FROM HERE TO ETERNITY AND *THE NAKED AND THE DEAD*: PREMIERE TO ETERNITY?

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> The novelist deals with personality, with characters wearing their *personae* or social masks. He needs the framework of a stable society, and many of our best novelists have been conventional to the verge of fussiness. The romancer deals with individuality, with characters *in vacuo* idealized by revery, and, however conservative he may be, something nihilistic and untamable is likely to keep breaking out of his pages.
>
> —Northrop Frye ("*The Four Forms of Prose Fiction*" 584)

> The epic requires as its object the occurrence of an action which must achieve expression in the whole breadth of its circumstance and relations as a rich event connected with the total world of a nation and epoch.
>
> —Hegel (qtd. in Moretti, *Modern Epic* 11)

James Jones was a born novelist. Norman Mailer was a born writer. This distinction holds, I believe, across the two authors' life work. I illustrate this distinction here for only the authors' first published novels, *The Naked and the Dead* and *From Here to Eternity*. However, I believe these illustrations help assess not only the quality of these two books, but each author's career.

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TWO TYPES OF FICTION

From Here to Eternity

In the classical taxonomic terms of Northrop Frye, *From Here to Eternity* is very much what Frye means by a "novel." Its characters do indeed wear "their *personae* or social masks" (Frye, "The Four Forms" 584). Robert E. Lee Prewitt is very much a Private First Class, Milton Anthony Warden a Sergeant, Ms. Karen Holmes a housewife. (They are vivid and memorable, yet seldom capitalize much on eccentrics as mark such well-remembered Dickens characters as *David Copperfield*'s Mr. Macawber or *Martin Chuzzlewit*'s Seth Pecksniff.) The book's stable societal framework is the U.S. Army just preceding World War II. Right at *Eternity*'s outset we are given the novelistic focus on a character in social context:

> When he finished packing, he walked out on to the third-floor porch of the barracks brushing the dust from his hands, a very neat and deceptively slim young man in the summer khakis that were still early morning fresh.
>
> He leaned his elbows on the porch edge and stood looking down though the screen at the familiar scene of the barracks square laid out below with the tiers of porches dark in the face of the three-story concrete barracks fronting on the square. He was feeling a half-familiar affection for this vantage point that he was leaving.
>
> Below him under the blows of the February Hawaiian sun the quadrangle gasped defenselessly, like an exhausted fighter. Through the heat haze and the thin mid-morning film of the parched red dust came up a muted orchestra of sounds: the clankings of steel-wheeled carts bouncing over brick, the slappings of oiled leather slingstraps, the shuffling beat of scorched shoesoles, the hoarse expletives of irritated noncoms.
>
> Somewhere along the line, he thought, these things have become your heritage. You are multiplied by each sound that you hear. And you cannot deny them, without denying with them the purpose of your own existence. Yet now, he told himself, you are denying them, by renouncing the place that they have given you. (3)

By the end of Chapter Two, we know of principal protagonist Prewitt's place in the company he is leaving and we know something of the Kentucky mountains from which he hails. Within a few chapters more we are deeply engaged with Prewitt in his new world of Company G: the stern but fatherly Warden, the jokester friend Pfc. Maggio, company commander Holmes, and the numerous sharply drawn men who'll "soljer" and chat and play cards with Prewitt and try to force him to box for the Company or almost make him wish he had, including Anderson, Bloom, Chaote, Kowalski, Leva, Mazzioli, Preem, and Stark.

The dialogue is masterful. Physical and social action clearly is evoked by concrete description and by adept use of the empathetic first person indirect, a vivid and seamlessly shifting sense of point of view on the action and its social circumstance. If there is a mode of writing other than Frye's "novel" that is aptly evoked by *Eternity,* it is Frye's "drama" in which the author is hidden from the audience and audience experiences content directly (*Anatomy* 239). Characters jump off the page as in this early exchange between Prewitt and Maggio:

> "If I had knew," he said to Prewitt, whose bunk was two beds from his own in Chief Choate's squad, "if I had only knew what this man's Army had been like. Of all the people in this outfit, they give that vacant Pfc to Bloom. Because he is a punchie."
>
> What did you expect, Angelo?" Prew grinned.
>
> "He aint even a good soljer, mind you," Maggio said bitterly. "He's ony just a punchie. I'm only out of ree-croot drill a month and I'm a better soljer than Bloom is."
>
> "Soljerin aint what does it."
>
> "But it ought a be. You wait, man. If I ever get out of this Army, you just wait. Draft or no draft, they'll never get me back."
>
> "Balls," Prew grinned. "You got all the makins of a thirty year man. I can see it on you a block away."
>
> "Dont say that," Maggio said, violently. "I mean it. I like you, but I dont like even you that much. Thirty year man! Not me, buddy. If I'm goin to be a valet, yard man, and general handyman for some fuckin officer, I'm goin to get paid for it, see?"
>
> "You'll re-enlist," Prew said.

> "I'll re-enlist," Maggio said chanting the old bugle call parody, "in a pig's ass hole. If anybody should of had that rating, man, you should of had it. You're the best soljer in this outfit for my dough. By a hunert million miles." (127)

Dramatic conflict arises with great naturalness and force from the well-etched milieu:

> Andy was dealing when the saloon doors opened and Pfc Bloom came in, pushing the door back so hard it banged against the wall and the swung back and forth squeaking loudly. Pfc Bloom advanced on the men around the blanket with a heavy, meaty confidence grinning and shaking his flat kinky head, so big the tremendous shoulders seemed to fill the door.
>
> "Quiet, jerk," Maggio said. "You want the CQ up here and break up the game?"
>
> "To hell with the CQ," Bloom said, in his customary load vice. "And you too, you little Wop."
>
> A transformation went over Maggio. He stood up and walked around the blanket, up to the huge Bloom who towered over him.
>
> "Listen," he said in a contorted voice. "I'm particular who calls me Wop. I aint big and tough, and I aint one of Dynamite's third rate punchies. But I'm still Maggio to you. I wont mess with you. I work you over, I'll do it with a chair or a knife." He stared up at Bloom, his thin face twisted, his eyes blazing.
>
> "Oh yeah?" Bloom said.
>
> "Yeah, yeah," Maggio said sarcastically. Bloom took a step toward him and he leaned his head forward pugnaciously on the thin bony shoulders, and there was the sudden attentive silence that always precedes a fight.
>
> "Lay off, Bloom," Prew said, surprised at the clear loudness of his voice in the silence. "Come on and sit down, Angelo. Five up to you."
>
> "I call," Maggio said without looking around. "Take off, you bum," he said over his shoulder as he walked away. Bloom laughed after him self-confidently and nastily. (137)

Though the book does not appear to aspire to any allegorical significance beyond easily generalizable but hardly unusual outsider-insider, self-society, subordinate-superordinate tensions central to its dramatic construction, its typical "dramatic-novelistic" mode of expression incisively and elaborately illustrates insights into the relation of individual to society within the specifcally military hierarchal orders. And *Eternity* rises eloquently to nice ironies of social aspiration and class, war and peace, as in the book's final pages on the status distortions of Lerene's recollections of Prewitt's patriotism and war. Take Karen Holmes and her son on the latter as they leave Honolulu Harbor:

> From this far out, if you did not already know it was there you couldnt have seen it.
>
> Behind her, the five boys had swelled to seven and had given up being shuffleboards and taken to shooting at each other with cocked thumbs and explosive "Bohww!"s from behind corners and stanchions.
>
> She took the six flower leis off over her head and dropped them over the side. This was as good a place to drop them over as any. Diamond head, Koko Head, Makapuu Head. Perhaps Koko Head was the best place, really. The six leis fell together and the wind blew them back against the side of the ship and out of sight and she did not see them light on the water.
>
> "Mother," her son said from behind her. "I'm hungry. When do we eat on this old boat?"
>
> "Pretty soon now," she said.
>
> "Mother, do you think the war will last long enough so I can graduate from the Point and be in it? Jerry Wilcox said it wouldnt."
>
> "No," she said, "I dont think it'll last that long."
>
> "Well, gee whiz, mother," her son said, "I want to be in it."
>
> "Well, cheer up," Karen said, "and dont let it worry you. You may miss this one, but you'll be just the right age for the next one."
>
> "You really think so, mother?" her son said anxiously. (858)

The dramatic arch of the multi-stranded narrative is strong and clear. Prewitt's refusal to box for the company, Maggio's mounting resistance to

abuses of the military power and class structures, and Warden's bold consummation of his desire for Karen Holmes provide parallel disequilibria that trigger narrative of beleaguered—and in Prewitt and Maggio's cases, doomed quests for "soljer" autonomy within a hierarchical social order. Each of these three central narratives cascades outward, rippling across the others: Maggio's rebelliousness is intensified by Prewitt's "treatment" by Holmes and the Company Boxers, and Prewitt's rebelliousness is deepened by Maggio's destruction in the Stockade. Ironic parallels between the Prewitt-Lorene affair and the Warden-Holmes affair cap the book's conclusion aboard the liner on which Karen Holmes and *Alma 'Lorene' Burke* leave Honolulu shortly following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor and war provide a second parallel wave of disequilibria that concentrate the book's action, speeding it to conclusion: the AWOL Prewitt is shot by a Wartime sentry while seeking to return to his company, and the call of war cancels Warden's committed involvement with Karen Holmes.

If there are jarring notes in *Eternity*, they are stylistic. They are mainly comprised of instances of faulty diction and idiosyncratic rhetoric that tend to arise when the writing veers off into an authorial voice distanced from specific characters and found within sociologically detailed dramatic situations. I address instances of the "bad" writing that has tended to conspire against the book's chances for immortality, especially after eventually falling under the shadow of extensively negative reviews reviling Jones's style that were cast by *Some Came Running*.

The Naked and the Dead

In the terms set out by Frye on the novel and romance, Mailer is as much an author of romances as of novels. Many characteristic portions of Mailer's fiction express the subjectivity of the "psychological archetype" and "[radiate] a glow of subjective intensity" (Frye, "The Four Forms" 584). True, this tendency in Mailer's writing is perhaps most intensely expressed in the first-person narration of *An American Dream*'s Steve Rojack and in *The Executioner's Song*'s polyphony of consciousnesses. (*Song* is perhaps more a socially wide-ranging chronicle of snatches of consciousness rather than of scenes of action.) Although *Naked* is hardly a romance, by the ascent of Mt. Anaka, Croft becomes a "psychological archetype" who "radiates a glow of subjective intensity" (Frye, "The Four Forms" 584). Indeed, with Croft, "something nihilistic and untamable" seems, in Frye's words, "to keep break-

ing out of" [Mailer's] pages" as would occur in much subsequent writing by Mailer ("The Four Forms" 584). However, novelistic-romancer will not suffice in Mailer, even as fiction writer. His work resonates not only as novel and romance, but also as confession (close to the tenor of O'Shaughnessy's tale) and anatomy or "Mannipean satire" (with Mailer himself in *The Armies of the Night* and with the Presidential contenders of Mailer's presidential campaign chronicles).

Still, not even evocation of the full range of Frye's four fictive modes will suffice to categorize much of Mailer's work. In particular, *The Naked and the Dead* evokes Moretti's reference to the appearance of literary "one-off cases, oddities, anomalies" in his discussion of that variant of the high modernist fiction he terms "the modern epic" in his 1996 *The Modern Epic* (1). If the original epic can be boiled down rather conventionally into a lengthy *narrative poem*, ordinarily concerning a serious subject containing details of heroic deeds and events significant to a culture or nation, the "modern epic" is a variation of the epic in which the heroic is downplayed and the expression of the "total world of a nation and epoch" extends to the "supranational" sphere, in which we encounter a somewhat incongruous ungainly mix of modes of expression—not only the very novelistic accounts of exchanges among the tale's principals but the confessional ardor of Ishmael's voice when he accounts his own high spirits, the cataloguing of seamen's conversation during watches, the lessons in cytology, the pseudo-Shakespearean soliloquies of Ahab along on the forecastle (Meyer 2128; Moretti 11–14). With the Ahab-like ardor of Croft ascending Mt. Anaka, the social and linguistic cataloguing of social types and vernaculars in Time Machine and Chow Line segments; and the epic qualities of the book's framing, and charting, and detailed depiction of the Anopopei campaign and its combat actions; and the basic novelistic interactions among the principals, each with members of his immediate sphere—Cummings, Hearn, and Croft, each with his circle of underlings—*The Naked and the Dead* fits the template of the "modern epic" quite well.

Although *Naked* has no individual hero—Croft is arguably an antihero—the action of the Army on Anopopei might be considered heroic. For example, the book begins with a statement about the invading force—the memorable "Nobody could sleep . . . all over the ship, all through the convoy, there was a knowledge that in a few hours some of them were going to

be dead"—and it ends with a description of the "mop up" or "successful" campaign (3, 715).

Further, *Naked*'s use of its Time Machine segments reaches out toward "expression" of the "total world of a nation and epoch" (Moretti 11). These devices democratically apply the model of Dos Passos's elite biographic profiles of great Americans in *U.S.A.* to the description of the American "everyman." In place of *U.S.A.*'s Jack Reed and TR, aviators like the Wright Brothers, lovers like Rudolph Valentino, financiers like Andrew Carnegie and J. P. Morgan, we get Hispanic Texans like Julio Martinez; Texan and Virginian rednecks Sam Croft and Woodrow Wilson; Montana miner and hobo Red Velsen; working-class Bostonian Irishman Will Gallagher and working-class Jewish Brooklynite Joey Goldstein; small-town Northeastern/Midwestern middleclass William Brown; Northeastern/Midwestern, upper-class, Harvard-educated Left intellectual Robert Hearn; and Northeastern/Midwestern, upper-class, West Point-educated Far Right intellectual General Cummings. Indeed, *Naked*'s use of its Time Machine segments extend *U.S.A.*'s encyclopedia of American social types and speech during the second and third decades of the twentieth century to the third and early fourth decades of the century, for the Time Machine profiles deal with the biographies that highlight the preponderantly 1930s and early 1940s adolescence and youth of *Naked*'s cast on its principal 1944-ish stage.

Naked's allegorical structure also contributes to the book's "expression" of a "total world of a nation and epoch" (Moretti 11). As allegory, *The Naked and the Dead* is dystopian. It is in part a dystopia of fascistic foreboding expressed both in terms of General Cumming's highbrow aspirations of a domestically authoritarian and internationally imperialistic United States and in terms of Sergeant Croft's thuggish service for Cummings (i.e., his role in the elimination of the annoying Lieutenant Hearn for Cummings). However, it articulates a more nuanced vision than the sometimes noted dystopian X-ray of fascist undercurrent at War and a possible fascistic post-war. It also voices the vision of the unexpected military victory that the hum-drum and luck Major Dalleson led right under General Cummings's nose—a triumph of competence and good luck that is a harbinger less of fascist totalitarianism than of managerialism and centrist liberalism fringed by Cold War hysteria of the Truman and Eisenhower eras. Mailer closes off not with some extension of Cummings's subtly maneuvered elimination of the intellectually annoying and faintly insubordinate Liberal Lieutenant Hearn. Instead,

he leaves us with Major Dalleson captivated by the USO-poster and PR charm of the emerging, somewhat demilitarized managerial age, thinking with more innocence than is imaginable for Cummings, "He could jazz up the map-reading class by having a full-size color photograph of Betty Grable in a bathing suit, with a co-ordinate grid system laid over it" (626).

ON STYLE, CONSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT.

From Here to Eternity

Jones has been criticized for bad writing. The main site of this criticism and defenses against it is in writing on *Some Came Running*. However, as we shall see, these criticisms had precursors in responses to *From Here to Eternity* (Garrett 100). Writing on *Some Came Running,* Edmund Fuller wrote, "[I]f you like bad grammar...shoddy and befuddled philosophy, *Some Came Running* is your book," and *Time* that "Choctaw rather than English would appear to be [Jones's] first language" (Fuller qtd. in Carter 38; qtd. in Carter 38). And, J. Donald Adams attributed Jones with having a "fatuous pride in being illiterate" (Adams qtd. in Carter 38). On *Eternity*'s literary quality, Burgess wrote the following in *The Caine Mutiny* section of his 99 *Novels*: "[*Mutiny*] stands somewhere between Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* . . . and James Jones's *From Here to Eternity.* It has some literary distinction, far more than Jones's, much less than Mailer's" (56). Similarly, I can recall a 1960s episode of *The David Susskind Show* on which Gore Vidal, after praising Fred Zinnemann's film of *Eternity*, dismissed Jones's book for bad writing. Although I am both a Jones and a Bloom fan, I was not surprised when I realized that Jones was entirely unmentioned in the extensive critical works of the stylistically finicky Harold Bloom.

Defenders of Jones's style cast light on its criticism, both positive and negative. For example, Tom Carson writes, "[A]t its crowded, vernacular best [the prose] does just what he wanted to do, involve you in the events, and put you inside the characters' heads with striking veracity and conviction" (19). George Garrett writes that "Jones, as he wrote *Running*, was involved in an experiment with language, a kind of discovery . . . he calls it working with 'colloquial forms' by which he means not merely the free and easy use of the living, spoken American language on dialogue or first person narration but an attempt to carry it into the narrative itself, into third-person narration" (116). These defenses focus on that aspect of Jones's writing that his critics seem to stress as his weakest attribute: his writing style.

One concentration of stylistic criticism seems to me to focus on Jones's attempts to put readers "inside the characters' heads" (Carson 19). This mainly consists of the use of the first-person indirect and free indirect, in which movement between a third-person mimicry of a character's consciousness approaching stream of consciousness and authorial comment on characters' consciousness or simple third person occurs, for Jones seldom lapses into the first person in "third person" fictions like *Eternity* and *Running.* This second paragraph of the book's first page, already quoted above, illustrates the sort of writing:

> Through the heat haze and the thin mid-morning film of the parched red dust came up a muted orchestra of sounds: the clankings of steel wheeled carts bouncing over the brick, the slapping of oiled leather slingstraps. (3)

So does the third paragraph of *Eternity*'s opening:

> Somewhere along the line, he thought, these things have become your heritage. You are multiplied by each sound that you hear. And you cannot deny them without denying with them the purpose of your own existence. Yet now, he told himself, you are denying them by denying the place they have given you. (3)

A second concentration of stylistic criticism refers to instances of straightforward third-person narration, a voice mainly confined to the tellingly italicized introductory pages to "Book Four: The Stockade."

Examples of the first sort of faulted writing mainly occur when Jones engages in extended attempts at first-person indirect and free indirect, and his language grows either too arcane to ring true as a plausible voice of the character overheard or too oddly vernacular to work as a shift into authorial voice. Even writing in a tone ostensibly close to a character, Jones may move into an oddly eccentric rhetoric that manages to violate the standards of verisimilitude in the mimicry of a character's use of language required of the first-person indirect, or the standards of good authorial rhetoric, or both standards at once. An example of a double violation arises in early pages of "Book Four: The Stockade" where Jones describes Prewitt's thought or feeling regarding "a great conflict of fear" that "lay rises flapping from the depth

like a giant manta ray, looming larger and bigger, looming huge, up out of the green depths that you can look down into through a water glass and see the anchor cable dwindling in a long arch down into invisibility, up from far below that even, flapping the two wing fins of choice and ego caught square in the middle" (410–411) This refers to fears that Prewitt thinks his unthinking candor precipitates in the minds of others (in this case fears of homosexuality in the mind of Maggio).

Examples of the second sort of blemished writing arise in "Book Four: The Stockade" when we shift into a clearly authorial voice far from that dramatic mode in which the book's style approximates a dramatic mode in which the audience experiences content directly. In the straight-out italics with which "The Stockade" opens, Jones writes, "*He was held in confinement at the Stockade as a general prisoner while he waited trial*" (405). Clearly "awaited" is the appropriate word. A little latter, still writing in a straight-forward third-person narrator (or omniscient narrator) voice, Jones describes the "many officers, officers' wives and officers' children" near Honolulu's "tennis courts, golf course and bridle paths as all looking very tanned and sportive" (409). Clearly, "sporty" is the appropriate word.

In defense of Jones's prose, Garrett refers to innovations with "colloquial forms" by Faulkner and O'Hara, and Carter extends this line of defense with a few brief evocations (e.g., of Bellow and Updike) (Garrett 116; Carter 39). However, I do not find these lines of defense persuasive. Where I see no lapse in an author's use of the first-person indirect and the free indirect (e.g., for O'Hara, Faulkner, and Bellow), the defense does not seem worth extended comment in the time and space available. (In short, I think that Faulkner, O'Hara, and Bellow employ idiomatic English more adeptly in their use of the free indirect.) Where I do see such a lapse is when Updike lapses into language too literary (e.g., too metaphorically ornate) to credibly reflect a character's consciousness, which in comparison to the stylistically masterful Updike, seems inappropriate, despite Updike's lapses. Although I see some dubious use of idiomatic language in straightforward third-person narration divorced from the first-person indirect and free indirect in the work of William Faulkner, the comparison again seems generally inappropriate (i.e., too much a matter of an idiosyncratic syntax), as well as rather too complex for this effort.

Digression of the pros and cons of Jones's possible stylistic shortcomings, where they turn up in Jones's writing, seems to me less relevant to the as-

sessment of that writing—*Eternity*, in particular—and seems to me less important than my own defense of Jones. This focuses on how infrequently they turn up and how peripheral they are when they do turn up—most especially in *From Here to Eternity.* In brief, the instances of poor writing that Jones's stylistic critics have targeted tend to address occasional divergences from Jones's best and most characteristic writing. This is a "transparent" mode of writing focused on dialogue backed by incisive description of action and setting backed up by preponderantly adept excursions into the first-person indirect and divorced—for the most part divorced—from overt authorial voice. It is that mode of writing that bears some resemblance to Frye's dramatic mode in which the author is hidden from the audience and audience "experiences content directly" (*Anatomy* 229). This mode provides almost all of the words of *From Here to Eternity* and *Whistle.* It provides enough of *Some Came Running* to constitute nearly all of Jones's 1958 Signet abridgement of *Running.* It perhaps does not apply well to *The Thin Red Line* because in that novel, Jones is far more involved in use of the free indirect, in which he shifts between dialogue and physical description. The first-person-indirect variant of stream of consciousness indeed jumps so frequently and swiftly from consciousness to consciousness as to virtually create a collective consciousness of *Thin Red Line*'s GIs.

From Here to Eternity can only receive glancing blows from the criticisms of Jones's writing for that book because these are largely irrelevant to most of the book's writing. The same can be said for *The Thin Red Line* and *Whistle. Some Came Running* may be another story. (For convenience, I ignore all of Jones's books but the four just mentioned.) On the one hand, the power of its underlying narrative, documentary scope and cogency, and rich characterization seems to me to compare to that of *From Here to Eternity.* (Here we have aspects of Jones's creativity perhaps even more effectively expressed by Minnelli's 1958 film than by Zinnemann's excellent 1953 one.) Moreover, Jones scholars have claimed with great zeal thematic and spiritual merits for the voluminous stretches of writing in *Running* that do not conform to the model of transparent writing and drama-like novelistic presentation described here for *Running.* Alas, with *Running*, critics of Jones's style have a large target. Perhaps champions of Jones might devise defenses for his literary style—say via elaboration of Garrett's claim that what looks awkward about the style of *Running* has an unappreciated idiomatic grace. However, such a defense seems to me so far no more than sketched.

The Naked and the Dead.

Some critics found the structure of *The Naked and the Dead* baggy.[1] In particular, they have charged that its narrative is encumbered and diffused by the Time Machine profiles of principal characters and by a late usurpation of the protagonist's role by Sergeant Croft. Here I dispute these criticisms in part on the grounds that they are put in a new truer light that is more favorable to *Naked*, when this is considered an instance of Moretti's "modern epic." Regarding sometimes imputed ungainliness of the Time Machine segments, critics have overlooked the function of the Time Machine segments—not as a plot element in a well-structured novelistic narrative, but as a kind of post-Crash extension of the 1910–1930 sociological and linguistic profile of the U.S.A. provided by the social disparate cast of Dos Passos's *U.S.A.* In doing this, they fail to judge *Naked* as a "modern epic" with a stress on "a summation of a social and cultural totality" and as no simple traditional war novel (Moretti 11). Further, critics have tended to overlook the sheer propulsive vigor of *Naked*'s narrative, which belies technical claims against this narrative's construction.

Regarding the coherence of *Naked,* this is quite remarkable considering the book's social reach as social chronicle and political allegory as well as combat narrative. If some of the book's coherence rests on traditional novelistic foundations, some derives from the book's ambitious modernist (i.e., modernist epic) reach for expression of a capacious social world. Key to this coherence are the central cumulating dramas of the book's Anopopei narrative. To my mind, there are four interlocking "dramatic substructures" to the Anopopei narrative that cohere into one visionary drama. One drama consists of the *top-down fascistic reach* of Cummings's creation of the patrol as an attempted solution to his failures to either effectively assert the dominance of his authoritarian intellectual vision with regard to the left-liberal Hearn or to advance his high career aspirations via his direction of the battle for Anopopei. The second consists of the *bottom-up fascistic reach* of Croft's attempted assertion of his will to power over Hearn by maneuvering his death and over his squad by pitting it against the symbolic as well as practical challenge of Mt Anaka. The third consists of the *heroically solidaristic altruism (*and *resistance)* entailed by Goldstein and Ridges' attempted assertion of soldier solidarity and group of survival in the face of Croft's assertion of his will to power. The fourth and final drama consists of the *managerial ascendance* of Dalleson's competently assisted usurpation of immediate prag-

matic military success on Anopopei due to a nicely Tolstoyan combination of managerial competence and sheer chance.

Naked's narrative elements cumulate well. The Cummings narrative ends powerfully with the death of Hearn and the trumping of Cummings's Mt. Anaka strategy by Dalleson's sea strategy. The Croft story ends with powerful irony with the failure of the Mt. Anaka expedition especially in the wake of the boldness of the Hearn offing and the strength shown by Croft in the initial attempt at the crossing. The heroic tale of Goldstein and Ridges serves as a nice dramatic and thematic counterpoint to the high and low fascist authoritarianism of Cummings and Croft and the softer, friendlier managerial authoritarianism of Dalleson. The Dalleson tale resolves itself and all the others with the resolution of fascistic and humanistic strains of narrative in the triumph of a managerial competence marked by some mediocrity and much good luck. The range of narrative strands—and their wrap up with the Dalleson strand—offset the somewhat disproportionate force of the Croft strand at least as we finish reading, if not, necessarily, in longer term memory.

If in *Naked* allegory helps provide a strong focus, so does the integrative cumulative force of the book's narrative. This is not merely some incoherent—or coherent—near apotheosis of Croft's vivid psychopathy but a symmetrical dystopia of fascist foreboding high (as with Cummings) and low (as with Croft). Moreover, it is not merely the often noted dystopian vision of fascist undercurrent at War and possible fascist post-War as well that is conceived of as a harbinger of the dangers and restraints of an age of Eisenhower, managerialism, and centrist liberalism, surface success and contentment and underlying antagonisms as one can imagine.

The social-documentary scope of *Naked*'s Time Machines segments and the reach and focus of its allegory fit Moretti's model of the "modern epic" with its aspirations toward expression of the "whole breadth" of "the total world of a nation and epoch" (3). This modernistic epic character of *Naked* vitiates much of the force of arguments against *Naked* as a loosely constructed attempt at a traditional novel. Within the context of a "modern epic," *Naked*'s Time Machines segments and allegorical anatomy function as social vision that have literary standing in their own right. That they, in fact, take little or nothing from the effectiveness of the more conventional narrative and novelistic pleasures offered by *Naked* only enhances *Naked* as a multi-faceted modern epic. As much as the basically novelistic character of

Eternity is consistent with the type of writing that Jones does best (and does almost exclusively in his first fiction), *Naked*'s range of literary performances is consistent with the book's genre and with the variegated skills and modes of Mailer's writing.

This is not to say that conceptualization of *Naked* as a modern epic provides any defense of criticisms of *Naked*'s use of language as sentence-by-sentence, paragraph-by-paragraph literary style. Much of Mailer's style shows the limitations of its reliance on a simple combination of dialogue, transparent physical description of the speakers and their settings, and the use of first-person indirect (after the models of James T. Farrell's *Studs Lonegan* and of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina)*.[2] However, I would simply argue that this style is a very serviceable one for expressing the characters and character interactions at the center of much of the book. The characters are memorable with several—at least Hearn, Cummings, Croft—drawn with depth and dynamism. For example, we see Hearn's intellectual confidence with Cummings and insecurity with "the men" of his platoon; we see Cummings both as aloof intellectual and commander, as schemer maneuvering Hearn into the dangerous patrol, and as the deflated figure who must acknowledge Dalleson's credit as victor of the Anopopei campaign; and we see Croft as not just a hard and capable commander of men but as one in the throes of a mythic conflict with Mt. Anaka that resonates with Ahab's quest for Moby Dick.

More generally, lesser characters like Martinez and Goldstein show development, and the dialogue and accounts of soldiering ring forcefully true. Indeed, the physical action of men in battle with the Japanese and with nature is often eloquent. For example, the opening rises to the level of Tolstoy in his epic descriptive mode on Napoleon's Russian campaign. Here it is: "Nobody could sleep. When the morning came, assault craft would be lowered and a first wave of troops would ride through the surf and charge ashore on the beach of Anapopei. All over the ship, all through the convoy, there was a knowledge that in a few hours some of them were going to be dead" (3). The description of a storm hitting base camp is especially memorable:

> The wind tore through the bivouac area like a great scythe, slashing the palm fronds from the coconut trees, blasting the rain before it. As they looked, they saw a tent jerk upward from its

> mooring, and then steam away in the wind, flapping like a terrified bird . . . .
>
> A tremendous gust of wind bellied under the tent, blew it out like a balloon, and then the ridgepole snapped, tearing a rent in the poncho. The tent fell upon the four men like a wet sheet . . . . "Where are you?" he shouted, and then the folds of the tent filled out again like a sail, ripped loose completely, and went eddying and twisting through the air . . . . [A]ll the tents were down in the bivouac area, and here and there a soldier would go skittering through the mud, staggering from the force of the wind with the odd jerking motions of a man walking in a motion picture when the film is unwinding too rapidly. (86–88)

The descriptions of the platoon's frequent physical exhaustion achieve a visceral force:

> Their ears filled with the quick frenetic rustling of insects and animals, the thin screeching rage of mosquitoes and the raucous babbling of monkeys and parakeets . . . .
>
> Slowly, inevitably, the men felt the water soak through the greased waterproofing of their shoes and slosh up to their knees whenever they had to wade through a deeper portion of the stream. (398)

Those descriptions of the platoon on patrol winding through the Kunai grass formed a pictorial beauty that would become one of the chief inspirations of Walsh in his film version of *The Naked and the Dead.*

Turning to the stylistic merits of the Time Machine segments—and not just their proclaimed obtrusiveness as excessively flashy, overly documentary, philosophically deterministic baggage for an effective war novel and campaign narrative—critics have been imperceptive. They have also dismissed the Time Machine segments as overly derivative—that is to say, as too closely modeled after Dos Passos's telegraphed biographies of national elites in *U.S.A.* However, in making this criticism, critics have failed to notice the extent to which Mailer's use of the Time Machine devices follows Pound's modernist injunction to "make it new." In particular, they have missed how thoroughly democratic and sometimes playful Mailer's Time Machines are.

In contrast with Dos Passos's use of his profiles to telegraph the life of important national figures in the shaping of the world, in which he situates his cast of rather everyday fictional characters, Mailer's Time Machine bios profile numerous faces of "everyman." They do so via the transfer of Dos Passos's elite-oriented device to a popular subject matter**.** As Mailer writes in the first Time Machine, which profiles Julio Martinez, "Mexican boys also breath the American Fables, also want to be heroes, aviators, lovers, financiers" (55). This is to say that they also want to be figures like those of the *U.S.A.* biographies, heroes like Jack Reed and TR, aviators like the Wright Brothers, lovers like Rudolph Valentino, financiers like Andrew Carnegie and J. P. Morgan. They have also failed to notice such playful touches as we find in Mailer's Woodrow Wilson Time Machine episode. This evokes Dos Passos's Meester Veelson biography of President Woodrow Wilson in *The 42nd Parallel* in more than title: at the outset of his profile of the white-trash Wilson, Mailer presents him in "*a pair of round, silver-rimmed glasses*" reminiscent of those that appeared on the patrician Southern President in photograph (326).

In addition, Mailer's prose sometimes attains a roiling power and dignity, most especially in its "overspirit" mode, by means of its use or near use of the "heroic" line: "Ahead, ahead, ahead, ahead, moving" catches the cadence of this pentameter, splendidly detailed for Mailer's writings by Christopher Ricks. For example, "The moon was out, limning the deckhousings" (10). Returning to Mailer on the movement of that 77mm artillery piece, we have a final phrase that begins with the heroic line:

> Once or twice a flare filtered a wan and delicate bluish light over them, the light almost lost in the dense foliage through which it had to pass. In the brief moment it lasted, they were caught at their guns in classic straining motions that had the form and beauty of a frieze. Their uniforms were twice blackened, by the water and the dark slime of the trail. And for the instant the light shone on them their faces stood out, white and contorted. Even the guns had a slender articulated beauty like an insect reared back on its wire haunches. Then darkness swirled about them again, and they ground the guns forward blindly, a line of ants dragging their burden back to their hole. (116)

That is, we have, with some intriguing mix of heroic irony, Mailer's dignification of the routine, derided as the "heroic" beat of "a line of ants dragging their burden back" (116).

Neither *The Naked and the Dead* nor *From Here to Eternity* is remarkable for such stylistic innovation or sustained eloquence as we find, say, in *The Sun Also Rises, The Sound and the Fury, Invisible Man, Augie Marsh,* or *Pale Fire.* Each, however, is masterful in its realization of its basic fictional design. *From Here to Eternity* provides a dramatization of a social milieu unexcelled in American writing, and *The Naked and the Dead* provides a vision of the U.S.A. combat in the Pacific theater of World War II and during the preceding decade, plus a look into the future. Stylistically, *From Here to Eternity* frequently attains the peculiar eloquence of great drama in which the audience witnesses intense action directly, and *The Naked and the Dead* rises intermittently to a level of stylistic eloquence above and beyond the call of its particular fictional duty.

NOTES

1. Dickstein refers to Jones's *The Thin Red Line* as "a tighter, more disciplined rejoinder to *The Naked and the Dead*" and charges Mailer with filling in his characters' backgrounds "clumsily" (25).
2. "The atmosphere of *The Naked and the Dead,* the overspirit, is Tolstoyan; the rococo comes out of Dos Passos; the fundamental slogging style from Farrell, and the occasional overrich descriptions from Wolfe," said Mailer to interviewer Peter Manso (qtd. in Manso 101).

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