ABSTRACT

THEMES AND MEANINGS IN THE AMERICAN AND FILIPINO NOVELS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN THE PACIFIC

By

Elena P. Polo

The intensity and concentrated fury of the Second World War prompted many of those who had participated in it to re-create the war experience. To the novelists the war is not just the landscape for their narrative, but a vehicle for social comments as well as a means of depicting the human condition. The novelists are concerned with human values, with the problems of existence, and with man's capacity to endure. As critics have noted, the war is a ready-made microcosm which has permitted the novelists to set man against his chaotic world.

American novelists who wrote on the Pacific war and the Filipino novelists who tried to portray the pain and anguish of the Japanese Occupation show a common preoccupation. This study, which defines the themes of these novelists, shows that they are preoccupied with the subject of survival both physical and moral.

The American novels on the war in the Pacific depict the individual's struggle against a crushing bureaucracy personified by the military organization and hostile forces

identified as Chance or Fate, nature, social inequalities, human nature itself and institutions. The novels portray man's quest for absolute freedom, for justice and equality.

The American novelists show two definite responses to this human dilemma. One is a strong voice affirming man's basic humanity. Heggen's Mister Roberts, Wouk's Caine Mutiny, Statham's Welcome Darkness, Gwaltney's The Day the Century Ended and Mydan's Open City, analyzed in this study, clearly affirm the endurance of the human spirit and man's ability to triumph over forces that would "dehumanize and destroy." These novels suggest that man survives because of his humanness. A second response shows the futility of human existence. Mailer's The Naked and the Dead and James Jones' From Here to Eternity, The Thin Red Line and The Pistol hold out no hope to man in his struggle to survive. Destruction is the end of man's quest for freedom, order, equality and justice.

In the Filipino novels there are two basic conflicts: Christian man against his primitive instincts, and man against a world of human foes who try to destroy him. The protagonists who struggle to dominate their instincts suffer guilt and remorse, but they attain redemption through some form of expiation. Those who struggle to survive in a threatening world of hunger, disease, anarchists, treacherous countrymen and Japanese foes must rely on their own inner resources.

In these novels only an affirming pattern emerges. Like the American novels of affirmation, they suggest that the spirit of man is indestructible, therefore he can survive torture and degradations.

By way of suggesting further critical investigation, this study offers a brief comment on a Japanese novel about the war, Shohei Ooka's Fires on the Plain. This novel, which portrays the author's war experience in the Philippines, deals with man's search for meaning and order--a theme that parallels the concerns of some American and Philippine novels on the war.

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In memory of my Father

who lived the anguish of War

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INTRODUCTION

> "Every piece of writing has a meaning, even if this meaning is very far from the one the author wanted to give it. . . . The writer is neither Vestal nor Ariel: he is in it up to his neck, whatever he does, marked, compromised, right into his most distant refuge."
>
> Jean-Paul Sartre

"War is life in the grips of death," Joseph Remenyi notes.[1] And partly for this reason war has fascinated writers through the ages. Homer and Virgil made it the subject of their immortal works. Folk epics of many cultures celebrate its glories and crown its heroes with laurels. The Anglo-Saxon Beowulf, the legendary Arthur, the great Charlemagne, Sigrid, the Volsung are warriors all. And so are the heroes of Philippine folk epics: Lam-ang of the North, Baltog and Handiong of the Ibalon tale, and mighty Bantugan of the darangan epics from the Muslim South.[2] All are peerless

[1] Joseph Remenyi, "The Psychology of War Literature," Sewanee Review, LII (1944), 140.

[2] Biag ni Lam-ang (Life of Lam-ang, an Ilocano folk epic), Ibalon (an ancient Bicol tale) and Bantugan (part of the folk epics of the darangan tribe in Mindanao) are three of several folk epics in various Philippine dialects.

warriors, courageous in battle and therefore, by ancient standards, worthy to rule and govern. On the other hand, early American literature glorifies, not unvanquished warriors but self-reliant individuals who carve their own destinies despite overwhelming odds.

Modern writers are no less fascinated by the grim spectacle of man killing his fellowmen. But for most of them war no longer means unadulterated glory, heroism and flag-waving. Warriors no longer remain unfalteringly courageous. Instead these writers portray the devastating horror of war, the disillusionment, the pain and anguish, the fear and cowardice as well as the heroism of men under fire. From Emile Zola's Le Debacle, through Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace, to Stephen Crane's Red Badge of Courage, on to Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms and Norman Mailer's The Naked and the Dead, war is presented as a montage of bloated corpses, mangled bodies, broken bones--a gory carnage where man shows himself indeed as the "glory, jest and riddle of the world." He crawls on all fours and soars with angels; a craven worm and a heroic demi-god all at once. The leaders are power-mad and paranoic, expert war strategists but also blundering fools, who send their men to the jaws of death for a piece of meaningless "property."

No other war has been as amply and as realistically chronicled as the Second World War. American novelists alone

have written a Sizeable number of novels about it. Three years after Hiroshima, a total of 270 titles were recorded.[3] Now a quarter of a century later, the list has lengthened considerably, as many of those who had experienced the war in one way or another responded to the compulsion to write about the shattering experience.

Novelists of other nations have written about it too, although not as copiously. Perhaps among other reasons, they lack a responsive public eager for a vicarious knowledge of the war. In the Philippines, almost every novel published after the Second World War refers to the Japanese Occupation and its devastating effect, but only five deal with it in detail.

The American novelists who wrote on the Pacific war and the Filipino writers who tried to re-create the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines shared a "cause" and fought a common enemy on similar terrain. Hence, a study of their themes and meanings is a propos. In this study I propose to show that these novelists have used the war as a means of expressing parallel themes concerned with human values and human dignity. Their interpretation of the war experience indicates that to the American novelists the war is an extension of the world they left behind and a continuation of the search for meaning. But to the Philippine

[3]Publisher's Weekly (Oct. 23, 1948).

writers war is a disruption of a peaceful existence and a backdrop in the search for the national self.

The chief tension that exists in both the American and the Filipino novels about the war evolves from the universal conflict between man and his world. To the American novelists the macrocosm of existence is represented by the authoritarian military hierarchy; by repressive human institutions. All of these conspire to deprive him of his liberties and his identity. To the Filipino novelists, society becomes the tribe, the village or barrio settlement, and treacherous countrymen. It threatens the individual not with a loss of identity but with its disintegration. The peacetime world of serene and tranquil existence has vanished.

The American fighting man wrestles not only with the enemy concealed by the deceptive jungle underbrush, but also with organized society, with his moral scruples and with his hostile physical environment. Survival depends on his physical and spiritual toughness. The Filipino guerilla fighter struggles with the clamor of his blood for vengeance and the demands of his conscience for atonement. He struggles with the need for tribal and self-preservation, with the claims of conflicting loyalties and the bonds of kinship, for he must kill not only the Japanese but his own kin sometimes. The "enemy" is both within and without, for the

protagonists try to subdue the rebellious self and to dominate a hostile world.

Because the main critical problem in this study is thematic definition, I have not extensively analyzed and compared literary techniques. References to technique and style are made primarily to clarify a novel's thematic significance.

To keep the work cohesive, I have divided it into two parts. Part I deals with the thematic preoccupations in the American novels: choice and responsibility; freedom and authority, which wears the masks of the military organization, the officers, the women and social conventions; Fate and hostile nature. Because of the large bulk of materials, I have limited Part I to novels on the Pacific campaign written by men who served in this war theater. A list of sixty-six titles emerges, compiled with the aid of the Fiction Catalog, the Book Review Digest and the bibliographies of Lawrence Feigenbaum's[4] and Joseph J. Waldmeir's studies.[5] I narrowed down this list to nine novels for analysis. The criteria for the final list are

[4]Lawrence Feigenbaum, "War, as Viewed by the Post War Novelists of World War I and II," (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1950).

[5]Joseph J. Waldmeir, American Novels of the Second World War (The Hague, 1968).

arbitrary: personal taste, popular appeal, some degree of thematic representativeness and relative closeness to the Philippine area. Geographic affinity and thematic relatedness then are the ties that bind.

These criteria necessarily exclude many novels which critics have extolled. Excluded, for instance, are Joseph Heller's Catch-22 (1961), Irwin Shaw's The Young Lions (1948), Vance Bourjaily's End of My Life (1952), to mention a few. These are excellent works, critics note, and thematically related. By critical consensus, the works I have chosen are not the best of the American novels about the war, with the exception of Mailer's The Naked and the Dead (1948). Yet, as Malcolm Cowley points out, the public does not always listen to the critics.[6] And what the majority reads might very well be the key to the social malaise of the times. One novel included in my study, Herman Wouk's Caine Mutiny (1951) won a Pulitzer prize and has been widely read. However, W. J. Stuckey, among other critics, considers this novel a blend of popular entertainment and moralizing.[7] And John W. Aldridge calls it "pseudo-fiction" and "serious hack-writing."[8]

[6]Malcolm Cowley, The Literary Situation (New York, 1954) p. 23.

[7]W. J. Stuckey, The Pulitzer Prize Novels (New York, 1966), pp. 138-164.

[8]John W. Adridge, In Search of Heresy (New York, 1956), p. 25.

William H. Whyte, Jr., on the other hand, gives it a chapter in his analysis of modern American society and considers it a significant fictional reflection of the American social psyche.[9] And Edmund Fuller, arriving at a conclusion opposed to the "anti-Woukeans," discusses the novel lengthily in his study of the image of man in modern fiction and considers it a realistic portrayal of modern man's dilemma.[10]

Also included in my study are Thomas Heggen's Mister Roberts (1946), set somewhere on the Pacific Ocean off the bay of "Tedium Island;" Francis Irby Gwaltney's The Day the Century Ended, also titled Between Heaven and Hell (1955), mostly on the last days of the Leyte campaign; Shelley Mydan's Open City (1945), set in Manila immediately after the Japanese landing; Leon Statham's Welcome Darkness (1950), somewhere in the mountains of the Philippines; and James Jones' From Here to Eternity (1951), The Pistol (1958), both set in Hawaii, and The Thin Red Line (1965), on the Guadalcanal campaign.

Part II provides a background for the Filipino novels by means of a brief survey of Philippine literary tradition and discusses the main concerns of the novels on the Japanese

[9]William H. Whyte, Jr., "Love That System," The Organization Man (New York, 1957), pp. 269-275.

[10]Edmund Fuller, Man in Modern Fiction (New York, 1958), pp. 133-147.

war years. Faith and betrayals, survival and extinction, remorse and purgation haunt the people in these novels. The characters try to discover their various roles in a world that is suddenly turned upside down, at a time that is out of joint. Subconsciously they are in search of answers to pressing questions about national identity. Does being Filipino, brown and Asian mean collaboration with the Japanese? Or does it mean remaining true to the abstract ideals of democracy? Is working with the enemy treason or national expediency? The result is not pretty. The reader gets a grim picture of war's brutalizing effect upon what the novelists portray as a once gentle people. In Bienvenido N. Santos' The Volcano, the American missionary sums up the effect of war:

> Something must have snapped somewhere and everything that he remembered with fondness . . . was gone--their gentleness, sweetness almost, replaced by grasping cunning. They had used to knock on the door, timidly. Now they pounded on it as if impatient to be attended to and even their smiles no longer seemed sincere.[11]

Five novels about the Japanese Occupation are included in my study. These novels give a view of wartime in the major regions of the Philippines. Stevan Javellana's Without Seeing the Dawn (1947) pictures life and guerilla fighting in the island of Panay. Juan Laya's This Barangay (1950)

[11]Bienvenido N. Santos, The Volcano (Manila, 1965), p. 309.

depicts the war struggle in the northern and central part of Luzon. Edilberto K. Tiempo's two novels, Watch in the Night (1953) and More Than Conquerors (1964) show underground activities in the Visayan Islands. And Santos' perceptive and sensitively written The Volcano portrays the effects of the war in the lush and beautiful Bicol region.

The last chapter sums up and notes some characteristics of the American and Filipino novels on the Second World War in the Pacific. Some novels show man's ability to conquer his world and dominate himself. They testify to his basic humanity. Others pessimistically hold out no hope at all. In this concluding chapter there is a brief comment on Shohei Ooka's Fires on the Plain (1957), originally titled Nobi, to suggest a possible direction for further critical investigation.

Critical studies on the American novels about the war are many, particularly the shorter critiques. Malcolm Cowley's "War Novels: After Two Wars,"[12] John T. Frederick's "Fiction of the Second World War,"[13] and a chapter on novels

[12]Malcolm Cowley, "War Novels: After Two Wars, Modern American Fiction, ed. Walton Litz (New York, 1963).

[13]John T. Frederick, "Fiction of the Second World War," College English, XVII (Jan. 1956), 197-204.

about the war in Chester Eisinger's Fiction of the Forties (1963), have proved enlightening, particularly in the contradictory generalizations that these critics have made. Three full-length works have greatly broadened my knowledge of the novels. John W. Aldridge's After the Lost Generation (1958), which has influenced the format of this study, has presented informative parallels between American writers of the First and the Second World War. Although Aldridge does not confine his study to novels on the war, the background he presents has been useful. Lawrence Feigenbaum's unpublished doctoral dissertation, "War, as Viewed by the Post War Novelists of World War I and II," which compares and contrasts these novelists' attitudes towards war, towards the enemy, the allies, the native populations, the home front, and women, among other aspects, is partly responsible for my choice of subject. And of the greatest help is Joseph J. Waldmeir's American Novels of the Second World War (1968), which suggests that most of the novels are affirmative, optimistic and ideological. This has increased my understanding of the novels, although some conclusions I make differ from those presented in the book.

My critical position is close to Chester Eisinger's view which points out a "pattern of affirmation" and a "pattern of despair." But we differ in the choice of evidence

and in the interpretation of some novels, particularly The Caine Mutiny and Jones' From Here to Eternity. Furthermore, my definition of "affirmation" is limited to novels that illustrate man's basic humanity, whereas Eisinger's novels of affirmation include what Joseph J. Waldmeir calls "gung-ho" novels and the "pseudo-ideological." And in the second category, novels that show futility, I have included only those that deny man's ability to win over "dehumanizing" forces.

On the other hand, critical evaluations of the Philippine novels are few. The principal studies in the Philippines are the short reviews in the Philippine Studies, a quarterly magazine published by the Jesuits of the Ateneo de Manila University (see Bibliography). Some American magazines have also reviewed one of the novels which was published by an American publisher (see Bibliography). Leonard Casper's The Wayward Horizon (1961) contains brief analyses of three of the novels. The same critiques with some revisions are included in his more recent The Wounded Diamond (1964) and New Writing from the Philippines (1966).

My contention that the novels on the war in the Philippines show the indomitability of the human spirit is not shared by any critic. However, Father Miguel Bernad's analysis of More Than Conquerors and Casper's evaluation of This Barangay are close to my reading of the novels.

PART I. AMERICAN NOVELS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN THE PACIFIC

CHAPTER I

THE WAR, THE NOVELISTS AND THE SYSTEM

The American novel of the Second World War has a robust and sturdy ancestry. Long before Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms, American novelists had already shown disillusionment with war and its brutalities. Robert Lively's discussion of Civil War fiction points out that even then, a century ago, the American writer looked on war as no glorious undertaking.[1] Speaking of Northern writers who "reported" on the war, Lively says that "instead of a gorgeously patterned epic of contending armies, battle was . . . presented as a senseless denial of reason. . . . Climaxes are moments of disordered, rather than of patriotic achievement; and their conclusions tend to be oriented toward what was lost rather than what was won."[2] In John W. de Forest's Miss Ravenel's Conversion From Secession to Loyalty (1867), one sees exposed the greed

[1]Robert A. Lively, Fiction Fights the Civil War, (University of North Carolina Press, 1957).

[2]Ibid., p. 151.

and materialism that hide behind the accommodating skirt of patriotism. And Stephen Crane's Red Badge of Courage (1895) already suggests the ironies of war where man gets rewards for his cowardice and pain for his heroism. Such disillusioning incongruities are later blown into absurd proportions in Joseph Heller's Catch-22. The seeds of disillusionment with war and glorious causes then were not sown in the novels of the First World War. Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms was but carrying on a tradition and partly starting its own. And to think that Mailer's The Naked and the Dead can look no farther back than Hemingway and Dos Passos is to have a short memory indeed.

On the American novels of the Second World War, critical judgments divide sharply. Some critics note a disaffection, a disorientation of sensibilities and a mood of disillusionment.[3] And others hear an affirmative note and sense anguished optimism in the ideological dialogues found in the novels.[4] Despite divergent views, however, critics agree that most of the "serious" novelists who wrote about the war used it to reflect their view of the human condition. Many critics believe that war is

[3]James Miller, Quests Surd and Absrud (Chicago, 1967), p. 5.

[4]Waldmeir, American Novels of the Second World War, p. 51.

the ready-made microcosm used to mirror the novelists' world vision.

The world and the society which these novelists of the Second World War portray in their novels become the subject of Whyte's The Organization Man. In this provocative and searching analysis of American society, Whyte suggests that in the America of these novelists, conformity has become the rule. The man who maintains the status quo is the man most likely to succeed. Initiative is on the wane. And Jeffersonian individualism has no place in the structured, hierarchical system. All thinking is done above; all orders come from above. And those at the lower end of the totem need only to execute not to initiate action of any kind. The good corporation man submits himself to this unacknowledged but nonetheless very real scheme of things. What is right for the organization he must consider right for him. And turning literary critic, Whyte avers that these social conditions are fictionally reflected in Wouk's The Caine Mutiny, which shows "an astounding denial of individual responsibility. The system is presented as having such a mystique that apparent evil becomes a kind of good."[5]

[5]Whyte, The Organization Man, pp. 271-272. My reading of the Caine Mutiny differs completely from Whyte's and I do not sense this "astounding denial of individual responsibility." See Chapter II of this study.

But the romantic image of the American Adam lighting out for the "territory ahead" unhampered and free to forge his own destiny impinges on the consciousness of modern man. This desire for absolute freedom shows itself in the rebellion of many protagonists in the American novels on the Second World War in the Pacific. Individual man is swallowed by the military organization which frustrates his desire. He realizes that he is one of the many expendable pieces in a colossal chess game and anonymity which he sorely dreads stares him in the face. The "system" plans his life for him and tries to shape him to its image. The untrammeled days are gone. His every step, his every move has been mapped out for him and for thousands like him. His thinking has been done for him, so he feels. He is smothered and hemmed in. Both the unwilling civilian soldier and the thirty-year military man can sense the corporation closing in. A staggering struggle to be himself and to be his own man again ensues. In the novels of the war in the Pacific some of the individuals triumph over the "system" and show W. H. Auden's "affirming flame" of humanity.[6] Others are completely demolished.

Many of these American novelists who wrote on the Second World War, Aldridge notes, were young men who left

[6]W. H. Auden, "September 1, 1939."

college and went off to war with the "natural excitement of awakening to life . . . reinforced and heightened by [the] impending participation in a great world war."[7] They had the "sense of youth" in abundance. They had besides a "sense of inevitability and of new energy getting set to explode." But returning from the war, these same young men with the high hopes and shining illusions realized that somewhere between the college campus and the theaters of war "tomorrow" had been lost. When they began to write those novels that would celebrate the "new age," they reached the bitter conclusion that all along they "had been keeping alive and making love to an illusion."[8] This has made them what Aldridge calls the "illusionless lads of the Forties."

The novels about the war which these "illusionless lads" have written exude a sense of futility that borders on fatalism. This is a similar sense of futility evident in John Dos Passos U.S.A. stemming from almost identical causes.[9] Society steeped in hypocrisy, materialism and the cupidity of human institutions crushes and destroys

[7]Aldridge, After the Lost Generation, (Preface), p. xiii.

[8]Ibid., p. xiv.

[9]For a discussion of these parallels with Mailer's The Naked and the Dead see Aldridge, After the Lost Generation, pp. 134-135.

the individual. But the war novels on the Pacific, intentionally or not, also suggest that often the well-laid plans of mice and men go awry, as Fate steps in to intervene.

Futility also derives from the heartlessness of a "system" that would tolerate no opposition from mere man. It tries to shape the individual to its specifications. Acquiescence means self-mutilation, but fighting it means destruction as the characters in Jones' From Here to Eternity find out too late. This intangible, abstract system, somehow like Kafka's bureaucratic and all too powerful Court in The Trial and the enigmatic Castle in The Castle, takes shape in the officers. Like Kafka's Court officers, they conspire to deprive a man of his life and liberty, for no obvious reason. "Off with his head," decrees the mad Queen of Alice in Wonderland from sheer whim and fancy. So do the officers portrayed in some American novels on the Pacific war.

Futility in this nightmarish world comes from still another source--a hostile and ruthless nature. Time and again, the protagonists are pitted against miasmic tropical jungles, unscalable mountains, raging typhoons, oppressive and ennervating heat. Only the fit survive in this infernal atmosphere. And as a judgment on the officers, many of the novels suggest that the survival quotient of this breed of

men is low indeed. Colonel Miles and Captain Grimes in The Day the Century Ended, Captain Morton in Mister Roberts, Captain Queeg in The Caine Mutiny all succumb to paranoia. The enlisted man dies a physical death, but the officers suffer a torture worse than death. The concrete embodiment of the "system" collapses mentally. To remove the officers physically gives no satisfaction and accomplishes nothing, for others can take their place. But when the mind goes, then the system will cease to operate.

One can see then that some of the novelists who wrote on the Pacific war glimpse no glimmer of Promethean fire, or if they do, it gives no light nor heat. Instead it becomes a revealing, blinding glare in which men, like Jones' Prewitt in From Here to Eternity, are trapped and felled by bullets of a relentless and unseen adversary representing the system. Mailer's The Naked and the Dead, which presents what one critic calls a "microcosm of futility,"[10] belongs to this category. Man is helpless in the face of overpowering universal forces. Jones' novels reflect the same sense of helplessness. Gore Vidal's Williwaw (1946), not analyzed in this study, which tells the story of men confined to a non-combat Navy boat in the

[10]Paul West, The Modern Novel (London, 1963), p.111.

Aleutian Islands, illustrates the same dim view of existence. Comparing Vidal's novel with Heggen's Mister Roberts, one can see how two novelists working with identical material--bored men, doing a dull job in the Pacific--can present two different pictures. "Williwaw moves logically through the futility of its parts to the climaxing futility at its end," Aldridge remarks;[11] while Mister Roberts skips light-heartedly along to its hilarious conclusion.

Heggen's sun-lighted vista of human existence illustrates the other pattern of response to the war experience--a resounding affirmation of the indomitability of the human spirit. The Weltschmerz of the "illusionless lads" does not cloud the landscape for novelists in this category. They go beyond political affirmations and they celebrate more than just ideological victories. These novelists' vision extends beyond the immediate perimeter of war as they try to create order out of a chaotic existence. And the victories they glorify are those of the individual over a system, a world that corrupts and maims the spirit. Their novels demonstrate the "defiant assertion of humanity in the face of overwhelming forces that

[11]Aldridge, After the Lost Generation, p. 172.

dehumanize and destroy," which Miller detects in Heller's Catch-22.[12] Mister Roberts, Mydan's Open City, Gwaltney's The Day the Century Ended, Statham's Welcome Darkness, Wouk's The Caine Mutiny show this "assertion of humanity."

The anguished optimism that Joseph J. Waldmeir has noted in some novels, stems from the soul-wrenching struggle of the hardy individualists against a threatening and smothering world. It is the echo of man's spirit, defiant and assertive. It was the same sound that echoed during the Promethean ascent to Olympus, through the Herculean feat at the Aegean stables, at the splintering tumult of the ill-fated Pequod. Man might succeed in stealing fire from the gods, but with what anguish and pain.

Two subsequent chapters will discuss some of the novels that project a gloomy picture of the human condition and those that light candles in the darkness and show a hopeful view.

[12]Miller, Quests Surd and Absurd, p. 17.

CHAPTER II

THE "AFFIRMING FLAME"

Chester Eisinger's discussion of American novels about the Second World War points out that "patterns of affirmation" emerge. To him, novels in this category are those which

> . . . responded to the demands of the new nationalism with a general and undiluted glorification of the armed services and its leaders or with a flattering version of the democratic ethic and the democratic hero. Others spoke boldly in the language of religion and love and in the accents of moral consciousness. These books were marked with determination to face the religious and philosophical issues brought urgently to the fore by the war. Their authors turned in upon themselves, confronting the problems of personal identity and of man's relation to God. Or they probed the mysteries of man's inner resources in an effort to discover the springs of personal growth, or of individual and moral survival in periods of crisis.[1]

He further notes that many novels of affirmation are "rhetorical novels," which are "unblushingly patriotic." They "[tend] to be either simple-minded or shrewdly calculating, and perhaps aesthetically and intellectually dishonest."[2] In this study, I have limited the category of affirmation to those novels that show man's ability to dominate his

[1]Chester Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties (Chicago, 1963), p. 44.

[2]Ibid., p. 47.

world--the vast military organization included. These are novels that reveal man's undefeated spirit in the face of almost insurmountable hardships both physical and moral. In these novels man survives because basically he remains master of his own fate.

In Thomas Heggen's Mister Roberts,[3] the hilarious tale of rebellious boy-men confined to the Navy boat Reluctant, the individualistic spirit ultimately rises above the "system." In a tone of derision and irony Heggen paints the rowdy world of the Reluctant sluggishly shuttling back and forth between Tedium Island, Apathy, Ennui, Limbo and Elysium. Heggen creates a tri-level universe with Captain Morton at the top, the officers at the middle and the men at the bottom. It suggests no Dantean inferno, but a purgatory of sorts. Its restive souls suffer temporary punishment relieved by little glimpses of Elysium and the thought of eventual release. In this purgatorial world, daily pitched battles occur between evenly-matched adversaries: Captain Morton against officers and men. With gleeful optimism Heggen shows man as victorious

[3]Serious critics of the American novels about the war give Heggen's work only passing mention. Waldmeir's American Novels of the Second World War, one of the more comprehensive studies, refers to it in a short footnote commenting on the similarity between Morton and Queeg of the Caine Mutiny. Press reviews of the book and of the play adaptation, however, predicted a literary future for Heggen. Tragically he committed suicide at twenty-seven unable to fulfill the prophecy.

because he can laugh at himself and at his own miseries.

The towering antagonist in Mister Roberts is the "shadow" of the Navy that hovers about the unprepossessing Captain Morton and lends him a "mantle of power." He embodies all the damning characteristics of the organization--its stupidities, irrationalities, and fascistic authoritarianism that gag the freeborn men of the Reluctant. The Navy "image" shines through his person, investing him with authority which no "animated Popeye" should possess. And what kind of man is Heggen's embodiment of power and authority?

Captain Morton is formerly of the merchant marine. He morosely presides over the reluctant crew, who refer to him as "Stupid," "old bastard," "the old Man," but very rarely as the Captain except in his presence. As the ship's Enemy Number One, he makes impossible demands and insists on insane rules: shirttails tucked in, men getting up at reveille, standing alert during watches and no reading of comics books, no leaning on the rails. He penalizes many other sins that civilians turned navy men are heir to. He likes stupid movies, mostly inane Westerns, which delight him immensely. He keeps a commander's cap hanging over his bunk like a talisman. He dotes on a potted palm tree and intemperately vows to court martial the culprit who pushed

it overboard and to deprive the whole ship of liberty. The idolized Mister Roberts diagnoses the Captain's peculiar ailment as excessive vanity and infantilism. In the hostile world of the Reluctant, Captain Morton lives in isolated splendor in his cabin, the target of pranks and vitriolic comments behind his back.

The stocky figure of the Captain looms in the men's horizon as the projection of the Navy's authority. He is the brooding god of destiny who controls each man's fate, communing only with his own thoughts, immovable in his decisions, implacable in his decrees. He decides who gets relieved from the temporal suffering in the Reluctant. And his special delight is thwarting Roberts' yearning for release, returning unendorsed the First Lieutenant's monthly request for a transfer. Puny man resorts to childish means of redressing grievances against the long shadow of the organization. And "the shadow, acknowledged or not, is there all the time."[4] To the men Captain Morton presents a tangible and static target. With the collective frustrations of the boy-men in the Reluctant in the gesture, Mister Roberts takes a potshot at the Captain's exposed derriere to get even. In his characterization of Captain

[4]Thomas Heggen, Mister Roberts, p. 6. All subsequent quotations from the novel are taken from the Bantam Book edition.

Morton, Heggen has put up to ridicule the organization which the captain represents.

The second level of Heggen's world is inhabited by fourteen officers. Their sanctuary is the wardroom where Ed Pauley keeps a chart which records the Captain's canards against them. As Heggen takes care to emphasize, "the mantle of leadership fell uneasily upon these officers. Most of them, feeling ridiculous in it, renounced the role altogether and behaved as if they had no authority and no responsibility."[5] Feuding cliques exist among them. However, they are united in their fight against the Captain, who represents the "system" that holds them captive in their purgatory. Four of these officers merit attention, for Heggen has used them subtly to illustrate his premise that the individual can triumph over the military organization.

Mister Roberts, the First Lieutenant, is Heggen's main protagonist. He alone among the reluctant defenders of democracy joined the Navy voluntarily, leaving medical school in order to fight a war. Among the officers, only Mister Roberts belongs to no clique but is accepted by all. And he alone among them acts like an officer. Heggen pictures him as competent and a born leader:

[5]Ibid., pp. 9-10.

> He was the sort of leader who is followed blindly because he does not look back to see if he is being followed. For him the crew would turn out ten times the work that any other officer on the ship could command. He could not pass the galley without being offered a steak sandwich, or the bakery without a pie. At one time or another perhaps ninety per cent of the crew had asked him for advice. If it had been said of him once in the compartment it had been said a hundred times: "The best son-of-a bitching officer in the goddamn Navy."[6]

However, life in the Reluctant--tediously loading and unloading supplies or playing pranks on the Captain for entertainment--is not Mister Roberts' idea of fighting the war. In this "slender blond boy of twenty-six," with a "shy, tilted smile . . . rather quiet," and a voice that is "soft and flat," with something in it that made people strain to listen,"[7] Heggen has pictured a romantic idealist, a modern Don Quixote tilting at windmills. Among the realistic men of the Reluctant, he alone comes closest to disaffection. As he pictures in his mind the Saturday night crowd in San Francisco, he thinks of all those men, searching for something, hoping somehow to find it,

> . . . the bright-eyed, expectant young officers, watching the girls, looking for something--they didn't know what--something that called at night with the dusk and the neon lights and swore to them that tonight, this very night, in this town, this bar, a thing of desperate loveliness would happen if only

[6]Heggen, Mister Roberts, p. 10.

[7]loc. cit.

> they found the right bar, drank enough liquor, smoked enough cigarette, heard enough talk, laughed enough. But they must hurry!--the bars are closing, the ships were sailing, youth itself was running out. What was it they were seeking?[8]

Roberts himself never quite knows nor does he find out what he seeks. But Heggen suggests that this is something more than just perishable pleasures. It is something beyond the realities of life in the Reluctant for Heggen's romantic dreamer:

> Roberts had never seen the sea quite like this. There wasn't a ripple anywhere: there was only the faintest hint of a ground swell, an occasional bulge of water. The surface, glazed as it was with moonlight, looked heavy, coated, enameled: it was that perfect. . . .
>
> Holy Christ, thought Roberts, this sea is phony, a mirage, an illusion. There couldn't be a sea like this. It's a lie, a myth, a legend. It's not real.
>
> And a not-at-all faint, interior voice answered him: Don't you wish it weren't?
>
> Yes, said Roberts, I do for a fact: I wish it weren't.
>
> And then he added: But this ship can't be real. There couldn't possibly be a ship like this. . . .
>
> But there is, Roberts said.[9]

Vaguely Roberts is aware that he is trying to reach for the elusive glory of the battlefield. When the Third Reich falls and he finds no reaction in the men of the Reluctant, Roberts feels the most intense frustration, which he vents on the Captain's potted palm. And Dowdy, one of the crew, awards him the Order of the Palm as ironic recognition for the

[8]Heggen, Mister Roberts, p. 48.

[9]Ibid., p. 43.

valiant deed. Heggen seems to laugh good-naturedly at his romantic idealist.

The ironic climax of Roberts' quest for glory is a pointless death. Not long before Hiroshima, Captain Morton in exasperation approves Roberts' transfer to another ship closer to the battle zone. While he is drinking coffee with another officer in the wardroom, a suicidal kamikaze pilot lets loose the fatal bullet that ends Mister Roberts' dream of glory. But in keeping with Heggen's intentions, Mister Roberts leaves his Sancho Panza in Ensign Pulver.

Superficially Ensign Pulver appears to be concerned solely with creature comforts. He spends much of his time sleeping, and ingeniously he devises a way to make life pass with ease. He provides his bunk with all the conveniences he needs. He could reach for almost anything while lying supine with the minimum of exertion. Brilliant he is not, but pragmatically clever he surely is. Young men like Ensign Pulver would survive when others less driven by the will to pleasure would shrivel in boredom. But underneath the frivolous exterior Pulver hides the makings of a more realistic Mister Roberts. He becomes the devoted disciple of the First Lieutenant, reading his books, listening to his conversation, even aping his mannerisms. When Roberts dies only Ensign Pulver mourns the loss. He realizes

that no one in the Reluctant really cares about the passing away of his hero. In a gesture parallel to Roberts' own, Ensign Pulver pushes overboard the Captain's third set of potted palms. He takes up the torch of rebellion and brashly lets the Captain know it. Ensign Pulver is the triumph of the realistic individualist over the organization.

In Ensign Robert Keith, Heggen demonstrates the incongruity and absurdity of society's conventions except where they belong--in Bostonian drawing rooms. A college boy straight from midshipmen's school, Ensign Keith steps into the slovenly ship and receives the shock of his young life. All the rules that he has lived by seem to have been thrown overboard. Of Ensign Keith, Heggen says:

> From early Bostonian childhood he had been taught that certain truths were self-evident: that the Democratic Party was incorrigibly evil; that a long engagement was essential to a happy marriage; that solitary drinking makes a drunkard; and that breeding and character were what counted in life. When he had finished two years at Bowdoin, the Navy came along, made him an officer and issued him a few more Truths: that an officer was, ipso facto, a gentleman; . . . that an officer must not fraternize with enlisted men; and the one to the effect that an officer enjoys special privileges by virtue of his added responsibilities. Young Keith came aboard equipped with a full set of these excellent, if sometimes impractical Truths, . . . [10]

Ensign Keith sees the anarchy in the Reluctant. Gripped by a messianic fervor, he tries single-handedly to restore the

[10]Heggen, Mister Roberts, pp. 19-20.

ship to the Navy. In no time he is the Captain's competition for Enemy Number One. It takes Dowdy and his bunch of jungle juice imbibers to get "Mr. Keith squared away." They make him swallow enough jungle juice to make him lose his aristocratic inhibitions. In Heggen's tri-level universe the rules of a civilian society and an authoritarian Navy are out of place.

The ship doctor, known only as "Doc," half philosopher and half man of science, has his feet in two worlds and entertains no illusions about them. He reads Nietzsche and Schopenhauer and works on advanced calculus problems to while away the endless waiting in the Reluctant. Doc has come to terms with life. Vice and sin, virtue and goodness are but two faces of one coin in Doc's experience. He understands Roberts' longing for the glory of battle but he knows the emptiness of such dreams. Through Doc, Heggen points out the irony of romantic dreams, for Doc suggests that the distinction one can expect from the war is to acquire "a dose of the clap." He tells the simple-minded Lindstrom, who gets it from a toothless native, that he should not try to cure it for it would set him off from the mob. Doc points out that people in Lindstrom's native Dakota would point him out as a hero.

Among the crew Heggen has drawn two types of individualists in Dowdy, the boatswain's mate, and in David "Booksie"

Bookser, a spiritual looking young Adonis. Dowdy has served eleven years with the Navy and intends to make it his lifetime profession. He is earthy, resourceful when it comes to obtaining the comforts of life like whiskey, and competent in his job. Many of the men swear by him and consider his opinions infallible. Lindstrom seeks him out for advice on his particular dilemma and receives Dowdy's unequivocal agreement with Doc. Dowdy is the inexhaustible source of information on almost anything under the sun, from where to get jungle juice to the condition of houses of pleasure in the ports of liberty. He is Mister Roberts' counterpart among the crew. He could tell off the Captain and spell out exactly what the crew think of "old Stupid." Dowdy is the man who gets the stuffy Ensign Keith "squared away" about life and rules in the Reluctant. He is the astute observer who recognizes Roberts' extraordinary heroism in getting rid of the Captain's palm tree. Heggen has pictured a hard-headed individualist who sees the realities of life in the Reluctant as a farcical and ironic re-creation of life. This rugged realist knows that even a man like Captain Morton with the "shadow" of the Navy behind him or Ensign Keith with generations of Bostonian good breeding and stuffiness cushioning him can be vanquished and led to see life the Dowdy-way.

Booksie belongs to a class all by himself, an anachronism among the hard-drinking, foul-mouthed, peeping Tom's of the Reluctant. As Heggen puts it, "he represented the spirit on the Reluctant"--a "lonely and valiant" thing to do. Booksie dares to be different and refuses to fit the mold, which even semmingly stronger men like Ensign Keith could not fight. Strangely enough the crew does not resent this, and the men take a protective attitude towards the "beautiful boy." When the liberty at Elysium becomes a reality, Booksie is the object of pitying attention. The men discuss delightedly what might happen to the angelic Booksie let loose in the den of iniquity. When the drunken orgy at Elysium finally comes to an end and everyone is restricted to quarters, the men discover that Booksie is still missing. Only when the Reluctant gets ready to sail away does he return. And while the whole crew watch in awe, Booksie takes a long and loving farewell of the "most beautiful" native girl in Elysium. He alone has had a truly memorable time in the port of liberty. Through Booksie, Heggen suggests that the spiritual man can survive and rise above the pattern set for him.

With gentle irony Heggen effectively depicts a world where the menace is mild and its personification vincible. The long arm of the "system" in Captain Morton can be successfully eluded. And in the harsh light of

reality, Heggen notes, the Captain "looked old, and not evil, but merely foolish." Sex and women, powerful threats in other novels on the war, are no threat to Heggen's men. A healthy adolescent curiosity, enthusiasm and undue optimism exist; there is none of the bitter cynicism of jaded libertines that one finds in other novels about the war. And yet, beneath the banter and the silly running battles between Heggen's pranksters and the "shadow" of the "system," the novel contains a positive assertion of man's perfectibility.

One enthusiastic reviewer says that "beneath the free and easy language there are solid underpinnings and a regenerative quality. In Mister Roberts young Heggen, even as Sir Philip Sidney and Keats and Thomas Wolfe before him, catches at that promise made to youth of bright and lovely imperishable things."[11] The praise is inordinately lavish and I would not claim the immortality of Sidney, Keats or even Thomas Wolfe for Heggen's Mister Roberts. However, the "solid underpinnings" are indeed discernible beneath the frill and froth of Heggen's light-hearted tale.

Like Heggen's Mister Roberts, Irby Francis Gwaltney's The Day the Century Ended strongly affirms the individual's triumph over the organization, over paranoid officers and

[11]Jane Voiles, "Mister Roberts by Thomas Heggen," San Francisco Chronicle (Oct. 20, 1946), p. 22.

over fear, loneliness and the physical hardships of combat. It portrays Samuel Francis Gifford's single-handed rebellion against sick men who call themselves officers and vent their own fears, frustrations and inadequacies on the men in their command.

But the novel is not an indictment of the whole "system" or of an entire military organization, like Jones' From Here to Eternity; nor is it a glorification of the officer class. Gwaltney's book offers "good" officers, like Colonel Julian Cozzens, and "bad" ones like Colonel Miles and Captain Grimes. Their neurotic fears and not the military organization bring out their fascistic tendencies. Miles and Grimes help to bring out the novel's main point: that the human spirit can withstand the bestialities of war and of men who perpetrate it.

Simply and uncomplicatedly Gwaltney tells the story of Sam Gifford from a normal adolescence in a Southern town, through a happy marriage, to the jungles of New Guinea and the Leyte campaign in the Philippines. When the atomic blast in Hiroshima ends the war, Sam and his squad are still shooting it out with the Japanese in a Philippine hillside, unaware that the Pacific war is over. Gifford experiences harrowing jungle warfare, grief over the death of his father-in-law, Colonel Cozzens, a court martial for striking an officer who incompetently killed two of his friends, and a

sentence to George Company. This is the "convict" company commanded by Captain Grimes where the regiment's "bad boys" serve time instead of in the stockade. The experience transforms Sam Gifford from a fearless fighter into a nervous wreck shivering uncontrollably during combat. But by the end of the novel, Pvt. Gifford gets back his sergeant rating with only a damaged ankle, two Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart.

Gwaltney has given his readers a refreshingly healthy and normal protagonist in Sam Gifford. He is not one of those anti-everything rebels, like the malcontents in Jones' From Here to Eternity. No traumatic and disillusioning experiences with parents and women haunt him, as they do Mailer's "wounded psyches" in The Naked and the Dead. Sam Gifford's rebellion is not against all forms of authority, as Gwaltney takes care to illustrate in the reasonable and respected rule of Colonel Cozzens, but against Miles, Grimes and Baxter as men who happen to be officers.

Miles, the real antagonist in the novel, remains in the background--a voice, a powerful presence, an iron hand that cows the most truculent men in the regiment. He generates the ripple of hate that causes Gifford's mutinous conduct against Baxter. But Miles is only a "reputation," an unseen evil that the men talk about, but whose influence is far-reaching. The extension of this evil power is Grimes,

who is severely paranoid. He fears for his life daily and keeps bodyguards to foil any attempt on his person by men in his command. In his company nobody smiles or laughs, and fear is the motivating factor. But when Miles pushes him too hard, Grimes finally becomes mentally deranged and goes after the colonel with a machine gun. With this neat resolution of the conflict, Gwaltney concludes The Day the Century Ended.

Herman Wouk's The Caine Mutiny, however, offers no pat conclusion, for he paints the human condition in varied hues of grey. His gripping tale of a junior officer, who relieves a paranoid skipper, believing him not competent to maneuver a foundering ship, covers that vast expanse of grey where soul-wrenching struggles take place--the area of choice and responsibility. He puts in military context what writers like Graham Greene and Joseph Conrad would place in a religious or ethical framework. Wouk portrays realistically the dilemma of choice that confronts Steve Maryk. Must he obey authority which errs, in his considered judgment, thereby losing the ship and the men? Or, should he take that authority in his hand to save the ship and risk the reprisals of a vengeful Navy organization? Maryk assumes authority on the strength of his understanding of Article 184, Navy Regulations, which states that "unusual and extradordinary circumstances may arise in which relief

from duty of a commanding officer by a subordinate becomes necessary." Maryk suffers the consequences of that act.

One critic notes that The Caine Mutiny deals with the conflict of "individual liberty with totalitarian authority," and "plays out the historic American drama of freedom versus authority."[12] Herman Wouk's non-resolution of that conflict has irritated a major segment of critics.[13] The chief source of critical irritation is what some critics call the "bewildering reversal," and what James R. Browne terms "distortion" in The Caine Mutiny.[14] Nine tenths of the novel "appears to be a service-blasting, liberal intellectual" tirade, another critic says, then it reverses direction and "Queeg is not a dangerous paranoic and a coward, all the evidence of 400 pages to the contrary; and Maryk had no right to usurp Queeg's authority."[15] This latter statement is representative of the seeming misapprehension of Wouk's intention.

[12]Frederic I. Carpenter, "Herman Wouk," College English, XVII (Jan. 1956), 213, 215.

[13]Edmund Fuller's Man in Modern Fiction, pp. 133-147, sums up briefly and refutes the attacks on the novel. My discussion concurs essentially with Fuller's view.

[14]James R. Browne, "Distortion in The Caine Mutiny," College English, XVII (Jan. 1956), 216-218.

[15]Waldmeir, American Novels of the Second World War, pp. 125, 129.

A critical conspiracy to misjudge the whole by its part and to attribute a premise to the novelist, leaving the burden of proof to the work, seems to exist in this "anti-Woukean" criticism. Chester E. Eisinger, who calls The Caine Mutiny a "rhetorical" novel, says:

> This book is a justification of the navy way, an attempt to find the justice of life within the framework of naval law and practice. Lieutenant Greenwald tells us what the war is all about: it is fought to stop the enemy from slaughtering human beings; it is won by a devoted officer class, trained before it broke out; our enemy is the man who destroys confidence in the country's military leadership. If we accept these premises, we must accept the proposition that the law of the navy is good and just because it is the enabling instrument in the achievement of these aims. In the novel, Maryk and Keith, the characters we are asked to like and admire, come into conflict with the law. If Wouk is to be true to his premises, these men should be destroyed. But in fact they escape real punishment.[16]

The fallacy in the reasoning is obvious. First, the critic assigns the major premise: "justification of the navy way," on the basis of a single incident: Greenwald's drunken outburst defending Queeg. Then, "if we accept these premises," which are Eisinger's, but not necessarily Wouk's own, the novel should mete out punishments to the offenders to prove the validity of the premises.

Indeed The Caine Mutiny will irritate those who expect pat resolutions of life's problems. But then as Fuller says "life would be a simple and happy proposition indeed if conclusions could be reached with such certainty,

[16]Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties, p. 46.

either before events or by hindsight."[17] The novel gives no black and white solution to the timeless dispute between individual conscience and authority, which Wouk equates with the Navy organization. What he does is unfold an impressive conflict which shows the necessity of authority and also proves the great value of individual responsibility. Wouk's contempt is not for repressive authority or self-assertive man, but for the lily-livered Tom Keefer who creates a Frankenstein monster and will not take responsibility for it. To illustrate his point, Wouk creates four plausibly motivated characters to represent the opposing forces: Philip Francis Queeg, Steve Maryk, Tom Keefer and Willie Keith. And to suggest the irresolvability of the problem, Wouk introduces the brilliant Jewish lawyer, Barney Greenwald, who brings about what anti-Woukeans call the bewildering reversal, but which actually points out the "subtlety and complexity of the dilemma."[18]

Lt. Commander Queeg appears to some critics to be more sinned against than sinning. To others he is the whitewashed villain of the piece: "Wouk apparently changed his mind about what he wanted the book to say by the time he was ready to finish it, thus he attempts to whitewash one of the

[17] Fuller, Man in Modern Fiction, p. 138.

[18] loc. cit.

most believable villains in all World War II literature."[19] To other critics this means that Wouk wants man "to think less and to obey more,"[20] and to catch the message that "it is not for the individual to question the system."[21] To Eisinger this is the "justification of the Navy way."[22]

But if the total picture were taken into account, and the whole not judged by its part, one could say that Wouk has created neither a hero nor a villain, but a man. At no point is Queeg wholly villainous or evil, nor is he shown as heroic; detestably authoritarian and pitifully weak, yes. In Queeg, Herman Wouk has shown his readers a man caught in the mesh of the "system" itself and in the complexities of living. Throughout much of the novel, Wouk pictures a sick Queeg suffering from a severe case of paranoia, somehow similar to Heggen's Captain Morton, except that the latter is funny where Queeg is obnoxious.

With clinical accuracy Wouk piles up symptoms, leaving not much room for doubt that Queeg is incapable of command. Ceaseless rolling of steel balls in moments

[19]Waldmeir, American Novels of the Second World War, p. 130.

[20]Martin Dworkin in his review of The Caine Mutiny, quoted by Fuller in Man in Modern Fiction, p. 136.

[21]Whyte, The Organization Man, p. 272.

[22]Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties, p. 46.

of stress, excessive attention to unnecessary details when command decisions must be made, general lassitude before a naval operation, looking for a scapegoat to take the blame for his errors--all add up to a sick man. And there are the endless excuses and indecisions. Ordered by his superiors to explain an unreported grounding of the Caine, Queeg lays the blame on the officers and not on his incompetence. Summoned to explain the loss of a target, Queeg makes the helmsman Stilwell his whipping boy and rigs a court-martial for him. In analyzing this outrageous deed Tom Keefer suggests latent homosexuality as Queeg's motivation:

> He hates Stilwell for being handsome, healthy, young, competent, and naturally popular and attractive--all the things that Queeg is not. Ever read Billy Budd, by Melville? Read it. That's the whole story. Stilwell is the symbol of all the captain's frustrations, all the things he would like to smash because he can't have them, like a child wanting to break another child's toys. Infantilism is very strong in our captain. I'm leaving out a conjectural element which I also think is important, maybe even decisive--the sexual--. . . . repressed desire can turn to hate, and all of the captain's maladies could fall into a pattern on the theory of an unconscious, violently repressed inversion which fits in beautifully. . . . [23]

And cowardice is another symptom of Queeg's disturbance. While on escort duty, he deserts defenseless landing crafts, unguided except by yellow markers, in order to avoid shelling from the beach. For this act, Keefer gives him the monicker

[23]Wouk, The Caine Mutiny, pp. 310-311.

Old Yellowstain. Queeg, aware of his caddishness, makes the whole ship his scapegoat, depriving the men of water for forty-eight hours. He later turns the ship inside out in search of a non-existent key allegedly used to pilfer a quart of strawberries. The hour of Queeg's testing comes when the Caine is caught in the eye of a tropical storm. To the observant Steve Maryk the skipper shows an incapacitating paralysis of the will and erroneous maneuvering. And for the junior officer this is cause enough to invoke Article 184 of Navy Regulations.

This image of Queeg is not in any way changed during or after the court martial, contrary to what some critics would like to believe. He appears initially cool and collected, but his emotional disturbance becomes evident as the trial progresses. Wouk, however, provides the psychological root of Queeg's paranoia, which makes the portrayal credible and realistic. Mediocre performance in military school, tensions between him and his wife--both contribute to feelings of inadequacy in his relationship with superiors and subordinates alike. The anguish of command aggravates and intensifies the growing neurosis. Incompetence and cowardice are but manifestations of an illness. And nowhere does Wouk justify these. Even Greenwald's defense cannot erase the earlier image of a sick Queeg. It does put the finishing touch on the canvas, which is a portraiture of a

man who is neither hero nor villain. At one time in Queeg's past he had been an able officer, or he would not have risen to command the Caine. But the fact that Wouk consigns Captain Queeg to a harmless post in a mid-western supply depot, never again to be plagued with decisions involving the lives of men, indicates Wouk's disapproval.

As to Barney Greenwald's outburst after the trial, Fuller remarks justifiably that this

> . . . should be regarded as one of the distinctions of the book, the fact that Queeg is not offered to us in simple black and white, but in the extreme complexity characteristic of all true human character (and without which he would not have been so superb an acting vehicle) and we are shown that it is quite impossible to be absolutely certain one way or the other in our evaluation of Queeg. If this were not so, Queeg would have been a mere straw man and the book would have lacked the central dramatic interest which made it possible for the play to focus on the trial alone.
>
> It is true to a degree that Greenwald exposes Queeg to the court as a "neurotic coward." It would be more accurate to say that he reveals Queeg as a man in whom the slow-gathering forces of emotional instability had reached a crisis.[24]

Indeed the Queeg of the typhoon incident is the "climax of a long inner process."

Lt. Steve Maryk, Executive Officer of the Caine during the mutiny and chief defendant at the court-martial, represents the strong force of individual rights. Wouk's characterization of Maryk strengthens the case for the

[24]Fuller, Man in Modern Fiction, p. 141.

individual against authority. Maryk is no malcontent. He is no rebellious Prewitt or discontented Mister Roberts. A fisherman in civilian life, he nevertheless likes the Navy and intends to make it his career. Throughout the novel Wouk establishes Maryk's competence, his loyalty both to Captain de Vries and later to Queeg, and his respect for the rules of the Navy. Talking to Willie Keith, Maryk says that "'the duty of an exec . . . is to do exactly what the captain would want him to do. It's the only way to run a ship!'"[25] When the other junior officers make bitter jokes about the Navy and Queeg, Maryk remains silent. He would not allow the mordant wit of Keefer to go unchecked when he labels Queeg a coward. Wouk has portrayed a stolid, well-intentioned, straightforward and sober man who has qualities that would make him a competent naval officer. Wouk also suggests that Maryk is cautious and would not act impulsively. Only such a man would carefully keep the secret medical log on the progress of Queeg's psychopathic tendencies. Wouk allows no breath of suspicion to touch Maryk's motives, so that no one could cast aspersions on his judgment. Even after his acquittal and the drunken outburst of Greenwald, Maryk's solidly established reputation remains intact. Not even the brilliant prosecutors of the "system" could impugn his motives. They could only cast doubts on

[25]Wouk, The Caine Mutiny, p. 249.

his capacity to predict the outcome of a catastrophic storm at sea. And yet, as Fuller notes,

> . . . it cannot be proved that had Maryk not acted, the Caine definitely would have foundered. Wouk does not make such an assertion. This is true to the basic life situation insofar as major decisions, fraught with dire personal consequences, often must be made without any positive certainty that the action involved is absolutely necessary, or that its alternatives would be surely disastrous. Life would be a simple and happy proposition indeed if conclusions could be reached with such certainty, either before events or by hindsight. This is part of the subtlety and complexity of the dilemma.[26]

However, Steve Maryk's Navy career is over, although he is exonerated at the trial. He will never rise above the rank of lieutenant commander. This seems to be the penalty for individualism and disobedience to the organization. A closer analysis will show that this is the price Maryk pays for gullibility. Wouk penalizes Maryk for failure of perception and the inability to see through the machinations of Tom Keefer, who shows the mischief-making tendencies of the frustrated adolescent.

If a villain's role must be assigned in The Caine Mutiny, Wouk has given it to Thomas Keefer, the brilliant and articulate novelist. Some critics point out that to other "war novelists"--Mailer, Heym and Shaw, for instance--Keefer, the intellectual-liberal would be the "hero."[27]

[26]Fuller, Man in Modern Fiction, 138.

[27]Waldmeir, American Novels of the Second World War, p. 125.

And for this reason Wouk has been called anti-intellectual and anti-liberal.[28] But this "anti-Woukean" appraisal of Keefer seems to be burdened with inaccuracies and extra-textual conjectures. For example, one critic says:

> These final results [exonerating Maryk and Keith] are components of Hollywood reality, but as a serious commentary on the problem of reconciling the good man with the good and necessary institution they represent intellectual failure and moral cowardice. They suggest that rhetorical motives play too large a part in this novel and perhaps, also, that Wouk is pandering to his notion of public taste. Both these points are reinforced by the way Wouk treats Lieutenant Keefer, the intellectual in his novel. The navy distrusts Keefer largely because he is an intellectual, and its judgment is borne out when he shows himself a troublemaker who is cowardly and unfit for command. . . . The anti-intellectualism of this book is cut from the same cloth as that sanctioned by De Voto and MacLeish and leads to the same demand for the suspension of critical intelligence.[29]

Illogical and tenuous assumptions are apparent in this statement. First, there is no logic in the assertion that Wouk reinforces the novel's rhetorical motives and panders to his "notion of public taste" by taking an "anti-intellectual" position. Second, a seeming disregard for facts and an unwarranted inference are evident in the critic's remark that the "navy distrusts Keefer largely because he is an intellectual" on the slim evidence that a less "sensitive" brother has been promoted ahead of him. After all, the Navy does make Keefer captain of the Caine until his discharge

[28]Whyte, The Organization Man, p. 272.

[29]Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties, pp. 46-47.

at the end of the war. And third, the critic makes a conclusion not based on facts, that Wouk's portrayal of Keefer "leads to the . . . demand for the suspension of critical intelligence." Keefer does not use his "critical intelligence," except in the wardroom to ridicule Queeg. When such exertion is demanded of him, i.e. reporting Queeg's sickness and testifying at the court-martial, he cowardly refuses to do so.

Another critic remarks that "Lt. Keefer, the brain behind the Caine mutiny, is also a novelist, writing and publishing the sort of novel--apparently a blast against the services--which Heym, Mailer, or Shaw might have written, and which Wouk obviously disapproves of."[30] These are extra-textual conjectures, extrapolations from facts in the novel. Wouk does not "obviously" suggest anywhere in the book that he disapproves of Keefer's novel writing. If anything, there is respect for the author of Multitudes, Multitudes, evident in Willie Keith's admiration which is almost close to hero-worship, and in Maryk's increased regard after Keefer's speech-making in Berkeley. In fact, one time skipper Captain De Vries shows consideration for Keefer's talent. And Wouk's comparison of Keefer's work is not to a novel that "Heym, Mailer, or Shaw might have

[30]Waldmeir, American Novels of the Second World War, p. 125.

written," but in the words of Willie Keith, a comparative literature major: "It doesn't seem very original in thought or style--sort of a jumble of Dos Passos and Joyce and Hemingway and Faulkner--but it's smooth, and some of the scenes are brilliant."[31]

But aside from these, Fuller, dissenting from the majority, has a case when he argues that,

> . . . Keefer is not the symbol of anti-intellectualism. He is something very different indeed, which the critics of Wouk perhaps are not eager to recognize--he is a brilliant portrayal of the phony intellectual. . . .
>
> Keefer can only be used to stick Wouk with the stigma of anti-intellectualism if the critic is prepared to endorse Keefer as actually a stalwart type, or if the critic is attempting to deny that it is valid for Wouk to project a portrait of a phony intellectual, a man intellectually and morally dishonest, a man whose revolt against authority is strictly of the "let's you and him fight" variety, one who is the true organization man in the sense that he will stick his neck out only if nobody who matters is looking, a man who does not scruple to perjure and lie for his own security at the trial. . . . Keefer is more, . . . than phony intellectual, he is also the phony liberal. . . . [32]

Indeed Tom Keefer's villainy, as Wouk presents it, stems not from intellectualism, defiance of authority or fascistic tendencies, but from irresponsibility and moral cowardice. Glib-tongued and witty, he is also a "gold-bricking" malcontent. As a junior officer Keefer tries to do as little as possible, avoiding responsibility and passing on to subordinates much of the job that he should do himself.

[31]Wouk, The Caine Mutiny, p. 542.

[32]Fuller, Man in Modern Fiction, pp. 144-145.

Justifiably he feels that doing the routine clerical chores of the Caine is a waste of his talents.

Keefer is a moral coward, a welsher and a ship-jumper--literally and figuratively. Turning pseudo-psychoanalyst, he tells Maryk: "'It's the clearest picture I've ever seen of a psychopathic personality. He's [Queeg] a paranoid, with an obsessive-compulsive syndrome!'"[33] But after he sets the machinery in motion, he evades responsibility and refuses to go with Maryk to the Admiral's office. Then he deserts Maryk and commits perjury to save himself at the court-martial. This comes as no surprise to anyone who has followed Keefer's progress. Greenwald's charge that the wrong man was on trial, sloshing champagne on Keefer's face at the party to celebrate the acceptance of the novelist's book, only confirms what the reader has suspected all along.

As skipper of the Caine, Keefer acts like the paranoid Queeg, keeping to his cabin most of the time, not working on puzzles, but on his novel. He leaves the responsibility for the Caine to his executive officer, Keith. A natural disaster brings Queeg to the breaking point; a kamikaze pilot does it for Keefer. When he sees the burning deck, Captain Keefer jumps and orders the men to abandon ship. To underscore the contemptibility of Keefer's action, Wouk allows

[33]Wouk, The Caine Mutiny, p. 306.

Willie Keith to save the Caine for him. Endowed with sensitivity Keefer knows how detestable he has been and his ready wit coins the term Old Swandive for himself. Wouk's sentence on Keefer fits the offense. Ever after he will carry in his sensitive but craven soul the stigma of a ship-jumper. Captain Keefer tells Willie Keith that, like Conrad's Lord Jim, this single act of his life will haunt him through his days.

The basic conflict in The Caine Mutiny gains realistic conviction by describing it through the eyes of Willis Seward Keith, last captain of the Caine, who developes from an irresponsible romantic through mutinous conduct to become a responsible officer.[34] Willie Keith comes to the old minesweeper through midshipmen's school after a rather useless existence as scion of an affluent Boston home. When he misses the ship as it sails away for the Pacific, young Keith is only too happy to stay at headquarters, playing the piano at the admiral's parties and enjoying gay Hawaii. But the dispatches finally catch up with him and he is whisked away to begin an education that changes him from a carousing, irresponsible society boy to a clear-eyed, cool-headed Navy officer who gets a Bronze Star for saving the Caine. Willie's growth ties up neatly with the odyssey

[34]Carpenter, "Herman Wouk," College English, p. 214.

of the fated Caine. Hence, making him the initial and final point-of-view character serves a structural and thematic purpose.

Willie Keith serves as the intelligent observer of the action on the Caine and the unprejudiced evaluator of characters and events. Wouk establishes early in the novel that above all else Willie is honest with himself and in his opinions of others. But the novelist also shows that the ensign is young, inexperienced and irresponsible. In his excitement over Captain De Vries skillful maneuvering, for instance, Willie absent-mindedly stuffs an important communique into his pocket and forgets it for three days. At this point in Willie's education, the reader realizes that his comments are those of inexperienced youth. But Willie grows in experience and judgment as none of the others do. Queeg is too sick; Maryk is already set in his thinking; Keefer is too cynical to make credible appraisals. Willie's journey into maturity is also reflected in his relationship with his girl, May Wynn. From a senseless feeling of shame, Willie learns to accept her social background as a minor factor compared to her own exceptional qualities. When Willie says at this stage that he likes his new skipper and thinks him good for the Caine, the reader believes him. His values have been set right.

From this point on Wouk makes Willie an eyewitness in every Queeg crisis. He is officer of the deck when Queeg turns away from a disabled destroyer straddled by enemy fire in Saipan even when the ship's guns are ready to fire. Again he is deck officer at the Kwajalein disaster, at the target-towing incident and during the climactic mutiny. With unbiased eyes Willie evaluates these events for the reader.

Willie Keith's hard-earned maturity meets its test at the court-martial and when he is executive officer to Captain Keefer. At Maryk's court-martial he testifies and accepts his own share of the responsibility for the mutiny. And when a kamikaze pilot sets the Caine on fire, Willie cool-headedly directs a volunteer crew to fight the flame while his own captain seeks the safety of a life boat. But that alone does not measure Willie's stature as a man. He has also learned to be generous and has gained understanding of human weaknesses. He tells Keefer not to blame himself too much, suggesting that the captain is after all only human and could not have gauged the danger accurately. Willie's humane qualities make him the fitting angle of vision from which to view with compassion the human problem of choice and responsibility.

Through these characters and the conflicts they face, Wouk has tried to place in military context the dilemma of

choice and personal responsibility that human beings must confront. As a story teller, observer and re-creator of human character he succeeds. But as resolver of the eternal dilemma, Wouk proves that as in life there is no final and definite solution. Authority or individual conscience, the "system" or individual rights--this conflict has challenged writers as far back as Sophocles. The Caine Mutiny provides no solution.

In other qacific war novels not dealing with combat activities, the novelists show the struggle of man to retain his dignity in the midst of degradations. Mydan's Open City is such a novel. A group of American civilian war prisoners at the Santo Tomas concentration camp in the Philippines struggle to stay alive and to retain their dignity as human beings. Miss Mydan shows that heroism is the daily endurance of almost unbearable affronts to the human spirit. In the world painted in Open City selfishness, greed and treachery co-exist with self-sacrifice and a generosity of the spirit. For one unscrupulous Lance Diamond who would exploit the needs of the other prisoners, there are the many generous people in the camp to keep the group together. There is Hark Harkinson, an oil executive, who heads the internees committee and provides leadership for the group. Bluff and hearty Dr. Busch takes care of the flagging spirits and the ailing bodies. Even the

spoiled and flighty blonde Vinny Whitney learns the lessons of adversity. Although the novel ends with the grim picture of military men in the camp being taken away because of Lance Diamond's treachery, the dignity with which Miss Mydan's characters face the crisis strikes an optimistic note.

Statham's little known Welcome Darkness is one other novel that affirms man's physical and moral capabilities to survive the hardships in a tropical jungle and the fear of torture and death. A group of air force officers are shot down and forced to bail out into the jungles of a Japanese-held island in the Philippines. Omar Mills, the central and point-of-view character, who alone knows about Philippine jungles, faces the challenge of leadership. Suspicions, jealousies and petty bickerings divide the group. Omar Mills suspects Jenks of shooting the injured Murphy in order to put him out of his misery and so as not to impede the group's escape. He suspects Tim of base motives, of being solely concerned with his own safety and interest. When one of the men becomes a raving maniac, Mills kills him in self-defense, suffering guilt and remorse thereafter. He suffers through a painful illness and when he recovers he becomes only a passive participant in the group's effort to escape. Although he teaches the men how to make a banca, he refuses to join in their effort to build one which would

help them leave the island. Ironically when the boat is finished and they have the means of escape, they are captured by the Japanese.

One critic notes the sociological implications in Statham's Welcome Darkness:

> While the social aspects of this novel are subterranean, it is clear that Statham conceives of life in society as barbarous and killing. The group of officers in the story who try to escape together from the Japanese-held Philippines may be taken as a microcosm of society. The group dissolves in petty jealousies and hatreds and reveals the insubstantiality of co-operative social action, men resort to only when it is necessary for the survival of life. Statham wishes to say, I believe, that social patterns have collapsed and man can continue to exist as man only by virtue of his inner resources.[35]

But the novel also suggests that man's salvation is linked with the bigger group--humanity. Omar Mills' redemption is effected by a series of ritualistic acts of purgation which are suggestively religious. In these ritual acts of purification, water, the symbolic cleansing agent, plays a significant part. In two instances Mills watches Tim, marble-white against the jungle greenness, washing his naked body, a Christ-figure before the redemptive sacrifice. Tortured by the Japanese, Tim dies in a symbolic crucifixion without revealing any information, thereby saving Mills and Jenks. Omar Mills' own personal acts of expiation for killing May consist of assuming what Eisinger calls "the Christian duty

[35]Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties, p. 55.

of saving another man."[36] Expiation begins when Mills saves one of the men, who is later killed by the Japanese, from drowning. He realizes that he can no longer be a passive participant in the fate of his companions. His "sense of personal immunity, his passive participation in the fate of the group"[37] vanishes entirely.

Again in the Japanese prison camp he ministers to the wounds of Jenks, the man he fears and suspects, using precious drinking water to clean the man's lacerated body. The Biblical figure of the Good Samaritan is easy to see in Statham's description of the situation. After Tim is killed, Mills and Jenks are able to escape from the Japanese. In a final act of expiation, Mills goes back for the weakened Jenks, risking his life. They hide in a culvert until the Filipinos can come for them. In a last symbolic act of cleansing, Omar Mills stands knee-deep in water washing off the mud and slime, thinking that now he can welcome darkness and participate in the very depths of life,

> . . . sharing the lives of all who had come before him . . . other lives . . . perhaps all lives . . . sustained him . . . and he glimpsed that they would perish with him. He seemed to be multiplied across the wide earth and along the vast ages--and get to remain one . . . a single individual . . . on the verge of oblivion.[38]

[36] Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties, p. 55.

[37] Statham, Welcome Darkness, p. 330.

[38] Ibid., p. 333.

Because he has undergone the severest trials of the body and of the spirit, Omar Mills "can face any darkness"[39] in that uncertain future world into which he is sailing away.

These then are examples of Pacific war novels that show the "affirming flame," not of unblushing patriotism but of humanness. They affirm strongly and decidedly the fasic humanity of man. And this humanness sustains him in his efforts to survive. But many of the popularly-read and critically well-received novels do not demonstrate this hopeful spirit, as the next chapter will illustrate.

[39]Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties, p. 55.

CHAPTER III

THE FUTILE QUESTS

In discussing the novelists of the First World War, John W. Aldridge notes that a "sense of lostness," evident in Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms, pervades the novels of the "lost generation."[1] Similarly one can say that a sense of futility apparent in some novels of the Second World War in the Pacific, shrouds the works of a seemingly hopeless generation.[2] The hopelessness in the novels springs from the bafflement of men confronted by a world of unscalable mountains, unyielding walls and hostile jungles, figuratively and literally. The futility also derives from the quest for the "impossible dream" of absolute freedom. The individual who wants to be free of all fetters discovers that he is caught "from here to eternity." Escape is impossible, for the boundaries of his world are defined not by the realities of war alone, but by the privations and injustices of the world left behind. Like Frederick Henry's world in Hemingway's novel, it also "kills the very good and the very gentle and the

[1] After the Lost Generation, p. 6.

[2] Eisinger in Fiction of the Forties, pp. 28-44 sees a "Pattern of Despair" emergent in the war novels.

very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry."[3] The novels show that in a well-worked out conspiracy the military organization, the officers that represent it, human institutions, human nature itself, the physical universe and Chance crush the individual.

Of the novels on the Second World War in the Pacific, Mailer's The Naked and the Dead and Jones' From Here to Eternity, The Thin Red Line and The Pistol generate this characteristic sense of futility. One critic notes that Mailer's novel "offers a microcosm of futility" and his protagonists exemplify "man corrupted, confused to the point of helplessness."[4] Another critic points out that Mailer, being a romantic, resolves the problems of his protagonists with defeat, and Jones being a realist shows the complete and uncomplaining "absorption" of the individual into the organization.[5] The "romantic" label hardly explains the strongly deterministic trend in Mailer's work.[6] And the contention about Jones may apply to The Thin Red Line, to

[3]Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, Book IV, Chapter XXXIV.

[4]West, The Modern Novel, p. 111. This opinion is shared by Aldridge, After the Lost Generation, pp. 135-140.

[5]Edmond L. Volpe, "James Jones-Norman Mailer," ed. Harry T. Moore, Contemporary American Novelists (1964), p. 112.

[6]Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties, p. 37.

some extent, but not to the earlier novel. Pessimism and futility pervade these novels. But in Mailer's work an incomprehensible universe is the cause; in Jones' novels an uncompromising "system" is the instrument of defeat.

Mailer's The Naked and the Dead, praised by critics as one of the best of the war novels and just as enthusiastically acclaimed by the reading public, exudes this sense of hopelessness. Vividly and realistically the novel portrays the activities of a reconnaissance platoon, the lives of the men that compose it and of the men that control its destiny. The story unfolds in three parts. In Part I titled "Wave," Mailer describes an invading force trying to establish a beachhead in the ocarina-shaped island of Anopopei, controlled by the Japanese. Among the first casualties is a young recruit, Hennessey, whose chief concern is to follow the rules so that he would get out of the war alive. And Red Valsen who had watched the boy inflating his life belt feels a "moment of awe and panic as if someone, something, had been watching over their shoulder that night and laughing. There was a pattern where there shouldn't be."[7] Part II, "Argil and Mold," deals with the men of the reconnaissance platoon toughening up in the mold of jungle warfare. With a Nietzschean

[7]Mailer, The Naked and the Dead, p. 35.

epigraph, Part III, "Plant and Phantom," shows the men's toughness tested as the platoon pushes through pestilential jungle to get behind the Toyaku Line through the impassable Mt. Anaka. And Part IV is the "Wake," for all the victims of power-madness and Fate, the mopping up operation to complete the re-conquest of Anopopei.

This is the external action but, as many critics have noted, Mailer's concern is not just to picture a battle campaign. One critic points out that Mailer's chief preoccupation is ideological--fascism against liberalism--illustrated by the dialogues between General Cummings and Lt. Hearn.[8] Another critic notes that in the world which Mailer re-creates, the individual is "pitted . . . against two allied enemies--the army and nature." Both constitute a formidable foe. The army threatens him with "moral destruction aiming . . . to destroy his will . . . and reduce him to a mere servant of its own ends," and nature with its raging typhoons, scorching heat and perilous jungles "threatens him with pain and fear and death."[9]

But Mailer also suggests that the enemy is more than just the army and nature, more than just the villainous face of American fascism. Through the "Time Machine,"

[8]Waldmeir, American Novels of the Second World War, p. 110.

[9]Norman Podhoretz, "Norman Mailer: The Embattled Vision," Partisan Review (Summer 1959), pp. 371-372.

a device by which Mailer shifts the focus to the men's lives before the war, he implies that "poverty and ignorance,"[10] injustice and social inequality, as well as emotional repression contribute to the men's destruction.[11] And capsulizing the critics, Richard Foster notes (quoting Mailer) that although "cast in the realist mode The Naked and the Dead is 'symbolic,' expressive of 'death and man's creative urge, fate, man's desire to conquer the elements. . . .'"[12] Indeed the enemy in The Naked and the Dead is a hostile universe, and the novel suggests man's desire to create order in this threateningly chaotic world.

Each of the major characters in the novel is involved in a quest for order which he urgently needs. But from birth his defeat seems decreed. Heredity, and environment, as well as a ruthless and indifferent fate, thwart each man's desire. The novel implies that these quests end in futility, for on the wings of the stage of Life stands "vulgar . . . luck" to direct the course of events. The rebellious individuals and the power-mad fascists alike are defenseless against it. The nightmare in mythic Anopopei serves as the objective reality, the

[10]Aldridge, After the Lost Generation, p. 136.

[11]Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties, p. 33.

[12]Richard Foster, Norman Mailer (Minneapolis, 1968), p. 9.

backdrop against which the men's internal chaos, their confusion and bewilderment are played. Majestic Mt. Anaka becomes the symbol of all the unwon battles, the unfought challenges and the unfulfilled dreams in another world, at another time.[13]

Consider Major General Edward Cummings, whom some critics say is the villain in the novel, but who is a victim of Life just as much as the other characters are. From early childhood he has been dominated by a rich, self-made and overbearing father and molly-coddled by an over protective mother. As a West Point cadet, he is not well liked. And convinced that he cannot be liked, Cummings decides that he must never "expose himself to the pack," never make mistakes, never make himself vulnerable in any way. To him power is the only way to achieve invulnerability. To dominate others, to command, to have authority, to be "respected if not loved"--this becomes his all-consuming desire.

The vision of power begins to take shape when as a young officer he watches with awe and wonder a battle being fought. And he thinks: "there were all those men, and there had been someone above them, ordering them, changing perhaps forever the fiber of their lives. In the

[13]Richard Foster in Norman Mailer, p. 9, notes the "almost Conradian symbolic significance" of the island and the mountain.

darkness he looks blankly at the fields tantalized by the largest vision that has ever entered his soul. . . . To command all that. He is choked with the intensity of his emotion, the rage, the exaltation, the undefined and mighty hunger."[14] That hunger never quite reaches satiety in Cummings. Even his wife becomes a battleground; he must dominate, absorb, subdue her. "He fights out battles with himself upon her body," and in the end he loses her and concomittantly his power over her.

In the hierarchical structure of the Army, Cummings finds a semblance of the order he seeks and the power he craves. He tells Hearn that "'the only morality of the future is a power morality, and a man who cannot find his adjustment to it is doomed. There's one thing about power. It can flow only from the top down. When there are little surges of resistance at the middle levels, it merely calls for more power to be directed downward, to burn it out.'"[15] And to wield this power securely, Cummings tries to instill fear in his subordinates. Trying to convert Hearn to his way of thinking, the general points out:

> Every time an enlisted man sees an officer get an extra privilege, it breaks him down a little more. . . . I don't care what kind of man you give me,

[14] Mailer, The Naked and the Dead, p. 326.

[15] Ibid., p. 255.

> if I have him long enough I'll make him afraid. Every time there's what you call an Army injustice the enlisted man involved is confirmed a little more in the idea of his own inferiority. . . . to make an Army work you have to have every man in it fitted into a fear ladder. . . . The Army functions best when you're frightened of the man above you, and contemptuous of your subordinates.[16]

Up to a point Cummings succeeds. He forces Hearn to pick up a cigarette butt on his tent floor, but the lieutenant has the last word and gets a transfer. In the final analysis Hearn eludes him. There is "something unapproachable and unassailable" about his aide which baffles the general. Hearn's death, which Cummings indirectly causes, is a hollow victory, for the general has failed to change Hearn's thinking. And in a defiant exit Hearn asks the general: "'Short of bringing in every man in the outfit, all six thousand of them, and letting them pick up your cigarettes, how are you going to impress them?'"[17] Cummings knows that Hearn has a point. Even the victory in Anopopei is not the outcome of his brilliant strategy. By a stroke of luck the plodding Major Dalleson wins the campaign for him, during his brief twenty-four hour absence from the front. And "for a moment (Cummings) almost admitted to himself that he had had very little or perhaps nothing at all to do with this victory, or indeed any victory--it had

[16] Ibid., p. 139.

[17] Ibid., p. 257.

been accomplished by a random play of vulgar good luck larded into a casual net of factors too large, too vague, for him to comprehend."[18]

Robert Hearn, liberal intellectual and Mailer's "hero," comes from a socio-economic milieu which is not much different from Cummings' own background. But Hearn's search for order takes the road of liberalism. Reared in the traditions of a wealthy mid-western family, Hearn has gone to the "right" schools and associated with the "right" people. And although he has broken away from many of the values which his class represents, the emotional luggage of his early years has not been completely dislodged.

In everything that he does, Hearn is a dilettante, even in his liberalism. He is a "dilettante skipping around sewers," as Mailer puts it. To the women in his life he is "nothing but a shell," a man who keeps the "self" bottled up. He cannot become involved wholly in anyone or anything. "Different women, different nights," but "it never lasts," for Hearn must remain aloof and uninvolved. Nothing ever lasts because Hearn could never quite come to grips with what he is seeking until it is too late.

War is just another phase of the search for Hearn, as it is for Mailer's other protagonists. As the troop-ship pulls out of San Francisco and the city lights recede

[18] Ibid., p. 555.

in the distance, Hearn thinks of the war as "the new phase. In the old one he has looked and looked and butted his head against the wall of his own making. . . . There is the phrase 'I'm seeking for something' but it gives the process an importance it doesn't possess."[19] Like Heggen's Mister Roberts, the object of the search seems to be some elusive will'-o'-the-wisp that beckons but does not take shape.

In the midst of the chaos in Anopopei, Hearn almost finds the order he seeks. As he leads the reconnaissance platoon he realizes that all his life "he had been running away from fear, from vulnerability, from the admission that he was a man also and could be humbled."[20] He decides to turn in his commission when they return to headquarters, if only to be consistent with his professed liberalism. He decides to live his principles, leave the realm of theories and embrace the realities. Then perhaps, he tells himself, he too can "fit into the ladder of fear." But the treachery of Sam Croft born of his own particular hunger ends the quest of Hearn and leaves him dead on the slopes of Mt. Anaka.

For Sgt. Croft the quest for power begins in the hills of western Texas. It stems from what Mailer calls

[19]Mailer, The Naked and the Dead, p. 277.

[20]Ibid., p. 455.

a "crude unformed vision in his soul." Mailer says of him:

> . . . he was efficient and strong and usually empty and his main cast of mind was a superior contempt toward nearly all other men. He hated weakness and he loved practically nothing. There was a crude unformed vision in his soul but he was rarely conscious of it.[21]

This is the same "vision" that General Cummings calls "power." It feeds on fear and thrives on violence. And Croft's life has hinged on violence, from the deer hunts of his early youth through a stormy marriage and on to its climax in Anopopei. "But why _is_ Croft that way?" Mailer asks and gives the uncertain answer:

> He is that way because of the corruption-of-the society. He is that way because the devil has claimed him for one of his own. It is because he is a Texan; it is because he has renounced God.
>
> He is that kind of man, because the only woman he ever loved cheated on him, or he was born that way, or he was having problems of adjustment.[22]

Croft has learned through it all that only the strong survive and in power lies strength. Like Cummings he has learned that the only way to be invulnerable is to wield power. But he lacks the intellectual, social and educational refinements which temper the violent urges of General Cummings. And for this very reason the subtle sadism of General Cummings emerges as ruthless cruelty in

[21] Mailer, _The Naked and the Dead_, p. 124.

[22] _Loc., cit._

Croft, who hates "everything which is outside [himself.]" The ordering principle in his existence is destruction and death, for both presuppose power in the destroyer. As Mailer puts it, "Croft always saw order in death. Whenever a man in the company or platoon had been killed he would feel a grim and quiet satisfaction as though the death was inevitably justified."[23] But even Sgt. Croft's relentless drive which has annihilated Hearn and cowed the rebellious Red Valsen succumbs to a stronger power. Disturbed hornets chase what remains of Croft's platoon down the mountain and lofty Mt. Anaka remains unconquered. As he looks at the unclimbed mountain, Croft feels that he has lost everything. The "crude unformed vision" remains unformed in his soul.

The other members of Mailer's "group hero" are engaged in their own futile quests. Red Valsen, whom critics equate with Hearn in his rebellion against authority, is in search of justice and equality. At thirteen he begins to realize life's inequalities because he must become the family breadwinner working ten hours a day, six days a week in a mine shaft that had killed his father at a Montana mining town. At eighteen he leaves his hometown dreaming of a better world and hoping to raise his horizon above the level of a mine shaft. He wanders through

[23]Mailer, The Naked and the Dead, p. 346.

the country's hobo jungles (Mailer's "Wandering Minstrel"), flophouses, park benches seeing, only poverty and the same inequalities that he had always known. Red hardens with hate for the "ruling class." But in his heart there is a softness, and looking at a corpse Red realizes with a shock that "a man was really a fragile thing." Outwardly "he had an expression of concentrated contempt but behind it his tired eyes, a rather painful blue, were quiet, marooned by themselves in a web of wrinkles and freckles."[24] This inner softness makes him vulnerable to the ruthlessness of Croft. And at the end of the campaign in Anopopei, Red Valsen feels like a whipped cur as he obeys Croft's order to scale Mt. Anaka. The spirit of rebellion is tamed. The search for equality ends right there for Red Valsen.

Among the other men there is Roy Gallagher, the Irish Catholic who thinks he has found security in his religion and in the love of his wife, Mary. But death takes Mary in childbirth and religion proves inadequate as solace for his grief. And there is the Mexican scout, Martinez, who has his dreams too--to build and fly a plane, to make much money, to do heroic things. Mailer notes that "little Mexican boys also breathe the American fables, also want to be heroes, aviators, lovers, financiers." But

[24]Mailer, The Naked and the Dead, p. 175.

Martinez discovers that in San Antonio, Texas, he can be anything but never a doctor, lawyer, big merchant or chief. And in Anopopei he realizes that "any man jack can be a hero. Only that doesn't make [him] white Protestant, firm and aloof." The Jewish boy from Brooklyn, Joey Goldstein, wants only to be accepted and to understand why he must always be an outsider. Willie Brown, a well-liked, clean-cut boy next door, brought up to be God-fearing, tries to replace the lost idols of his youth with the numbing pleasures of drink and women. First there is the idolized older sister who becomes a locker-room joke after marriage. Then the passion he shares with the woman he marries betrays them both. The violence in Anopopei does not cauterize Willie's wounds.

In The Naked and the Dead Mailer implies that war is an extension of the men's hopeless quests. The island of Anopopei and the formidable Mt. Anaka are externalizations of their longings. Describing the island bathed in the splendor of the setting sun, Mailer also pictures the effect on the men:

> It was a sensual isle, a Biblical land of ruby wines and golden sands and indigo trees. The men stared and stared. The island hovered before them like an Oriental monarch's conception of heaven, and they responded to it with an acute and terrible longing. It was a vision of all the beauty for which they had ever yearned, all the ecstasy they had ever sought.

> For a few minutes it dissolved the long dreary passage of the mute months in the jungle, without hope, without pride. If they had been alone they might have stretched out their arms to it.[25]

The end of all these dreams and yearnings is suggested in a description of the island after the glorious sunset:

> It could not last. Slowly inevitably, the beach began to dissolve in the encompassing night. The golden sands grew faint, became gray-green, and darkened. The island sank into the water, and the tide of night washed over the rose and lavender hills. After a little while, there was only the gray-black ocean, the darkened sky, and the evil churning of the gray-white wake. Bits of phosphorescence swirled in the foam. The black dead ocean looked like a mirror of the night; it was cold, implicit with dread and death. The men felt it absorb them in a silent pervasive terror.[26]

Fear, terror, death--futility is the end of their quests, whether it be for power as it is with Cummings and Croft; or equality as with Hearn and Red Valsen; or the sense of belonging as with Martinez and Goldstein; or an impregnable faith as with Willie Brown and Roy Gallagher. In the world where Mailer puts his characters there is no order and no hope of attaining one. The circumstances of birth, of social and educational status in no way alter the outcome of the search. Eisinger justifiably calls The Naked and the Dead a naturalistic novel.[27] An indifferent

[25]Mailer, The Naked and the Dead, p. 353.

[26]Ibid., pp. 353-354.

[27]Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties, p. 64.

universe and fickle Chance defeat them all. There is nothing that mortal man can do to change his destiny.

In Jones' From Here to Eternity the same sense of hopelessness prevails. But the deadly conflict is between man and the abstract "system," which Heggen treats with levity in Mister Roberts. In Jones's resolution of the conflict the "system" wins all and breaks the protesting individual. He succumbs to the powerful army organization and in this "final frontier of rugged individualism,"[28] man's vision of complete freedom turns into a garish nightmare. The men that Jones portrays are indeed "damned from here to eternity." Pvt. Robert E. Lee Prewitt, the co-protagonist whose history is a "paean to individualism," Volpe says,[29] is shot to death by mistake as he tries to return to his outfit after being absent without leave. And Sgt. Milt Warden, the ruggedly individualistic thirty-year man who "equates his integrity with the existence of the enlisted man,"[30] surrenders by compromise--rejecting a commission, but serving as a pawn in the hand of Karen Holmes and the Army.

[28] Volpe, "James Jones-Norman Mailer," p. 108.

[29] Ibid., p. 109.

[30] Ibid., p. 110.

The rebellious lives of the main characters in From Here to Eternity illustrate best Jones's preoccupation with the individual's survival in an increasingly bureaucratic society. "Kid Galahad" Prewitt, Jones's romantic hero in search of the Holy Grail of absolute freedom, puts up the strongest fight against two powerful threats: the Army and women. The paradox is that he loves both.[31] Prewitt grew up in the Kentucky Mountains, and his boy's dream of adventure and romance fed on his Uncle John's tales of soldiering in the Philippines. Even as a boy he had dreamed of going into the "Profession." On a deathbed promise to his mother, Prew vows never to hurt anyone unless it is an absolute necessity. This rules out boxing as a lifetime occupation for which he has the aptitude and it becomes the immediate cause of Prew's troubles in the Army. Prew refuses to join the boxing team. Boxing is an individual ability to which the Army has no claim, Prewitt subconsciously thinks. For Prew the way of rebellion leads to the stockade.

Jones's stockade is a distorted symbol of the bureaucratic realities that the novel indicts. Its vicious, irrational brutalities reflect the Kafkan world of The Trial and The Penal Colony. Joseph K. in The Trial goes through

[31]Volpe makes the same contention.

the nightmare of facing a capricious Court to clear himself of he-knows-not-what crime and ends up being shot like a dog, just as Prewitt does. In Jones's novel a man subjected to the horrors of the "Black Hole" in the stockade undergoes a metamorphosis no different from Gregor Samsa's symbolic transformation in Kafka's "Metamorphosis." Separated from the job, which makes a man lose his identity, Samsa becomes a crawling insect. Paradoxically he loses his human identity. When he tries to rejoin humanity and creeps towards the sound of music, his own family drive him back to isolation and pelt him with apples to extinction.

Jones' men in the stockade undergo a similar transformation. They metamorphose into something less than human if not altogether animal or insect. Temporarily detached from the detested Army organization, to which they had to surrender their personal identity, Jones's men are ironically reduced to less than men. The jailers keep them so, like Samsa's family who increase the alienation, and balk the men's attempt to resume identity with the human race. Man's existential anguish becomes strongly evident in this part of Jones's novel.

The methods of torture which Jones vividly portrays recall the bizarre execution machine in "The Penal Colony." And the absurdity of the trumped up charges brings to mind another American war novel, The Charcoal Horse (1948) by

Edward Loomis. He writes of the brutal torture and death of one soldier, the guilt and anguish of another in an Army prison camp, because of the prison authority's mad desire to apprehend the culprit who drew a charcoal horse.[32]

For Jones's tortured and doomed souls extinction or insanity is the only way out of the chamber of horrors. Angelo Maggio takes refuge in insanity. And Blues Berry's mangled body, coughed out of the "Black Hole," is a mute testimony of man's ineffective resistance to the "system." Berry's sole crime against it is helping an Indiana farm boy in the stockade to break an arm in order to put him out of the prison miseries. And Jack Malloy, advocate of Gandhi's passive resistance, solves his problem by completely dropping out of society when his method proves fallible.

The horror of all these for Prewitt lies in the terrifying realization that there is really no one to blame. The executioners like Thompson, Judson, Turnipseed, even the Army itself are but tools of the "system," an ubiquitous but elusive and smothering mirage that envelopes them all. These torturers do what the "system" demands. To kill them will not change anything, for others will take their place, Malloy points out to Prewitt. But Prew kills Judson anyway; if it feeds nothing it will feed his revenge.

[32]See Waldmeir's, ed., Recent American Fiction, Some Critical Views (1963) p. 61, for a brief comment on what he calls "brief and brilliant existential novel."

Other threats to Prewitt's quest for absolute freedom are the women. There is Violet, the Japanese-Hawaiian "shack-up," who poses no problem until she mentions marriage. Then Prewitt sees the clutches of the "system" drawing close. With regrets, he must move on before a definite commitment is made. Then Prewitt meets Lorene-Alma, the much-sought after staff worker of Mrs. Kipfer's whorehouse. In his romantic fantasy, Lorene is the epitome of ideal womanhood and Prewitt even considers marrying her: "Didn't all the old timers like Pete Karelsen always say whores made the best wives?" But before this can happen the Army intervenes, Prewitt goes AWOL, gets sick and is nursed back to health in Lorene-Alma's apartment, and war begins. Prewitt dies trying to rejoin his outfit, his quest for freedom ending with the volley of shots.

In the co-protagonist, Sgt. Milk Anthony Warden, Jones pictures a man shaped by the Army organization. He has moments of intense rebellion, but he is an organization man to the core. He performs his functions in the organization competently and efficiently. He runs not only the Orderly Room for Captain Dana Holmes, but also the whole company. Milt Warden is a blunt, hard-drinking man completely dedicated to G Company. He resents Dana Holmes's tolerance of incompetence. In fact he resents the class and everything

that his company commander represents. Warden realizes why he hates Dynamite Holmes intensely:

> It was because he had always feared him, not him personally, not his physique or mind, but what he stood for. Dynamite would make a good general someday, if he got the breaks. Good generals ran to a certain type, and Dynamite was it. Good generals had to have the type of mind that saw all men as masses, as numerical groups of Infantry, Artillery, and mortars that could be added and substracted and understood on paper.[33]

The conformity to organization rules which has forced the Warden to do Holmes's dirty work has cost him dearly--his individuality. And as the Warden's cup of frustration runs over, he becomes aware of the captain's wife, Karen Holmes, spoiled society girl now a bored army wife and reputedly promiscuous. All these years Milt has avoided Army women who are to him cold, with no more warmth in them than in a brilliant diamond." But Karen is more than just any woman. She is his company commander's wife and represents the "system." She is Milt's way of getting back what he has lost, "not as a vengeance, or even retribution, but as an expression of himself, to regain the individuality that Holmes and all the rest of them, unknowing, had taken from him."[34]

But Milt's problem is not easily resolved. Surrender his individuality to the organization and to a woman

[33]Jones, From Here to Eternity, p. 105.

[34]Ibid., p. 109.

both is too much for Milt. He would not take a commission to marry Karen. And even before Karen sails away, the Warden is already out on the town. When he returns to his outfit G Company is changed. Holmes is no longer company commander; he has become a major. Prew has been released from the stockade but is absent without leave. Maggio has gone berserk and Corporal Bloom committed suicide thinking that he had gone "queer." Even the kitchen force has a new chief. The men of G Company may come and go, but Sgt. Milt Anthony Warden goes on, fighting the enlisted man's battle as well as his own, following the rules of the game--the picture of compromised individualism.

From Here to Eternity paints a world of futility and unrelieved pessimism. Death, insanity, dropping out of society altogether, or compromise that breeds an uneasy conscience assuaged only by alcohol and whoring, is the end of those who fight the "system." In this novel Jones looks at his world through a glass, but darkly indeed.

In The Thin Red Line the atmosphere is not as dark, but the quest for individual freedom and for an identity of one's own is just as hopeless. It tells the story of C for Charlie company engaged in battle operations at Guadalcanal. Like Mailer, Jones traces its combat activities, with

textbook accuracy some critics say.[35] But unlike The Naked and the Dead, Jones's novel has no sharply defined characters--a method that intensifies the individual's lack of identity. Jones continually shifts his narrative focus, never remaining for any length of time on any one character of the vast cast. The protagonist is strictly C for Charlie. Even the organizational chart which Jones provides does not help the reader to remember with accuracy any one of the major characters. As men die in combat or are transferred to other units, replacements arrive to fill their space in the chart. When the novel ends with the termination of the Guadalcanal campaign, C for Charlie is a changed company getting ready for the campaign in New Georgia.

In The Thin Red Line Jones "has presented a frightening twentieth century picture of individual man's insignificance in society and the universe."[36] The timid young Corporal Fife has this horrifying realization of "man's insignificance" as he goes into combat. He realizes that the war is like some business venture operating on some kind of mathematical equation. Men themselves are significant only in that they must operate the machines to solve

[35]Waldmeir, American Novels of the Second World War, p. 19. See also Norman Mailer, Cannibals and Christian (New York, 1966) p. 112.

[36]Volpe, "James-Norman Mailer," p. 112.

the equation. To Fife "the very idea . . . struck a cold blade of terror . . . a terror both of unimportance, his unimportance, and of powerlessness: his powerlessness. He had no control or say so in any of it. Not even where it concerned himself, who was also a part of it. It was terrifying. He did not mind dying in a war, a real war,--at least, he didn't think he did--but he did not want to die in a regulated business venture."[37] A similar thought occurs to the cynical First Sgt. Welsh, who could be the counterpart of Mailer's Sgt. Warden, both in their affinity for whiskey and women as well as in their steadfast rebellion against the officer class. Welsh, who carries listerine bottles filled with whiskey among the company records, feels that wars are fought for "property. All for property." And the men who fight in them have no more significance than "a little band of wounded animals."

Although the intense dread of losing individual freedom and identity is apparent here as in From Here to Eternity, Jones's thinking since the earlier novel seems to have changed. In The Thin Red Line the sketchily-drawn characters have learned to accept their insignificance and to adapt themselves to the inevitable anonymity. They have learned to endure what cannot be changed. They realize

[37]Jones, The Thin Red Line, p. 47.

that survival depends upon their adaptability. Uncompromising rebellion against authority and an irrational "system" has partly caused the destruction of Prewitt, Maggio and Blues Berry in From Here to Eternity and of Hearn in The Naked and the Dead. Such rebellion lacks intensity in The Thin Red Line. Consequently the individual meets frustration and defeat, but he survives.

Captain Jim "Bugger" Stein, for instance, knows he is just another expendable cipher. When Colonel Tall relieves him of his command for disobedience, but recommends him for a Purple Heart and a Silver Star because of the victory which resulted from the disobedience, Stein accepts the situation without much protest. In the earlier Jones this would have meant an all out resistance. And because he is more malleable than Prewitt or Hearn, Stein can look forward to a new assignment, perhaps among the bright lights of Washington, instead of dying senselessly.

Another mild rebel in The Thin Red Line who learns to resign himself to the inevitable is Pvt. John Bell. An officer before the war, he turned in his commission in protest. Drafted right back when war starts, he fights as a private in Guadalcanal. But his courage and heroism win him a field promotion and a commission which he finally accepts, as he faces his wife's betrayal with resignation. These are inevitable, John Bell reasons, and must be accepted.

The Thin Red Line has all the elements that create the hopelessness and futility in The Naked and the Dead and From Here to Eternity, but none of the unbending resistance. Chance, Luck or Fate (Jones himself is uncertain of his terms) determines the outcome of events and rules men's lives, as it does in Mailer's novel. Edmond Volpe notes that "atheistic or religious, brave or cowardly, these men are equally vulnerable to the indiscriminate governance of Chance."[38] Hostile nature causes much suffering and pain. Capricious officers representing the irrational "system" direct battle campaigns out of vanity and pride. Women are selfish and unfaithful, as John Bell's "Dear John" proves. Homosexuality is the haunting specter in many a darkened tent. Fife and Bead, Doll and Carrie Abre, for instance, are victims of the nightmare. Insanity, faked or real, and death are still the only way out of the horrors of war. Freedom, a personal identity, a secure and ordered world are still beyond man's reach. But the men of The Thin Red Line, as Jones pictures them, accept these as their lot. They realize that they must function as cogs in the war machine and function well, or be crushed. And they would rather live.

[38]Volpe, "James Jones-Norman Mailer," p. 111.

Jones's preoccupation with the individual's futile search for freedom from authority is also apparent in The Pistol (1958), a brief, obscure and badly written novel on the war, which serious critics have hardly noticed. Through a confused system of symbols and one dimensional characters, Jones tries to bring out his main point.

The Pistol is the story of Pvt. Richard Mast, who purloined a pistol at the start of the Second World War in Hawaii. This pistol becomes the symbol of many things to Mast. It is salvation, freedom, security. All that Mast asks of life and of the men around him is to be left alone with his pistol. But one after another, they attempt to take it from him. By fair or foul means they try to separate Mast from his means of survival. The pistol is all there is between Mast and the samurai of a Japanese officer that Mast keeps seeing in his private nightmare. When a corporal takes the pistol forcibly from Mast, he looks on the corporal as the enemy "who had taken this salvation from him." When he recovers the pistol, "the feeling of comfort that it gave him, being there again was indescribable. Mast felt saved again, had a chance to survive."

As the story progresses, the pistol begins to symbolize also the salvation of the whole world. Every man in Mast's unit equates it with his own chance "to be saved

out of the war." And Mast fights off each of those who would take it from him in order not to lose his chance to survive. When lawful authority represented by Sgt. Musso takes the pistol back, O'Brien voices Jones's and the men's collective protest:

> "You got no right!" he shouted. "You got no right! It ain't fair! You got no right to do that to us!"
>
> In the violence of his emotion he threw his head back and yelled it at the top of his lungs, so that in an odd way, while he was shaking his fist after the carrier, O'Brien himself, his teeth bared, was staring fiercely upward at the sky, as he went on shouting. . . . And beside him Mast stood staring at the picture of his Japanese major, who would someday come for him.[39]

Jones intends O'Brien's defiant gesture not wholly for the departing back of Sgt. Musso, but for an indifferent Being who takes away man's freedom and means of survival. But it remains the helpless defiance of mortal man before the crushing force of Authority.

In the novel a hilltop guardpost also serves as another symbol of freedom. Ironically the men in Jones's The Pistol must live inside an "encircling, isolating wall of wire which they had built around themselves and which they had all come gradually to hate." The self-made prison makes it even more difficult for Mast to protect his pistol. An assignment at Marconi Pass in a mountain guardpost makes him feel safer. But a southerner named Grace tries to steal

[39]Jones, The Pistol, p. 143.

it from Mast. An absurd fight follows on the slopes of the hill. Jones tries to suggest a parallel with the war and at the same time imply that nowhere can man be wholly free and secure. In the senseless and bloody struggle for freedom, man does not win ever.

These novels on the war in the Pacific written by two of the most widely-read war novelists typify the anguished and despairing response to an incomprehensible world. Mailer's protagonists in search of order and security find none. Heredity, prejudice, and injustice, poverty and ignorance, faithless women, the military organization, hostile nature, Chance constitute a formidable conspiracy that balks them at every turn. Jones's individuals are threatened by anonymity and the loss of personal freedom. An irrational and bureacratic "system," an "absolute, inexorable, impersonal Authority" as well as Chance work together to defeat them. Those who resist the crushing force like the protagonists in From Here to Eternity come through the fight mangled, deranged or are annihilated. Those who accept the inevitable, survive and become one of the faceless mass suggested in The Thin Red Line. Either way leads to futility, and destruction which is the outcome of the existential quest, as Richard Lehan points out.[40]

[40]Richard Lehan, "Existentialism in Recent American Fiction: The Demonic Quest," Waldmeir, ed., Recent American Fiction, Some Critical Views, p. 78.

PART II. THE FILIPINO NOVELS ON THE SECOND WORLD WAR

CHAPTER IV

THE PHILIPPINE LITERARY EXPERIENCE: A "BROKEN CIRCUIT"

Like the American novels on the Pacific war, the Filipino novels on the Japanese Occupation are concerned with man's conflict with a hostile world. However, not an oppressive bureaucracy nor fickle Chance, but an obsessive passion for vengeance and a slowly disintegrating world threaten the individuals.

To understand the Filipino novel on the war, one must reach back into Philippine history, however briefly. The Filipino novel in English has no tradition of its own. To a large extent it looks to the Spanish and the Anglo-American literary tradition as its source. But the Philippines has a complex past. Oriental and Western, pagan and Christian concepts have shaped it and influenced contemporary Philippine life and thought. Consequently fatalism and realism both lay claim to the schizophrenic Filipino soul. This subtly buried national schizophrenia reflects itself in recent Philippine writings. It becomes evident in the writers' concern for a definition of the

national self through their questing protagonists. The writers try to pin down, dissect and analyze the Philippine psyche, a preoccupation that accounts for the self-consciousness in much of Philippine writing today. There is a constant, a ceaseless questioning as to what constitutes a truly Philippine heritage. Is it the indigenous, the Spanish, the more recent American element or all of these together plus the various oriental strains--Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and the Malayan? Much of Philippine literature still tries to resolve this question hoping to capture the elusive Filipino soul in the process. The Filipino novels about the war, a small body of works, pose that same problem among other concerns.

1.

The Filipino cultural and literary experience is a "broken circuit." Before Ferdinand Magellan made his fateful and fatal mistake in 1521, the Philippines ("Pearl of the Orient Seas" to adoring poets) had a culture of its own. Historians testify that both oral and written literature which showed an "Indian cast" existed then.[1] Much of

[1]See Father Miguel A. Bernad's Philippine Literature: A Twofold Renaissance (Manila, 1963), for a brief but sufficiently documented survey of Philippine literary tradition.

See also Teofilo del Castillo y Tuazon and Buenaventura S. Medina, Philippine Literature From Ancient Times to the Present (Quezon City, 1964), my source of information for this section. The book, however, lacks documentation and suffers from superficial treatment of the subject, evidently because of the authors' effort to be comprehensive.

this has become extinct because of neglect, the ravages of time and conquests. But lately students of Philippine folk culture have started a trend to uncover the buried past. The effort has produced modest rewards. In regions where the inroads of modern civilization have not been greatly felt, there are still garrulous raconteurs who can recite from memory some heroic exploits. One folk "epic" which has attracted the researchers' attention is the Ibalon tale of the Bicol region. In both Spanish and the Bicol dialect, the versifier known simply as Cadunong unfolds the tale of Handiong and Baltog's adventure in the measured verse of metrical romances.[2] Another epic that has received some attention is Biag ni Lam-ang (Life of Lam-ang) told in the dialect of the Ilocos in northern Luzon. Students of this work attribute it to the Ilocano poet known only as Bukaneg and they point out similarities to the Anglo-Saxon Beowulf. The Darangan epics of Mindanao, partly written in Arabic, have posed a problem for researchers. Several years ago the Muslim Princess Emily Marohombsar attempted a translation to solve this research difficulty. More and more students of Philippine culture today go into the hinterlands armed with tape recorders and western

[2]Jose Calleja Reyes', "Ibalon: An Ancient Bicol Tale," Philippine Studies, XVI (April 1968), 319-47, a thoughtfully researched article, gives an English translation of the tale.

research methods to record folk literature. These constitute part of Philippine legacy from the pre-Christian past which still impinges on the present.

Spanish colonialism in the Islands lasted more than three centuries. Throughout those years the Spaniards tried to Christianize the whole archipelago with frustrating results. Although the majority accepted Catholicism and made humanistic western ethos part of their lives, the mountain fastnesses defied the most serious efforts of the missionaries. To this day much of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago have remained Muslim. And the upper north plus the Zambales hills and the many little islands are still mission land. Some historians aver that in the effort to Christianize, the conquistadores burned and destroyed much of folk literature--to make the indio forget his anitos (heathen gods). Others contend that the Spanish missionaries tempered and built on the existing culture rather than tried to destroy it.[3]

From the blend of the pagan and Christian in present day folk practices, the latter contention gains validity. A case in point is the Moriones Holy Week festival in the island province of Marinduque, which blends the primitive, pagan ritual of masked men beating wooden gongs

[3]See Miguel A. Bernad, S. J., Philippine Literature: A Twofold Renaissance, pp. 9-12.

while prancing up and down the streets with a re-enactment of Longinus' decapitation, a Christian legend. In fact, participants in the pagan celebration are in it to fulfill a panata, a religious "vow" made in order to seek a good harvest, to cure an illness, as thanksgiving for a favor or as an act of atonement. And on Easter morning, like all good Christians, they unmask and hie away to the parish church to offer the pagan sacrifice at the altar of the Risen Christ. The anomalous co-existence appears not only in daily life but in contemporary writing.

Spanish colonization and Christianization then created the first break in the cultural circuit. A developing culture stopped in its tracks as the Filipinos adjusted to the new order. The colonizers introduced new literary forms. They encouraged vernacular literature provided this was not against Church and State. The indigenous karagatan (extemporaneous poetic debates) later known as the duplo and balagtasan remained a vital part of village celebrations. The corrido (a corruption of the Spanish word ocurrido, a happening) and the awit, literally meaning song, (both like medieval metrical tales) gained popular acceptance. The moro-moro, a stage play full of sound and fury, depicting the defeat of the Muslim Moors by Christians, flourished with the blessings of Church and

State authorities. Another Spanish import, the zarzuela (a musical comedy with lilting tunes and slapstick humor) thrived towards the end of the nineteenth century.

And even earlier than the secular literary forms came the liturgical pageants still existent in many Philippine towns today. Spanish missionaries introduced these pageants in the Islands presumably towards the end of the sixteenth century, at a time when "the mingled revelry and worship of religious drama . . . [had already] faded like a dream in Chester."[4] The pageants dramatized parts of the liturgy and Scriptures for pedagogical as well as ritualistic purposes, just as medieval European churches did.[5] Here lay the seed of a native dramatic tradition that did not germinate, another casualty in the conflict of cultures.

Despite Spanish encouragement of vernacular writing, suppression and censorship were still the rule. The Filipinos must bear the yoke of oppression and "shut up" about it too. But the peasants could not be totally suppressed and more than a hundred uprisings, revolts, mutinies,

[4]F. M. Salter, Medieval Drama in Chester (Toronto, 1955), p. 28.

[5]Fr. Bernad in Philippine Literature: A Twofold Renaissance suggests the pedagogical purpose, which may very well be, but since much of it is in Latin then obviously the pageant was part of ritual.

recorded in history books, harrassed the conquistadores. And the intelligentsia formed an exodus to Europe, where they issued their manifestos from Madrid cafes.

During the era of censorship the voice of protest was feeble and remote. But one powerful voice, menacing as the sound of doom to Spanish rule, managed to be heard. Jose Rizal, much later chosen the Philippine national hero, wrote and published two "protest" novels in Germany: the Noli Me Tangere (1887) and El Filibusterismo (1891).[6] Copies of these were smuggled into the country and clandestinely read at meetings of the Katipunan, a secret organization that advocated the overthrow of Spanish authority in the Philippines. Filipino expatriates in European capitals avidly read the books. And all missed Rizal's plea for gradualism and saw only the need for immediate upheaval. For unwittingly starting a revolution, Rizal paid dearly. After a mock trial, he was sentenced to death before a firing squad. He died in 1896, at the age of thirty-five--a man of peace, committed to a non-violent change in the social order, but whose death precipitated the bloody Philippine Revolution. Until then the Filipinos

[6]Leon Ma. Guerrero, former Philippine Ambassador to the Court of St. James and to Spain, has written excellent new translations: The Lost Eden (New York, 1961) for the Noli and The Subversive (New York, 1962) for the Fili.

were indeed divided and conquered. His death became the nation's rallying point and national unity started to become a reality.

Critics of Philippine literature entertain diverse views about the literary merits of Rizal's Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo. N. V. M. Gonzalez notes that among Filipinos the critical consensus is that these are novels "only in form."[7] But an American critic points out that by all critical standards these are full blooded works of literature and "the greatest novel in any language in one hundred years," says another.[8] Indeed Rizal's works are novels in the best European tradition of realism and satire. His gallery of characters compare favorably with Dickens' most memorable creations.

The Noli which tells the story of Crisostomo Ibarra, an educated Filipino who returns from Europe only to discover anew the abuses and excesses of the Spaniards, also exposes through brilliant satire the ills and vices of Rizal's countrymen. He suggests that ignorance, superstition, indolence, ostentation hinder progress just as

[7]N. V. M. Gonzalez, "The Filipino and the Novel," in Fiction in Several Languages (Boston, 1968), ed. Henri Peyre. pp. 19-30.

[8]Casper, New Writing from the Philippines, p. 35, and The Wounded Diamond, p. 15.

much as Spanish abuses. The Fili contrasts sharply with the earlier novel in mood and technique, but the "message" in the end remains the same--a change in the people themselves must take place, if Spanish abuses are to be corrected. A cynical and bitter tone has replaced the witty satire of the Noli in this story of Simoun, the filibustero who goads and tempts the Spanish officials to commit more abuses in order to bring the revolution closer. But when the young medical student Isagani takes up the cudgels for his people in a Dominican classroom, then one feels that the wheel has come full circle. The violence that Simoun advocates fails; education still remains the strongest weapon against oppression. The filibustero's death stresses symbolically the futility of fighting evil with evil. Ibarra's peaceful way is still the best. And Isagani, Ibarra reborn, innocent of personal tragedies, untouched as yet by disillusionment and cynicism strikes the hopeful note of freedom from bondage. Again to paraphrase a critic, these are books that should be read wherever second class citizens are struggling to rise.[9] They should be read where bigotry, intolerance, suppression, discrimination exist.

Although written in Spanish, the Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo are in a way the immediate precursors of

[9]Casper, New Writing from the Philippines, p. 36.

the contemporary Filipino novel in English. What might have developed from these works, if the quirks of history had been different, can only be speculated on. They established a standard of effective social criticism in Philippine literature that has dwarfed any contemporary effort.

2.

At the turn of the century, a new influence came to the Islands. Commodore Dewey's fleet steamed into Manila Bay on a May day in 1898. After a few salvos, Manila, the "ever loyal and noble city," capitulated; Spain's dwindling empire, where once "the sun never set," dwindled even more. For a handful of silver, Spain handed over her rebellious 7,000 island colony to the United States of America in the Treaty of Paris (1898). The Philippine literary and cultural experience suffered another break in the circuit. And as Nick Joaquin nostalgically puts it, "a people that had got as far as Baudelaire in one language was being returned to the ABC's of another language."[10]

Filipino writers of the old persuasion painfully went out of fashion. The effete poet Esteban Borromeo, a brooding and Byronic dreamer in Joaquin's novel, poignantly represents that generation of Filipino writers. Still

[10]Joaquin, The Woman Who Had Two Navels (Manila, 1961), p. 115.

dreaming of the glories of the past, he dies a consumptive unable to cope with the pragmatic demands of the present. Fiery young men who plotted against Spanish power in Madrid cafes came home to fight the Americans. They found themselves obsolete when the new government got going. "They were to have no continuation; a breed and history stops abruptly with them," Joaquin says elegiacally in his novel.[11] When the smoke of battle cleared, another exodus ensued for those who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the United States. Hong Kong and Japan became the sanctuary. For those left behind new things must be learned. A new language, another flag, another national anthem and the blessings of education for all came with the new regime.

A boatload of enthusiastic Thomasites arrived and started teaching English to the Filipinos, at the same time training those who had the aptitude to become teachers themselves.[12] So thorough had the "Americanization" effort been, that the remark of Santos' Spanish character in The Volcano rings true: "'You gave them your songs and your speeches, and what did you get? A generation of parrots

[11] Ibid., p. 115.

[12] The Thomasites were American teachers who came on the boat Thomas in 1901, six hundred strong, and laid the foundation for the new public school system.

singing your America and The Star-Spangled Banner, thinking it's their own country they are singing about, the land of the brave and the free.'"[13] English spread through the land as Spanish, the language of the Philippine social elite, never did. And today, Father Miguel A. Bernad remarks,

> . . . the Filipino student studies his law or medicine or physics or mathematics or history or philosophy in the same language as the students of these disciplines in Australia or Canada or the United States or Ireland or Great Britain--or in Borneo, Malaya, Ceylon, Hong Kong or India. The Filipino reads his newspapers, listens to his radio, argues his case in court, speaks for or against a measure in Congress or denounces graft and corruption--all in English. To be sure, it is not always the Queen's English. Some would call it an inferior species of "American." The name does not matter. What matters is that an Oriental people, . . . has become part of a growing body of English-speaking nations. Anglo-American culture has become part of the Philippine cultural heritage.[14]

Painfully and laboriously a new crop of writers in English emerged, to replace the Esteban Borromeos of the old dispensation and to write for a new generation of readers who have consistently ignored their countrymen's literary works outside the classroom. These fledgling writers were initially inspired by the Thomasites with Longfellow's sonorous "forest primeval," with the gurgling verse of Hiawatha. But later these Filipino writers discovered for

[13]Santos, The Volcano (Manila, 1965), pp. 257-258.

[14]Miguel A. Bernad, S. J., Bamboo and the Greenwood Tree (Manila, 1961), pp. 4-5.

themselves other models and they worshipped at other shrines. Hemingway, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Steinbeck and the greats of English fiction, among others, became their guides. With much effort they tried to express the Philippine experience in a language whose nuances many of them could not completely master. One Filipino critic remarks that much pilferage characterized the early works.[15]

Two decades after the first group of Thomasites had docked, the first Filipino novel in English was published: Zoilo A. Galang's A Child of Sorrow (1921). Now out of print and very rarely found in Philippine libraries or bookshelves, its chief interest lies in its being a "first." Perhaps of greater importance is Maximo Kalaw's The Filipino Rebel (1932). By literary critical standards this is not a "good" novel. Its characters, structure, theme and intention do not seem to work together. However, its significance lies in the fact that Kalaw's work moves the Filipino novel away from Galang's sentimentalism back to the realism shown in Rizal's novels. Kalaw's novel touches on a vital issue in Philippine life during the thirties, and until the present--the social injustices that triggered the peasant uprisings in Central Luzon. It shows the new opportunism and by the author's prefatorial

[15]Petronilo Bn. Daroy, "Philippine Writing in English," Philippine Studies, XVII (April, 1969), 249-65.

admission, his purpose is not so much to write a novel as to represent history. Somehow Kalaw's Filipino Rebel bridges the years between Rizal's El Filibusterismo and F. Sionil Jose's The Pretenders (1966).

The thirties was a period of ferment in the rural areas of Central Luzon. The injustices castigated in John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath (1939) were magnified a hundredfold in the Philippines. The social evil created by the encomienda system in Spanish colonial days extended to the oppressive caciquism in the vast haciendas owned by powerful absentee landowners. And the peasants seethed with unrest, incited by outside agitators and by their own misery.[16] Sakdalistas gathered in dark rooms, the Katipunan once again, and plotted uprisings.[17]

These social conditions which Kalaw's The Filipino Rebel started to reflect in fiction have challenged few contemporary novelists. Critics have decried the Filipino writers' lack of commitment to social reform. The writers know that the vices exist, festering like sores that poison the moral fiber of the nation, but they choose to look the other way seemingly impervious to the social ills in their

[16]See Jose's The Pretenders (Manila, 1966) for a fictional re-creation of the abortive peasant rebellion.

[17]Sakdalistas were members of a socialist movement which eventually gave birth to the communist-oriented Hukbalahap of Post World War II.

midst, so the critics have noted. An apologist for the writers says that this is not a refusal to dig into the vices "but a timidity to probe into evil."[18] And in Literature and Society (1940), Salvador P. Lopez has called for a socially "engaged" Philippine literature, echoing Sartre's littérature engagée dictum, But not many Philippine novelists have heeded that call. Perhaps only Sionil Jose's The Pretenders comes close to social protest. Some novels like Winds of April (1941) and A Season of Grace (1956) by N. V. M. Gonzalez as well as Juan Laya's His Native Soil (1941) reveal the hardships of rural folk, but only indirectly blame social inequalities for their misery.[19]

Gonzalez' Winds of April, like many of his early short stories, portrays the simple almost primitive lives of kaingin people, mountain tribes who make clearings in the forest, in his well-remembered island province of Mindoro. A Season of Grace pictures the plight of the same mountain folk as they try to make a living out of the land, fighting off threatening hunger, rats overrunning the ricefields and greedy money lenders who suck the lifeblood of the needy. And Laya's His Native Soil, which depicts the life of the

[18]M. A. Viray, "Philippine Writing Today," Literary Review (Summer 1960), pp. 465-477.

[19]See Casper's New Writing from the Philippines for short critiques on most of the novels mentioned in this section.

hardy, adventurous, hard-working and tradition-bound peasants of his native Ilocandia in northern Philippines, focuses on the same kind of rural problems that Gonzalez explores. Evidently Laya's chief concern is to show the fine qualities of these people and also to point out the mediocrity and backwardness of their traditional ways. Both Gonzalez and Laya do not rage at social injustices; they are content to portray the peasants' little joys, their tough fight for survival and their hard-headed adherence to tradition.

But Sionil Jose's The Pretenders can qualify both for the "social protest" and the Philippine "quest" novel. In fact, Father Bernad calls it an "angry novel."[20] Sionil Jose moves up the scene several notches in the social ladder. He has shifted the locale from the mountain kaingin and the farm to the scented chambers of the social elite, where the festering sore of greed and corruption, whose stench has hovered over the land, really originates. The protagonist Tony Samson, penniless but with a doctoral degree from Harvard and married to one of the elite, struggles to retain his personal identity and integrity, nebulous concepts in his corrupt world. He faces the corrupting lures of money and power; discovers that the business world of his father-in-law, like the academic world that he reluctantly left,

[20]Miguel A. Bernad, S. J. "The Problem of Integrity," Philippine Studies, XIV (Oct. 1966), 653-65.

operates on the same greased wheel of graft and corruption; and harrassed by newsmen, who are his friends, and plagued by guilt feelings for having severed his ties with the ancestral past, he throws himself on the tracks of an approaching train. Before his death he tries to find his way back. But as Tony Samson gains understanding of his peasant past and resumes his Ilocano identity, he loses his life.[21]

3.

This search for a link with the past is a dominant strain in most of the Filipino novels written after the Second World War. Like their contemporaries the world over, the Filipino novelists have become preoccupied with man's growing isolation and with his vague search for the self, illustrated by the recurring patterns of "departures and homecomings" in the novels, which Casper has noted. And in these novels action has shifted from the barrio farms and mountain kaingins to the town and the city, extending oftentimes beyond national boundaries. The change reflects a people's growing awareness of their role in the international scene. This broadening consciousness of a world beyond the confines of the barrio, the region and the nation brings with it the need for national self definition.

These Philippine "quest" novels, which suggest that the Filipino can find his true self by accepting the

[21]Father Bernad makes a similar assertion in "The Problem of Integrity," his review article on The Pretenders.

realities of the Past and reconciling them with the Present, are couched in an allegorical mode. One such novel is N. V. M. Gonzalez' The Bamboo Dancers (1959), which portrays a young sculptor's voyage of self-discovery from Manila to New York, Vermont, Tokyo, Hiroshima, Taipeh and back to Manila. It also pictures other Filipino expatriates--"bamboo dancers" who flit from continent to continent ever restless, homeless and alien, languishing in spiritual aridity. Back in the land of his fathers, the sculptor Ernie Rama, through a symbolic near-drowning, experiences a form of rebirth. He senses the dawning realization that the self which he seeks is somewhere in his Past. Rediscovering that Past could give meaning to his Present.[22]

In Nick Joaquin's The Woman Who Had Two Navels (1961), this search for a national identity is given added dimension and intensity because of the ethical overtones--the tension between a primitive Past and a Christian Present, between good and evil, choice and moral responsibility, illusion and reality, self-delusion and knowledge. It also depicts man's bafflement over his duality and the Filipino's bewilderment over his dual heritage. The novel spans three

[22]See Father Bernad's rather lopsided evaluation of this novel and Gonzalez' rejoinder, Bamboo and the Greenwood Tree, pp. 42-52; 115-121. Gonzalez takes exception to Father Bernad's critical method.

periods in Philippine history (Revolutionary, American, post World War II), although the action lasts only a little more than three days.

In The Woman Who Had Two Navels, Joaquin tells what he calls the "fable" of Connie Vidal Escobar (an allegorical representation of the Philippine experience), who thinks that she has two navels. Even as a child this difference from other children haunts her. She lives through a troubled and lonely adolescence during the Japanese war years when adults have no time for her. She turns to Biliken, the pagan god of the carnival enthroned in the Vidal garden, as her refuge and confidante. But even Connie's primitive god betrays her. She finds Biliken after the war sprawled obscenely with bullet holes in its stomach. The nation's pre-Christian Past and gods have feet of clay after all.

Connie's quest for the truth about herself is the Philippines' own quest. It takes her through a marriage and a love affair on to Hong Kong where she absurdly consults a horse doctor (Pepe Monson) and a priest of God (Tony Monson), who have no answers. She finds the truth through an old revolutionary (Doc Monson), living in exile, dreaming of a mountain pass in a glorious long ago. He provides the link to a Past, which to Connie has always been the echo of a voice, a uniform, a sword. The old

patriot himself has been clinging to an illusion of glory, which turns into the reality of "dust," "crabs" and skeleton stairways that lead nowhere, in the homeland he has dreamed about through the years of exile. After a symbolic purging of self-delusions, which are the eye-opening effects of war for the Philippines, Connie returns to meet the old patriot. In a dramatic recognition scene, the heroic Philippine Past (old Monson) merges with the bewildered Philippine Present (Connie) to forge a hopeful Future. As the old revolutionary dies, rapturously whispering "Nunc dimittis," the Past has become the here and now in his two sons (Pepe and Tony). The Revolution and the Republic "had been carried to safety." As Connie lets go of illusions and accepts responsibility for present realities, a people learns to live with its Past and to accept its dual heritage.[23]

The allegorical mode and the recurring motif of "departures and homecomings" are also evident in Bienvenido N. Santos' Villa Magdalena (1965). The novel pictures the moral decay and corruption that touch every member of the Conde family who has lived in Villa Magdalena. Like Hawthorne's Pyncheons in the House of Seven Gables, the Condes who own the villa suffer a curse. But unlike

[23]See Regina T. Garcia's "A Reading of Nick Joaquin's The Woman Who Had Two Navels," Phil. Studies, XV (April 1967), 288-306, for a balanced though not exhaustive reading.

Hawthorne's people, the curse of the Condes runs only in its women--beautiful, intelligent, but cursed with wantonness,[24] symbolically represented in the ubiquitous stench that clings to the family's leather business. And unlike Maule's curse on the Pyncheons, which is finally broken, no refreshing country cousin lays the ghost at the Villa Magdalena. Fred Medallada, the exorcising agent, searches in distant lands, on to the scientific laboratories in New York. But not all the chemical combinations in the world could sweeten the malodorous Conde leather.

Santos' lonely wanderers venture to distant ports in search of a nameless something, Gonzalez' "bamboo dancers," once again. Each returns empty-handed, bruised and battered to the Villa, a sprawling mansion built from leather money that carries the odor of decay. Like a forgiving mother the house waits to receive her erring daughters. "We [shall] all come back. . . . We'll all be here. This is where we belong. No matter how far away we go, we always come back. . . . Villa Magdalena will be full of us. . . . "[25] Indeed, everyone compulsively returns--the dead,

[24]Valdemar O. Olaguer makes this comment on the Conde women in "A Sordid Splendor," Phil. Studies, XIV (Jan. 1966), 182-85.

[25]Bienvenido N. Santos, Villa Magdalena (Manila, 1965), p. 267.

the dying, the insane--to the Villa, symbol of a degenerating Philippine patrimony.

In Kerima Polotan's Hand of the Enemy (1962), the "search," (for love in a loveless universe), is evident but not the allegorical framework. The novel shows that the human "heart is a lonely hunter," and it portrays man's isolation and defenselessness in a brutal world. Kerima Polotan's heroine, Emma Gorrez, leaves her rural birthplace; goes to Manila for her education; meets and marries a small town newspaper editor, who becomes a success and loses himself in the maze of the city's Vanity Fair. Disillusioned, Emma leaves her husband; returns to the small town and consoles herself with a loveless love affair, with the school principal, who later burns himself and his promiscuous wife in their home.

Like Sionil Jose's The Pretenders, Kerima Polotan's novel suggests that the city is the source of evil and the seat of corruption. And the protagonists in both novels temporarily lose touch with the rural ancestral past and get embroiled in a man-eating metropolitan present. But Kerima Polotan provides no answer. Neither the past nor the present; the city nor the barrio contains the magic key. The "hand of the enemy" is an uncaring, loveless world.

And Emma Gorrez discovers that in this world, the gods indeed toy with mortals and kill them for their sport.[26]

Like The Hand of the Enemy, Linda Ty Casper's The Peninsulars (1964) deals with man's isolation given an eighteenth century setting. The protagonists in the novel grope towards an identity which they never find, traveling from one elusive dream to another; each one immersed in his own private vision of power and glory. Its chief protagonist, Santistevan--descendant of an Aragonese family and aide to the Governor General--expresses all the other characters' sense of alienation when he confesses at the point of death his own "desolate loneliness."[27]

The Filipino quest revealed in these novels is not "for a self that is leaking away, disappearing or lost, or . . . non-existent."[28] It is the quest for a self, rooted in the past, of which the protagonists are vaguely aware. Confused in the shuffle of cultures, yearning for more power or material wealth, they abandon their ties with it. But separated from that past, they become disoriented, alien

[26]See Father Bernad's and Casper's two-pronged evaluation of Kerima Polotan's fiction in Philippine Studies, XVII (Jan. 1969).

[27]This brief comment essentially agrees with Bienvenido Lumbera's review article, "Desolate Loneliness," Philippine Studies XIII (Oct. 1965), 850-9.

[28]Miller, Quests Surd and Absurd, p. 11 makes this comment about post World War II American novels.

even to themselves; sterile and unproductive as Gonzalez' "bamboo dancers." When they find their way back, the schizophrenic self becomes one again.

4.

Such is the social, cultural and literary milieu, capsulized, out of which emerged the Philippine novels on the Japanese war years, tempered besides in the smithy of war. These novels reflect the national confusion, the shaken but steadfast faith in democratic ideals, a whistling-in-the-dark optimism that America indeed will return, and a grave concern over individual and national survival. And the pervading question in the novels is: What is a Filipino? They also reflect man's struggle to dominate primitive instincts brought to the fore by fear and the desire for vengeance.

Like the American novelists who wrote on the war, the Filipino writers who tried to re-create the Philippine war experience were also yanked out of college classrooms by the explosion in Pearl Harbor. Only Bienvenido N. Santos among these novelists had watched the war from afar--with the Philippine government in exile in the United States. And the anguish of those years are recorded not in his novel The Volcano, but in his collection of short stories You Lovely People (1955). But unlike the American novelists, who went off to war with the "natural excitement of awakening

to life," the Filipino writers did not have the excited anticipation of fighting the war. It was right there in their midst before they were ready for it. No "sense of tomorrow," only of today, accompanied them to the tunnels of Corregidor and later to the mountain fastnesses. They had no illusions to lose, like the American novelists as Aldridge has pointed out, so they lost none.

Unlike the American novels, the Filipino novels on the war have received little critical attention and even much less readership. The few critics who have said anything at all about the novels agree that most of these are "badly" written.[29] And these critics have a case. The novelists have failed to dramatize the war struggle in the Islands. The creative talent has not measured up to its subject. Characterization is weak and the narrative technique sadly pedestrian. Some of the novels suffer from wordiness and structural looseness. A minutae of details, for instance, presented narratively in colorless prose and a haphazard structure weaken the effect of Laya's This Barangay. Its narrative continuity hangs by a thread. Strangely enough only Santos in The Volcano has presented the war experience with a sense of reality not always evident in the other realistic portrayals of it.

[29]See Casper's comments in Wayward Horizons and New Writing from the Philippines indicated in various footnotes in subsequent chapters.

Evidently the writers' chief concern has been simply to recount events and to show the contrast between sunny peacetime days and the black nights of near despair. From the angle of style and craftsmanship, therefore, a study of the Philippine novels on the war would become but a running commentary on how the novels should have been written.

Thematically, however, these novels about the war show concern over national identity, over survival and the tensions between primitive instincts and the dictum that "vengeance is in the hand of the Lord."

CHAPTER III

GUILT, REMORSE AND PURGATION

Hate and vengeance are strong forces that propel the protagonists in some Filipino war novels, some critics' opinion to the contrary.[1] Almost overnight, a gentle person untouched by violence turns into a cold-blooded killer. A whole village, in fact, changes its moral outlook as quickly as day changes to night. Gently laughing and singing serenades one day, a barrio can watch a bloody execution unflinchingly the next. Overnight, war becomes not only the stench of decaying flesh but of decaying morals as well. War changes the little villages and barrio; corruption and violence seep in and suspicious strangers walk the footpaths. In the novels the changes in the protagonist reflect the change in the village. The village in turn reflects the national condition. Violence brought on by the festering hate inside the protagonists mirrors the violence that has spread throughout the land. But the aftermath is deep remorse and a torturing sense of guilt.

[1]Casper, The Wounded Diamond, p. 72.

Two Filipino war novels focus on the devastating effect on the individual of hate and the lust for vengeance. The novelists portray the guilt, remorse and agonizing expiation of haunted men with the lust to kill. Stevan Javellana's Without Seeing the Dawn shows how man's desire for revenge turns him into a dreaded killer. Only in his own death does he find redemption. And Edilberto K. Tiempo's Watch in the Night depicts a Protestant minister's painful purgation after having yielded to the overpowering urge to kill. For him redemption lies in involvement with humanity, a theme that closely parallels the chief concern of Statham's Welcome Darkness.

Without Seeing the Dawn,[2] was published two years after the war when the memory of Bataan and Leyte was still fresh. It had its share of fairly favorable, though not very enthusiastic reviews in the American press. One reviewer says that "because Stevan Javellana is a real novelist, this plain tale of a man and the life and death of the community he lived in becomes the story of all the Philippines under the heel of Japanese occupation. . . . [It has been] worked from the fabric of Philippine life--quiet,

[2]The phrase alludes to a line in Jose Rizal's poem "Mi Ultimo Dios:" "Ya muero cuando veo que el cielo se colora." ("I die just when I see the dawn break.") However, the epigraph of the novel is from Rizal's Noli Me Tangere: "I die without seeing the dawn brighten over my native land! You, who have it to see, welcome it--and forget not those who have fallen during the night!"

laughable, exalting, bitter and horrifying; but it is written almost gently with an undertone of lightness, like the sound of Filipino voices heard in the fields towards the end of day. . . . it also has a gift of sunshine, and laughter and broad humor despite the horror with which the ending unfolds."[3] In the Philippines however, only earnest students of Philippine writing have read Javellana's engrossing re-creation of the war experience.

In the novelist's own prefatorial explanation, Without Seeing the Dawn is not meant to be the "story of battles fought." It is not the story of Filipino soldiers at the front lines, but of a "son of misfortune; a farmer-turned-soldier who went to fight and came home to find Grief sitting at his doorstep." Javellana adds that the novel tells of a hopeless fight in the island of Panay. Indeed it does more, for the tragic transformation of Carding, ironically surnamed Suerte meaning Luck or Fortune, from a simple farm boy to an embittered killer reflects the transformation of many sons of misfortune like him.

Javellana divides the novel into two sections, "Day" and "Night." He suggests that Day is the untroubled, serene, pre-war period of songs and laughter; while Night

[3]Walter D. Edmonds (rev.) "Without Seeing the Dawn by Stevan Javellana," Atlantic Monthly (July 1947), pp. 123-124.

is the season of despair when the women of barrio Manhayang wear only black and the Japanese horde ravages the land.

Without Seeing the Dawn tells the story of Carding and of barrio Manhayang. At eighteen he is as "tall and as wide as a house" and strong like a bull carabao. Already his thoughts have turned to women and marriage. Following the traditional rituals of Manhayang, Carding woos and wins Lucing, the daughter of Teniente Paul, and the fairest of the barrio maidens. But calamities and misfortunes beset the marriage from the start. The first son is stillborn. Then the landowner evicts them from the land which is the source of their livelihood. They move to the city, but Carding gets into trouble with the labor unions and so he cannot find any work. In order to earn a living he becomes the paid bodyguard-lover of a taxi dancer, Rosing. After a brief separation the couple decide to start anew in another village. But a flood destroys their crop. And although a second son is born, a cause for rejoicing, Carding and Lucing find themselves with no land to farm again. As they get ready to migrate and seek their fortune in Mindanao, the "Promised Land," Night descends; Carding with all the gay young men of the barrio departs for the war.

In Book Two Carding returns from Bataan and finds "Grief sitting at his doorstep." He discovers that the child his wife carries in her body is not his. Japanese soldiers had raped her, killed his aged father who was trying to protect her and slain his baby son. This knowledge turns Carding into a morose, taciturn man and a dread killer. He kills not only the Japanese but Filipino collaborators. He kills his wife's Uncle Jaime, his boyhood pal and cousin, and plots to commit infanticide to satisfy his grim desire for vengeance. But he is saved from the last horrendous act, for the baby is stillborn. Carding's inner struggles end as he marches away with a band of guerilla fighters to attack a Japanese garrison and Lucing kneels before the faded image of her altar saints listening to the distant sound of guns and praying for her husband's immortal soul. At the same time the people of barrio Manhayang prepare to leave their homes.

Briefly this is the story that the reader can re-structure out of the loosely structured novel. So precariously knitted together are the events that each chapter can stand as a separate vignette in the life of Carding. The novel's obvious plan is simply, unadornedly chronological. And the novelist's intent is to create a sharp contrast between what he pictures as the blissful innocence of peacetime and the corruption of war. The chapters bear

titles that mark the events in Carding's life: "A Marriage is Made," "The First Son," "The Red Card," "The Shoes," "The Flood," among others. Significantly each event leaves a definite mark on Carding and suggests a subtle eroding force that makes his life of wartime violence not wholly unprepared for. Each is a buffeting from life and a step in Carding's gradual descent to the vortex of violence. And despite a critic's remark that the "wasted first half of the novel should have treated Carding less as an animal, to make his final rise not miraculous,"[4] it is precisely the characterization and the events that shape Carding which make the second half plausible. The reader becomes aware that when disaster strikes the valley and evil supposedly appears in Eden, Carding is no longer an innocent and uncorrupted Adam. The seed of moral decay lies fallow in his own nature and it only needs watering. What the first half denies is the author's implied premise that war has brought corruption; war has only precipitated it. Javellana has disproved unintentionally what the novel's distinct division into "Day" and "Night" suggests.

Basically the novel illustrates the struggle raging in Carding's soul, an intense battle taking place in

[4]Leonard Casper, The Wayward Horizon (Manila, 1961), p. 16.

his own private hell and externally taking place in the barrio and in the nation. It is a conflict between strong animal passions for revenge and a vaguely grasped sense of divine prohibition against it.

To give the inner conflict, which is externalized in acts of violence, plausibility and significance, Javellana portrays Carding as a young bull carabao--a natural and elemental man, not given to thinking and philosophizing. He acts and does not rationalize about it. He comprehends the eternal through the "miraculous" present; he apprehends the celestial through the terrestrial; he perceives the metaphysical through the sensual. His love for Lucing, for instance, is solidly based on her effect on his young glands, as Casper points out. And when he learns of a tryst between his wife and the landlord's son, he instantly takes a bolo and chases the man out of his house and asks his questions afterwards. This first act of violence is a clever foreshadowing, for Carding reacts similarly although more intensely when he discovers the Japanese' crime against his honor. In fact, this is the sole motivating factor in his vendetta--not his personal sufferings in Bataan nor the death of his father and his son.

Still in character, as Javellana portrays him, Carding does not consider his philandering with the taxi

dancer, Rosing, as a violation of a vow he made before God and man; nor does he see it as infidelity to his wife. Forces stronger than he manipulate events to their natural conclusions. Floods come; crops are destroyed; sons are stillborn; therefore, taxi dancers can also walk in and offer a man without a job the means of earning a living. And who is Carding, a mere mortal, to refuse the offerings of fate?

That same force that has ruled his life, naturally saves him from committing a crime that cries to heaven for vengeance--infanticide. Far from being a deus ex machina, as Casper implies, the stillbirth which saves Carding from that crime is a credible point of reversal. For a man like Carding Suerte, whose life has been manipulated by external forces, rather than directed by an act of will, this is just one more indication of heaven's intervention. To a man who can peer into his gunsight and fervently say: "Dear God, guide this bullet," and not in self-defense, an intervention that saves him from himself is a sign of heavenly grace. Javellana has only been consistent and true in his characterization. Without any willing suspension of disbelief the reader can accept this moment of enlightenment, as the beginning of Carding's self-knowledge. It is not a "miraculous rise," but the start of a voyage towards self discovery and redemption. Javellana has

vouchsafed his protagonist a glimpse from the "edge of darkness," so regeneration can believably follow. The "religious apprehension of the human predicament of which," a critic insists, "even the simplest Filipino must be capable,"[5] has not "substantiated" the "personal struggle" because Carding Suerte must be true to himself--an unschooled, slightly superstitious farm boy of the wartime Philippines.

To externalize the conflicting forces, Javellana uses his various characters as voices rather than as people who have their impact on Carding. The reader hears rather than sees them as fully drawn characters. The whole barrio, whose fate is intertwined with Carding's own, resembles a Greek chorus that advises, condemns, evaluates, judges and warns. The novelist's description of the village women clothed in black, most likely intended to create an atmosphere of gloom, produces the effect of faceless Cassandras predicting doom. When Carding returns after surviving Bataan and the Death March, the young voices of his comrades in arms try to rouse him into fighting again. These are the same voices that turn to fearful whispers when Carding starts volunteering for the most dangerous missions. Unidentified voices insinuate

[5]Casper, The Wayward Horizon, p. 17.

into Carding's consciousness the horrible cause of his father's and son's death and his own dishonor. The voices of the Manhayang women utter dire warnings when Carding's crime goes beyond the slaying of the Japanese or bandits. Lucing's mother is the dominant voice in the chorus of women. She pleads with him, threatens him and warns of heaven's wrath after he soils his hands with the blood of his kin.

But there are also the muted or silent voices that clamor to be heard. The most powerful is the growing life in his wife's body, for as Carding tells Uncle Jaime before killing him,

> . . . you might be older in years but can you deny the withering power that my particular pain brings? Everytime I look at my wife growing bigger and bigger day by day with a child which I am not sure is mine I am old a hundred times, I die a thousand deaths.[6]

The sound of mutilated Lucio's agony as he crawls away like an animal to hide his shame and the pain-wracked face of his mutilated Flora echo in Carding's heart. There is the quiet anguish of legless Gondoy in his bed of pain giving up the only girl he loves. The voice of the village maiden, abducted by the Japanese, forced to live a life of shame in a Japanese brothel and already blighted by venereal disease, begs Carding to "Remember Alicia." And the last voice is

[6]Javellana, Without Seeing the Dawn, pp. 278-279.

Lucing's, loving, pleading, condemning and praying. Javellana succeeds in balancing the forces and when Carding asks his wife to forgive him on his way to the last fight from which he will not return, he has indeed earned his absolution. Man has conquered himself. He has worked out his own salvation.

An interesting role in the novel belongs to the schoolteacher, Manong Marcelo. He is the voice of wisdom, of the advocate, the seer, the inquisitor. His florid metaphors and silver-tongued advocacy win Lucing's hand for Carding. Later in his conversations with Carding he counsels and reminds him of the past, of his gentle mother and hard-working father, of human dignity. Like a blind Tiresias, Manong Marcelo foretells the outcome of Carding's actions. He seems to be on the periphery of a crowd most of the time. Many times the schoolteacher becomes the people's inquiring voice. As he sits with the rest of the barrio folk listening to Uncle Jaime talk about America "where the buildings, like giants brush their shoulders against the smoky skies, where the bridges are like fairy rainbows of steel girdling the seas to the ends of the world,"[7] Manong Marcelo interrupts the man impatiently. This is not what they want to know. Tell us about her people, the schoolteacher insists. And at the end of the

[7]Javellana, Without Seeing the Dawn, p. 268.

novel as the villagers prepare to leave Manhayang for some place outside the "collective barrio," Manong Marcelo philosophically voices the people's predicament and sagely points out why they must abandon their homes: "If a poisonous snake were already poised to strike at me I would surely be in a most dangerous position. But if two serpents struck at the same time, one in front and the other in the rear, I would be lost. One enemy is bad enough; two is too much."[8] Javellana has made the village wise man the summarizing voice in the novel.

The basic weakness of Without Seeing the Dawn stems from the narative technique and the unsuitability of the language. Javellana has done far too much exposition and very little dramatization of potentially dramatic incidents. There is just a little too much authorial explanation in the novel. He has also failed to develop some potentially dramatic incidents. Casper says with much justification that "the clash with Morada [the bandit] and the ambushing of Polo are dismissed before their climaxes; and the mutilations of Flora and Lucio which try so hard to be vivid in horror, are less realized than the later restrained descriptions of Gondoy's wound and Alicia's dilemma."[9]

[8]Javellana, Without Seeing the Dawn, p. 352.

[9]Casper, Wayward Horizon, pp. 16-17.

Javellana's linguistic style creates the aura of a romantic tale rather than the sense of realism which his material demands. The chapter on the destructive flood, for instance, starts: "The mountaineer spoke of a flood, such a one as would drown the whole wide lowlands, carry away houses and crops and suck all living things, man and beast and fowl, in its angry swell."[10] A chapter innocently titled "The River," which actually tells the tragic tale of Lucio and Flora begins: "The breastless one who lay in bed stiffened when she heard the shout." The shock at the discovery of Lucio's mutilated body in a thicket by the river loses impact. Again to introduce the chapter on "The Repatriate," Javellana writes: "Now there came to the village one whose face was fair and ruddy who preached about peace." Somehow the manner of narration and the language lull the reader into a false mood of placidity when the incident portrayed demands a heightened emotional response--shock, horror or fear.

Despite the flaws Javellana has handled his material honestly and brought out his theme effectively. Through the consistent characterization of Carding and the inevitable resolution, Javellana suggests that man even when ruled by his primitive instincts can dominate his passions. Although

[10]Javellana, Without Seeing the Dawn, p. 174.

the end for Carding Suerte is death, it is a victory, for Carding has at last learned the awesome meaning of being human. As a critic neatly puts it, the novel gains significance because Carding Suerte has rescued "his bloodstream from his less erect ancestors."[11]

Like Javellana, Edilberto K. Tiempo deals with guilt and remorse in Watch in the Night.[12] The novel suggests that man can achieve purgation and ultimate redemption only by becoming part of erring humanity. Man saves himself by helping to save others. The minister in Tiempo's novel purges himself of guilt when he begins to realize that indeed "no man is an island" and that "every man's death diminishes [him]" because he is "part of mankind." On this thesis of involvment Tiempo's minister resolves his inner conflict.

A Watch in the Night depicts the soul-searching and remorse of Ramon Cortes, a Protestant minister who is caught in the eddies of hate and violence in the wartime Philippines. Tiempo sets his novel in the Visayan islands during the early part of the war--Bataan has fallen, but the southern islands are still under control of American and Philippine troops. Receiving orders to replace another minister as chaplain of a regiment, Cortes leaves a small,

[11]Casper, Wayward Horizon, p. 17.

[12]The title of the American edition is Cry Slaughter.

highly conservative congregation whose elders consider him far too liberal. But as he takes over the chaplaincy, the Japanese troops wipe out the forces in Cebu and the regiment disbands. Cortes is among those who sail across the strait to continue resistance with a unit in Negros.

Cortes, already very much shaken by what he has seen of the war, is assigned to stand guard for some Filipino envoys. These have been sent by the Japanese to ask the Negros unit to surrender. In a fit of rage, the minister shoots them. Filled with remorse, Cortes agrees with Colonel Finley, troop commander in Negros, to surrender himself to the Japanese in order to avoid reprisals on the whole island. But as they sail towards Cebu, Japanese planes strafe their boat. One of the men with him dies, another is lost and Cortes himself recovers consciousness in a strange place. He feels responsible for all these deaths and resolves not to bear arms again. And because he feels defiled by his act of violence, he thinks himself unworthy of resuming his ministry. He lives in the home of an old farmer and his family, masochistically reviewing his transgression against the Fifth Commandment while looking for justifications of it in the Bible. He helps the old man, Iyo Osting, to farm until one day when a Japanese raid kills the old man. Cortes with great reluctance looks for the missing body of Iyo Osting and finds it in an advanced state of decomposition.

Hating to do it, the minister cremates the old man and officiates in a private burial ceremony later for an American missionary killed in another Japanese raid. These two acts constitute his means of expiation. In a sermon that the minister preaches during the burial services, Tiempo makes the point of his novel clear: "Man does not really die. He goes on living . . . in the minds of those who mean anything to him. . . . Only when we can reach out to others are we really alive. Living in ourselves we are dead."[13]

Watch in the Night is a thoughtful though rather dull novel on the war. Tiempo has chosen long public speeches as vehicles for his "message."[14] A severely central point of view has forced the novelist into this desperate corner, where a revolving point of view might have given him the flexibility of range that his subject demands. This same weakness is apparent in Statham's Welcome Darkness, which views the whole action from Omar Mill's angle of vision. Such a choice bars the reader from the intriguing thoughts of at least two other characters in Statham's novel, Tim and Jenks. The dullness of Tiempo's novel also derives from the obvious attempt to be true to the historical data, supposedly the purloined documentation

[13]Tiempo, Watch in the Night, p. 207.

[14]See Casper's brief and strongly adverse criticism of Tiempo's technique in Wayward Horizon, pp. 31-36.

on the activities of the underground in the Seventh Military District entitled They Called Us Outlaws, used as material for the novel.[15] Consequently the facts are there but not given artistic transformation.

Nevertheless, Tiempo's characterization of Cortes sheds some light on the main point of the novel despite Casper's contention that the lack of careful characterization reduces the minister to one without identity and therefore "capable of nothing." Cortes is a romantic given to soul searching and self doubts. He doubts his ability to reach his congregation. He doubts the validity of pulpit aphorisms and platitudes in the face of realities. Listening to Camacho, the minister who he is to replace, Cortes is impressed by the enthusiasm of the less capable but more realistic man of the Gospel. The pragmatic Camacho tells Cortes that education and merit alone no longer buy anything. "I don't worship Mammon. . . . But the body has to live if it must house the soul," Camacho explains and Cortes remembers that the lawyer Valente in his old congregation had told him the same thing.

Tiempo has pictured a man who is out of place in the world he lives in and seemingly lacking in self-confidence

[15]Casper gives this information in The Wayward Horizon, p. 36; also in The Wounded Diamond, p. 68.

and inner strength to fight his way through. First, he wears polka-dotted ties, talks evolution and encourages young people to ask questions where such things are just not done by a minister. Casper considers this a bad choice in details of characterization if Tiempo wants to point out the "unorthodoxy" of Cortes. But in the boondocks of Cebu, this is unorthodoxy indeed. Second, the minister falls in love with Cely Castillo, a Catholic and one of the town's social elite. In Cawayan, Protestant ministers do not aspire to marry emancipated Catholic girls who drive their own cars, paint as a hobby and sophisticatedly argue with despotic fathers. Cortes later discovers that Cely's father, a member of the Spanish community of Cebu, is one of the collaborators. Third, Cortes' romantic idealistic eyes see evidences of corruption setting in early and destruction is everywhere. Wives of Filipino officials hoard foodstuffs that should go to the people. Filipino guards tolerate bawdy and ribald comments on Filipino women by Japanese civilian prisoners. Cockfighting and other forms of gambling are carried on in a place of worship, the small rural chapel. And the "scorched earth policy" of the troops shocks him. He witnesses the burning of the city; schoolhouses and century-old cathedrals are put to the torch. Then helplessly he watches and listens to the young leader of a youth group from his congregation die a painful death.

Far from being a "nothing" Minister Cortes emerges as a character who mirrors the confusion of a man whose social role has precipitously become uncertain. Killing the envoys is the credible release of psychological tension building up in the minister. But it also signifies the individual's self-assertion and man's desperate struggle to hold his universe together. The envoys represent the destructive forces--greed, expediency, treachery--in the minister's crumbling world.

A close analysis of the minister's crucial act shows that Tiempo has motivated it adequately both psychologically and narratively. The many shocking events preceding the arrival of the envoys are but many forces pushing against the dam of the minister's self control. The sudden burst of courage from a normally meek man is the believable reaction of one whose life is in grave danger, in this case symbolically. The minister apprehends the danger only subconsciously. When the deed is done an unusual calm descends on Cortes. A new-found self-confidence blossoms in the minister, for he has at last acted decisively following undeniable impulses which have long been repressed. He who has been Mr. Milquetoast for a long time--too cautious to stand up to the old women of Cawayan and whose only overt defiance of conventions is flaunting his frivolous tie--has at last asserted himself, made himself heard. Offering himself to the Japanese in atonement for

the impulsive act is convincingly in character for the new Cortes. Now he has the strength that he has sought all his life and the self-assurance for which he had envied the minister Camacho. The minister's brief illness, the withdrawal from social contact and the acute sense of guilt are plausible consequences of the series of shocks to his sensibilities.

To portray his protagonist's inner life during this time of purgation, Tiempo uses interior monologues and animal imagery. After a lengthy self examination, for instance, and a thoughtful review of Biblical justifications for slaying the enemy, the minister comes across a python devouring a wild boar. He watches fascinated as more wild boars gang up on the python, gore it and try to snatch their doomed companion from the python's mouth. The bloody battle ends with the boars tearing the python to pieces and eating its meat. The minister is disturbed at his own feelings about the fight, for he had wanted the python to win. Unconsciously Cortes has identified with the outnumbered python and has tried to justify his act of anger as self-defense against the "wild boars" that have attempted to destroy his world. In a pointless flashback, Tiempo allows Cortes to further justify himself by equating himself with the boy Ezequiel, who drinks the oozing blood of his first Japanese victim, digs out the

heart and eats it. Some old wives tale has convinced the boy that this would give him great courage. Cortes tries to make himself believe that killing the envoys has done the same thing for him.

In another instance Tiempo uses the image of tiny land crabs scuttling into their holes to suggest the minister's attempt to brush aside and blot out the existence of people and of things remembered. The minister thinks that it is "easier to escape once in a while as he had always done. . . . to try to purge his soul by skinning his hands on the surface of the world, to deaden his thoughts by numbing his body, to dissolve this intense concentration by building up a meaningless engrossment in little things."[16]

Picking up one of the wiggling and wriggling creatures, Cortes symbolically pulls out the hermit crab from its shell and "it lay naked and moist against his palm." At this moment the minister's soul-searching stops and he realizes that "he was not really alone. . . . The darkness was alive with people. People in his mind, people he had known, those who had mattered most."[17] He alone did not pull the trigger of the murder gun. All the men with whom he "had shared anxiety and open and secret fear

[16]Tiempo, Watch in the Night, p. 210.

[17]Ibid., p. 211.

and revulsion and even hatred" have helped pull the trigger. Tiempo has provided justification for the minister's act of violence.

Reconciled, if not wholly purged of his guilt, the minister walks his lonely way back "along the shoreline, a long arc curved to a thin slice jutting boldly into the sea. The wind smelled of seaweed and drying coral." In Welcome Darkness, the protagonist's final act of purgation takes place in a similar setting--a ritual purgation by the sea. Cortes like Omar Mills must atone for his violent deed by becoming once again an active participant in the fate of humanity. Mills must save Jenks; Cortes must perform the burial rites for an old man and another minister of the Gospel.

Javellana and Tiempo have both portrayed man's struggle to dominate the primitive passions within the framework of wartime violence. The protagonists these novelists have chosen represent two distinct Filipino characters. In Without Seeing the Dawn Javellana has pictured an unlettered peasant whose values are dictated by an innate sense of right and wrong as well as by traditional rules of conduct. His powerful natural instincts override even the strongest ties of blood and kinship. Watch in the Night depicts a protagonist whose thinking has been shaped by a ministerial education and whose

ratiocination is based on Christian precepts. Both novelists have shown that peasant or educated man succumbs to his primitive instincts and his salvation lies in personal acts of expiation. For Javellana's elemental man death is redemption; for Tiempo's minister, rejoining humanity and resuming his ministerial duties.

CHAPTER IV

DESIGNS FOR SURVIVAL

The struggle for self-conquest dominates the action in Without Seeing the Dawn and A Watch in the Night as the preceding chapter shows. The protagonists suffer intense guilt and remorse after violent acts of vengeance, and only some expiatory act prescribed by the novelists brings redemption. In Laya's This Barangay and Tiempo's More Than Conquerors, the characters try to dominate not the inner self, but a threatening world of brutal conquerors and treacherous collaborators, a lawless world where hunger, disease and human predators lurk. The basic conflict is between man and this brutal world. Laya suggests that survival depends on the group; Tiempo indicates that man survives through his own inner strength and spiritual resources. On the other hand, Santos's The Volcano pictures the social change in a Philippine region and the brutalizing effects of the war.

This Barangay[1] depicts the struggles of a small settlement formed by families who evacuated from a

[1]The term barangay during the Spanish colonial days in the Philippines referred to an administrative unit, not necessarily tribal, composed of a group of families. The headman of the unit called cabeza de barangay was chosen

Japanese-occupied town to the Pangasinan hills in the island of Luzon. War has just come to the Philippines and anarchy threatens the nation. The barangay, the name given to the settlement, chooses Emilio Veloria, a schoolteacher, to be community leader. Because he has education and common sense, he seems to be the right man to solve the problems of the barangay and give direction to its activities. Emilio faces the first task of keeping order within the settlement and preventing hot-tempered members from bringing disaster on all of them by killing Abogado Benig, the Japanese-appointed mayor of a neighboring town. Benig, whose brother killed Emilio's father in a landlord-tenant fight, has redeemed himself in Emilio's eyes by saving his bride Nena from the Japanese.

The barangay must also fight off other enemies--hunger, disease, bandits and the Japanese. Emilio starts a communal garden to produce food for the community. He creates a sanitation corps to build a primitive sewage system. He organizes a bow and arrow brigade to protect the settlement from bandits and to watch for approaching Japanese patrols. Each man, except Mr. Sabias, who pays a substitute, takes his turn working in the garden and being on guard duty at the outpost for a number of hours daily. Sabias, formerly town treasurer, is the richest man in the settlement, having

on the basis of wealth and literacy. He usually owned the land where members of the barangay lived and earned their livelihood.

had the good sense to take all the money in the treasury before the Japanese could get to it. Then the barangay opens a make-shift school with Nena as teacher aided by Josefina, a Manila girl given temporary refuge in Emilio's home.

Skirmishes with bandits and the Japanese make up some part of the narrative. The barangay fights off a bandit gang and captures their weapons with the aid of Benig. These bandits later burn Emilio's house, which the whole settlement work together to rebuild. The bandits also rob Mr. Sabias, who commits suicide because he cannot live without his money. The deserter Lt. Aldecoa, who has been given temporary housing in the barangay, causes trouble, too. He takes all the weapons of the men in the settlement purportedly on orders from the USAFFE. He is later axed to death while attempting rape and after engaging in some robberies. The barangay recovers the weapons, and ambush a truckload of Japanese soldiers in retaliation for their having humiliated an old woman in the town plaza. During the fight, Benig dies killing his own brother who drives the truck for the Japanese. Melodramatically the brothers die in a death-embrace of hate rather than brotherly love.

Laya supplies a romantic-comic interest in two pairs of lovers. Pidiong, a callow barrio swain, courts the

sophisticated and city-bred Josefina. But because he "only" finished at an agricultural college he feels unworthy of her. Josefina, whom Laya tries to shroud with an aura of mystery, comes through as a shallow and affected girl with pretensions to social refinements. She keeps dropping mysterious hints about some disease she got from the Japanese. The pair of married lovers, Statesman and Virginia Fe, are comical in their inanity and superficiality. Virginia Fe supposedly typifies, to Laya at least, the tart and bold American mestiza in Philippine social life. And Statesman is the local muscle-man who has tried to domesticate her. She constantly threatens at the slightest provocation not to share his bed.

The novel ends on a hopeful note. Josefina gives Pidiong some encouragement by letting him escort her back to her home in Manila. Emilio and Nena are expecting a baby. Filipino and American military officers arrive at the settlement. The barangay will survive despite the vicissitudes of war.

Evidently Laya intends to depict in a realistic novel the plight of the barangay as "group hero" in the same way that Jones makes C-for-Charlie the focus of narration in The Thin Red Line. But Jones through his collective protagonist tries to underscore the insignificance of individaul man, indistinguishable in the conglomeration

of faces; Laya tries to suggest that the group takes precedence over the individual. The fate of the communal society is of paramount importance because only in its survival can the individual survive. But Laya clouds his purpose and invalidates his theme because of the uncertainty of focus and direction. A critic remarks that "Laya's novel like Emilio himself often misdirects its devotion."[2]

The uncertainty of focus has prompted the same critic to comment justifiably that Laya "seems unable to decide where the center of the story should lie: with Emilio the person or with the community concept represented by the barangay."[3] The divisiveness in Laya's thought springs from the dichotomy that exists between the realities of his own experience in a strongly centralized and feudalistic society and the dream of an "enlightened democracy." The indecisiveness of purpose stems from the inability to envision a design for the experience that he interprets.

First, consider the structure of the novel. It defies a rational analysis. Laya divides his work into four books arbitrarily. One fails to see the relationship of each major division to the whole novel in terms of thematic, character or conflict development. Even more

[2]Casper, The Wayward Horizon, p. 20.

[3]Ibid., p. 20.

exasperating are the innumerable short sections, many of them as brief as one page each. Whim and fancy seem to have dictated the external structure of This Barangay; nor is any other pattern discernible. No intelligible design emerges from the overwhelming details that Laya has piled up, in the name of realism, one suspects. He inundates the reader with meaningless trivia--pointless boar hunts, long-drawn out target practices, tedious journeys, including an ocular inspection of the place where Aldecoa was axed to death. Laya has allowed his subject to lead him by the nose. Consequently he fails in the primary task of the artist--to impose order on the chaos of experience.

Laya also fails to develop minor plots vital to his theme, in spite of the overwriting. The tragic tale of Benig, the puppet-mayor, is a case in point. His is the realistic tale of many in the Islands--victims of war rather than victimizers. Deserted by his own family whom he has tried to protect from harm by working with the Japanese, this ill-fated collaborator has tragic potentials. Although none of the other characters, Emilio included, attain dignity or gain self-knowledge by the end of the novel,[4] Benig does realize his error and makes partial atonement by helping the barangay and by full payment with his life.

[4]Casper, The Wayward Horizon, p. 21.

If individual survival depends on the group, as Laya wants to suggest, then Benig's case fully developed should have proved the point. Reviled, cursed, spit upon and alienated from the group to which he should belong, Benig loses his integrity and sense of wholeness. He regains the dignity he forfeited only when he becomes part of the group again. Given importance and full development, Benig's rise and fall could have emphasized the rise of the barangay by contrast. But Laya does not explore this potentially effective means of imposing a thematic pattern on his novel. Benig remains a sketch, an unfinished portrait of the only character in This Barangay who faces a significant human conflict, resolves it and gains self-awareness in the process.

Then secondly, consider the handling of protagonists. Laya creates a second protagonist in Emilio, who becomes the narrative focus in a major portion of the novel instead of the barangay. Although the survival of the settlement is everybody's concern, Emilio dominates the scene. Laya paints him as the dedicated civic leader and "holds him up for emulation."[5] Emilio is a serious, judicious, even-tempered man with a teacher's ability to organize and get the team working. He is also a staid and stuffy plodder who hates

[5]Ibid., p. 20.

making a spectacle of himself. At his own wedding he refused to follow the tradition of passing ten-centavo pieces from his mouth to the bride's because this would give the "rabble" a chance to laugh at his expense. For books to take to the hills, he picks out a pocket Bible, Jose Rizal's Noli Me Tangere, Palgrave's Golden Treasury and Bartlett's Familiar Quotations. But Emilio also has his own private dreams. He confesses to Josefina that at one time he had written poems. And he waits for the war to end in order to write again. The violence of war and the memory of his sister Lily, raped and killed by the Japanese, and still vivid in his mind, can only produce poems of bitterness and hate, he tells Josefina.

The whole government of the barangay revolves around Emilio as it did in the feudalistic barangay of the past. One has but to compare the operation of Shelley Mydan's internee camp government in Open City and Laya's barangay to realize the difference between what a critic calls Laya's "primitive democracy" and the modern concept of an "enlightened democracy."[6] In the barangay Emilio is the father surrogate. He settles the fights, looks after everyone's needs, thinks for the barangay and speaks for it. When Aldecoa voices his doubts about America's ability

[6]Casper, The Wayward Horizon, p. 21.

to win the war, Emilio ousts him from the settlement. Aldecoa articulates their own doubts and fears. He crystallizes for them the realities of war beyond the boundaries of their own little world. But wisely Emilio silences him, not wanting to hear what he does not want to believe. In the grand manner of the feudal lord, Emilio makes the decisions in this tribal society. Hence, its survival truly depends upon his wisdom and common sense.

Faced with no personal conflict, Emilio undergoes no significant development and change. Throughout the novel he is consistently the unimaginative, though efficient leader involved heart and soul in the problems of the settlement to the exclusion of everything else, imperceptive even to the emotional needs of his wife. But the barangay does transform itself. Some of the threats to the communal life are eliminated. Bandits, hunger, disease, internal disorder are under control. The sense of achievement at the end of the novel belongs to the "group hero," despite the fact that throughout much of the novel Emilio has vied with it for dominance. Continuity of life for the group is suggested by the expected birth of Emilio's child, a contrived reassertion of Laya's theme.

Tiempo's More Than Conquerors, a grim picture of the enemy's atrocities, documents accurately the darkest

phase of the Japanese war years in the Philippines. Father Miguel Bernad notes that it "reveals the full horror of the war," and gives a "true picture" of it--"its horror and grandeurs. It also gives a true picture of human life." He says that it is a "black tale enlivened by humanity and heroism," and "gives a vision of life beyond the grave; a vision that glows in the foul prison like a 'light shining in darkness'."[7] Like John Hersey's The Wall (1950), a novel about Jews in a Warsaw ghetto during the Hitler purge, Tiempo's novel also attempts to depict a "timeless theme--the indestructibility of the universal human spirit." Like Hersey's novel it suggests that even in times of grave danger and extreme suffering it is possible for human beings to retain their dignity as men.[8]

Tiempo's novel makes its point by presenting a group of doomed men in a filthy Japanese prison cell subjected to the cruelest tortures that the Japanese could conceive. They reveal sparks of courage and heroism, and grow into serene forbearance. But each man's regeneration lies within himself. He must invent for himself the device that would ward

[7]Father Miguel Bernad, S. J. "The Heroic Age in Philippine Literature," Philippine Studies, XIV (April 1966), 304.

[8]Eisinger in Fiction of the Forties, p. 52, makes this assertion about Hersey's novel.

off despair and insanity. He must find means to keep alive until the moment of deliverance. The novel also shows the dilemma of men walking the tightrope of Japanese collaboration while feeding information to the guerilla forces.

The plot line of More Than Conquerors is simple and uncomplicated. In clearly defined stages Tiempo unfolds the story of Andres Bantayan, a lawyer-newspaperman, whose chief guerilla activity is writing and printing anti-Japanese propaganda. He also circulates news bulletins on the progress of the allies and handbills denouncing or threatening collaborators. The first phase in Andres' harrowing tale deals with his capture. Because of the treachery of a Japanese-paid Filipino spy, Andres and his younger brothers, Pablo and Jose are trapped by the Japanese in the mountain hideout where they keep the printing press. Andres is thrown into a suffocating cell where he is inmate number thirty-three, but seventh among the living.

The second stage covers the days and nights of mental agony in the Japanese prison. Each morning at dawn the Japanese guards take out one of the seven men for questioning. If he is fortunate he returns at sundown all mangled and broken to recuperate during the night for another torture session. The less fortunate ones never return. In the dank and dark prison that reeks with rotting food and

human excrement, Tiempo puts together almost a cross section of Philippine society, trying to keep sane and stay alive.

There is Tomas Rafal, a former Protestant divinity student and government clerk. He fears that he might lose his mind, so he recites passages from the Bible to test his memory. He is haunted by the thought that he had tried to betray his former boss by leading the Japanese to the hideout of the provincial treasurer, in order to turn the enemy's wrath from himself and his family. The consolations of religion nearly fail to assuage his remorse. Nevertheless, he provides consolation to the inmates, who call him "Padre." For those of wavering faith after being tortured he recites the Temptation of Jesus; the Beautitudes for those who return to the cell at nightfall; and the Burial Service for those who never come back.

Three of the men in the cell do not survive. Juan Macul, the hoodlum who killed a truckload of Japanese soldiers single-handed because his sweetheart was raped, finds comfort in his patch of moonlight. Night after night he follows the slab of light on the floor cradling his head on it as he sleeps. He says not a word as he suffers through his own grief. The patch of light does not save Juan Macul. One night he bashes his head against the wall in an insane frenzy. Manuel Lim, the Chinese millionaire's

son, is taken by the guards one day and never returns. He has refused to reveal the names of people in the Chinese community who have contributed to the underground movement. Bataan, obviously intended as a symbolic character, dies during an attempted prison break and allows the American radio man, McFarland, to escape. Among the emaciated men in the cell Bataan alone has a firm and strong handshake, Andres notes. Bataan has survived the Death March and the O'Donnel concentration camp in Capas, but he does not live through his final test in Tiempo's prison cell. Nevertheless, he dies a hero, fighting to help others live.

Two of the other prisoners survive by sheer daring and force of will. McFarland, who refuses to broadcast for the Japanese, keeps sane by taking out his girl's picture every mealtime when a small window lets in some light. He escapes through the help of Bataan. The lieutenant-governor, Atilano Palomar, finds strength in a continuing anger and contempt for his political ally, the governor.

The third phase focuses on the various tortures used to break Andres. The Japanese want him to reveal the whereabouts of the old editor who finances the propaganda activities, to disclose the hiding place of the printing press and to join them in their co-prosperity sphere campaigns. Andres refuses to do any of these, so they make

him watch his younger brothers tortured and killed. He watches with anguish the day-long death agony of the youngest, who is barely a man. Then Andres witnesses the brutal execution of the other brother. Finally he himself is tortured day after day.

Tiempo tries to create an atmosphere of unrelieved terror through detailed descriptions of Japanese torture methods. Almost dispassionately he pictures the water cure with its various refinements. He tries to re-create the agonizing pain of the spread-eagle position under the burning sun. He describes the excruciating torture of standing naked in the town plaza, head tilted so that the unblinking eyes stare directly at the noonday sun, and the maddening thirst whetted by the sound of water that is beyond reach. In Welcome Darkness Statham writes about the same method of breaking down the men's resistance before execution. Tiempo's reportorial style and clinical attitude in presenting the torture scenes heighten their shock value. The whole novel is a picture of grim suffering.

Although the horrible atrocities underscore Tiempo's thematic preoccupation, the true crisis of the human spirit occurs not during the torture when the body becomes numb with pain. It takes place later, during the long quiet hours of soul-searching. In the filthy cell these are the dark hours of night when doubts, despair and dread of the

pain which dawn brings become unbearable. Andres, for instance, suffers deep remorse at the death of his brothers knowing that he could have saved them. But he also realizes that he could never betray the old man who trusts him. Tiempo effectively dramatizes the inner struggle of Andres through hallucinatory images:

> The upper window had been opened, but the murky darkness was unrelieved. There were moments when Andres thought the shaft of moonlight had shot in and made a pillow on the floor for Juan Macul. The thought one acute moment was so strong he had to hit his head against the wall to dispel the unearthly image of Macul. Hardly had it disappeared when Andres seemed to see again the bloody face of Macul as he was carried out of the cell. Bataan was there holding the lifeless legs, and blood oozed from Bataan's own pierced side, soaking the undershirt Andres had to shed to stop the wound; McFarland was there, too, eyes glowing out of his grizzled face, muffled laughter coming from his mouth at the thought of escape; across the room the pale haggard face of Manuel Lim was silently looking on.
>
> Andres closed his eyes and willed himself to think of the living . . . and he willed his mind to stay blank, to merge with the heavy darkness, to float away, out of the cell into unpolluted air, above drifting unconfined clouds. . . .
>
> A huge bird with a woman's head, with a red beak dripping blood, was clawing away the cusioning cloud and he was falling, falling away fast and he screamed.[9]

When Andres walks out into the public square to welcome pain and death, the crisis is past. He has wrestled with the angel of darkness and has won.

The final stage deals with the day set for Andres' execution and his escape. An air of unreality surrounds the whole situation. First, there is the brief scene with the

[9]Tiempo, More Than Conquerors, pp. 103-104.

Japanese Captain Nakamura, who tries to suggest a less painful and humiliating way of dying than that planned for Andres. Although one of the "enemy," Nakamura is Tiempo's vehicle for an anti-war statement. The Japanese officer is presented as a man of peace, who must nevertheless fight his country's war. Educated in American college campuses--Dartmouth and Yale--intelligent and sensitive, Nakamura is outraged at the cruelty of his superior officer. During an interview with Andres Nakamura says:

> "Perhaps you think I'm crazy to talk to you this way. I'll be shot if a Japanese soldier heard me talking like this to anybody. I"m not talking like a Japanese--so you think perhaps. I'm proud I'm a Japanese--as you're proud being a Filipino. I think I love my country as well as anybody. My tragedy, Mr. Bantayan, is this war. I don't believe in this war. I think my country shouldn't have gone into it. We are doomed to lose in the end."[10]

He tells Andres that a "true soldier of Japan must forget his conscience in the performance of his duty." When convictions and duty become incompatible, Nakamura in true Japanese fashion commits harakiri.

A second source of unreality is the circumstance of Andres' escape. By a clever ruse a woman, cousin of the governor and mistress of the Japanese High Command, provides him the chance to escape and dies in his place. As Andres digs his grave she suddenly makes the Japanese colonel hostage, berates the governor and urges Andres to

[10]Tiempo, More Than Conquerors, p. 76.

run for his life. Tiempo describes her as a "female Satan" proud and strong-willed, spawned by some unknown Spaniard. Although she has gone to a good school, she remains the governor's poor relation and to the community the "bastard" child. She has chosen to avenge herself on all of them by collaborating in the worst possible way--becoming the mistress of the Japanese colonel. This background, however, hardly provides sufficient motivation for the melodramatic reversal. The unmotivated last act of self-sacrifice for a man she hardly knows comes as a surprise. A brief exchange between her and the puppet-governor does explain her action:

> "Cousin, look at yourself. You look troubled, don't you? It's your guilty conscience. There's no need to worry. I'm not going to shoot you. You've been having your reward for sometime now. You've decayed. You have decayed into a despicable coward, and you know it. You're even afraid of your own shadow. Your own people despise you. Even they despise you, our friends and liberators do. You can't go any lower."
>
> "Nenita," said the governor. "Have you gone loca?"
>
> "Not yet, Cousin. Not yet. But if I had just stood by to see that man finish digging his own grave--after what I've seen of the others--I certainly would lose my mind. But you--you have lost all--all decency. It's you who have lost your mind--your soul."
>
> "Who's talking?" The governor laughed. "Has a whore any soul to lose? Tell me that, now."
>
> "There was one who did. She saved it in time."[11]

Tiempo thinks that now she has earned her salvation, for like the Biblical Magdalene she has loved much and therefore

[11]Tiempo, More Than Conquerors, p. 108.

should be forgiven much. "Greater love than this no man hath, that he should lay down his life for a friend." To the reader, however, the change of heart lacks plausibility. Like his protagonist, Tiempo has been driven to a tight corner. Nothing short of a miracle could get Andres out of the clutches of the Japanese at the grave-digging stage. And Tiempo manipulates a death-bed repentance for the woman to make Andres' miraculous escape possible.

More Than Conquerors has attempted to show the spark of humanity that flickers even among people who have been been humiliated, degraded and cowed by fear--people who are deathly afraid. Tiempo has tried to capture the climate of terror during the war years and has shown that such weather can breed treachery and cruelty. But he has also used it to illustrate that through it all man's spirit remains indestructible.

The after effects of the horror and fear that Tiempo writes about are depicted perceptively and sensitively in Santos' The Volcano. The novel does not deal with wartime violence, with ambushes and guerilla fighting as the other Philippine war novels do. Although a major portion of it is on the war, the cruelties and sufferings are suggested only in a few well-chosen incidents, like the blinding of a boy, for instance. Obviously Santos' purpose is to portray artistically and realistically the events that serve

as explanation of the seemingly irrational upheaval after the war. With no apologies, he interprets sincerely and intelligently its causes and effects.

The Volcano is an interesting chronicle of slow change that culminates in the greed, the corruption and opportunism of the war's aftermath. Santos' protagonist is a quiet town of gentle and soft-spoken people. By extension, strongly suggested in comments on national affairs, this protagonist becomes the whole country, flooded with relief goods and victory pesos. Overwhelmed by the sudden wealth which could vanish like a dream, as the war experience has proved, these people must take advantage of it by fair or foul means. These people portrayed in The Volcano have lived under the constant threat of natural disasters--pestilential blights, typhoons of hurricane proportions the whole year round, volcanic eruptions. They have survived them all. They have also survived a ghastly war during which they learned how to use the bland oriental smile and the meek bow while murderous hate rages in the heart. Now they are faced with a greater problem--how to live through the peace with dignity.

Although the novel is cast in a realistic mode, it admits of an allegorical interpretation. Ernesto Y. Sibal, publisher of The Volcano, calls it "a fable of the

American experience in the Philippines."[12] Santos' implications are clearly that. Characters and symbols work together to support this contention.

To provide narrative continuity and thematic unity, Santos tells the story of the Hunters, an aging American missionary couple, who have witnessed the change he writes about and partly caused it themselves. In smoothly presented flashbacks, Santos manages to recount the happenings of thirty years in the short span of time that it takes Sarah Hunter to pack their few belongings and leave the Albay Mission House for the boat that would take them back to the United States.

Paul and Sarah Hunter came to this land in the late twenties, a young and hopeful couple with two young children, Junior and Florence. Now stooped and aging, after thirty years of selfless and dedicated work they must leave the Mission Hospital and the Mission itself in Filipino hands. Over the years they have thought of dying in this adopted country and have hoped to be buried "there in the cool shades, under the acacia tree, open to the winds coming round the volcano like a breath of spring."[13] Those years have included building a hospital, teaching people to seek medical help, typhoons, volcanic eruptions and the

[12]Ernesto Y. Sibal, "Publisher's Note," The Volcano. by Bienvenido Santos (Manila, 1965).

[13]Santos, The Volcano, p. 16. All subsequent quotations followed by the page number are from the novel.

perilous days of the war in the Sinicaran hills. The Hunters have seen the subtle change in the people from suspicion and awe, to friendliness and acceptance. They have lost a son fighting the war in the hills and have gained a Filipino son-in-law in the young man who lost an eye rather than betray them to the Japanese. And now they must go, forced to leave by this undercurrent of rejection, that pulsates in the dark and reveals itself in the rain of stones on the Mission House. In the light of day, the same friendly faces greet them with smiles. And Dr. Hunter asks himself: Where is the hate? As he leaves with his wife and daughter, he still has not understood the change.

Briefly that is what has happened to the Hunters. No "internal change" has taken place, Father Miguel Bernad points out.[14] They have suffered, but the same set of basic prejudices accompanies them home to their barely-remembered Iowa. They have allowed the daughter to marry a native, but in their heart of hearts as their perceptive friend Don Vicente points out, they have not really accepted him. The Hunters leave Badong behind ostensibly to carry on the work for a while. But the old doctor knows that even if it breaks his daughter's heart, there can be no reunion for Badong and Florence. "Dr. Hunter had not looked,

[14]Miguel Bernad, S. J., "The Heroic Age in Philippine Literature," Philippine Studies, XIV, p. 302.

but he knew the volcano was there. His thoughts were vague and confused as he heard the low voices of the young couple behind him. What were they saying to each other now? Was this not really the last for them, would they see each other again? Did he want it that way? He was taking his daughter away from this man, away from this country. God forgive him, he had not been honest about it." (p.375). Indeed there is no "internal change" in the Hunters because Santos has not intended them to change.

Clearly Paul and Sarah Hunter are "representative" characters. And their story is the "fable of the American experience" that Sibal mentions. Moved by the messianic urge, to fulfill the "manifest destiny" and to "christianize the natives," they have come along with many others in good faith. As one of them writes:

> . . . we, [are] the pioneers, who have brought occidental civilization to the Orient, who have brought American comforts and luxuries to a million Oriental homes, we who have brought to the Philippines the greatest era of progress in its history, we who have built mines and bridges, piers, industrial plants hospitals, roads, we have been dubbed imperialists, who have introduced the American sewing machine, textile and petroleum products in the Orient, American foodstuffs, canned and cured, and fresh fruits, fish and meats, milk, butter, cheese and dairy products, American implements and tools, clocks, watches, tractors, airplaines, radios, clothing, shoes, drugs, cigarettes, and tobacco. . . . We have been encouraged to develop two of man's most useful and commendable traits of character: self-reliance and self-confidence. . . . (p. 81).

They have brought change to these people and have generated unwittingly the discontent. Kindly and sincere, the Hunters have worked hard among them with love and faith.

Like the Hunters the other characters are "representative," too. The Barrios couple with their two sons, Tito and Badong, are the natives receptive to the new ways and to the new faith that the Hunters bring. But the brothers are antithetical like the opposing tempers in the whole nation. The younger brother Badong is malleable and docile. He imitates the ways of the missionaries, speaks only their language, works for them and eventually marries the daughter. His brother Tito ridicules him for this subservience as a young boy:

> "How much are you paid as ball boy?" Tito taunted him.
> "Nothing," Badong answered.
> "Ah, a philanthropist, a Don Vicente!" Tito mocked.
> "I didn't say that!"
> "No? Then you're their slave."
> "Of course not."
> "Then why do you have to act like one?"
> "You're crazy."
> "Do you know what you look to me running after that ball and throwing it back to these Americans? A dog. A trained dog."
> "I'm not a dog. If I am, then you must be one, too, brother. Besides I want to do it. I enjoy running and throwing that ball. It's my game. Then, of course, these people are nice. . . .
> "I'm sure they are. Hey, what have they done to you, fed you with something they have seasoned with their saliva, that's why you act so docile to them?
> "I thought you and Junior were friends!"

> "We are."
> "What's wrong with you then? What have you got against them?"
> "They're masters. I don't like masters. . . .
> "Hate yourself then. You're acting like one." (pp. 13-14).

Badong is the "little brown American," much ridiculed for his "canine devotion" by his own brothers. Basically good, he is, nevertheless, spineless. As the novel ends, Badong sits back and meekly allows the enforced separation from his wife, not even asserting his right to decide their own future together.

The elder brother Tito is proud; he is the Hunters' friend but not their "slave." When the war breaks out, he and the Hunters' son, Junior, go off with the other young men to fight. Together they live through the tragedy of Bataan. Side by side they walk the Death March and endure the degradation at the Capas concentration camp where people die like animals:

> Filth and human waste were everywhere. Those who were not too seriously ill were ordered to dig graves and bury those they had known in life or who were utter strangers. The graves were shallow and the lime they used was no longer effective. Blue-green flies and huge birds covered the evening sun and the dying groaned, refusing to die, clinging to the earch and the smelly grass there they lay wallowing in their own filth and gore. (p. 238).

Together they escape from the camp "the stench [following] them through mud and dry places," They spend the rest of the war still together in one underground unit. Only death and peace separate the two. Tito discovers when the

war is over that the fair-weather national leaders, carpet-bagging politicians and expedient nationalists have taken over the country's leadership. To save the men in his command from being tried for alleged crimes during the war, Tito serves his term in jail. This has made him angry and bitter, knowing that the men who are now sitting in judgment had collaborated with the Japanese.

Tito typifies the many "young [men] with the greying hair" who have seen too much of suffering too soon. He is one of those young men disillusioned by the peace. And "for him the war had not yet ended. He was still the hunted, except that this time it was not the Japanese stalking him but his own countrymen."

Don Vicente, the philanthropic Spaniard, represents the remnants of Spanish influence. The first description that Santos gives of the Spaniard is through the eyes of Dr. Hunter. Significantly the two men meet for the first time during the eruption of Mt. Mayon. Both are engaged in giving aid to the peasants who have evacuated their homes at the foot of the volcano. Watching the man supervising the distribution of foodstuffs and clothing with the governor, Dr. Hunter thinks that he "looked like a priest in civilian clothes." The two become the best of friends and the missionary subsequently learns that the

Spaniard lives a far from priestly life. He helps to build and rebuild churches but does not go to them. He gives aid to the poor, but does not really pay just wages. He loves his wife but also maintains a querida, who has a son by him. There is nothing clandestine or sordid about this. Santos' tone bears that out. Even the American missionary, who is accustomed to a different moral standard, learns to accept it as a fact of life. In fact, a city councilor has also constructed two identical houses--one for his legal family and the other for his extra-legal one. And such goings-on do not diminish the man's popularity with the electorate, Santos suggests through Tito.

Less idealistic than the doctor, Don Vicente understands the change and tries to explain it to the missionary:

> At last these people are beginning to see that they can't be anything else than what they really are--Filipinos. They should have thought of this long ago as much as they do now. But we--our peoples--didn't give them a chance. The Americans didn't give them a chance. You held out to them an opportunity to be what they can't ever be, Americans. First you taught them English, then you made them love the things you could sell them, cards, electric appliances, beauty make-up, solutions to make their skin less dark, etc. . . . For a long time they sang your songs, including your national anthem, The Star-Spangled Banner, and America. The war took away all that--or almost all of it. I was afraid for a time the country would be taken over by the communists. There was one crisis after another, but the nation survived. Now it must show the world that it can stand on its own. It's tired of its

> role of the beggar with the extended arm, the upturned palm. . . . Like my people they have pride! They don't want to owe anything to anybody from here on. (pp. 358-359).

He knows that these are the facts that cannot be ignored. They must be accepted. Don Vicente himself is sick, a leg amputated and the gangrenous infection far from arrested. But he has kept on with his research and experiment to solve the coconut tree blight.

Santos uses two recurring symbols to suggest his meaning: Mayon Volcano and the coconut tree blight known as cadang cadang. The volcano with its serene and lambent beauty, but strong destructive passions in its seasonal eruptions, symbolizes the region itself and its people, and again by extension the whole country. Like the rumbling sounds that warn those who live at the base of the volcano, the disturbances which Santos writes about could be the warning of violent eruptions. The epigraph he has chosen for the novel clearly points out characteristics of the volcano after an eruption that he equates with the conditions of the country after the war (an eruption):

> Mount Mayon . . . assumes a smooth form when newly coated with ash after an eruption but soon becomes deeply furrowed as numerous consequent gullies are cut in the fine and relatively impermeable ash . . .
>
> Such furrowing of ash slopes generally begins with the first rain . . . [15]

[15]From C. A. Cotton, Volcanoes, Chapter XVII, "Erosion and Destruction of Volcanic Mountains," pp. 361-362.

Even more directly this identification of the volcano with the country itself is stated by Don Vicente in one of his many conversations with Dr. Hunter during the war:

> "That volcano, that beautiful thing out there, which we see wherever we go except when our thoughts are elsewhere, that is this country's trademark." . . .
>
> "Senor Americano, listen to me," Don Vicente pulled the other's hands away from his breast. "Look at that beautiful mountain. In the years you have been here, you have seen it explode twice and seen the destruction it has caused, but even at its worst, it was magnificent, awesome in its grandeur. What happens, why does it explode? I'll tell you. . . . This volcano can never be leveled to the ground or bombed out of existence. Nothing can destroy it except its own strength. In one mighty explosion, shattering, final, it will destroy the entire countryside, level itself to the ground, or sink below the earth, smoulder, perhaps die. I say perhaps because it may not die completely. Some life may yet remain that will spark another eruption after many years. Like cancer. . . . You have operated on a number of cases, scraped off every infected area of flesh, removed organs entirely, but somehow, out of practically nothing, a growth takes place, and the corruption begins all over again. Then death comes and ends all. Or does it, Doctor?"
>
> "I don't know. I don't know anything any more," Dr. Hunter said.
>
> "If this race doesn't destroy itself, it will continue to be beautiful and great, and one day . . . "
>
> "Why speak for the Filipino race, only Don Vicente? You might just as well speak for the entire human race, don't you think?"
>
> "Maybe so. But I can think only of these people. And this volcano. . . . " (pp. 253-254).

Such references run through the whole novel like a refrain, and the reader is made constantly aware of the volcano's presence--"something that had always been far which was now close, and in closeness not very familiar yet real."

The whole novel is "framed" by a reference to the volcano. The opening image is of the miniature volcano that the Hunters' son Junior built in the yard of the Mission House: "For the Hunters, one particular memory of their son stood out: Junior walking among the rice paddies near the Mission House, with the volcano on his back, a cardboard mountain dripping in the rain." The volcano that Junior built, at first fragile and readily blown away by storm winds, has endured through the years,

> . . . very much like the mountain. . . . There were those who imagined it growing like a live thing and never aging. Unlike Mount Mayon whose crater changed with every eruption, whose slopes bore the brunt of corroding flames and lost some of its smooth lines through landslip and erosion, Junior's little volcano suffered no change. The seasons had no effect upon it, nor the elements, nor men. The rains left it clean and shining. The hurricanes passed it by, untouched almost, firm in its foundation of reinforced concrete, held firmer to the earth by roots that had encased it. . . . The miniature mountain, although lacking the grandeur of the original, stood just as firm. (p. 6).

The volcano has gained another significance, a lasting monument of the good works, the good will, the sacrifices that the Hunters have done for the people. The closing paragraph of the novel refers to the volcano again, the original one that the Hunters are leaving behind as they leave behind their son's work: "[Dr. Hunter] shook his head, fighting his thoughts and the tears rising to his eyes, and turned towards the night and the mountain, so

close as if it stood in the way and would not let them pass." Also of some significance is the fact that the volcano erupts on the Hunters' first year in the Mission House. And again as they get ready to leave there is talk of an impending eruption that breaks the ten-year cycle.

As the volcano is somehow the symbol associated with the Hunters, the blight which is juxtaposed to it is related to Don Vicente. A tree pest has infested coconut trees which provide the source of livelihood for most of the peasants who live at the base of the volcano. Nobody knows how the blight works. And the Spaniard has made it his lifework to save these trees. There is no known remedy for it, and Don Vicente feels that someday cadang cadang would exterminate all the coconut trees. Its germs have not been isolated. Don Vicente has observed that the tree pest "emptied the interior of coconut tree trunks with no visible sign of blight outside while the rotting went on inside the tree, unless you knocked on the trunk and noted the hollow sound of your knocking or, in the last stage of the disease, when the leaves turned reddish brown and fell, or if you had been careful to observe that for years that particular tree had borne no fruit." (p. 250).

Such has been the case with the country--the festering sore of corruption in high places saps the nation of its strength. And the government has not been much help in controlling the pest, as Don Vicente points out. Trying to explain its probable cause, he feels that "the land is losing its lava content, the frequent typhoons and volcano eruptions that left the coconut tree in a 'perpetual state of shock,' or the inferior quality of the coconut." (p. 253). And as the old Spaniard lies in his bed of pain after the amputation, his thoughts are on "the work he had set his heart on: to keep the coconut trees healthy and fruitful for all the years to come and rid them of the pest that sapped their life and by so doing save the people he loved from hunger. Otherwise, if all the coconut trees died, as they would if the pest was not checked, one day these people would have to leave before the land around the volcano became a graveyard of dead trees." (pp. 369-370).

And the novel ends with a reference to the blight but in a hopeful context: "Around them on both sides of the road, the coconut trees receded, gave way to other trees, dark with fruit, and ghost-like, except where the late rising moon touched the leaves with yellow, but this was not the blight a slowly dying friend had told him about, no, not the blight, this was something else, moon radiance perhaps, but not the blight." (p. 375).

Thus, Dr. Hunter thinks as he turns his back on a people he has come to love.

The allegorical mode can hardly be missed in Santos' The Volcano. But the powerful evocation of place gives the novel a sense of immediacy and reality that is sharp and clearly defined. If Salinas Valley comes alive in John Steinbeck's stories, Albay and the Sinicaran hills become vividly real in The Volcano. Santos has captured the tone and texture of life in this Bicol town beneath the shadow of Mount Mayon. Anyone who has walked its streets and known its people cannot fail to experience a "shock of recognition" when reading the novel. And although its two major characters, Dr. Hunter and Don Vicente, are "representative," they are nevertheless, recognizable as real life people. The subtle nuances of manners are so vividly reproduced that the story could not have happened anywhere else in the world, Father Miguel Bernad notes.[16]

But the issues go beyond the region which is the setting of the narrative and the tensions in human relationships are not altogether insular. The mirror that Santos has created reflects the confusion of a whole nation, even of the whole human race as the gentle doctor suggests. When Dr. Hunter, for instance, gives an Easter sermon in

[16]Bernad, "The Heroic Age in Phil. Literature," p. 303.

the Sinicaran hills on the ruins in men's hearts, he speaks not only of the peasants listening to him:

> "Nothing will ever be the same again, . . . But it is never too late to begin all over again. Now is the day of renewal, of rebirth, of beginning anew. It won't be long now and we shall be returning to our homes which we have so long missed. Maybe, there will be no homes for some of us to return to, but all ruins can be rebuilt. More terrible than the ruins that will soon meet our eyes are the ruins in the hearts of men. We have seen violence and hate; it is likely that the scars of these memories will be with us." (p. 285).

Taking up that same thread of thought the authorial voice says: "There was a difference in this new peace. The ruins of buildings and homes were slowly being rebuilt, but the ruins the doctor had spoken about, in the soul and heart of men, were still there." (p. 316).

Again this is amplified to include the whole nation: "Something was wrong, but what was it? Was it bewilderment, a hangover of the war? . . . There were no more ruins on the countryside, except here and there emerged, like a ghost above a wild growth of hedges, stone stairs that led nowhere, where once a mansion had stood and had never been rebuilt." (p. 324). This commentary goes on like the concentric ripples of a pebble that keep widening, extending its significance beyond the confines of one place.

> . . . it was happening everywhere. . . . these men didn't know what to do in a world changing from war to peace. No one seemed certain of values any more; and even as they grew, all they could hear of was the atomic or the hydrogen bomb possibly bursting in their midst any time so-called leaders of men decided to use it. We are not going to live long anyhow, death is

> ever with us, in step with every moment of our life, so why not be truly free, do whatever we feel like doing, for kicks, to have something to do in a world grown empty of deeds found only in books: This was the post-war generation, older than their time, afraid to die knowing death was nearby, saying things, pretending they were not afraid, but every nervous moment they lived showed the anguish. . . . To them the only certitude is death. . . .
>
> It was all these things and more. . . . It was a symptom of something more grave--the disruption of values, the death of ideals, disillusion in those so young. (p. 325).

Speaking with even more certainty as to what might be the reason for it all, Santos says:

> Truly the times were out of joint. . . . a dislocation in the body politic.
>
> Things were altogether different now from what they used to be before the war. Now everybody not only looked hungry but talked hungry, went after things they had long been denied, with greed closing their eyes to all that was good, shaking their heads against the restraints, moral and otherwise, that would have helped them resist temptations that filled the country as, limply at first, it struggled to rise from its visible ruins. (p. 334).

The recurring thought is the "ruins in the heart and soul of men," the devastation caused by war that would take a long time to rebuild. Designs for surviving the peace have not been charted by the end of the novel. Like the coconut tree blight, the signs of infestation are evident, but the possible remedy has not been found.

The Volcano offers a solution that is but a series of questions with no answers. The recalcitrant Tito, a hero of wartime unrecognized during the uneasy peace, sums it up for the reader:

> Be yourself. What is being ourselves? Partly this and partly that and being something else we are not?
>
> Return to the past. Which past? As far back as when? When will the true history of our country be written? Who will write it? Surely, not a professor in history, much less a librarian who never lets anyone forget that he has been to the Library of Congress.
>
> Conserve what is your own. What is our own? A costume dress, a nipa shack, a lacy thing around the neck, a few mincing steps, a pair of bamboo poles, a love song, a meaningless refrain?
>
> What is my own? The many dialects I have to speak to be understood? English, which I can never master? A college degree that practically everyone with the price of a tuition fee already has?
>
> What is this land of the morning I sing about? For which I fought and nearly died, for which others with a better claim to life than I have died? A bit of territory peopled by men who have to huddle in corners under their leaking roof to keep dry in the rain and safe from the wind, who died in an epidemic, who become boisterous when drunk?
>
> What am I? A brown man, five feet five inches tall, a little man with dark pomaded hair, sparkling teeth and a ready smile, dark brown eyes, a scented body, smoking cigarettes, faithful in my own fashion, believing in what? A golden rule not so golden? who can't have some kind of faith without being fanatical about it? What am I really, what are we all, survivors of an era passing away, marked victims of the next fury? (pp. 365-366).

Laya, Tiempo and Santos have all dealt with the subject of survival in war and in peace. They have presented, strangely enough, a hopeful picture. Laya looks back to a past system, an ancient way of life as a possible solution to the problem of survival. <u>This Barangay</u> is a replica of the old and tightly-knit tribal group that would fight all those who threaten its safety. In Tiempo's <u>More Than Conquerors</u> the battle for survival is fought and

won basically in the hearts of men. Santos' The Volcano looks forward to the future for a definition of the national self, which hopefully will lessen the bewilderment and confusion. But like Tiempo he also suggests that a rediscovery of the spiritual values which the war obliterated could bring back order into this chaotic mess in the shadow of the volcano.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The novels of the Second World War in the Pacific written by American and Filipino novelists show a common concern for survival, reasonably enough. This preoccupation extends beyond the purely physical--beyond defeating the Japanese, surviving hunger, diseases and the hardships in the jungles, the prison camps and stormy seas. The novelists are concerned with human values as well, with the problems of human existence and with man's struggle with forces that would reduce him to the level of beasts and machines in the barbaric climate of war. The novels also demonstrate social awareness and reflect social conditions, as various critics of the American novels have pointed out. Whether they write about combat activities or enemy brutalities in prison camps, the novelists offer social comments protesting injustices, inequalities, treacheries or the irrationalities of a formidable system. Some of the novels picture a ruthless universe ruled by Chance.

In the American novels two definite patterns of response are evident: affirmation and futility. Affirmative novels portray the triumph of man over the "system,"

over fear, sufferings and degradations. In these novels the writers suggest that the human capacity for endurance is immense. Those novels that show futility picture man as incapable of winning in the struggle with the forces that "dehumanize and destroy." In his search for freedom, for order and meaning, for equality and justice, man is thwarted by social and natural forces, by Authority and Fate. The war which is an extension of his search does not annihilate him, but social forces do. Utter futility is the result. Where a humanly affirmative novel like Wouk's The Caine Mutiny can pit the individual against authority and give hope in the eventual triumph of man, novels of the futile quests make authority an unreasoning, ruthless force that defenseless man must yield or be annihilated.

This sense of futility somehow does not appear in the Filipino novels about the Japanese Occupation. Grim horror, inhuman brutality, blood-curdling torture abound in the novels. But the human spirit seems to meet even these. The tortured men of the Japanese dungeon in Tiempo's More Than Conquerors retain some feeling of hopefulness. Man survives tortures, mental anguish, guilt and remorse because something in him is indestructible. The novelists suggest that man's destruction comes from within himself, just as salvation lies in his inner strength. In Without Seeing the Dawn and Watch in the Night both protagonists

were nearly destroyed, not by outside forces but by their own uncontrollable passions. To Tiempo's doomed men in More Than Conquerors, every dawn brings close the shadow of death; every opening of the door, the terror-filled prospects of "interrogation." But each of the men tenaciously clings to one little thing that wards off despair and insanity. A patch of moonlight, a faded picture, Biblical quotations--anything at all that brings temporary relief from thinking. Even the crushing possibility that help might never come, does not smother the flicker of hope. Understandably the futility that comes from battling a hostile environment, an irrational system or a repressive organization is not apparent in the Filipino war novel. The protagonists face human foes who are therefore vincible. Tiempo's Bible-quoting ex-seminarian in More Than Conquerors suggests that one should fear only those who can kill the spirit, for they would be conquerors indeed.

In the Filipino novels the system which Jones indicts in From Here to Eternity is replaced by expedient political leadership, pacificationists and Japanese-paid Filipino spies. The novels label these men traitors. Ironically, post war political realities exonerated the political leaders and reversed the novelists' judgment. Most of the novels picture the social elite, the governing

class of pre-war days as expedient nationalists. Tiempo's Spanish community in both novels and the pre-war governor in More Than Conquerors who serves under the Japanese are cases in point. Top echelon politicians and businessmen join the conquerors in pacification campaigns. Only the lesser people, the common tao--a barrio schoolteacher, a farm boy, a struggling lawyer, a minister--bravely face the enemy's wrath. The disloyal opportunists are the deadly antagonists in the novels, even more deadly than the Japanese. They underscore the perplexing problem of national identity and challenge the ideals of a pre-war way of life.

Aside from the thematic parallels and contrasts, there are some characteristic features that bear comparison in the American and Filipino novels on the war: the novelists' view of the war, the protagonists, the writers' portrayal of women and sex, and of the Japanese foe.

As to the novelists' view of the war, the novels show that both American and Philippine war novelists consider the war justified and fighting in it is necessary to redeem the national honor. Critics of the American novels agree that novelists of the Second World War do not "presume to judge the war," although they still consider it a "pointless sacrifice" and an "outrage to humanity."[1]

[1]Cowley, "War Novels: After Two Wars," in Litz's Modern American Fiction, p. 296.

The novels reveal a strong sense of guilt and responsibility for all the destructions of the war. The characters feel both individual and national responsibility for this "outrage to humanity." Martinez, the scout of Sgt. Croft's platoon in The Naked and the Dead expresses the men's guilt feelings after killing an unsuspecting enemy. In The Day the Century Ended Gifford feels remorseful for the devastation caused by planes providing air cover for his squad.

In the Philippine novels verbalizations of the rationale for fighting the war do not appear. There are no dialogues such as those between Cummings and Hearn in The Naked and the Dead. There are no sophisticated and dramatic justifications of military authority like Greenwald's arguments in The Caine Mutiny. It is more like Mister Roberts' reason--he had to get in and fight; or as Carding in Without Seeing the Dawn puts it, so that the whole world would know that "we, too, can die . . . that we love freedom and that we deserve it." The minister in A Watch in the Night thinks, as he watches a group of recruits, that perhaps none of them feel that they are fighting for democracy against fascism or totalitarianism. Patriotism and democracy are big words that politicians and teachers talk about. No ideological dilemmas face the protagonists. Ironically the only statements condemning the war in the Filipino novels come from Tiempo's Japanese

characters--Nakamura in More Than Conquerors and a civilian Japanese prisoner in A Watch in the Night.

In the choice of protagonists, American and Filipino novelists who wrote on the war differ. The American novelists use the collective hero of Dos Passos, as various critics have pointed out, who represent a cross section of American society. The struggles of a squad, a platoon, a company become the novels' narrative focus. This collective hero is a microcosm of society ruled by despots, hypocrites or crass materialists, in the novelists' view. Significantly the collective hero disintegrates and assumes a new identity as replacements arrive and get ready for other campaigns. Jones' C for Charlie company in The Thin Red Line is not the same body of men at the end of the novel. And Mailer's platoon is half its original number as the troops withdraw from Anopopei. Eisinger sees "sociological implications" in this break down of the group in Welcome Darkness.

In the Philippine novels the collective hero is not a platoon, a squad or a company and the novels do not depict sustained campaigns nor combat activities. In fact, what Lively says about the American Civil War novel Long Remember (1934) by MacKinlay Kantor applies to the portrayal of the war in the Philippine novels: a story not told from behind an army but the "conversion of a peaceful

village to a festering rage." Fighting is incidental in the novels, part of an over-all resistance. The collective hero is a village or a civilian group, suitable to the novelists' purpose of portraying a war struggle which is essentially civilian. The novelist does not always succeed in keeping the narrative focus on this group hero as Laya's This Barangay shows. And in all of these novels the fate of the group is dependent on the fate of a lone protagonist: Carding Suerte in Without Seeing the Dawn, Andres in More Than Conquerors, Emilio in This Barangay. Hence, the disintegration of the individual means the group's disintegration; his survival is the group's survival.

A notable fact about the war and the Filipino novel is the novelists' avoidance of presenting combat in its actuality. Tiempo describes torture methods, Javellana and Laya refer to sporadic skirmishes, but there is no realistic portrayal of combat itself. None of the novelists, for instance, have tried to re-create directly what happened in Bataan, in Corregidor, in Capas. All of these are events reported second hand. They are rumors, they are tragedies that happen offstage and the gory details are left to the imagination. In Without Seeing the Dawn, for example, Javellana consigns his protagonist's Bataan and Corregidor days to that limbo of blank pages between Book One and Book Two of the novel. The effect is one of remoteness and unreality. In Greek plays, one hears the agonized scream

of the victim Clytemnestra, but only hears about the crime of Orestes.

Of wine, women and sex one hears much about in the American novels but not in the Filipino novels about the war. In the American novels these are intensely preoccupying subjects. The protagonist in John Cooper Cobb's The Gesture (1948) observes justifiably that the fighting men "have an affinity for hard liquor and easy women." In the novels there is a continual traffic in liquor, regular as the posting of the guards. Some hard-driving entrepreneur usually operates a hidden still, camouflaged by jungle growth or lodged in the ship's hold, and sells bootleg whiskey called jungle juice. Moonshining is a big time operation in many of the novels, Michener's Tales of the South Pacific, for instance. Much thought and talk is expended on how, where and when whiskey or beer can be obtained.

Another preoccupying subject in the novels is women. Malcolm Cowley notes that "there is more sex than love" in the novels and that the novelists portray women as "cold, selfish, even malignant."[2] In fact, woman, whether wife, sweetheart or mother, is often blamed for the ills of the men--the eternal Eve leading the unsuspecting and innocent

[2]Cowley, "War Novels: After Two Wars," in Litz' Modern American Fiction, p. 303.

Adam to his destruction. But one finds exceptions now and then: May Wynn in Mister Roberts, Nellie Forbush in Michener's Tales, Andy Hookan's New Zealand widow in Uris' Battle Cry, to mention a few. But these are indeed few and far between.

However, some novels do treat women and sex light-heartedly--humorously as in Michener's Tales or ironically as in Mister Roberts. But in general, liquor and sex become a frenzied obsession in the novels. Whether in fantasy or in reality, the indulgence produces a sense of guilt.

Closely related to this preoccupation is the intense dread and fascination with homosexuality. Yet, the novels only vaguely suggest it, like whispered exchanges in the darkened tents in Jones' The Thin Red Line. Suicide is the consequence of such fears as in From Here to Eternity. In Welcome Darkness the insanity of May has been induced by fantasies that have homosexual undertones. Again these are vague suggestions which leave doubts as to whether the novelist has meant it or not.

On the other hand the Filipino novels hardly refer to liquor, women or sex. This is understandable since the novelists do not write of men existing in a womanless world, which is the case in most of the American novels of the Pacific war. There are no women left behind who can be

suspected of unfaithfulness. No haunting image of wives and sweethearts whiling away the hours with other men tortures the characters. Even Lucing's faithlessness by intent in Javellana's Without Seeing the Dawn is presented without censure. The onus of responsibility for the intended cuckolding rests with the landowner's son, who has transgressed against the traditional rules of hospitality.

But the "great American whore mystique," the myth of the golden-hearted whore, that Fuller deplores in Jones' From Here to Eternity[3] has its parallel in the Filipino novels. In More Than Conquerors the woman who has sold herself to the Japanese commandant takes the bullet meant for the guerilla fighter, Andres. And in Without Seeing the Dawn a taxi-dancer, who is Carding's mistress, proves more loyal than his wife. She blows up a Japanese ammunition dump for him and she is shot for it.

The novelists' attitude towards the Japanese show ambivalence. In the American novels contempt and unreasonable fear, condescension and morbid curiosity predominate. The novelists picture the Japanese as a poor, benighted "yellow bastard" banzaing himself to sure death for a disembodied abstraction known as the Celestial Son of Heaven. The enemy is a little man with protruding teeth and a

[3]Fuller, Man in Modern Fiction, p. 98.

wealth of gold in his mouth. There is no hatred; only the feeling of superiority towards this fierce, sly fighter becomes evident in the novels. But there is also unreasoning fear and morbid curiosity about the unknown, the mysterious, the unfathomable enemy.

The American novelists credit the Japanese foe with wily animal cunning and unpredictability. For these he is feared. Few of the novels present him as a human foe. A Japanese corpse, in fact, serves as the happy hunting ground for souvenirs. Prying a dead Japanese mouth open to extract some gold teeth brings no distaste, repugnance or compunction. Equipped with a pair of pliers, Terry in The Day the Century Ended, pulls and hoards gold teeth in a little pouch as one might collect the precious ivory from elephant tusks. When the souvenir hunters discover evidences that the dead enemy is indeed human, possessor of photographs and diaries, a note of astonishment creeps in. That the Japanese should have a home, a wife and children seems unimaginable. The parting wish, "happy hunting," is no empty formula. And the softening that Joseph J. Waldmeir notes is short-lived, for the "American soldier seldom saw the Japanese as human beings but only as stupid, half-civilized things which he despised."[4]

[4]Waldmeir, American Novels of the Second World War, p. 77.

In the Philippine novels a similar ambivalence towards the Japanese foe exists. He is not just the enemy; he is the aggressor, invader and the hated conqueror in a long line of conquistadores in the people's history. For the dreaded kempeitai, for the impersonal mass of guttural-voiced, hobnailed soldiers the novels reflect savage hate. The Japanese are regarded as less than human; canine terms are common appellations; and animal descriptions apply to their ways.

But paradoxically, a captured Japanese receives compassion and kindness. In Santos' The Volcano a shot-down Japanese pilot is treated for his injuries. The Barrioses and the Hunters take care of him even as their own sons, Tito and Junior, fight in the hills. In This Barangay a Japanese soldier taken prisoner gets the same sympathetic treatment.

This discussion of the American and Filipino novels on the war has shown and heavily underscored the fact that the novelists have portrayed man as human, even when involved in the inhumanities of a war. But it takes the "enemy" writer to touch this humanness with spirituality, to plumb the depths of human imperfection and suggest that only Absolute Perfection is the answer. Shohei Ooka, a Japanese novelist taken prisoner of war in the Philippines, re-creates his experience with "uplifting spirituality" in his brilliant novel, Fires on the Plain.

The translator of the novel, Ivan Morris, notes in the book jacket that it is "generally recognized to be the most important Japanese novel to have come out of the last war."[5] Indeed the brevity of my comment does not do justice to the excellence and complex richness of the novel. However, the justification for its inclusion here is that Ooka's concern parallels the themes of some American and Philippine novels about the war; and to point out a basic ingredient missing in these novels. For, none of these reach the spiritual heights nor the depths of degradation and isolation evident in Ooka's novel.

Fires on the Plain tells about the wanderings of Private Tamura, a reject of the retreating Japanese forces in the Philippines, through the plains and mountains of enemy territory. In the struggle to survive, he reaches the point of cannibalism, as two other rejects feed him "monkey's meat," dried flesh of Japanese soldiers whom they kill. As Tamura wanders through the plains, Christian symbols of hope beckon and betray him. The wanderings and the "search" wind up in a mental asylum in Japan.

Shohei Ooka deals with a universal theme, man's search for meaning and order, but Biblical echoes and images

[5]This refers to the edition of Shohei Ooka's Fires on the Plain published by Alfred A. Knopf, 1957. All quotations in this discussion are from this edition.

give Fires on the Plain the added spiritual dimensions. The novel suggests man's yearning for union with the Summum bonum, epitome of order and meaning, through His creatures. But the guideposts in man's journey towards the Infinite prove to be deceptive and destructive illusions, for they remain mere symbols to demented man. And in the anguished cry of a protagonist who calls himself an "Oriental infidel," Ooka echoes the loneliness and the utter desolation of David in the Psalms.

These are not tenuous conjectures, for a pervasive Christian symbolism depicts Private Tamura's search, which is projected against the chaos of a disintegrating military force. His journey is a solitary Exodus in paradox. As Tamura wanders he sees the Cross on the steeple of some village church. It gleams and fascinates him, but this Christian symbol of redemption and life leads him to a desolate village reeking with death and decay. Beneath its shadow are bloated corpses of his slain comrades in arms. And the "cross failed to awaken the expected excitement." The gleam is not there, for the cross "was dirty and . . . the gilt was peeling," and carrion crows perch on the crossbars. Tamura experiences a "sense of desolation and a profound knowledge of betrayal." And David's spiritual anguish wells up in this "Oriental infidel's' involuntary "De profundis clamavi."

In this spiritual desert, Tamura finds salt, symbol of regeneration--life sustaining "crystals [which] were things of great value, both to those who still belong to humankind" and to him. But death, as he accidentally kills an innocent Filipino, is what brings the life-giving salt to Tamura. The crime, which assumes monstrous proportions to him who has not killed before, haunts him through his journey and the woman's eyes become the accusing eyes of heaven. And the manna in Tamura's desert is ironically a piece of his own flesh blown off by a ricocheting rifle bullet.

For Tamura there is want in plenty as he contemplates Nature in its tropical abundance, a manifestation of God's munificence. Flowers, plants, trees, rivers, fowl talk to him and taunt him with their presence,daring him to eat of their substance to assuage his hunger. Mountains become the images of women he had known and pleasures vaguely remembered torture him. "Everything was looking at me. The hill at the end of the plain gazed at me. . . . The trees vied with each other in coquetry to capture my attention. Even the blades of grass, decked with raindrops, raised their heads in greeting, or again, drooping their slender bodies, turned their faces in my direction."[6]

[6]Ooka, Fires on the Plain, p. 188.

But the central recurring symbol which suggests the paradoxical relationship to Exodus is the column of smoke, the "fires on the plain." For God's Chosen People " . . . by day a pillar of cloud to guide them on their journey, by night a pillar of fire to give them light" (Exodus XIII:21); for Tamura, they are threats--the watchful eyes of the enemy stalking him. Behind the column of smoke and the "fires on the plain" are Filipinos signalling one another to make known Tamura's alien presence.

Shohei Ooka's Fires on the Plain admits of a multiple interpretation. One can read it as the portrayal of a mystical experience with the ecstatic emergence absurdly taking place at a mental asylum in a madman's Gloria in excelsis: "If He had indeed for my sake alone been sent down to this mountain field in the Philippines . . . Then glory be to God."[7] The novel can be given a psychological interpretation, as the portrayal of war-induced schizophrenia.

But the Biblical implications are strong and powerful. Ooka suggests that man's search for meaning ends in meaninglessness; his search for order, in total disorder, because only in union with Supreme Order and oneness with His creation can man achieve what he seeks. Somehow this Christian transcendental view of man's lonely quest for

[7]Ooka, Fires on the Plain. p. 246.

union with the Supreme Good fails to inform even the most strongly affirmative American and Philippine novels about the Second World War in the Pacific. In an essay on the novels about the war, one critic charges the American novelists with "failures in vision, failure to see in the jungle of war the root and leaf of human meaning. For too many of these writers, the surface of experience is enough, the surface is all."[8] It is not a failure to see "human meaning," but a failure to grasp the transcendental meaning of human existence, which Shohei Ooka brings out in Fires on the Plain.

[8]Frederick, "Fiction of the Second World War," College English, p. 197.

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