

LIPTON'S JOURNAL:

Mailer's Quest for Wholeness and Renewal

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The modern mind has forgotten those old truths that speak of the death of the old man and the making of a new one, of spiritual rebirth and similar old-fashioned "mystical absurdities." My patient, being a scientist of today, was more than once seized by panic when he realized how much he was gripped by such thoughts. He was afraid of becoming insane, whereas the man of two thousand years ago would have welcomed such dreams and rejoiced in the hope of a magical rebirth and renewal of life. But our modern attitude looks back proudly upon the mists of superstition and of medieval or primitive credulity and entirely forgets that it carries the whole living past in its lower stories of the skyscraper of rational consciousness. Without the lower stories our mind is suspended in mid air. No wonder it gets nervous. The true history of the mind is not preserved in learned volumes but in the living mental organism of everyone.

—Carl Jung, *Psychology and Religion*

DURING THE THIRTEEN WEEKS SPENT COMPOSING HIS PRIVATE JOURNAL of self-analysis and personal growth between December of 1954 and March of 1955, Mailer, at age 32, recorded his discovery of various pathways to tap into his libidinous, instinctive, rebellious, and liberated self as an artist. I'll examine here Mailer's *Lipton's Journal* from two complementary perspectives: 1) how Mailer used a Jungian self-analysis to change his life and work, and 2) how Mailer recorded his discovery of jazz as one of the most significant pathways to artistic renewal.

PART I
MAILER AND JUNG

In the mid-1950s Mailer employed creative methods and goals that are significantly like those Carl Jung employed through his own journal of self-analysis earlier in the century. Both Mailer and Jung seek to discover neglected and undeveloped elements of their personalities; both are in search of wholeness and renewal; both are in search of their deepest selves. Both, by their own testimony, are in search of their souls. In short, Mailer initiated a Jungian analysis on himself, though it is unlikely he was fully aware he was doing so in 1955.

Mailer's self-analysis through *Lipton's Journal* was transformational and foundational; it would become the key to all his future work, beginning in the 1960s. Reading it, we witness both the *how* and the *why* of Mailer's personal transformation. Mailer began *Lipton's Journal* during a turbulent and disappointing time in his life—after the collapse of his first marriage and the bleak reception of *Barbary Shore*, and in the midst of his anguished attempt to find a publisher for his third novel, *The Deer Park*. “For the first time in my life,” Mailer writes in journal entry #139, “I have come to realize that I, too, could go mad or commit suicide.” He recognizes that *Barbary Shore* and *The Deer Park* had expressed his few ideas, “only through great pain, and the most stubborn depression . . .” That *The Deer Park* “is an enormous lie,” and that he must break free of such dishonesty and such worrying over “bad receptions of my books” because such worries tend to make him “go on and try to be more dishonest at an even higher level,” rather than becoming a rebel artist connected to an independent, whole self (#221, 388). “I am analyzing myself in order to become a real rebel, not just an adjusted rebel” (#244).

Mailer found his journal to be “a refuge. . . giving him a clean feeling” (#191). He began to see that, “Only through understanding myself can I come to create . . . As I understand myself . . . so I can waste less time” (#245). He was on a quest through self-analysis for potential sources of rebellion against the claustrophobia he was feeling about his life as a rejected, perhaps even failed, artist. “*The Deer Park* is a failure, but I have discovered myself,” he writes, and adds that he will no longer need “to protect myself against quitting the values of the world” (#122). His self-analytical journey in *Lipton's* would be his turning point, the source of his personal transformation (#127).

He sees himself as “shoving off into a total re-evaluation of everything I must trust what my instincts tell me is good rather than what the world says is good” (#141). In the same entry, Mailer notes that he considers *The Naked and the Dead* to be an “imposture” he tried to hide behind, but he now is committed to going forward. He wants his work now to become less derivative, more rebellious and outrageous, more instinctual and deeper, foretelling not only *Advertisements for Myself*, but *An American Dream*, *Why Are We in Vietnam?* and *The Armies of the Night* in the coming decade. Mailer also believes such “self-analysis will make me a happier more effective rebel . . . because I will be less afraid” (#477). “I believe I’m going to come out of this bigger than I went in” (#232).

Mailer was opening himself to—was indeed ardently seeking—a means of integrating, of better balancing, the powers of his conscious and unconscious life. He was seeking rapprochement between the two. He was seeking, therefore, an integration or “individuation” of psyche. In “The Relations between Ego and the Unconscious,” in *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, Jung defines individuation as “embracing our innermost . . . becoming one’s own self . . . coming into selfhood or self-realization” (173). “The unconscious is a process,” Jung writes in his autobiography (*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*), “and . . . the psyche is transformed or developed by the relation of the ego to the contents of the unconscious,” which contents in humanity’s “collective life . . . has left its deposit principally in the various religious systems and their changing symbols” (209). Jungian therapist and scholar June Singer, in *The Boundaries of the Soul*, emphasizes the psychological dynamic of growth and change nicely: “The starting point of understanding the analytic process is the concept of the psyche as a self-regulating system in which consciousness and the unconscious are related *in a compensatory way*.” Singer, as we’ll soon see, could have been describing Mailer and his journal when she adds that as the “resources of the unconscious” integrate with consciousness, *the conscious psyche can release the “attitudes, modes of behavior, that are no longer necessary or desirable,”* realizing the individual potential “which has somehow gotten lost” (my emphasis, 10–11).

In his own journal of self-analysis, Jung demonstrates his motivations and processes in search of a more integrated self,¹ a quest not unlike Mailer’s own forty years later. Jung’s more extensive journal, first composed in a series of six small “Black Books,” began at the end of 1913, on the eve of the first world war and after he had parted ways with his mentor Freud, a stressful

time when Jung, much like Mailer, feared he was susceptible to a nervous breakdown. In his autobiography Jung describes his feelings as he embarked on his journal as “uncertainty” and “disorientation,” as if he were living “under constant pressure” and in a “state of tension” and “psychic disturbance.” He experienced “a feeling of panic” and became “afraid of losing command of myself.” He then started his journal as “a voluntary confrontation with the unconscious as a scientific experiment” on himself. “I was in effect writing letters to the anima” or “the soul, in a primitive sense,” to “she who communicates the images of the unconscious to conscious mind” (170–187). Jung’s journal itself demonstrates his non-linear process, continued off and on with greatest intensity until June of 1917, when he began to understand the material arising out of his experiment. In his earliest journal entries, Jung describes his “unbearable inner longing” for something more than his professional accomplishments, some potential enrichment of his soul, an enrichment he has “long discarded.” He felt as if he were “half a man” stuck in his own time (127–28). The inexplicable brooding darkness he felt eventually manifests in the reality of world war, and by 1914 he comes to believe that wars, as with any human conflict, are an external projection of the unbalanced duality within human beings. That inner struggle, that imbalance, is “the wellspring of the great war” (199–200).

For many years thereafter, Jung revised, added commentary and graphic images, extended the journal, and eventually produced a single text of his entire, decades-long journal in a folio calligraphic version, bound in red leather, but unpublished until the twenty first century as *The Red Book: Liber Novus, A Reader’s Edition*. Jung’s experiment in self-analysis was for him a frightening confrontation with his unconscious, that potent and creative layer of the psyche. In one of his dialogues with his soul, Jung was clear about his fear of such a journey into the depths: “You dread the depths; I [the Soul] should horrify you, since the way of what is to come leads through it.” Opening to the deepest layers of your psyche allows “the dark flood of chaos to flow into your order and meaning” (138–39). But through several dialogues, Jung decides to trust his soul “even if you lead me through madness.” If you enter the world of the soul, you are “like a madman” (148–151). Later, he describes the process of opening himself to his psychic depths as “a civil war in me” (159). Part of the fear is also a lack of easy understanding as the inner material first reveals itself, “the meaning is dark to me” (184–85). Once he has the opportunity to reflect on the journal, he comes to see the need for inte-

grating conscious and unconscious psyche—the process of individuation. Similarly, Mailer writes in his journal that “I will journey into myself with the hope that I, the adventurer, can come out without being destroyed. But I am terrified. I don’t think I have ever been so frightened in my life” (#93).

To aid his journey into deepest self, Mailer used cannabis (hence the title “Lipton’s” or “tea,” as well as the moniker—General Marijuana—he soon gave himself in his *The Village Voice* column, later collected in *Advertisements for Myself*. “Lipton’s seems to open up one to one’s unconscious,” he writes. Cannabis “destroys the sense . . . of society and opens the soul.” He continues, “Lipton’s is a great aid given my intellectual and verbal mind” to “my great adventure.” Mailer compares smoking tea to hypnosis because it “opens man to his soul, immediately, powerfully, and perhaps irrevocably.” “Administered properly,” he goes on, “Lipton’s has excellent therapeutic qualities,” allowing him to “ideate so profusely” because it releases his “normal state of muscular tension” (#2, 61, 79, 93, 137, 577).

One can’t help being struck by the way Mailer discovers what Jung called “the collective unconscious,” that layer of psyche deeper and broader than Freud’s version of the personal unconscious. Freud’s unconscious is, essentially, a layer beneath consciousness developed through the experiences and environments of one’s life, whereas Jung’s unconscious includes a layer below the personal that taps into the larger, archaic history of humanity as evinced in world mythologies through archetypes—those similar mythic forms (characters, quests, images, and tropes) appearing in the record across many cultures, traditions, and epochs. Jung’s sense of the collective unconscious, then, taps into myth-forming structural elements of the unconscious. In 1909 Jung began to shift his research to what he believed to be that larger phylogenetic layer of psyche consisting of mythological images that he analyzed, over decades and voluminous works, through comparative anthropology. He used his studies—stimulated by his journal—to transform not only his own life but psychotherapy, especially his treatment of his own patients, through the creative use of those primordial images that arise not only in art, literature, and religion, but in our fantasies and dreams, as well. June Singer gives a proper emphasis to the images and figures from the unconscious as actors in “the archetypal drama” that move us from psychic “separation and loss of integrity and despair” and lead ultimately to “the drama of transformation . . . and regeneration” (250).

Near the start of his own journal Mailer also writes of his belief in a “stra-

tum of the collective unconscious” that connects us all “independent of [one’s] will” (#22). His earliest theories suggest many layers of the unconscious, each one buried deeper in the psyche and closer to what he was at the time calling “homeostasis” (the deeper layer of illogical, intuitive, and irrational power in the psyche), which opposes “sociostasis” (the layer of psyche where reason becomes rationalization and serves as “a bulwark of society”) (#250, 283). Mailer suggests that sociostasis and homeostasis are engaged in “trench warfare” as the “condition of the soul,” and it is “the deep collective truths of the soul” that will provide the “clue” to the time to come (#297).

Indeed, the conflict between the soul and society, which echoes Emerson as much as it does Jung, is the central theme and insight of *Lipton’s Journal*. Mailer writes of “the cry of the soul against society” and “the anger of the soul” forced to “travel the roads of the social world.” Soul and society comprise but one dualism Mailer examines throughout his journal, the extreme opposition to the soul is totalitarianism, the greatest state of imbalance. He places “the soul’s insights against the world’s insights.” The individual’s soul is “part of the collective soul” that society opposes. Mailer goes so far as to declare that a writer’s “style gives the clue . . . to what happened to the soul” (#43, 57, 221, 226). Mailer also concluded, as Jung did, that although the underlying symbolic structures of the archetypes endure, the symbolic forms are colored by, shaped by, the society in which one lives: “No matter how deeply we dip into . . . our collective wisdom,” Mailer writes, “the particular insights we return with to the world are colored by our S,” our dominant society (#465). Most people probably know of the symbols and archetypes that unfold across millennia through the work of Joseph Campbell, but Campbell based much of his own work on his predecessor Jung, even if he carried Jung’s work further.

Like Mailer’s journal, Jung’s is full of raw material that can be difficult to judge or comprehend, but the editor for the published version of *The Red Book*, Sonu Shamdasani (Professor of Jung History at the Center for the History of Psychological Disciplines at University College of London) is an excellent guide to Jung’s. In his nearly 100-page introduction, Shamdasani points out that *The Red Book* depicts the rebirth of God in the soul, a “hermeneutic experiment” not unlike Yeats’ automatic writing experiments that published as *A Vision* reveal the creation of an individual cosmology (30–31). Although Yeats’ cosmology was fully formed once published, as was William Blake’s in his illuminated works, Mailer reveals in *Lipton’s* merely the

seeds of his own cosmology, seeds that will begin to bear fruit in “The White Negro” (1957), “Hip, Hell, and the Navigator” (1958, 1959), and his work of the 1960s. (In “Navigator,” published in *Advertisements*, we encounter Mailer’s emerging cosmology, which posits a God in danger of dying and in existential battle with a Devil—as two “warring element[s] of the universe” that place mankind in a “staggering moral” position, to be navigated by unconscious messages to consciousness (380–83, 386). Like Blake, but unlike Mailer’s mere doodling, Jung adds extensive drawings and paintings in the process of developing his integration of soul and consciousness, individuality and society. “The overall theme of the book,” Shamdasani writes of Jung’s *Red Book*, “is how Jung regains his soul and overcomes the contemporary malaise of spiritual alienation . . . a new worldview in the form of psychological and theological cosmology . . . a prototype of Jung’s conception of the individuation process. . . .” (48).

Jung would have his patients follow a journaling process similar to his own, complete with drawings, to illuminate dreams and images arising out of their confrontations with the collective unconscious. As therapist, Jung helped his patients toward self-transformation by enabling them to interpret and integrate into the self the unconscious materials (fantasies and dreams, often in dialogue form) called forth by the creative journaling process he called “active imagination.” The creative goal, as Shamdasani puts it, is to use the mythopoeic imagination (a “higher wisdom”) that has been lost to the modern age in order to “reconcile the spirit of the time with the spirit of depth” (39, 49).² The fusion effected by individuation, then, inspires a break with social conformity, bound by time (*Red Book*, 204–207). Individuation is, therefore, a transcendent function for the individual, a function Mailer was obviously seeking throughout *Lipton’s*.

Mailer’s desire, as he later said in *Advertisements for Myself*, to find “the courage to pay the high price of full consciousness . . . and to make a revolution in the consciousness of our time” (17) was necessarily based first on making a revolution in his own consciousness through *Lipton’s* in the mid-1950s.³ His work in the sixties represents not only a significant change in style, but the breaking through of a new self, a self that includes qualities his former self lacked and that now give “rise to images assumed worthless from the rational perspective,” as Shamdasani describes the phenomenon. Shamdasani then adds, “The first possibility of making use of them is artistic” (60). The archetypal imagery in Mailer’s fiction, as in any archetypal art, is im-

agery that can educate the spirit of an age, off-setting its one-sidedness. It is art that can synthesize dualities by resetting the balance against imbalance and disproportion. "If society is allowed total reason, it will destroy itself," Mailer writes. "I am a revolutionary because only by revolution, and probably not political revolution, can the S [Society/ Sociostasis] be set back . . . and put into serious retreat, thus opening larger H [Homeostasis or later in the journal "Homeodynamism"] gambits for future generations" (#367). Mailer argues that without the counterpoise of homeodynamic psychic force, Reason becomes Society's Rationalization, "so H turns to the illogical, the intuitive, the *irrational*" (Mailer's emphasis) (#250). The dialectic he was drawn to he found in himself: "I am the rationalist who is drawn to mystery" (#225). For Mailer it is "the extraordinary contradiction of my personality . . . that gave me strength as a writer," (#273).

In early 1955 while waiting for the galley proofs of *The Deer Park*, Mailer comes to understand that *Lipton's Journal* is showing him the way forward as a rebel artist. "Doing my analysis in the way proper for me . . . is through creativity—taking into self, synthesizing." He comes to see that in our psychic duality ("the polarity, the double") the conscious and the unconscious reflect one another in the manner of "a dialectic." Mailer puts it this way: "What I believe is true of psyche and of dialectic" is that "as we plumb . . . the unconscious, states of consciousness appear" (#325, 379). As a psychotherapist, June Singer describes the therapeutic process, likewise, as the "dialectic between ego and the unconscious" that has the potential to "result in a transformation of the personality" (29). Jung called this nourishing and rebalancing of consciousness "*mysterium coniunctionis*"—wholeness of self through the synthesis of opposites. "My mind is deeply dialectical," Mailer later writes. "The whole journal has been a dialectical illumination" (#404). Right to the end, this duality/ dialectical theme reappears in Mailer's journal. "We dip into our er, our collective wisdom," Mailer says, and return to the world "with insights . . . colored by our S" (#465). ("Er" becomes one of Mailer's words for vital force in the unconscious, just as S becomes his shorthand for Society/ Sociostasis). This vital duality within us, this "lore of the mind-body . . . is the source of all creativity to us" (#495). The exploratory processes, his adventures, in *Lipton's* will become ever more the processes of his later books, just as archetypal imagery will reflect that creative narrative process. "The novel goes from writer's-thought to reader's-thought by the use of oblique (obliging) symbol, expression, or montage," Mailer writes.

The creative process must be authentic (that is, autonomously archetypal), fed by the unconscious, not constructed by the rational mind alone. And that is why Mailer says he can't write a fully outlined novel knowing "what I want to say," because "it comes out too thin, too ideated. My best scenes are the ones where I didn't know what I was doing" (#522). Those interested in pursuing a detailed analysis of how archetypes function and cohere throughout Mailer's writings (up to 1980) may refer to my book, *Acts of Regeneration: Allegory and Archetype in the Work of Norman Mailer*.

Jung, like Mailer, began to profoundly adjust his life and work as a result of his experiment in self-analysis. Within a year of beginning his journal he resigned in 1914 from the medical faculty of the University of Zurich and as president of the International Psychoanalytic Association so that he could focus on what he believed was his more creative work on the collective unconscious and its historical manifestations in world art and religion. And he would thereafter focus his therapeutic work with his patients on their confrontation with the deepest unconscious material in their own search for psychic integration and balance. "It will be no joy," Jung says of "my transformation But a long suffering since you want to become your own creator. If you want to create yourself, then you do not begin with the best and the highest, but with the worst and the deepest." He later writes, "Incidentally, musn't it be a peculiarly beautiful feeling to hit bottom . . . at least once, where there is no going down any further, but only upward beckons at best?" (188–89, 235). In *Cannibals and Christians*, Mailer put it this way: "Postulate a modern soul marooned in constipation, emptiness, boredom and a flat dull terror of death It is a deadened existence, afraid precisely of violence, cannibalism, loneliness, insanity, libidinousness, hell, perversion, and mess, because these are the states which must in some way be passed through, digested, transcended, if one is to make one's way back to life" (269–70). *An American Dream* is Mailer's first fully realized fictional narrative of such descent and transcendence, a modern re-telling of the ancient heroic journey.

For both Freud and Jung, making one's way back from the depths to life requires the integration of one's dualities. But one must first recognize the dual nature of one's personality and allow each element of the duality its time, place, and energies. Jung saw his own dual personality, on the one hand, as the accomplished schoolboy, his failings and ineptitudes, but also his love of and success with science. The second personality was the man full of theological reflections, in communication with nature and cosmos,

the lover of art and humanities. Jung found psychiatry a means of integrating his interests in both science and art, his rational self and his intuitive self. For Mailer the personal duality is most readily expressed, as he wrote in *Lipton's*, “the neurotic little boy” and “the sweet clumsy anxious to please Middle-class Jewish boy” (#165–166, 199) who will go to Harvard to pursue his scientific interests, but who began studying American literature in 1939 and, as he put it in *Advertisements for Myself*, realized he wanted to become “a major writer” (27). But through *Lipton's*, he will go on, more importantly, to become a rebel writer challenging his society and, in Jung’s words, “his time.”

Mailer’s Jungian discoveries and sympathies⁴ stem in part from Mailer’s problem with Freudian psychoanalysis as it was generally practiced. Freudianism, in Mailer’s words, was a kind of “ideational lobotomy,” severing man from his deeper world, his soul, and leaving him adjusted to, marooned in, the “dead world of society” (#33). He accuses one New York psychoanalyst of being afraid of “taking a wild plunge off the Freudian board into the oceanic unconscious,” a plunge Mailer is himself now taking through his journal (#423). Mailer, who mentions in *Advertisements for Myself* that he once considered abandoning writing for a career as a psychoanalyst (108), sees himself through *Lipton's* as “embarking on the second Freudian expedition into the unknown” (#141), just as Jung did in his journal, as well as in his decades of studying comparative anthropology.⁵

Jung’s self-analysis exemplifies his own break with Freud. Jung not only became disenchanted with the limitations of experimental and statistical psychiatry. Even though Jung began his research into deeper layers of unconsciousness before he met Freud, he turned from Freud in 1910 because he believed that Freud reduced all psychic distress to sexual repression or trauma and because of Freud’s emphasis on the personal unconscious to the exclusion of transpersonal elements of the psyche. For Jung, psychotherapy could no longer be solely preoccupied with the treatment of psychopathology; rather, psychotherapy becomes for Jung, in Shamdasani’s words, “a practice to enable the higher development of the individual through fostering the individuation process” (75). It is not enough for therapy to adjust one to society. Creativity, psychic integration and balance constitute larger goals for mental health. Mailer’s friendship with psychiatrist Robert Lindner—who read and discussed installments of *Lipton's* as they were being written and figures prominently in it—began when Mailer saw that Lindner

understood the shortcomings of any therapy that merely adjusts the individual to the world, to the time and society in which one lives. Lindner agreed with Mailer's feelings (expressed in *Lipton's*) that *The Deer Park* was "a phase, a necessary step in your development . . . Now that this [book] is well on its way, you're free to grow a new self."⁶

The insights Jung gained from his journal, as I indicated, changed his professional life and priorities; those insights also informed all his writings thereafter. Jung described in his autobiography those years between 1913–20 spent "pursuing my inner images" through his journal as "the most important in my life . . . with the goal of psychic development of the self" (196, 199). I would argue the same might be said of Mailer's life and self-induced therapy merely beginning in 1955. Although *Lipton's Journal* is more compact, much less filled with dramatic confrontations and dialogues with archetypal figures, and covers a shorter time devoted to the self-analytical journaling experiment, a case can be made that *Lipton's* (which in a letter to Lindner Mailer called his "internal dialogue between the doctor and the patient in me") is merely a "catalyst" (to use Mailer's description to Lindner), a first draft of a larger, multi-volume project (*Selected Letters*, 183, 193). For Mailer extended his self-analysis beyond *Lipton's* per se and into the next decade of his fiction and non-fiction. For practical purposes here, I can only suggest what I mean by Mailer's extended and public self-analysis through the 1960s.

That public self-analysis was collected and launched in 1959 with the publication of *Advertisements for Myself*, a first fleshing out of the ideas and the new consciousness Mailer was first approaching in *Lipton's* in 1955. His introductions ("advertisements") to each section of the book are his "muted autobiography," a continuation of self-analytical moments as he looks back on his earlier life and work, a sort of confessional analysis more fit, however, for public self-revelation than for the private meditations of his journal. He tells us in one advertisement that his journal of "self-analysis" with "marijuana, my private discovery," led him to evolve into "a psychic outlaw," a "changed writer" even as he worked on the page proofs of *The Deer Park*: "Finally, I was learning how to write." His new outlaw voice and style began to emerge in his *Village Voice* column in 1956 as the opening salvo of his battle for a revolution in consciousness, "a seed ground for the opinions of America." The new style was "a purgative to bad habit" and an expression of "rage against the national conformity which smothered creativity, for it delayed

the self-creation of the race.” That new style became “the first lick of fire in a new American consciousness . . . I was gambling all I had” (219, 234–35, 277, 283–84, 335). We also see in *Advertisements* the emergence of the dialogue form that Jung had used so often in his self-analysis, but the real “seeds” of his future work, Mailer points out, are collected in the last half of the book—“The White Negro,” “The Time of Her Time,” and “Advertisements for Myself on the Way Out” (335). It becomes more obvious that *Advertisements*, the first progeny of *Lipton’s*, is the transitional book for Mailer, and that his 1959 book looks particularly toward *An American Dream*, the first fictional development of the themes begun in *Lipton’s Journal* and given initial public airing in *Advertisements for Myself*.

Cannibals and Christians (1966), a collection of diverse pieces, can be read as a sort of exegesis for *An American Dream* (1964, 1965). The two books function like artistic pendants, parallel texts. The extension of speculations and meditations begun in *Lipton’s* are developed much further in *Cannibals* for publication. And just as Mailer began to make use of the dialogue form in his published existential and psychological musings in *The Presidential Papers* (1963), in *Cannibals* the technique—echoing the many dialogues in Jung’s *Red Book*—comes to full fruition. Two dialogues are of particular significance. “The Metaphysics of the Belly” posits intuition as messages from the unconscious that can transform perception, perception that is both physical and psychic, that is, integrated (263–65). It is such messages from the unconscious that continually urge themselves on the hero Rojack in *An American Dream*, the potential source of his transformation: “I felt as if I had crossed a chasm of time and was some new breed of man” (81). In the other major dialogue “The Political Economy of Time,” Mailer explicitly connects body and soul into a “being” and connects the soul with the unconscious (287–373). This dialogue particularly is in turn strikingly (if annoyingly as some of Mailer’s critics claimed) similar to the dialogue in Chapter 6 of *American Dream* between Rojack and his heroine Cherry, a dialogue that repeats much of what Mailer wrote in *Lipton’s* about the struggle between Soul and Society.

During the writing of *An American Dream*, Mailer was in a state of personal crisis once again, perhaps even worse than that during his writing of *Lipton’s*. Looking back on that period in *Existential Errands* (1972), Mailer described it as one of the lowest, despairing points of his life. The tone of *The Presidential Papers* reflects that crisis, as *Lipton’s* reflects the earlier one, but

his collections of poems *Deaths for the Ladies (and other disasters)* (1962) strikes the tone even more emphatically. His failing marriage to Adele ended with her stabbing in 1960 during a drunken fight, his 1962 marriage to Lady Jeanne Campbell had collapsed, and in late 1964 he had married Beverly Bentley. Although he had found his voice, he was still a man who had not yet come through. *An American Dream* can be read as a fictionalized extension of *Lipton's*, another public extension and development. But this time, in *American Dream*, with all the archetypal figures and dialogues of mythopoeitic art. The unconscious material is fully fleshed out in narrative. It does the novel no disservice to argue that it is a deeply if partially autobiographical plunge into powerful unconscious material and filled with figures who test, threaten, and help the hero in his extreme state of "emotional exhaustion and existential disorientation" during his quest for renewal. Mailer described the novel's originality as his attempt to write "the dramatic history of a man's soul over thirty-two hours . . . a time of intense despair"⁷ (*Selected Letters*, 350).

Two years later, Mailer writes a novel of a very different kind that nonetheless carries forth the themes first arising out of *Lipton's Journal*. *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967) is Mailer's Swiftian-satirical, libidinous, Dionysian, darkly humorous rant, complete with mythic rituals, dialogues, and confrontations among archetypal figures. It is Mailer's rant against the status quo of the military-industrial society that peaked in the 1960s. A spontaneous rant in the form of an inspired tour de force of youthful alienation from a murderous, hyper-technological society that desecralizes all elements of the ancient hunt ritual in a rapacious desire for complete domination over man and nature. It is the cry of Mailer's soul-rage (embodied in the trickster-fool narrator D.J., "disk jockey to the world"). Mailer's rage expresses his homeodynamic "er" (the vital force of his unconscious, as he describes the "er" in *Lipton's*) pitted against a corporate America that chose devastating technological warfare in a far-off Asian jungle. Warfare America would eventually lose. The satirical obscenity in the novel is nothing compared to the obscene lies and acts that enabled the war in Vietnam and took more than three million lives (half a Holocaust) and wasted millions of other lives of survivors and their families. Back in 1955 in *Lipton's* Mailer also had been already trying out part of his narrative strategy in *Vietnam?* That is, his theory of human beings as "receivers and senders of electric waves" and of the radio as providing "an ear" into one's unconscious, "a vital experience

longed for,” giving us “electric communication.” Mailer went so far as to propose in *Lipton’s* that his wife Adele could be “a hipster-lady” if she could “m.c.” her own radio program (#154, 299, 511). Adele, thereby, might be seen as an early prototype in Mailer’s mind for the narrator of *Vietnam?* as a D.J. who beams her/ his “grassed out” hipster rant across the collective “magnetic-electro fief” to the American ear.

Although after *Vietnam?* Mailer would give up fiction per se for a decade, *The Armies of the Night* (1968)—again with brio, élan, and outrageous humor—is more than a little filled with Mailer’s continuing self-analysis, with personal tests of courage and displays of incapacity, with analytical insights into various Mailerian personae, and with new rebellious energy in Mailer’s more intuitive, more Melvillian, post-1950s style. In short, the self-analysis begun in *Lipton’s* and carried forward into the autobiographical introductions in *Advertisements* continues here. He even takes up the question of obscenity so prevalent (and apparently so troublesome) in the literary satire of *Why Are We in Vietnam?* The real obscenity in American life is done to humanity and nature by those politicians and corporation executives who are “perfectly capable of burning unseen women and children in the Vietnamese jungles, yet feel a large displeasure . . . at the generous use of obscenity in literature and in public” (*Armies*, 47).

But *Armies*, more than *An American Dream* or *Why Are We in Vietnam?*, reads like the work of a man who has come through. Mailer discovers in an event filled with absurdity, compromise, and mass movements, hope for a renaissance of integrated consciousness. The book is a record of a war, a war between a dead world and a living one, during the “long dark night of the soul” in America. Mailer from the start realizes he had been dragging his own bad image around like a sarcophagus, that he has often been his own worst enemy, that he has been a man of self-defeating unintegrated polarities. In Book I, “History as Novel,” he plays both observer and actor, and it is as actor that his flawed personae emerge. But in Mailer’s flaws lie his strengths; he becomes a fool-hero, a persona not unlike D.J.’s outraged fool, full of comic flaws and disproportions, but nonetheless encouraging and participating in the symbolic rites and revels that, in *Armies*, confront the center of military-industrial-technological power, the Pentagon. As a fool-figure, both absurd and prophetic, Mailer assumes the potentialities of that mythic character of universal dimensions, as Enid Welsford points out in *The Fool*, based on a long history and mythology of fools as agents of human

emancipation from stifling order, from leviathan states and their representatives. The fool's wisdom is not of the intellect but of the spirit; he draws from mankind the self's inner antagonism against the oppressive social order. In one incarnation, the holy fool, he represents a receding of the "logical soul" or consciousness and advances the inspired, irrational soul. Satire is one of his natural modes of expression (Welsford, 315–19). He is, then, a representative of what Mailer called back in 1955 homeostasis, the ranting, romping enemy of sociostasis. Especially as he observes the antagonistic battles, rites, and rituals of the demonstrators in Book II, Mailer realizes he is witnessing an historical moment when "the radiance of some greater heroic hours may have come nonetheless to shine along *the inner space* [Mailer's emphasis] and caverns of the freaks . . . some refrain from all the great American rites of passage. . . ." Despite their flaws the protesters, reinvigorating Dionysian symbolic warfare in a "crazy time" of history, have found the endurance and courage "in a painful spiritual test" where "some part of the man has been born again, and is better" (280–81). Mailer too has been changed: "he felt one suspicion of a whole man closer to that freedom from dread which occupied the inner drama of his years . . . than when he had come to Washington four days ago" (212–213).

Mailer seems to have discovered in his march on the Pentagon and in his writing about it new energy and a new faith in nonfiction, the genre that would consume his next decade. By his immersion in historical experience he discovered the primordial order of energizing archetypal ritual, he discovered wholeness and purpose in a world apparently without wholeness and purpose, and he discovered that through the unifying force of his art he could give meaning to the events of his time. Mailer discovered in writing *Armies*, therefore, that imagination and reality can unite to produce a new foundation for narrative structure and theme and a new complication in his relationship to his characters and material. Enlightened by Mailer's previously private journal, I'd like to propose that Mailer's books of the seventies through the nineties might be read profitably anew with a full recognition of the extended experiments in individuation, private and published, in which Mailer engaged from 1955 through 1968.

PART II MAILER AND JAZZ

*[Author's note: This portion of the essay was delivered in an earlier draft at the 2017 Mailer Society Conference in Sarasota, Florida. As people filed into the room, I played Sonny Stitt's "Autumn in New York," a Stitt tune Mailer loved and which played at the Mailer Memorial Tribute at Carnegie Hall in April of 2008. This rendition is available on Stitt's CD **Personal Appearance**, track 3. At the end of my presentation I played Dizzy Gillespie's "We Love to Boogie," available on his CD entitled **School Days**, track 10. Both are also available on Youtube.com.]*

During the thirteen weeks spent composing his private journal of self-analysis between December of 1954 and March of 1955, Mailer recorded his discovery of jazz as one of the most significant vehicles to tap into his libidinous, instinctive, and liberated self as an artist. Mailer considered and analyzed many topics that might open pathways into his deepest self: language and style, sexuality, Wilhelm Reich, gender and bisexuality (close to Jung on our inner gender duality), the Holocaust, humor, hip, courage, Marx, and the visual arts among them. Any of these topics will reward further analysis of Mailer's journal, but jazz music will be my practical focus here as one of the most important topics as Mailer prepared himself to emerge from the 1950s a rebel writer whose language can now be as much or more concerned with rhythm and sound as it used to be concerned with literal sense.

How did jazz become one of the most important vehicles for Mailer's literary, psychological, and even spiritual transformation? Mailer was tone deaf and never played an instrument. Nonetheless, in the fifties he and his new wife Adele went on weekends with friends into such Village and Harlem jazz clubs as The Village Vanguard, Five Spot, and Jazz Gallery. Mailer met some of the musicians and ultimately became friends with saxophonists Sonny Stitt and Sonny Rollins. Mailer's 1957 essay "The White Negro" (collected in *Advertisements for Myself*) is but one product of Mailer's jazz experiences. In "White Negro" Mailer writes that the "presence of Hip as a working philosophy in the sub-worlds of American life is probably due to jazz ... its subtle but so penetrating influence on an avant-garde generation." Jazz, he

continues, is the black man's connection to survival through "the art of the primitive," the voice of the all the highs and lows of his existence, the music of orgasm, good or bad, the communication of "instantaneous existential states" (340–341). The jazz musician "is the cultural mentor of a people" (348). *Lipton's Journal* is the very seedbed of such ideas expressed in that notorious essay, as indeed Mailer's journal reveals the processes of germination for one writer's acts of self-creation and regeneration. Over the length of *Lipton's*, we see the direct influence jazz musicians had on Mailer himself, teaching him some things he was ready to learn, or relearn, about existential art, about taking risks whether you succeed or fail, about art as anti-totalitarian force, and about the sound and rhythms of improvisational language.

He writes of his coming to understand that "jazz consists almost entirely of surprising one's expectations" and that "the artistry lies in the degree to which each successive expectation is startled." It is an art form that "has risen to the crisis of modern painting" by "changing the audience's expectations nightly . . . a self-accelerating process," that is not without risk and is now blending all the arts (#8).

The surprising risks jazz musicians take display the existential nature of their art, through the immediacy of improvisational creation. "Instead of trying to understand the beauty of jazz," Mailer writes, "one should understand it as something which is constantly triumphing *and* failing." Victory is simply the "effort to keep musically alive." To flesh out these insights, he offers the example of Dave Brubeck and Paul Desmond improvising together "entirely off on their own with nothing but their nervous systems to sustain them wandering through jungles of invention with society continually ambushing them." Brubeck, Mailer adds, might "wander into a cliché, then investigate it, pull it apart . . . put it together into something new." Sometimes Brubeck succeeds, sometimes he fails, but whether he fails or succeeds he accepts the risk and creates "a communication between the soul and the world." Caution is the "high priest of society," Mailer continues, and "swing is a distillation of competitiveness in social life," but "jazz is the soul" (46, 48). Here Mailer echoes a quip often attributed to Duke Ellington when asked about the difference between swing music of the 30s and 40s (the pop music of Mailer's generation) and jazz: Swing is business, jazz is art.

Mailer more than once compares playing jazz to bullfighting, another existential art, and posits that jazz, bullfighting, and cosmopolitanism are the

three “culture bearers of the hipster,” culture bearers that “Stalinism [i.e., totalitarianism] will continue to war against” (#56). Mailer will follow up this thought later, writing, that Be-bop “is a hybrid art (like opera)” expressing a distrust of society, a sort of decadence that allows the soul of the musician to be expressed (#366). These thoughts lead Mailer into meditations on the language of jazz and the hipster, the language of anti-totalitarianism. Hipster speech contains “fucking rhythms . . . almost as powerful as music.” About the be-bop jazz chorus, he writes, “You get me bee-bopping too.” It was the energized be-bop form of jazz in the early fifties that helped him feel his way beyond “the sweet clumsy anxious to please Middle-class Jewish boy” (#165-166).

As he would later say in “The White Negro” about hip language, Mailer first says in his journal that there is a poetic diction in improvisational be-bop, especially, where the words, whether sung as jazz scat or played on a horn, “can mean two or three things at the same time,” and may bring us all to a point where we “speak in the style of *Finnegan’s Wake*” (#213). Be-bop he later writes “is the first popular and tentative expression of Joycean language . . . Which is why I prefer it to cool, which while technically advanced is nonetheless a retreat from a more advanced state of perception” (#508). If Rojack in *An American Dream* might well represent Mailer’s first fictional hero as hipster and psychopath seeking regeneration, it is D.J. in *Why Are We in Vietnam?* who, to my mind best, represents the jazzman or hipster’s improvisational, instinctual, free-flowing font of language and sound. *Vietnam?* is his hipster novel, his rebel novel, his be-bop novel, his most improvisational novel, that novel he said on several occasions was the only book that came to him on a wave of inspiration without the hard and dreadful labors so many of his other books required.

Dizzy Gillespie, the trumpeting prophet of the be-bop style with a dizzying range, Mailer much admired, calling him a genius, and noting that jazz is “more creative, the more responsive to genius than classical” even if “it [jazz] is a degraded expression,” the only kind of expression left to genius in our time (#155). One thing Dizzy seems to have taught him appears shortly after his notes on the Diz: “I suspect,” Mailer writes, “that the frequency of sound has some relation to the depth of one’s **unconscious**. As frequency is stepped up so the notes rise [as in the upper registers and limits of the trumpet or saxophone] . . . Low notes are progressively more **conscious**” (#516, my emphasis). So be-bop, especially in the highest ranges of an instrument,

becomes yet another source, a hip source, into the unconscious of the artist, and perhaps of the listener. Jazz, then, became for Mailer one avenue into the unconscious and instinctual life, into rebellion, into existential and risky artistry. Into what—finally by 1959 in *Advertisements for Myself*—would become Mailer's own, true voice. And Dizzy, I'm going to speculate, is the one whose brash be-bop trumpet playing gave Mailer the clue to his famous line near the end of *The Deer Park*. For Mailer found his voice and his rebellion in *Lipton's Journal*, in large part through jazz, and like Sergius O'Shaugnessy at the end of *The Deer Park*, emerged better prepared "to blow against the walls of every power that exists, the small trumpet of his defiance" (374).

NOTES

1. The "self" in Jung's psychology "is produced through the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements of the personality," as Jung explained in "On the Psychology of the Child Archetype," see *The Red Book* (136). The self is therefore a potential for and a result of the individuation process. Self is the wholeness of psyche or "the subject of my totality"; whereas the "I" is "the subject of my consciousness." The "persona" is the "conscious attitude," essentially the mask we wear as social beings (59).
2. The spirit of the time (more commonly the *Zeitgeist*) is the general spirit in which we act and think as we live in our era; the spirit of depth, Jung writes, "evokes everything that man cannot" and speaks "in riddles," often in dreams, "the guiding words of the soul" (132, 154–55). The spirit of depth is thereby the gateway to the soul, the nourishing unconscious. But out of balance, the unconscious is less nourishing than dangerous: "The spirit of this time is ungodly, the spirit of the depths is ungodly, balance is godly." Understanding this, Jung adds, "is how I overcame madness" (150).
3. Speaking of the collapse of former civilizations and the old order in World War I, Jung too understood that no social revolution is possible without internal revolution first in individuals' consciousness. He put it this way: "Too many still look outwards . . . But still too few look inwards, to their own selves, and still fewer ask themselves whether the ends of human society might not best be served if each man tried to abolish the old order in himself, and to practice in his own person and in his own state those precepts . . . which he preaches at every street corner, instead of always expecting these things of his fellow men" ("Two Essays on Analytical Psychology," 5).
4. We know that Mailer read some Jung. In fact, Jung's *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* received an asterisk signifying its importance in the bibliography at the end of *Castle in the Forest*. We know that his library contained Barbara Hanna's *Jung: His Life and Work* (1991), but we don't yet have a full list of what other books about or by Jung Mailer owned or consulted over the decades. Mailer's Provincetown-study library is for now stored at the Mailer Center before being donated to Wilkes University, after which transfer we should have an index to the collection, including further works

by Jung (Mailer archivist J. Michael Lennon tells me there are more in his email to me on 3/3/18). We know Mailer was contemplating a sequel to *Harlot's Ghost* (*Harlot's Grave*) with a Jungian protagonist. Moreover, Susan Mailer reported at a Mailer Society conference that her father questioned her (his psychotherapist daughter) rather pointedly about Jung in the 1970s. In January of 2007, during one of his last interviews, Mailer told Michael Lee in *Cape Cod's Literary Voice* that he decided "on my own" that it's as if "an unconscious was lent to us, almost like a Jungian notion" but "I didn't have to read Carl Jung to decide this." Mailer's 2007 "notion" that "the unconscious taps into a deeper realm of knowledge that we possess," if the unconscious "trusts you," is also close to a classical sense of the Muse. Nonetheless, we have no firm evidence yet that he had read much or any Jung by 1955, although it's obvious from the journal he knew about Jung, as so many knew generally of Freud and Jung (among other psychoanalysts) at the time. My speculation is that Mailer came to his self-analytic journaling technique by his own path, not by Jung's, whose own journal wasn't published till 2009. I offer this speculation (or challenge?) even though there are so many striking similarities between the methods and goals of both men and their journals. More archival work still might, of course, turn up some evidence of Mailer's reading of Jung in the 1950s.

5. See Jung's *The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature*, where Jung fully credits Freud with his bold accomplishment: "Like Nietzsche, like the Great War, and like James Joyce, his literary counterpart, Freud is an answer to the sickness of the nineteenth century" (37). I would add Marx to this list. "The Victorian era was an age of repression, of a convulsive attempt to keep anaemic ideals artificially alive in a framework of bourgeois respectability by constant moralizings" (34).
6. I am quoting from Mike Lennon's manuscript edition of the Mailer-Lindner correspondence (23), which may be appended to a proposed published edition of Mailer's journal. Eventually Mailer and Lindner had a falling out over the journal's contents. In Lindner's view the problem was Mailer's "insistence on projecting some of your doubts about the 'new' self you are discovering on me" (25). But Lindner's private responses to the journal were by and large helpful to Mailer's development, though they in no way constituted a professional psychoanalysis of Mailer's psychological state at the time.
7. See letter to Eiichi Yamanishi, June 3, 1965, *Selected Letters*, 350. *An American Dream*, especially, rewards archetypal analysis as a story of the classic hero's journey (crisis-descent-return), a quest and battle for wholeness arising out of traumatic psychic disruption. At the same time, it represents the commonplace, almost banal, reading experience of the much-worked-over conventions of crime fiction and the familiar elements of the mythic heroic quest. But it is this very narrative mundanity that also makes the novel one of Mailer's most mythopoetic. As Mailer put it in his April 23, 1965, letter to John Aldridge, "The narrative clichés were chosen precisely because I felt they had been despised so long that a novelistic magic had returned to them" (*Selected Letters*, 346).

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- [The manuscript I am citing here is the manuscript edited by J. Michael Lennon and Susan Mailer, which they generously provided to me. My heartfelt thanks to Mike and Susan, especially to Michael Lennon who commented at length on this essay during its development. The journal-entry numbering system I follow is theirs, where each numbered entry Mailer made is re-numbered according to the editors' system for a proposed, compressed edition of the journal to be published in the future and to include the Mailer-Lindner correspondence.]
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