummings and Croft. They cannot achieve heroic stature and cannot keep their integrity. They cannot involve with others and they withdraw from the social bonds. They are confused. After the depression of the 1930, Valsen suffered from poverty which made him feel old at twenty three years old. When Valsen feels sympathy for anyone, he resists such a feeling. He left the woman and child he lived with them a happy life in order to sink in drinking. He leaves the platoon when he feels a sympathy for its members. He wants to feel that he is independent. He rejects any closeness he feels for others like Gallagher, Roth and Wyman; "he allowed himself to like no-one so well that it would hurt if he was lost" (Mailer, 2013, p. 381).

It seems that Mailer focuses on the Jewish alienation, where he presents another Jew who suffers a lot from loneliness: "Roth was irritated. Just because he was a Jew too (...) it made him feel a little frustrated" (Mailer, 2013, p. 34). Poverty alienates Polack and makes grow up in the streets of Chicago. Moreover, Gallenger is alienated. His wife died during childbirth. He usually feels sorry for himself; "everything turned out lousy for him sooner or later" (Mailer, 2013, p. 4). Men here cannot accept war and death, but they are imposed to fight because of the systematic power. They do not understand the war and there is less concern with the social bonds and familial relationships. There is a constant denial of humanity. Moreover, all the characters suffer from despair. They are unable to do anything because everything is beyond their control. According to Chester E. Eisinger (1963), "in this novel nobody wins. Mailer's pessimism is implicit in the naturalistic literary philosophy that he chose as the very ground upon which his book would stand" (p. 37). Men in the army feel hopelessness. Many members of the platoon die like Wilson, which makes the other members feel hopelessness. Red Valsen is desperate. He sees the rotten bodies of the Japanese and feels hopeless:

very deep inside himself he was thinking that this was a man who had once wanted things (...) Red was realizing with surprise and shock, as if he were looking at a corpse for the first time, that a man was really a very fragile thing. (Mailer, 2013, p. 142)

According to Valsen, Hennessey was killed because he is a straight man; "he was the kind of kid who would put away money for marriage before he even had a girl. It was what you got for following the rule book" (Mailer, 2013, p. 8). Hearn's and Valsen's deaths show that "defiance is fruitless" (Sreejith, 2010, p. 3). They resisted for a long time, but their resistance has no result. Consequently, they suffer from despair. For Valsen, "everything is crapped up, everything is phony, everything curdles when you touch it" (Mailer, 2013, p. 233). Valsen is controlled by "a particular blend of pessimism and fatalism" (Qadoos, 2011, p. 5). He feels hopeless and helpless, especially when he sees the Japanese rotten bodies and "notes their overpowering stench which becomes hopeless, "sober and weary"" (Qadoos, p. 5). For Hearn, "if you searched

something long enough, it always turned to dirt" (Mailer, 2013, p. 120).

Moreover, Oscar Ridges suffers from despair during their return from a march turning to the beach, where he "wept out of bitterness (...) longing and despair; he wept from exhaustion (...) failure and the shattering naked conviction that nothing mattered" (Mailer, 2013, p. 453). In fact, not only does Ridges feel desperate, but almost all of the men also feel desperate and hopeless because they cannot control anything. In fact, the novel presents the events through irony which is a main characteristic of the novel of manners, even the song they sing at the end of the novel is a kind of irony; "roll me over/ lay me down/ and do it again" (Mailer, 2013, p. 470). It seems that all characters fail to achieve what they want. Cummings could not achieve the great success he tried to do. When he returns to the camp, he finds that victory came easily. Cummings has no role in the victory; the action of inefficient Major Dalleson led to the victory, "for a moment he almost admitted that he had had very little or perhaps nothing at all to do with this victory (...) it caused him a deep depression" (Mailer, 2013, p. 475).

Cummings could not dominate the nature. All the struggle along the novel is useless. The novel ends with irony. The machine could defeat the man. Modern life leaves the man passive and helpless. Valsen feels desperate; he cannot achieve anything. He says, "You carried it alone" (Mailer, 2013, p. 468). This shows that this war has no purpose. The way Croft drives the platoon deserves irony; "driven by Croft almost to the summit of Mount Anaka, they blunder into a nest of hornets from whose stings they flee in terror down mountain-side, discarding their weapons and equipment as they go" (Qadoos, 2011, p. 8).

All characters are desperate. In fact, what's painful is that neither sides triumphs over the other, where Hearn is dead, Valsen's pride is defeated, Cummings' ambition is thwarted and Croft is beaten (Glenday, 2003, p. 202). Although Croft and Cummings achieved victory and defeated the Japanese, they could not achieve it the way they want, which confirms the failure of the mechanistic forces and the success and victory of humanism. Although they are able to force people to do what they want, Cummings and Croft fail because of their tyrannical ambitions and their exaggerated dream of power and fascism. They forget that they have not the sufficient experience and there are natural obstacles that are able to destroy their realms.

As a novel of manners, *The Naked and the Dead* tackles social issues like the relationships between husbands and wives. *The Naked and the Dead* presents infidelity. For example, Sergeant Brown feels restless; he does not trust his wife. He thinks that she betrays him and he decides to kill her when he returns. He tells Stanely "there isn't a woman you can trust" (Mailer, 2013, p. 9). Brown tries to convince those who are around him that all women are unfaithful. He says that "Toglio's going to go back and find his wife fooling around with anything that wears pants" (Mailer, 2013, p. 121). Polack doesn't trust his wife, he says "I wouldn't trust those bitches with a nickel"

(Mailer, 2013, p. 121). Robert Solotareff asserts that the novel has "a strong Marxist orientation with its generally prevailing social determinism, its emphasis on class structure, class consciousness, and historical process, and its critique of the American ruling class" (as cited in Leigh, 1990, p. 3). Mailer "wanted to be heard in any polemic subject that could have mattered to society and, as we said at the beginning, be influential" (Rodríguez, 2008, p. 99). The novel presents Hearn as Mailer's spokesman. Mailer is a compromised political activist who involved himself in the socio-political affairs. At the age of thirty two, he defined himself as a "Marxian anarchist" (Rodríguez, 2008, p.99). Mailer believes that he must have a role in the development of his society and anything that matters his society, he must involve in it. Hearn has a realistic authority and a psychological depth. He is the positive side in the novel, who resists fascism. Hearn represents goodness, He is unable to stay when Croft comes because "if he stayed, he would become another Croft" (Mailer, 2013, p. 389). Cummings and Hearn are contradicted in their ideas and emotions; "Hearn is a naive and uncompromising idealist, whose theoretical hope is that history will cyclically produce "certain great ethical ideas" (153)" (Bailey, 1979, p. 10). Cummings does not care about revolution and he attacks Marxism:

But you've a big gamble there," Hearn said. "If we lose the war, you've produced a revolution. It seems to me in terms of your interest it would be better to lose the war by being over good to the men, and avoid the revolution afterward. "Cummings laughed, "That would be one of your liberal weeklies, wouldn't it? You're an ass, Robert. We're not going to lose the war, and if we did, you don't think Hitler would grant a revolution, do you?" "Then what you're saying is that you people can't lose the war either way." "You people, you people," the General parroted. "That's a bit of Marxism, isn't it, the great big capitalist conspiracy. Just how do you know so much about Marxism?" "I've played around with it." (Mailer, 2013, pp. 115-116)

Finally, *The Naked and the Dead* tackles many issues that are related to customs, ways of thinking, and the values of the American society. It presents the problems and the social ills of the American society during the Second World War to refer to the reality of the society during that time. *The Naked and the Dead* contains many characteristics of the novel of manners, that it shows global and personal struggle in the American society. The novel focuses on the social mores of a specific group. *The Naked and the Dead* not only presents the political side, but other sides as well. It is a kind of satire and irony to the American society that is characterized by totalitarianism. Mailer describes the American society well and shows the characters' pressure, fear, despair, and alienation and many other problems following the Second World War. Mailer not only deals with political issues, but he also presents social issues like love, which place the novel in a long-standing literary tradition known as the novel of manners.

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