

Tribhuvan University

**Fact and Fiction of the Post-War American Civilization in Mailer's
*The Armies of the Night***

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This thesis entitled 'Fact and Fiction of the Post-war American Civilization in Mailer's *The Armies of the Night*' submitted to the Central Department of English Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Lokendra Bahadur Gyenwali, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* makes a deep incision in the post-war American civilization through the three days' 'Anti-War Demonstration' taken place in front of the power plaza, Pentagon where the inhuman and brutal suppression of the people's voices by the mainstream democratic government reveals the crooked nature of the dreamy American civilizedness. Character Mailer's bruising commentary over the material progress of America and American formulation of the advance civilizational indicators like welfare state, democracy, welfare foreign policy, human right preservation, melting culture and social integrity seems to be merely the fictional charms created and maintained by the power discourse of the mainstream Americans. Factual dimensions of the post-war American civilization are garbaged with the American totalitarianism, intervention, inhumanity, social and cultural devastation that are tacitly remonstrated by the demonstrators who create counterculture against the grandnarrative of the post-war American civilization.

Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
Chapter I: Introduction	1-16
Background: Post-War Experimental Fiction of America	1
Mailer and His Vulnerable World	4
Critical Responses on <i>The Armies of the Night</i>	8
Fact and Fiction of the Post-War American Civilization in Mailer's <i>The Armies of the Night</i>	13
Chapter II: Truth under the Nexus of Power and Representation	17-41
Archaeological vs Genealogical History	17
Foucault's Discursive History	26
Symbiotic Relationship between Power and Truth	34
Chapter III: Fact and Fiction of the Post-war American Civilization in Mailer's <i>The Armies of the Night</i>	42-58
Fictionalizing the History, Historicizing the Fiction	42
Writer Mailer's 'Perspectives' Through Character Mailer	47
Confutation over the Coherence of American Advancement	49
Battle of Pentagon: Brutal Manifestation of American Civilization	53
Chapter- IV: Conclusion	59-62
Works Cited	

Chapter I

Introduction

Background: Post-war Experimental Fiction of America

Post-war experimental fiction looks for the ways to deal with the brevity, rigidity and violence of existing life, which also carries to great extremes the themes of combativeness, fragmentariness, coolness, and meaninglessness that are the visible marks of modern fiction. It may originate in the modernist sense of life as problematic, but unlike the great experimental fiction of the 1920s, it doesn't lament the brokenness of experience as a sign of the decline of western civilization, instead it offers an acceptance of dislocation as a major part of life and perhaps a hope that the displacement of traditional ideals might permit new ways of dealing with the human situation. Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* (1968) sustains a hope towards the end of the book, in the chapter 'The Metaphor Delivered'.

The post-war experimental writer tries to see man differently. The experimental hero of the post-war period is shaped by the concern with functioning and behaviour that spawned and accelerated the growth of ego psychology in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, and is characteristic of an age of increasing technological sophistication. Experimental fiction is concerned with the mechanism and conduct of the individual mind and life, with the search for a different adaptation, an angle of vision, a mode of feeling or behaviour which will alter the protagonist's condition.

At the core of the post-war experimental novel is an acute sense of cruelty and powerlessness as flip sides of the perception of all relations as power relations. The post-war novel sees people caught up in a psychological dramas of power and vulnerability. Mailer makes a deep incision upon the power discourse in his nonfictional novel *The*

Armies of the Night.

Likewise, experimentalists' fascination with aggression and suppression is a legacy of World War II. Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948) deals with the fight, in World War II, for an imaginary Pacific Island, Anaopopei. 'Political' Mailer explodes political issues by returning war to issues of need in the most of his novel.

Popularity of 'nonfiction' novel emerged due to American fascination with the self-absorption of people who act out, as theatre or as violence, the aggressive dramas in their own minds and who perceive their victims as spectators or assistants. Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* (1968) is about significant social event, the Pentagon march of 1968, nevertheless is not concerned with the theoretical elements of the protest, the post - smoking audience, the mystics who tried to levitate the Pentagon, the sheer mass of people who turned the march, for Mailer, into a circus or a football game in which he could make "his linebacker's run" to get arrested by the police. This nonfiction novel reflects the extent to which we may externalize ourselves by becoming moviegoers as well as participants in the political drama of power and vulnerability.

Writers have attempted to reduce the trauma of either violence or humiliation by blurring the differences between winners and losers. In this experiment, all evil and all anger are not internalized but externalized. The hero becomes concerned with avoiding rather than confronting what he perceives to be unbeatable situations. In contrast to the novel of aggression, these are novels of passivity.

When the circumstance of reality is perceived as predominantly tragic, one may try to change the definition of what is real. The tragic is seen as an illusory, and the real is a private dream. The repatterning of the past or of the present, in line with an individual imagination is, obviously, the protest of the writer persuaded that he can not change the

world and determine to change at least his vision of it. A sense of powerlessness before reality becomes for such a writer a catalyst for seeking a world of manageable size, of controllable problem, of puzzles confusing only to others.

Sexual, feministic, surrealist and science novels are also experimentally written demonstrating the ills and ifs of the western civilization. These novels carry radical issues via a counterculture. *The Armies of the Night* is the best example of counterculture.

Surrealists who have delved into the recesses of consciousness where nightmare is the only reality, and fantasies can't be distinguished from fact, have nevertheless described a world as familiar as it is strange. They offer a unique perspective on post-war concerns. Political violence and terror turn up as nightmares of perception, torture, or pursuit. The same novelist may write in explicitly political context in one book, and in another express his concern with sexual domination and submission. Mailer can not be exception of this trend.

A perception of force as the determinant of action and behaviour, and a consequent sense of individual impotence, may be at the heart of the variety of experimental literatures in America. From the fiction of aggression, to that of passivities, fragmentation, and escape, to the novel of sexual confusion, pain, and revolt, the experimental literature provides a documentary of American imaginative experience. The writer who deliberately sets out to be the historian and cartographer of this journey is also its product: Thomas Pynchon sets out to describe the values of his generation and its despairing belief that the way to reduce anger and pain is to reduce involvement, to model one's self on those smoothly functioning feedback mechanisms bequeathed to our time by cyberneticists.

Experimentalists blame technology as the source of all American woes, their

short-circuited relations, their IBM-ised line. Mailer blames the technology land and its war machine which facilitate its power circulation over weak. Pynchon also seems to believe that America is manufacturing plastic people, people without positive emotional capacities.

What experimental fiction contributes to America is its perspectives, its faith in possibility. It makes Americans see in extreme and at times frightening images, the impact of the post-war period on their imagination of themselves at work, in love and in the recesses of thought.

Mailer and His Vulnerable World

Norman Mailer was born on 31, January 1923. Long Branch, New Jersey from his parents Issac Bemett and Funry (Schnids) Mailer. He earned his graduation from boys high school, Brookly, New York and B.A. degree from Harvard University when he was only sixteen. It was at university while majoring in engineering that he became interested in writing and published his first story at the age of eighteen. During the Second World War, Mailer served in the Philippines with 112th Cavalry from Texas. Those were the years that formed his internationally best selling war novel, *The Naked and the Dead* (1948). His other works include *Barbury Shore* (1951), *Dear Park* (1955), *Advertisement for Myself* (1959), *Death for the Ladies* (1962), *The Pres-Dential Papers* (1963), *An American Dream* (1965), *Cannibals and Christian* (1966), *Why We Are in Vietaman?* (1967) and his recent work is *Why We Are at War?* (2003). It is *The Armies of the Night* (1968) which earned name and fame for Mailer as he was awarded with both Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. In 1955, Mailer co-founded the magazine *Village Voice*. He was the editor of *Dissent* from 1952 until 1963, and become a producer and director of the movies: 'Wild 90', 'Beyond the Law' and 'Maidstone' in 1968. Indisputably

one of the most controversial, talented and popular author 'of our time', Norman Mailer has been married four times and has six children.

Beginning in early 1950s and continuing to present, Mailer's intellectualism and combative temperament drew him increasingly into journalism. The interesting thing with Mailer is that the more he was concerned with marriage and divorce, the better literary output and fame he achieved. This has made him as one of the most distinguished figures of the post-war literary days. Hohn Thompson comments about Mailer's career, "like the writers of the old modern literary days like Yeats, Pound and Joyce, he makes up for himself a theology, a psychology and even a pharmacopocia" (276). This backs up that Mailer is not singular in his appearance. Mailer had to struggle a lot before he got the recognition in the literary ambience of America. Basically, he is a humanist since his writings depict the war and its negative consequences. He became a figure in New York and began to present the loop holes of American popular culture. Primarily his depiction of overt sexuality and hedonism in the writings made several publishing houses reject the manuscripts.

Despite his fame and all for his best sellers, Mailer was, as a result of his many failed marriage, in his dire financial tracts; and it was only through lucrative but demanding multibook contracts he was able to remain a solvent supporting the large extended family. Mailer in his sixties was increasingly placing himself in the role of elder statesman of America. Like Noam Chomsky he was never satisfied with U.S. foreign policy and the growing barbarity in so called American civilization. However, Mailer claims that sex is essence of life and it is vital need but incest relation and lesbian and gay cultures are the poison seeds for a moral culture. Harold Bloom characterises Mailer as "a historian of the moral consciousness of his era; and as the representative writer of his

generation" (Bloom 48). It means Mailer was not in favour of growing overt crudity.

Mailer is productive and holds the same kind of consistent view towards life at the core level.

Norman Mailer as a writer of American Civilization is a great literary radical because some of the critics like Robert Laugbaum find him "The most irritating author" (Bloom 52). His Public image is entirely powerful but not an embarrassing one. Sometimes his writing is too bawdy and morally offensive. Despite this kind of disgraceful writing, he is well applauded as a popular literary figure and perhaps the most influential novelist in the post-war American era.

Raymand Rosenthal writes that Mailer's novels, "deal with a close group of characters as Wuthering Heights because emotional and psychic presentation of characters is one dominant aspect in his writing" (Curley 271). As a novelist, his prose is powerful but plain, complex in theme yet very near to reality and vulgar but artistic. Mailer's attitude towards realistic literature is very positive but not always constant. He says, "Realistic literature had never caught up with the rate of change in American life. Novelists were no longer writing about the beast but about the paw of the beast [. . .] or about the dream of the beast" (qtd. Bloom 51-52).

The obvious metaphor in this commentary is that writing doesn't visualise only what is obvious and general, it deals with the deeper and inner parts of society and an individual. For him, the civilized human beings appear in their uglier form of amoral and cruel activities no lesser to beast if one has to observe beneath the civilizational appearances.

Mailer's latest creative venture, apparently, is in the realm of feature films and the author's new role is as a director of films. All his novel and nonfiction writings are

evocative and visual in nature, a style that translates everything into the world of film, the collection of writings labelled as literary journalism forms an explicitly recognizable case of a 'blurred genre'. Literary journalists have consciously combined the techniques and style of fiction writing and journalism, themes of literary novelists tend to concern with social and political issues, usually examined the context of contemporary culture.

Language of hip is the key to Mailer's style of literary journalism. It is spoken by those who are aware of the absurdities inherent in modern life. This use of multiple narrative persona distinguishes his literary journalistic works from others. In describing the style of hip, it sees the context as generally dominating the man, dominating him because his character is less significant than the context in which he must function. Mailer's response to the nugatory powers of powerful social contexts is to develop a narrator with multifaceted qualities.

Violence, sex and power are the major themes of Mailer's novels. He writes about American culture, World War Second and Vietnam War, and other outstanding features of the time of post-war era. He also depicts the metaphorical vision of American culture and the human behaviour which applies to all human kind in general. The configuration may change, but Mailer remains convinced that these are the dark tapestry threads of American culture. With very manifestation of discontent with traditional concept of life and society, art and creation, he emerged in literary field drawing imaginatively the symbolic arsenal of literary post modernism. In 1950s, there was a political and civil rights movement, that caught much attentions but for novelists it was a period of new generation, a generation of writers which were concerned to depict the fatal practice and psychic vision of American culture. Writers such as Bellow, Mailer and some others were trying to differentiate between the American dream and its achievement. The beat

generation writers of 1950s were escaping the false American dream values by countering with the real and revolutionary ideas. The novels depict the bitter reality of American culture and human psyche that are essentially motivating all human activities. Admits the unparalleled openness of the conflict between black and whites, Mailer appeared to leave social matter at the spot and take more controversial subject matter of politics and psychology as the subject matter of his writing. So his novels are the details of the many level of interplay between the subjective and objective world. He was true believer on god. But his writing frequently appears as if he is an atheist.

Mailer has a unique perspective towards the formation of history. In *The Armies of the Night*, he goes deep into the American psyche to reveal its civilizational turmoil. Very indicators of post-war American civilization such as democracy, technological advancement, welfare foreign policy, racial integration and other issues are soothingly narrated by mainstream American people who blindfold the factual history with their circulation of power. Mailer genealogically brings the fact and fiction into light which let us know the fact and fiction of the post-war American civilization. He employs both experimental style and content to reveal this very nature of American society and culture.

Critical Responses on *The Armies of the Night*

The Armies of the Night (1968) is a Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winning nonfiction novel written by Norman Mailer and sub-titled History as Novel/The Novel as History. Mailer essentially creates his own genre for the narrative, split into historicised and novelized accounts of the October 1968 March in the Pentagon. Mailer's unique rendition of the nonfiction novel was one of only a few at the time, and received the most critical attention. In the book *Structured Vision of Norman Mailer*, Barry H.

Leeds opines:

In Mailer's nonfiction prose, whether the subject be literature, politics, or existential psychology, there is never an attempt to mute or disguise the voice of the man, Mailer, he is always frankly subjective, and it is this quality upon which rests the success of Mailer's two most recent books, *The Armies of the Night* and *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* (Both, 1968). (247)

It reveals that Mailer's subjectivity can be rampantly found in his nonfiction prose where Mailer himself makes his perspectives towards the contemporary literary, political, social scenario being a character of the novel. In *Pamphlets on American Writers*, Richard Foster comments that radical Mailer experiments his content and technique just to make inside out of the American society that lives in the dreamy world. In his own words:

The Armies of the Night [. . .] a kind of autobiographical novel with a protagonist called 'Mailer' who is at once an absurd citizen of "technology land" in crisis and a bard of the bright dream that lies behind the thickening miasmas of the betrayed and perishing republic. (30)

These are some alleged evidences that are essential to prove the novel's meaning in terms of Mailer's biography, politics and contemporary cultural values. The early responses to the text and the novelist by the reviewers and critics were based on Mailer's own political affair which he was involved in the sixties. Because Mailer himself was something an enigma for the contemporary world as he was breaking away from the convention and norms, there may be no better example of the way the world has changed around Norman Mailer than the recent critical esteem shown on his writings and his world view. Even though critics ironically claim that Mailer's literary status has declined in the recent

years, key features of his particular brand of social criticism have become common aspects of the contemporary thought, and this fact alone makes him a figure still of consideration under political lens.

The Armies of the Night represents the political issues in terms of social and individual level, for before and after Mailer had experienced the World War II. Worked as a political thinker Frederick Karl, in *American Fiction 1940- 1980*, says, "the political dimension those were so earnest in *The Armies of the Night*, give way to images and symbols of a politicized America" (240). He focuses upon the representation of the political overview of post-war America.

The kind of novel Mailer chose to write reflected post-war culture and its most obvious aspects. After the war, American political situation changed into social and individual revolution. Voice of the margins, hippies, Jews, blacks were looking for outlet that fact has been captured by Mailer in *The Armies of the Night*. In *Norman Mailer Society Journal*, Phillip Sipiora argues:

Armies of the Night is explicitly political discourse revealing an emphatically 'Political Mailer'. Mailer's complex tapestry of personal and political reporting functions as symbolic gestures representing the deepening crisis in American society, one that traverses political, cultural, social and racial borders and margins, all within a swirl of discourse form (s). (4)

Sipiora highlights the symbolic gestures represented in the novel which function as discursive forms underlying in the novel. Mailer is a political Mailer, he picks the political issues of 1960s and dramatizes through literary genre in journalistic manner. American society and culture was undergoing a sea change at the contemporary period,

of which Mailer becomes a bard.

Barry H. Leeds finds *The Armies of the Night* a novel representing the deep philosophic attitude of Mailer towards his motherland America because Mailer firstly hates American just to prepare himself for loving it. It means he criticises the injustices, inhumanities, amoral projects and so on natures of American governments and then what remains is the good ones which he loves. The clearest and most beautiful articulation of Mailer's feelings about America in 1968 is the powerful concluding paragraph of the book:

Broad on that country who expresses our will. She is America, once a beauty of magnificence un-paralleled, now a beauty with a leprous skin. She is heavy with child-no one knows if legitimate and languishes in dungeon whose walls are never seen. Now the first contractions of her fearsome labour begin - it will go on: no doctor exists to tell the hour. It is only known that false labour is not likely on her now, no, she will probably give birth, and to what? She, poor giant, tormented lovely girl, deliver a babe of a new world brave and tender, artful and wild? Rush to the locks. God writhes in his bonds. Rush to the locks. Deliver us from our curse. For we must end on the road to that mystery where courage, death, and the dream of love give promise of sleep. (320)

As W.B. Yeats describes the potential future in his poem *The Second Coming*, Mailer also sees a frightening situation, but there is hope as well, Mailer remains tied to America, committed to ride out the battle and to work for the better future. The more courageous of today's youth can reject the outworn values of the past and still do their fighting at home, working constructively for freedom. Here, hope is societal as well as

individual. In this thematic resolution, as in the masterful control of form and subject matter *The Armies of the Night* is evidence that Mailer has progressed enormously, both artistically and personally in the twenty years since the publication of *The Naked and the Dead*. According to John Carlos Rowe says:

Mailer's *Armies of the Night* (1968) took the major antiwar march on Washington of the year before as its subject; in his *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (57) the war was at least a titular topic. In both works, however, Mailer argued that it was our failure to comprehend the entanglement of our deepest psychic drives with our most visible cultural myths that had led us to war in Southeast Asia and at home [. . .] Mailer adopted post-modern techniques to modernist literary ambitions and utopianism. (120)

Rowe comments upon Mailer's obsession towards war theme and he supports that Mailer is right to reveal the misunderstanding created within the American psyche in a post modern literary manner. This very misunderstanding led them to the war at home and in the alien land. It is termed as wargasms of the war mongers of mainstream government who play war game, just to enjoy the killings of their own sons and mass human beings in the foreign land, which is evident in Mailer's first great novel *The Naked and the Dead* too.

Barry H. Leeds concludes her critical reviews that this book, which won the 1968 National Book Award for Arts and Letters, is a fusion of elements of both the fiction and the nonfiction. As he puts it, ". . . [*The Armies of the Night* is the] logical culmination of Mailer's personal concern with the individual and American society, and his increasing control over narrative prose, as they have developed over two decades" (161). This supports the idea that *The Armies of the Night* pays more popularity to Mailer's literary

career and similarly critics select this book to make a critical overview upon the whole literary career of Mailer.

In the *Yale Journal of Criticism*, Sean McCann calls Mailer a cultural radical of the sixties who lamented the coercive banality of a materialist society and rallied against the evils of bureaucracy. *The Armies of the Night* is a par-excellence to this issue because it is written on the line of counterculture which shows the insurgency within American institutions.

Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* stands as the one of the most powerful books of the post-war era because of varieties of criticism and opinions it has aroused among the literary persons. A fiction, as a form of art, is presented to the reader. So it is open to multiplicity of interpretation. The raw martial for any kind of interpretation is the explicit and implicit language of the text. The language can be twisted to focus on some particular points, so that numerous interpretations to the text can be offered. Therefore the researcher is undertaking this research to interpret the novel from the perspective of Foucauldian theory of discourse which is the dominant underlying theoretical pattern of the text.

Fact and Fiction of the Post-War American Civilization in Mailer's *The Armies of the Night*

From the critiques referred above, it is evident that critics, as in the most other novels, irrespective of other authors and contents, vary in their reading of *The Armies of the Night*. One thing, however, is certain that though it may be implicit, no critique is voiceless in criticism of mainstream American's grandnarrative of civilization. They have, in general, sensed Mailer's experimental technique of describing the hegemonic and imperial America invalidating its logic of democracy, welfare foreign policy, individual

freedom, material advancement and its assistance to humanity, and the ideal government. There is also no schism with critics in their judgement of the tragic irony that has crept into American mores: the vast disparity between the way Americans have been or are heading towards, and the way they ought to move.

The interpretation of these critics is not surprising because Mailer clearly shows his mastery over the treatment of the discourse of mainstream Americans who assume their way of defining and living is very civilized. Anti Vietnam war demonstration before the Pentagon, a power made symbol of civilization, is repressed by the mainstream democratic government in a brutal and totalitarian manner. Soothing definitions of bureaucracy, technological advancement, political reform, liberalism, democracy, human right preservation and such many indicators of civilization created by mainstream American producers, are mythical and mystified at the factual level. Marginalized Americans are protesting in the way mainstream Americans are heading the state and its citizens, because their relation to the state is by definition coerced, thus distant, thus mystified, thus perforce, imaginary. It means Mailer presents an alternative definition of reality. Character Norman Mailer, a 'subjected' individual holds the view that America, in the name of universal civilization exercises power on 'other' countries and on its own marginalized citizens. Thus, Mailer confronts with the superficial American tendency which produces the indicators of civilization in wholesale. And such tendency Mailer says, is at the factual level - nothing but an exercise of power that sublimates the creativity and potentiality of an individual by making him tread on what the society thinks is the right path.

But what is the theoretical background upon which Mailer holds this view? From the study of the most of his novels, it is apparent that he has been concerned throughout his career to identify and examine the different kinds of power and their projection of

multifaceted violences in American society. Whether through his fictional writings or nonfictional ones, he aims to expose these levels of violence projected by the mainstream Americans who assume to be the engineers of the state mechanism and the civilization.

The very violence prognated in complex manner, can be analyzed in relation to Michel Foucault's ideas of discourse and power. Foucault says that every epoch of human society is governed by diverse discourses, each of which corresponds to a particular arena of human knowledge. Because human knowledge encompasses various fields as a society has many discourses. Foucault's more radical theory is that such discourses contradict each other and as a result there is no harmony and 'oneness' in the society. This is because in a discourse lies a kind of power which produces the effects and is itself produced out of the network of representation and truth. Power, for Foucault, is all pervasive and resides in every domain of society. It is according to him, neither evil nor dominating but it is always dangerous.

Foucauldian concept of discourse, therefore, assists this research in its attempt to invalidate the historical bases of mainstream American civilization, for his concept confutes the myth of integrated 'oneness' in a society. Similarly, his idea of power assists to examine the mainstream American's involvement in Vietnam and their coded civilizational norms as an American exercise of power upon 'other'. This idea of power also incorporates the subjection of an individual and his resistance that easily corresponds, in this research, to major character Mailer's attempt to protest the corporate life he is compelled to live.

Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night*, therefore, when seen through the methodological tools like Foucaulian ideas of history, discourse and power, can be read as the depiction of the mainstream American power as exercised in Vietnam War and to glorify its cultural patterns in the name of civilization. At the fictional level, mainstream

Americans pretend to be producers of civilization but at the factual level, this very concept of civilization is nothing except a working of discourse of mainstream America. In such exercise of power, each individual is 'subjected' to what the discourse of 'civilization' says and prescribes for him. *The Armies of the Night* confronts the historical justification provided by the Americans and examines the American concept of civilization to reveal the fact and fiction of the post-war American civilization.

Chapter II

Truth under the Nexus of Power and Representation

Archaeological vs Genealogical History

Well known dictum of Michel Foucault goes like this, "History which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meaning" (qtd. In Adams 1137). Foucault's approach to history is a problem based approach which views history as historical process, not as historical slice. This very tendency of new historicism is radical in its textualization of history and historicization of text that views history as a social science and the social sciences as historical. Then, the rupturing took place in the age-old demarcation between history and fiction and this merging of 'historical actuality' and fiction parodied the search for 'objective truth' in the history. History, like a work of art, became something like a negotiated product of a private creator and the public practices of a given society. The more radical thesis of new historical thinking - as inspired by Michel Foucault- was refusal to see history as an evolutionary process, a continuous development towards the 'present'. Neither was history regarded as an abstraction, idea or ideal, or as something that began in the 'beginning' and would reach to the 'end', a moment of definite closure.

The idea of 'historicity of the text' connects a text to the social, cultural and economic circumstances of its production. The text, now was not to be read with the motto of 'art for art's sake'. It was but to be read in connection with all discursive practices and power relations expressed in it by the language that is, as argued by new historicists, necessarily dialogical and materially determined. Similarly, the idea of 'textuality of history' came as a jolt to the age-old search for metaphysical spirit that was said to be all pervasive throughout the historical movement. This was because new

historicists tended towards less fact and event orientedness. This may be perhaps because they realized that 'truth' about what really happened could never be purely and objectively known. They, in this way, developed a theory of history which was no more linear and progressive, as something developing toward the 'present'. Such review considered history to be less identifiable in terms of specific era, each with a definite, persistent and consistent Geist or Spirit of the time.

Previous literary criticisms also attempt to put a text in its historical context. The historicism of 1930s, for instance, tried to examine literary works within the diverse and interrelated historical contexts by analysing them with respect to the cultural and the social forces that influenced and were revealed through texts. The 'historicity of the text', therefore, seems to have been practised by critics even before new historicists.

New historicists' way of dealing with the history in their analysis of text differs from the previous approach in at least two ways. First, the latter tries to see the significance of a literary work along with the reception of that work in certain historical circumstances. Second, they seek to analyse a literary work with respect to historical forces that encompass power relations and discursive practices which were in operation during the composition of that work. This becomes clear when we take the reference of J. Hillis Miller's 1986 Presidential Address to the Modern Language Association. He, in his speech answers (though with some dismay) why new historical concept of the text is 'new':

Literary study in the past few years has undergone a sudden, almost universal turn away from theory in the sense of an orientation toward language as such and has made a corresponding turn toward history, culture, society, politics, institutes, class and gender conditions, the social

content, [and] the material base. ('Triumph' 283)

Miller's portion though somewhat hyperbolic, sees a literary study turning way from theory. But his arena of theory implicitly includes formalism, new criticism and deconstruction which saw language as not concerned with outside thing. This shift, Miller says, forms the theoretical bases of historical and socio-economic circumstances in literary analysis, which however, seems to assume that works of literature both influence and are influenced by historical reality. It shares the belief in referentiality, that is a belief that literature both refers, and is referred to by the things outside.

When analyzing a text with reference to all historical forces, it is not possible to have a single and definite meaning. The new historical thinkers, therefore, are unlikely to suggest that a literary text can have an easily identifiable historical context. With this parallel, then, we can say that fictionalisation of history and historicization of text, both result in indeterminacy and various 'truths'.

The argument of new historicists that we can never possess objective knowledge of history because historical writing is always entangled in tropes owes much to the philosopher and the 'historian of otherwise' Michel Foucault. Although Foucault shares a lot with those new historicists, his redrawing of boundaries of history has had a central influence on the domain of the ideas like power, discourse and subject.

Because this research is mainly concerned with Foucauldian ideas related to history, power, discourse and governmentality, it is necessary to understand the Foucauldian concept of history. His ideas of history will be examined through three dimensions. Firstly, we will see how Foucault influences the new historicists' idea of textualization of history and historicization of text. Second, we need to examine his confutation of humanistic or Hegelian concept of linear and progressive history. And

lastly, Foucault's analysis of a 'subject' being imprinted and a 'body' inscribed by history.

An often quoted phrase that describes the new historicists' reciprocal concern with 'historicity of text and textuality of history' seems to have emerged from H.M. Abram's clarification of Foucault's notion, which calls text "a discourse which, although, it may seem to present, or reflect an external reality, in fact consists of what are called representations" (183). The Foucauldian notion that views a text as verbal formations in the form of ideological products of cultural constructs of a certain historical era, assists the concept of historicization of the text. The text of Foucault never represents or reflects pre-existing entities and orders of a historical situation, rather it speaks of the power structures, oppositions and hierarchies which are after all the products and propagators of power. A text, in Foucault's view, speaks of 'history' but not as it is described by traditional Marxists and historicists. It, within itself, buries the 'situatedness' of institutions, social practices including their workings amidst the power relation and the hierarchies. So, a text becomes, 'a history of otherwise' in that it presents a historical situation not as a 'background' but as something with which it can have constant interaction, for text is both product and the propagator of the power structures of society.

Now comes the question: how Foucault influences those who believe in the textuality of history? Because he is always aware of the fact that a historian can't escape the 'situatedness' of his time. Foucault takes a historian to be 'embedded' in the social practice. It is, by this logic clear that history is also written from the perspective of the historian. The position a historian occupies in society determines the history he writes. The way he goes inside the forms of power structures and social practices determines his description of history. Is history, then, different from fiction, if it is nothing other than fictionalised details of a person's perspectives? In this regard, Foucault has some affinity

with Derrida, for both of them say that a 'subject' who 'thinks' may not 'know' his own limitations. This indicates the uneven history of relationality that testifies to the civilizational failure of the Cartesian project which Foucault says "begins as it ends in violence" (85). He further says in the essay 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' that "Devotion to truth and the precision of scientific methods arose from the passion of scholars, their reciprocal hatred, their fanatical and unending discussions, and their spirit of competition-their personal conflicts that slowly forged the weapons of reasons" (86)

Foucault positions himself as a thinker who wielded philosophy and history by linking the 'devotion to truth' and 'the passion of scholars' to the 'forged' weapons of reason. He opines that historians pretend to grind the 'past' taking it as something that is resting for the axe to strike and break it, but, in this 'myth' of historians, Foucault sees their instinct to write fairy tales of their evolution.

Foucault's main interest in historical reading was to see how various discourses govern a certain era but in a contradictory way where a discourse doesn't come to terms with other. For example, how an age defines 'civilization' may not be in harmony with its practice and similarly philosophy of a certain age may not correspond with the reality of the time. With this idea, now comes Foucault's confrontation with the traditional concept of history and his apparent neutrality in describing the deep-rooted techniques of power in historical movement. Writing about Foucault's ideas, and describing him as the 'historian of otherwise' McHoul and Grace writes:

Foucault is no historical determinist [. . .]. What are we how is not what we must necessarily be by virtue of any iron laws of history. History is as fragile as it seems, in retrospect, to be fixed. But for Foucault, history is never simply in retrospect, never simply 'the past', it is also the medium in

which life today is conducted. (viii)

From this depiction of Foucault as 'no historical determinist', he becomes more difficult in his analysis of history. He, at the same time, takes a person at present to be affected by 'the past' and denies that we are what 'iron laws' of history make us. This is not a deviation in Foucault's theory. It is his standpoint making strategy to attack the humanistic tendency of seeking the 'culmination' of history.

Foucault's counter-history, by attacking the [De] Cartesian 'cogito ergo sum', views the Cartesian man to be in a state of misunderstanding. Cartesian man as Foucault describes "is also the sources of misunderstanding that [. . .] also enables him to recover his integrity on the basis of what eludes him" [The Order 323]. From this attack, Foucauldian historical reading moves forward to see the flaw in Hegelian perspective of history as a linear and progressive phenomenon that one day will reach 'perfection'. The flaw, Foucault sees, lies in the humanists' (Hegelians) thinking of an individual who always 'corrects' himself by identifying his deviation from the norm of the historical situation. This is Foucault's analysis that sees the results to be the product of the cold alliance between an individual and morality and his 'embeddedness' with discourse and power. The Hegelians' concept of universal reason that existed behind the surface forms of human knowledge, was what irritated Foucault.

In *The order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Foucault commented on the nature of humanistic notion of history by finding in it a contradiction that began with Cartesian mathesis. It is, as Foucault writes "an exhaustive ordering of the world as though methods, concepts, types of analysis and finally men themselves [. . .] [are in] inevitable unity of knowledge" (75-76). The insight which is so 'dispersive' sees history as not having a casual law or final goal but as having a network of power relations

to work upon an individual.

Foucault's radical anti humanism is best expressed in his essay entitled 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.' Taking the concepts of truth and power as described by Nietzsche in his idea of genealogy, Foucault, in this essay, has a three-fold aim. First, he offers his arguments supporting his break with archaeology. Second, he expands the scope of genealogy. And third he revises the role of the historian.

In arguments that support his break away from archaeology, Foucault describes genealogy as a diachronic method. Genealogy, for him, is a Nietzschean effort to undermine all absolute grounds and to demonstrate the origins of things only in relation to and in context with other things. So, genealogy, unlike archaeology which seeks to uncover the layers of civilization by positing in them the stability of systems of thought that 'stay' long for an era and come to a sudden end, turns towards the problem of power and practice. Regarding his movement toward genealogy, Foucault states "the search for descent is not the erecting of foundations: on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself" (88).

Writing about Foucault's shift from archaeology to genealogy Arun Gupto describes, the Foucauldian concepts of these two historical readings to be complementary. Both of these historical approaches are for Gupto, in disagreement with "a fairy tale like totalising concept of history" (114).

Most interesting idea with genealogy is its scope. Firstly, genealogy attacks the supposed coherence of a thinking 'subject'. Secondly, it dissolves the fiction of singular human identity. Thirdly, it attacks the notion of origins in historical investigations. Fourthly, genealogy stresses the idea of history as discontinuity. Finally, it focuses not

upon ideas or historical mentalities but upon the 'body' so as to show it totally imprinted by 'history'.

What, then is the task of a Foucauldian historian? Foucault (departing from the traditional concept), reformulated the role of a historian. A historian, for Foucault has a three-fold task. First, while confronting the 'one' reality, a historian should be in the favour of the use of history as a 'parody'. Second, he should be against a singular continuist human identity, and thirdly, the 'investigations' should be directed against truth.

Now after these ideas of Foucauldian history, it is necessary to illustrate, in short, Foucault's answer to the question; how history imprints the body and inscribes itself in it? Foucault doesn't mean that the body should be understood as a biological entity, rather, he treats it as William James and John Dewey treated the mind: as a repository of habits. His conception of the body has been inscribed by forces largely beyond an individual's control because these forces are nothing but the points in the locus of historical movement.

Foucault says that this 'body' is imprinted and destroyed by history and this destruction can be exposed only when we approach a history from a genealogical perspective. 'Body' for Foucault can never remain outside the power-relations of a society and its discourse. And because of the subject's failure to resist and resign from institutional commonalties, the body becomes victim. Past events that one may never have experienced directly, and ideologies ingrain themselves upon the 'body' and shape his life. The body can never escape from the web of past images and knowledge that imprint it.

In the final chapter of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault asks

after a 'history of bodies' which inquires into "the manner in which what is most material and vital in them has been invested" (152). In this (re) formation he suggests that history acts not only on the body but also in the body; that power not only produces boundaries for the body but also pervades the interiority of that subject. The question arises: what lies inside the body? It is the soul? Absolutely not, for Foucault doesn't believe in it. Neither is the body a biological boundary for the soul. The 'inside' of the body is, as *Discipline and Punish* offers, an instrument of power through which the body is cultivated and formed. The 'inside' for Foucault is like 'form' of Aristotelian matter which is here equivalent to body.

To sum up Foucault's idea of historical reading, we can say that his is the general approach that seeks to analyse "the order, mechanism, and exclusion that have been the features(s) of western societies since enlightenment" (Gupto 114). This general approach, in contrast to total history which looks at the overall development of the period, attempts to describe differences, changes, alternations, mutations and so on.

Foucauldian radicalism of history manifests itself in three dimensions- it rejects absolute truth or origin and argues for fictionalised history and historicised fiction, it confutes the linearity of history and exposes how a 'body' is imprinted and inscribed by history. This theory is 'radical' in the sense that it shocks us by going at least one step further than Marxism, Darwinism, Freudianism and even deconstruction, for all of them, unlike the Foucauldian perspective, believe in progressive history that starts 'in the beginning' and comes to an end, the culmination. Considering Foucault's general history, we can conclude that he wants to confront 'essentialist' humanism by showing how the so-called unique, unified and enduring personality is inscribed by the forces of history.

Foucault's Discursive History

Concept of discourse stepped ahead having something to do with language along with the structuralism's demise. The 'Speech Acts' which were said to have been governed by 'appropriateness conditions' in sociolinguistics, were now discussed as a kind of business in which human knowledge is transacted. The formalist approach that attempted to find the general underlying rules of linguistic and communicative function was given a jolt by those theorists who took discourse as something related to social disciplines and practices. What annoyed those thinkers was perhaps the formalist tendency to seek a valid function behind every form of word or linguistic unit. So, with the advent of such theorists, discourse began to be seen as something where human knowledge is collected and structured.

As 'Discontinuity' is one of the major themes of Michel Foucault's work (though he doesn't provide a definite theory of anything), it is evident that he would obviously support the thesis that behind every linguistic form exists a function cherished by general layer of pragmatic rules or conditions. Foucault thinks of discourse in terms of bodies of knowledge. It is closer to the disciplines than to the linguistic system or grammar. Disciplines for Foucault, have two sense: one, it refers to scholarly disciplines such as science, medicine, psychiatry and so on and two, it refers to disciplinary institutions such as prison, school, hospital and so on. We can, therefore, clearly establish Foucault's idea of discourse as the historical relationship between scholarly disciplines and institution of social control.

For Foucault, the whole rationalization of a society is a 'myth'. A society, according to him, should be analyzed as a 'process' in several fields, each of which shares the "fundamental experience of society: madness, illness, death, crime, sexuality and so

forth" ('Subject and Power' 329). And all of these human phenomena are the units of knowledge (i.e. discourses). And the discourses of all of such phenomena have their own vocabulary, concepts and rules, the knowledge of which constitutes power and serves as the dominant ideology of society.

Foucauldian concept of discourse may be seen to have a number of components which are fairly identifiable: objects (the things any discourse studies or produces); operations (methods or ways treating the objects), concepts (the terms which constitute the unique language of discourse) and theoretical options (those different assumptions and the theories on the basis of which discourses are formulated). With the help of all three components, a discourse produces effects and is itself produced. But all of these components are subject to change. This implies that discourse is always in a process of formulation, correlation and transformation which takes place after a certain epoch.

This concept of discourse is obviously very different from the Anglo-American conceptions that connect the term discourse only to language or to social interaction. It is so because for critical theorists like Foucault, discourse refers to well bounded areas of social knowledge. And this social knowledge is reflected in discourse.

This is a shift in the concept of discourse. It is a technical accomplishment in terms of linguistics or social interaction towards the 'howness' of the statement made and 'whatness' of the conditions of their production. Foucault clarifies this idea in his book, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* while referring back to his historical analyses in *The Order of Things*. Though Foucault laments his own failure to specify the term, he relates a discourse not to what it states but to what particular circumstances in which it states something:

Instead of gradually, reducing the rather of fluctuating meaning of the

word 'discourse', I believe that I have in fact added to its meanings; treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements sometimes as an individualizable group of statements and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements. (80)

Now the question that arises is: is the statement a unit of discourse? Does a statement have properties similar to proposition, sentence and speech act? The answer to both questions, in a way, is 'no'. A statement is not a unit of discourse in the way proposition, sentence and speech acts are, because it may lack the logicity of a proposition, ordered structure of a sentence, and the 'facility condition' of a speech act. But a statement can sometimes be unit of discourse because it is what Foucault describes in *The archaeology of Knowledge*, "a function that cuts across a domain of possible structures and unities, and which reveals them with concrete contents in time and space of statement" (87).

This concept of statements hints at one of Foucault's important thesis regarding discourse. He takes statements as components of discursive formations which are primarily functional. He denies the one to one correspondents of forms and functions of linguistic units as argued by the Speech Act Theory. So, 'facility conditions' of propositions, sentences and speech act may not work for Foucauldian discourse.

When Foucault is interpreted on the basis of his idea of discourse, he doesn't appear to be interested in logical analysis of propositions or formal linguistic system. His concept of discourse encompasses the material condition associated with time and space. For Foucault, the statements or the Functional units of discourse, don't represent the state of affairs but they do things and bring about effects rather than merely produce speech acts.

According to him, these material conditions are related to the 'archive' which is

not a stable system of stating forms that have certain functions but is a historical flux, which can be defined as "The General System of the Formation and Transformation of Statements" (Foucault, *Archaeology* 130). Archive, therefore is concerned to historical conditions of difference. And it is in this archive that discourses produce their effects and are themselves produced. Foucault also connects the material conditions that constraint that enable production of discourse with the archive, which is "a much more mobile and fluid term than the relevantly fixed concept of episteme" (*The Order* 57).

Because Foucault is a philosopher of 'discontinuity', his study doesn't see the development of different discourses in the linear 'episteme' running up to the present. Though his main concept regarding discourse is best expressed in his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, his other works like *The Order of Things*, *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. one) *Discipline and Punish* and *Madness and Civilization* also touch upon the issue of discourse. In all of these books Foucault refuses to accept the linearity of the development of discourses. All of these books attempt to clarify how disciplinary institutions create and develop discourses in different fields of human knowledge. *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. I), for example, deals with how the discourse called sexuality is developed for 'sex' and reveals how the discourse of 'sex' changes over different times. *Madness and Civilization*, on the other hand, is concerned with the discourse of psychiatry (i.e. madness) and shows how this discourse is defined by clinical institutions like the hospital. In the same way, criminology is studied in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

Though it is almost impossible to describe how every phenomenon related to human knowledge is described in discourse of its own, we can take 'sex' and its discourses i.e. sexuality to clarify the intricate relationship between sex and power for the

production of sexuality. In the same way, patriarchal discourse produced women as cultural construct; the penological discourse produced the 'criminal' and the western discourse produced their orient, strategies and relations of power applied in the field of sex produced male and female morality. Describing about Foucault's notion of discourse, Arun Gupto writes:

Sex is the raw material of sexuality. When sex is not merely a physical and psychological matter, it is a discursive element. Thus sex has always been in the discourse of sexuality that can be studied in general historical framework [. . .]. That is when sex comes under Foucauldian archaeological and genealogical research, it is the study of sexuality. (118)

Therefore, the discourses are produced in specific historical and material conditions i.e. archive. We can conclude that Foucault's main interest was in studying different discourses, which make a society but are themselves contradictory. Because discourses themselves are not absolutely true, there always lies gap between practice and statements of discourse.

Having discussed material conditions that enable and constrain the production of discourses, it is now essential to study the representational nature of discourse. Though discourses represent the specific cultural circumstances under which lie the power structures and the relations of power, they don't represent the 'real'. So, to simplify this argument, we can say that the discourse, while trying to establish the 'Truth' always hovers between the 'real' and '(mis) representation'. Commenting on this Foucauldian idea, McHoul and Grace write that "Discourse is not just a form of representation; it is a material condition (or set of conditions) which enables and constrains the socially productive imagination. These conditions can therefore be referred to as 'discourses' or

'discursive formations of possibility" (34).

Foucault doesn't believe and distinguish between the best or the metadiscourse and the minor or the marginal discourse. He, in his interview to Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino said, his principal interest was to study how "effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false" (qtd. In Adams 1134).

How then is truth determined (or at least supposed to have been determined) by discourses if no discourse represents, the 'real'? It is such discourses that enable institution of different disciplines to wield power with which the criteria of truth is established. Who is allowed to speak with authority, what is free to be thought, written and spoken and what constraints are to be taken into account, are all determined by statements of discourse. Individuals, so living in certain discursive formations have to follow the truth looming around them. They can't think or, speak without obeying the unspoken 'archive' of rules and constraints, which is but the construct of disciplinary institutions. If they do so, they must risk being condemned to 'madness' or 'crime', for discourses always are said to have been reserving, what Foucault calls, 'an exhaustive ordering of the world'. It is, he goes on to say, "as though methods, concepts, types of analysis and finally men themselves had all been displaced at the behest of a fundamental network defining the implicit and inevitable unity of knowledge" (The Order 75-76).

One of the facets of Foucauldian discourse is how individuals are made 'subjects' by the discourse. The simple thesis that Foucault is not interested in discourse as language, implies that he must be interested in discourse as thought - the intention of men who have formulated them. But, in turning away from discourse as a system of language to discourse as thought, Foucault clearly says there is no reason to suppose that these

rules and criteria are someone's personal thoughts. In his view, discourse can be a theoretical framework for manifestation of ideology of any society. And by this logic, a discourse never allows freedom to an individual. He is always guided by the rules of this discursive formation and their effects. Foucault, in his paper 'Politics and the Study of Discourse' suggests, "seek in the discourse, not its laws of construction as do the structural methods, but its conditions of existence [. . .]. Refer the discourse not to the thought, to the mind or to the subject which might have given rise to it, but to the practical field in which it is deployed" (15).

This makes it clear that instead of being a means through which a human subject accomplishes something, discourse places him in certain position. The subject is supposed to speak, think or write from the place specifically set for him. It is because discourses are the product of discursive conditions (i.e. rules and criteria) that specify the position of subjects who can now identify themselves as 'patients', 'doctors', 'perverts', 'criminals' etc.

The Foucauldian concept of discourse may remain vague if not compared with Edward Said's concept of orientalism as a discourse and Antonio Gramsci's hegemony. Though Foucault is said to have not taken any political issues in his writing, it is there in this early essay 'George Canguilhem: Philosopher of Error' that he explicitly equates European knowledge and the mirage of western rationality with the "economic domination and political hegemony of colonialism" (54). Seen through this statement alone, Foucault seems to be sharing affinities with both Said and Gramsci who respectively talk about textual colonialism i.e. orientalism and 'the wilful consent to be ruled' i.e. hegemony as the effects of European discourses. But Foucault's concept of discourse is not exactly akin to these two theorists. The point can be established with

reference to Said who writes on 'how' of Orientalism: "Continued investment made orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the orient into western consciousness" (6).

The above statement clearly hints at the three major differences between Saidian and Foucauldian discourses. Firstly, Said takes discourse as a 'continued' phenomenon with which Foucault, the philosopher of discontinuity, obviously disagrees. Secondly, Said takes the European knowledge about the orient as tainted that comes after being filtered through a 'grid'. This is similar to Foucault's notion, for he also doesn't believe in 'real' representation. But, for Said there exists the 'real orient' which should be sought outside the discourses of orientalism neglecting its 'tainted' representation. In this way Said (mis) interprets Foucault. Thirdly, Said examines the west-east relationship as that of power and domination for which orientalism functions as knowledge and imperialism as power. But for Foucault, the power relationship results from differences in discourses that are involved in discursive practices.

Foucault however seems to have some commonalities with Antonio Gramsci, who defines hegemony as the 'willful consent to be ruled' and doesn't examine power relationship in it in terms of domination. People belonging to certain discourses, according to Gramsci, may have that consent to be ruled whereas the superior discourse (not metadiscourse) may try to rule with the help of the truth it establishes. Foucault also agrees that discursive practices result from the differences in discourses, which are intricately woven with power that helps a discourse to be a governing and an ordering medium in society. Finding an intersection between Gramsci and Foucault would be easy with reference to Raman Seldon who says, "The discursive practices have not universal validity but are historically dominant ways of controlling and preserving social relations

of exploitations" (106).

In this way, moving away from the idea of discourse as a system of language to define it as thought, Foucault challenges the formalistic trend of seeing subject as the source of knowledge: the human mind receives impressions of the objects and puts them into 'transparent' words. Foucault sees discourse as the product of 'archive' of the material conditions. He sees discourse as inseparable from power because every discourse according to him, becomes the ordering medium of the institution it belongs to. Although discourse is neither true nor false, it attempts to represent the 'real' and forms limits and constraints for its subjects. It does so with the help of certain dichotomies related to normality or abnormality. For example, the discourses define madness, criminality, and sexual abnormality and so on in relation to sanity, justice and sexual normality. And "such discursive formations massively determine and constrain the forms of knowledge" (Selden 106). All human subjects, therefore, are positioned by discourses or knowledge of different fields and of themselves. So, to view discourse, as a pure form of knowledge would be a flawed approach, for no discourse could escape from the network in which power politics governs all other components. To talk about the development of any discipline (e.g. science) for the advantage of the human subject, therefore, is nothing but an illusion for a subject who is always imprinted and conditioned by the discursive practices of his society.

Symbiotic Relationship between Power and Truth

Characterization of Michel Foucault as a political theorist may be a bluff, if for being a political thinker one needs to have put forward a manifesto of political ideas. But some of his works, contain a powerful, original and coherent body of political ideas. Especially, in his theory of apparently neutral and politically invisible techniques of

power, Foucault appears to be concerned with politics of a society. Although he never liked to play the role of an ideological traffic policeman. Foucault's ideas on 'subject', 'knowledge' and 'truth' make him at least a political philosopher. This is because, his main interest lies not merely in power and its manifestation but also in techniques which produce truth so as to lead an individual to subjection.

Foucault's 'radical' thesis on power has to be seen from three angles; its deviation from that of the concept of thinkers of his time, its productive but dangerous nature and constitution of subjectivity through power relations. Firstly, unlike the main trend of postmodernism which questions the 'Truth' so as to argue for 'truths', Foucault's main project is not to devaluate and discredit the truth or science in general but to question the historical conditions necessary for the emergence of such truths. For this purpose he demonstrates the historicity of different disciplines and the concepts of objects related to such disciplines along with power relations and their strategies.

In developing this new idea of power, Foucault is less concerned with power as an entity or process than with an interrogation of the material conditions which promote specific power relations. He calls this project of evaluating one's own historical epoch or present an 'ontology' of the present. Writing on this idea of Foucault, McHoul and Grace say "An ontology of the present would aspire to unearth the particular historical conditions which produced the types of 'scientific' truth peculiar to our society" (60). From this it becomes clear that, these two critics see, as we do, Foucault setting himself apart from all other contemporary social theorists. This is because of his interest in not the status of the truths but on the conditions necessary for the production of such truths.

Secondly, Foucault's turning away from the repressive hypothesis of power so as to attribute the productivity and creative potential to this bears much weight in his

'radical' thesis of power. Power, according to him, is a creative source for positive value, and is practised hegemonically. It is not hierarchical flowing from top to bottom and is not used vertically to dominate the 'other'. Foucault's power doesn't adhere to the repressive hypothesis that sees power functioning in the form of chain which localizes it in a new hands. Power, for him is not just the ruthless domination of the weak by the stronger. This idea is akin to Nietzsche who says that power is not to be 'had' at all. In *History of Sexuality* (vol. one), Foucault writes about the all pervasive nature of power:

Power is everywhere: not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere. [. . .] power comes from below; that is there is no binary and all encompassing opposition between ruler and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix-no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body. (93-4)

From this it becomes clear that Foucault's main project was to turn the negative conception of power upside down. (By 'negative conception' we mean the vertical and hierarchical notion of power). In doing this he owed more to Nietzsche than to Karl Marx who, like Foucault, saw history in terms of power but defined power as something to be wielded by somebody upon the 'other'. On the contrary, Foucault saw power not simply as a repressive force or tool of conspiracy but as a complex of forces that produce what happens in a society. It is not wielded by somebody because he himself is caught and empowered by certain discourses and practices that constitute power.

Foucault's concern with the productivity of power, as his notion that power is all pervasive, also deserves equal weight. Power, seen in this light, is about two parties who are involved in its exercise. And such exercise in power relations produces effects on the

object, concepts and the structures of institutions which play vital role in the circulation of power in its modern forms. Practices with such power relations generate knowledge regarding various components including human beings of the social structure. He strongly defends this point in *Discipline and Punish* as he says "we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms; it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks' it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces, it produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (194).

Now the question is: if power only produces and generates something, what is wrong in its exercise? Is it always useful? The answer is; the use of power and knowledge in the productive way doesn't mean that it is always 'safe'. It is so not because false knowledge is used in the practice of power, but because it can be 'essentialist'. For Foucault, such essentialist notion and compulsive quest for fundamentalist certainties is not 'safe. The idea (to put it in simple words) is what James B. Faubion states in his introduction to *Power: Essential works of Foucault* (vol. 3) "Nothing including the exercise of power is evil in itself but everything dangerous" (XIX).

Thirdly, parallel to this 'danger' lying behind the exercise of power, there lies an attachment of constitution of subjectivity to power relations. Because discourse of a discipline positions an individual within certain limits, the individual thinks, speaks and tries to act accordingly. The knowledge of himself and that of other objects, therefore, can't escape the boundary set the discourses. And, because the knowledge prescribed by discourses is what determines power relations, an individual is 'subjected' to be identified according to this demarcation. Cited below is the Foucauldian notion of the 'all encompassing' nature of power in the modern state:

I don't think that we should consider the 'modern state' as an entity that

was developed above individuals, ignoring what they are and even their very existence but on the country, as a very sophisticated structure in which individuals can be intergrated, under one condition that [their] individuality would be shaped in a new form, and submitted to a set of very specific patterns. ("Subject and power" 334)

This is the description of how power categorizes the individual, marks him, attaches him to his own identity and imposes a law of truth on him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subject.

To try to put the matter as simply as possible, Foucault doesn't say that all power is evil or all government unacceptable but he does think that the theorems claiming to confer legitimacy on power or government are fictions. And social contract based on such legitimacy is nothing but a fairy tale.

In stating the 'ways' of power in a society, we can't disregard a question: does Foucault give the same position to power as the structuralists do to the centre? No. Foucault's position is very different from that of the structuralists because his 'power' unlike their 'centre', can't function in the absence of knowledge/truth. Clarifying this idea, James D. Faubion, in the introduction to his book, writes:

One of the key clarifying points Foucault makes is that what is most interesting about links between power and knowledge is the detection of false or spurious knowledge at work in human affairs but, rather, the role of knowledge that are valued and effective because of their reliable instrumental efficacy. (XVIII)

Faubion's term 'instrumental efficacy' for knowledge makes it clear that Foucault's main interest is not about power as such but its application through techniques that are

supported by knowledge/truth.

As discussed above, power marks an individual and imposes the law on him but it is knowledge that makes it possible. That is to say that power's attempt to subject to individual becomes successful with the help of knowledge. To subject an individual means to compel someone else to be under control or dependent and to tie a conscience or self-knowledge to his own identity. The subject, therefore, is always placed in a net-like organization of power, knowledge and representation. It becomes something around which power circulates and produces its effects.

A subject can't but be submissive to a discipline which being aid by an institution becomes the foundation of knowledge and truths. Because discipline is, what Paul Bove calls, "an accumulative, co-operative project for the production of knowledge, the exercise of power and the creation of careers" (qtd. In Spannos 52). Such a project, therefore, always produces knowledge irrespective of truth or falsity, and support the 'techniques' of power. Foucault's observations about the regulatory mechanisms of knowledge and their assistance to the 'techniques' of power are expressed in his hypothesis about dominant knowledge systems that are the products of the disciplines. He sees such a system" as double repression: in terms of those whom it excluded from the process and in terms of the model and the standard (the bars) it imposes on those receiving this knowledge" (Discipline and Punish 219). In this way, the subject can't but live in the network of power, knowledge and the techniques of power, all of which produce and revolve around the subject.

A grave issue, now, is if all social contracts and governments are 'fairy tales' designed to exercise power why can't the subjects resist that power? If knowledge is the part of a social practice of subjecting individuals by mechanisms of power that lay claim

to truth, why can't the subjects question the truth on its effects of power and power on its effects of truth? Foucault doesn't say that the 'governed' have no rights. He is of the opinion that a subject can possess a critical attitude of not being 'governed thus'. A subject can always raise question about the systems he lives in. He can also bungle the 'consent' with which the power works on the two parties involved. Supporting such a revolt of the subject, Foucault writes in his essay 'Subject and Power':

May be the target now a days is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political 'double kind' which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures. (336)

On this basis, however, we can't say that Foucault talks about the liberation of 'embodied' individual. No doubt the writings of Foucault's latter career, pay much heed to human rights, the revolutions, and the resistance of the subjects, but he, unlike Kant, an enlightenment philosopher, doesn't see an individual breaking open from inside the 'tutelage'. This means, he doesn't say that subject can be liberated from the kind of subjectivity they are 'bound' to live with, because according to him, subjects also try to resist from a creation location in the power structure. They resist from 'within'. So, they only try to alter the power relations by rising from another discourse. Revolts of these kinds will also be nothing more than simply an attempt to create another 'essentialist' discourse. The subjects, because of already being components of the power structure, can't get rid of the subjectivity imposed on them but only try to alter prevailing power relations.

Is it useless to revolt then? Of course not, although the subjects can't liberate themselves from the state and the state's institutions, they can according to Foucault,

"promote new forms of subjectivity through refusal of this kind of individuality that has been imposed on [them] for several centuries" (Subject and Power, 336).

This can be done, he seems to suggest not by going beyond the limits set by the discourses but by thinking from 'within'. But the subjects are sure to fail if they attempt to create the "next essentialist notion" by opposing the prevailing one. So, only to develop the 'critical attitude' as the 'will' not to be governed without trying to develop the new essence, is the best revolution of subjects against a system that imposes order on them.

Foucault, thus, challenging the conditions of the production of certain truths which, for him are but the effects of power, deviates in his concept of power and truth from his contemporary thinkers. He doesn't say that power is evil in itself, rather his idea of power is related to productivity. But, he seems to suggest in his latter works, that productive power limits an individual and subjects him to certain conditions. This subjection of an individual is possible with the help of 'techniques' of power that are aided by truth/knowledge. But the subject can resist his position and conditions that are set for him by the ideological framework of his discourse. Foucault, however, doesn't see in such resistance the liberation of human beings, as argued by humanists. His reason is that the claims arising from the resistance are also the products of another discourse and can never be "disinterested" and "objective". So the best way for the subject, Foucault says, is to develop a critical attitudes as the will not to be governed 'thus' and to deny the 'essentialist' notion by locating oneself at the 'frontiers'. But in doing so, the subject should never attempt to establish the 'essence' on his own.

Chapter III

Fact and Fiction of the Post-War American Civilization in Mailer's

The Armies of the Night

Fictionalizing the History, Historicizing the Fiction

Norman Mailer's metaphorically titled novel *The Armies of the Night* not only deals with the thirty two hours' demonstration before the asphalt plaza, Pentagon but also demonstrates the underlying evils of the post-war American civilization revealed through the major character Mailer's experience which he undergoes in the technology land (America). Ruminations and critical visions of character Mailer rampantly sketch the historical and fictional maps of American Great Society and latter he himself blurs the genres taking history as fiction and fiction as history. The whole novel is an account of the three days' demonstration before the Defence Department of America that is Pentagon, which event had historically taken place in 1968 when the marginalized groups, veterans, and students were remonstrating the American presence in Vietnam War. Hence, protestors are the characters who not only protest the "Uncle Sam's Whorehouse War" (114), but also try their best to present the "morally blind Pentagon from destroying the future of its own nations" (132). Except Norman Mailer, the protagonist of the novel, some other veterans - Robert Lowell, MacDonald, Noam Chomsky and others, are fictionally employed as the characters who collaborate to protest against the America's absurd interference in the Vietnam war. There are two books named History as Novel (Book One) and Novel as History (Book Two). Book one consists of five parts which include the preparation for and events of demonstration taken place during Thursday evening, Friday, Saturday and all of Sunday. Likewise, book two novelizes the same event or historical event - the battle of the Pentagon in eleven

chapters. It means the participants of the symbolic battle are treated fictionally and historically just to blur the fiction and fact of text and context.

In fact, symbolic significance of the title counts much more at the fictional level. *The Armies of the Night* can be divided in two words 'armies' and 'night' whereas it can have metaphoric meanings at two levels: at one level, 'armies' refers to the citizens or demonstrators and 'night' refers to the dark side of American civilization against which armies are fighting; and at next level 'armies' refers to the gun headed supporters of the power elite, who are living and leading a dark life at home and in Vietnam. Brutality and violence were being created by American soldiers in Vietnam who went there just to assist at the surface level but at the deeper level, they had gone there to make South Vietnamese "pro-American" instead of being-communist. Citizens of America not only protest against this American wargasm but also remonstrate against "a totalitarian tyranny" (130), "sexotechnologist" (110) and "sore beneath the skin, new sore" (19).

With this brief account of the anti-Vietnam demonstration in the backdrop *The Armies of the Night* can be read as a depiction of 'History of otherwise'. Demonstration against mainstream policy is inextricably associated with the novel. There are ample evidences for us to help draw a parallel between the anti-Americanism and fictional sides of the novel. The major characters Mailer, Lowell, and others protest the way of "high church of military industrial complex, the Pentagon, blind five-sided eye of subtle suppression which had come to America out of very air of the century" (132). This "greatest rally in American history" (247) is for civil disobedience. Here, "thousands of people will disrupt the centre of the American war machine" (261). But what may be the purpose of Mailer behind sketching such historical events in the fictional form? It may be to confront the historical bases that support American justification of its superiority in

civilizational affairs. Because, our main concern here is Mailer's confrontation, it is necessary to see how he accomplished his purpose. He adopts two measures for this purpose: by exposing the inhuman motives and behaviours of the mainstream government towards the peaceful demonstrators, and by parodying official history and 'redrawing' his own personal history.

Mailer's confrontation with the historical bases becomes crystal clear through his fictionalization of the 1968 Demonstration before the money - headed complex, Pentagon. Mailer is novelist but at the same time he is a fictional character. Events taken place during thirty two hours' demonstration are real events but at the same time fictional as it is narrated through fictional character. Character Mailer ruminates over the history making process of the historicist, "It may be obvious by now that a history of the march on the Pentagon which is not unfair will never be written, anymore than a history which could prove dependable in details" (292). Criticizing over the 'dependable history' made by mainstream, he thoroughly depicts the counter history which are genealogically significant to know the fact and fiction of the certain event and theme.

Mailer climbs over the tower made of fiction which is located in the jungle and then sees horizon that is history. It means factual history can never be Hegelian; and fictional history is also biased from the personality of the fictional historicist. Mailer says, "Horizon can be viewed from tower built in the forest but if tower is crooked and the telescopes warped, facts can't be seen" (245).

Demonstration plan is to surround the Pentagon, a Defence Department and symbolically exorcise the ghost dwelling there, so that this movement could serve as another "paradigm of American civilization in this decade of the 20th century" (267). Hippies, Blacks, Jews, and so many oppressed classes gather to protest the mainstream

way of involving in Vietnam's internal affairs and not giving due attention towards the demand of suppressed citizens. But the government brutally suppresses the demonstration misusing its power, military force, and police. Mailer journalistically fictionalizes the very events as he himself claims in a third person narration, "it is obvious that the first book is a history in the guise or dress or manifest of a novel, and the second is a real or true novel no less presented in the style of history" (284).

This is the irony that the state apparatus attempts to formulate history in a soothing manner which can never be soothing as American mainstream history of civilization leaves the ground in a levitational manner and at reality this history bears so many evils within which pesters the inner American psyche.

American concept of democracy, human right, welfare foreign policy, technological advancement and human development are mocked by Mailer. Preacher of democracy and welfare foreign policy demonstrates brutality over its citizens at home and in Vietnam respectively. Plight of human is clear by the inhuman treatment of Marshals, military personnels towards the sit in protestors. How jail keepers treated them is clear here, "For a day they lay naked on the floor, for many days naked with blankets and mattress on the floor. For many days they didn't eat or drink water. Dehydration brought them near to madness" (318).

All the above mentioned incidents help Mailer confront and invalidate the bases justified by official history and to expose the brutal working of power in history.

The first book can be, in the formal sense, nothing but a personal history which while written as a novel was to the best of "the author's memory scrupulous to facts" (284) and therefore a document; whereas the second, while dutiful to all newspaper accounts, eyewitness reports; and historic inductions available, while even obedient to a

general style of historical writing, at least upto a point, while even pretending to be a history is finally now to be disclosed as some sort of condensation of a collective novel - which is to admit that an explanation of the mystery of the events at the Pentagon can't be developed by the methods of history only by instincts of the novelist. The reasons are several, but reduce to one. Forget that the journalistic information available from both sides is so incoherent, inaccurate, contradictory, malicious, even based on error that no accurate history is conceivable. More than one historian has found the way through chains of false facts. Mailer says:

No, the difficulty is that the history is interior-no documents can give sufficient intimation; the novel must replace history at precisely that point where experience is sufficiently emotional, spiritual, psychical, moral, existential, or supernatural to expose the fact that the historian in pursuing the experience would be obliged to quit the clearly demarcated limits of historic inquiring. The collective novel is written in the clock of a historic style [. . .] with hundreds of confusing and opposed facts and this will now unashamedly enter that world of strange lights and intuitive speculation which is the novel. (284)

This implies that historian alone can't bring context into text rather novelist is also needed for this project as the event (context) has both factual and fictional (intellectual and emotional) aspects.

After analyzing the fictional and historic aspects of the novel, now it is necessary to illustrate the ways through which Mailer expresses his perspectives on the American civilization by parodying its 'official history'.

Writer Mailer's 'Perspectives' Through Character Mailer

Experimental nature lies at the point that writer himself is a major character in this novel. Writer Mailer shows his 'perspectives' being a character Mailer throughout this novel. So, *The Armies of the Night* is an expression of history by a person who can never detach himself from the material conditions that he lives with.

Mailer ruptures the demarcation between history (1968, Anti war Demonstration at Pentagon) and fiction (the novel) while developing the novel as personal history of the 'otherwise'. Therefore, the fact that the novel both refers and is referred by the Anti war Demonstration becomes clear with Mailer's technique of historicizing the novel and fictionalizing the demonstration.

Character Mailer narrates his personal history combining it with the national history of America. He becomes the spokesperson of "the mysteries of America buried" (132). This man reveals "the carnal secrets of law and order tried to be maintained by mainstream" (160). So, writer Mailer best represents himself through the 'schizophrenic mind' of character Mailer as the technology land filled chaos and criss cross into its citizens. So, Mailer never forgets to express his contempt towards American 'ways'. The journalistic and collage narrative that he narrates throughout the novel exposes the trauma American like himself were compelled to face during this post-war American hegemony.

The distorted mentality of character Mailer is expressed in fragments throughout the novel. Character Mailer who speaks of himself in the third person is a war tainted individual representing all the 'minority group' people of America. He gives outlet to the "metaphors of his mind" (133) exposing "the truth of the objects stripped of all love, sentiment, or libids" (158). This represents Mailer's 'redrawing' of official history. Mailer comments on the "storm of hysteria" (165) of the sexotechnologists who are running

America offering "music in the gas chambers in the new totalitarianism" (178). Hence, Mailer shows the economic and political 'soul' of American so as to sketch his own personal history.

Mailer's detestation over the corporation land can be openly realized as he says, "[. . .] deepening schizophrenia, man and women devoutly worked for American corporation and caught in an unseen whose pressure could split their mind from their soul" (211).

Mailer represents the corporate American 'misery' who resists the grand cultural waves that is 'mysterious' and 'painful' for the citizens. He sees power hunger mainstream government exercising power over 'others' for fulfilling their deep-rooted lust. Mailer comments on the corrupt heart of the American establishment that, according to him, has a partnership with evil and power.

Mailer offers a dramatic analysis in *The Armies of the Night* which explains the schizophrenia and hysteria of post - atomic superpower. America that resulted in the killings of its own sons in Guerrilla war of Vietnam and suppression of the 'willpower' of its own citizens. Here, Mailer takes the presence of America in internal affairs of Vietnam and behaviours of mainstream over the marginalized as wholly destructive and brutalizing exercise of American violence whose only rationale is the verification of vulgarized self-imagery of potency, toughness and masculinity. However, our concern is not how Mailer takes war but how he exposes the illness in America's 'ways' of power. The dread demonstration he states before the warlust Pentagon and its journalistic account he gives, is his technique to expose the 'ways' of mainstream America in novelized form, so as to confute the historical infrastructures.

Confutation over the Coherence of American Advancement

Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* reveals the American Dream of hope, agreement and success turned into a nightmare of violence, murder, vengeance and social disintegrity. It is Mailer's assessment of the prosperity and freedom as slogans of the American dream. As an 'anti-establishment' writer, Mailer narrates a bizarre, violent and absolutely contemporary American story of the partnership of 'power and evil'.

Mailer critically assesses the American power in *The Armies of the Night* because he targets to refute the mainstream American 'myth' of 'coherent advancement'. Historical movement of human civilization, according to Mailer, can never be coherent as it is assumed by the power holders. Mailer refuses the Geist (the universal spirit) of civilization. Every 'thesis' and its 'anti-thesis', he seems to suggest, may not merge into a synthesis. He verifies this idea by making the mainstream government's attempt to synthesize mainstream culture and counter culture failed in the post-war American scenario.

America's failure to create the integrated or inclusive social and cultural infrastructures exposes the mythical 'oneness' of the Great Society. Rubin, the demonstrator, evaluates the fate of citizens and American society which brings bizarre conclusion as he lastly says, "we're now in the business of wholesale disruption and widespread resistance and dislocation of the American society" (261). Mailer metaphorically shows his attitude towards the ongoing physical and psychical revolution in America which was backed up by the media as he says, "Since the American Revolution must climb uphill blindfolded in the long Capitalist night, any thing which was publicity became a walking stick" (297). This implies the movement of American civilization which is itself lame and supported by the walking stick like power structure.

Mailer says "the real victory or defeat could be measured latter by the militancy, money, and mass available for the next big operation" (296) because the historical coherence is not itself a coherent fact, rather it is made so by the mainstream who possess the instruments to judge the historical event and call them defeat or victory. Mainstream American government calls itself victorious after clubbing the few armies of citizens in the demonstrations but in fact so called defeated ones never felt defeated at the heart as their purpose of 'anti-establishment' was reached to their deeper satisfaction even though they were arrested. It further suggests that the idea of linear progress of American humanity is merely a 'myth'.

Mailer as a character doesn't seem to be an integrated individual because he is at the sametime an amoral, instinctual, brilliantly eager and an appealing demonstrator. Not only this, he represents the place, the context and the locus for an American mixture which moves not towards 'culmination' but towards disaster about to be caused by various historical accelerations that have taken place, such as the Anti-war Demonstration in front of war making complex Pentagon. The mores of the American past have shaped character Mailer as a person who in the beginning seems to have some pessimism. He says that "American heroism is corrupted by American know-how" (165) but in the last chapter he shows the optimism in a skeptical manner because he is 'subjected' by the underlying structure of the Great Society. His acceptance makes us know his obligation to work as a corporate 'subject'. The big question arises: does he show his absolute loyalty to the American dream of advancement? The answer can be illustrated with Mailer's own account in the novel:

She (America) will probably give birth, and to what? The most fearsome totalitarianism the world has ever known? Or can she, poorgiant,

tormented lovely girl, deliver a babe of a new world brave and tender,
artful and wild? (320)

This illustrates Mailer's evaluation of American power. "Photographs of the crowd at the Pentagon" (275) indicate the American ways of power. Such an assessment of mainstream America by Mailer hints that his peaceful demonstration before the Pentagon is not only to negate the 'Americanism' but also to outlet his schizophrenic crisis. 'Corrupt' and 'evil' institutional practices of America subject its citizens like Mailer but they never remain silent, rather confront the webbing power influence.

American dream of democracy has turned into nightmare because the very slogan of individuality, freedom and human right fail to actualize themselves before the poor and victimized citizens who surround the power symbol Pentagon just for their human right promised by the outwardly 'promising land'.

Mailer's war is against the "cold mystery of the corporation" (213). America's war is against the deeper schizophrenic living of the power mongers who feel relief by indulging themselves at war in Vietnam and brutal repression of its own citizens. Mailer comments over the war 'ego' of America:

American needed the war. It would need a war so long as technology expanded on every road of communication, and the cities and corporations spread like cancer; the good Christian Americans needed the war or they would lose their Christ. (212)

Barbarism of America is increasing along with its technological advancement. War is their living condition or the Church where they worship just not to be civilized but to be barbaric, warlust.

Hippers and some other beatinics, who were subjects of the civilizing land, act vulgarly and armorally. Even Mailer never forgets to use four letter words or taboo words. This expresses the bitter reality of civilizing land where its own citizens are not civilized but attempts to civilize the foreigners taking it as the 'Whiteman's burden'.

Mailer symbolically reveals the inner truth of the civilized race who live a barren life having no any peace and restfulness into the mind. Mailer says, "High church of the corporation, the Pentagon spoke exclusively of mass man and his civilization, every aspect of the building was anonymous, monotonous, massive, inter changeable" (255). It ironically implies that mainstream grand narrative of civilization and individualism are apparent in the schizophrenic existence of the people and mysterious manifestation of the Church or Pentagon which kills Christ (citizens) who gave power or location to it. This commitment of sin is prevalent in "American brutality at home and aboard" (275). It shows mainstream government doesn't represent America but exercises power over its subjects and Vietnamese.

The demonstrators themselves debate over the ways of demonstration in front of the Pentagon. Students for Democratic Society and Contingent dispute over the manner of protest. Even the cleavages can be seen in the social and cultural elements which mocks the pride of Americans for making America a melting pot, so the attempt of making melting civilization in the form of continued advancement is aborted due to such incoherence and heterogeneities.

Mailer's confrontation with history and its working can be seen from two dimensions. First, he implies that America lacks a coherent and inclusive culture. American citizens are not in integrated 'oneness'. Small and great rival forces and group tussle over their issues of interests. This falsifies the 'myth' of linear and continued

progress towards culmination: a point of definite closure. Secondly, Mailer reveals the impact of mainstream bulliness upon the physical and psychic life of the marginalised people. The people can't remain aloof with these schizophrenic crisis underlying in the American society. Character Mailer physically and mentally refuged before the power holders who inscribe tags upon him.

Battle of Pentagon: Brutal Manifestation of American Civilization

The above mentioned ideas highlight the cocooned 'evils' of the post-war American civilization. Mailer even examines the fictional story of the mainstream American's civilizational progress bringing the issue of the Anti-war Demonstration 1968, in front of the Pentagon. Now, the time is to answer the question that how American civilization manifested itself in the uncivilized way? It's venturesome task to locate the answer without taking the major references Mailer presents in *The Armies of the Night*. Mailer unveils the inner sickness of the post-war American civilization bringing the editorial from the newsletter *Mobilizer*, mouthpiece of the Mobilization, a protesting group and the fact goes like this:

The American people today live in a country which has developed the world's most murderous military machine. We live in a society which trains its sons to be killers and which channels its immense wealth into the business of suppressing courageous men from Vietnam to Detroit who struggle for the simple human right to control their own lives and destinies. We American have no right to call ourselves human beings unless, personally and collectively, we stand up and say, NO to the death and destruction perpetrated in our name. (262)

The phrase 'no right to call ourselves human beings' bears the kernel of the Mailer's thesis that the American civilization is controversial as it manifests itself in a barbaric fashion. The passage also unveils that the Americans call themselves most civilized and model 'homo sapiens' of the whole human history. They are far ahead from any other historical civilization as they claim that they have most advanced humane politics, social and cultural infrastructures. It was with this discourse of civilization that they claim to be civilized but the post war American civilization is merely a fiction beneath which lay the fact of their power politics.

Discourse is a superstructure which has material condition that is infrastructure - it means the discourse of civilization which they employed to be civilized also had its own bases. First, it was necessary for America to create a hegemonous civilization which could pay more for its power during cold war period. Second, America was looking for the ways to dominate outcast people of America and even the world politics through civilizational software rather than weaponry hardware. This real politics of civilizational discourse of America is thoroughly sketched by Mailer when he says, "A compensating damage to America if it chose to dominate a dozen Asian nations with its technologies and its armies while having to face their guerrilla wars" (210). Mainstream America becomes violent because the "expression of brutality offers a definite if temporary relief to the schizophrenic" (212).

Exercising corporate power and institutional violence was the main function of the discourse for the mainstream America. Post-war superpower American wanted to advance itself technologically which could make America a step forward in the scientific arena that was the major supporter of the power. Mailer voices this fact,

"American the first great power to be built on bullshit" (226). Demonstrators call this technological advancement as the headlong journey of America which makes America, at the deeper level, barbaric as it had been in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the II World War. Loudspeaker has been called a 'bullhorn' and 'engineering' of Pentagon is just a "cluster of barnacles" (254). This implies the evil sides of technological advancement which was celebrated by Americans as the indicators of their civilization.

Mailer's criticism of American society makes it clear that the loss of morality, death, decay and degeneration are products of the partnership of power and the discourse. Pentagon spokesperson, after the demonstration, says, "We were trying to keep order against varying degrees of violence and insurrection" (315) which is the polished truth fabricated with discourse and power because the Pentagon inherently had created violence and decay in the American society naming it in a soothing way which makes their rule hegemonously easier.

America constructed the 'other' who would have the 'consent to be ruled'. Some 'pro-war' Americans justify the American way of governing and fighting in Vietnam because they were brainwashed in such a manner "Big Brother" (313) cast subtle net upon those through "corporation land's whip—the mass media" (281). Mass Media voices the government's cocooned speech after the end of demonstration that "The government remained to the end what had been from the beginning; a part legalistic, a part co-operative, and a part threatening" (313). This bewildered the logics of counter cultural heroes who claimed America to be completely uncivilized over its own patriotic citizens treating them inhumanly and undemocratically. However, it's an American tendency to create a fact out of fiction as it holds the Midas touch—power.

Mainstream America tries to maintain "law and order" (231) and does every governmental function after formally passing bills from the Senate because the Senate or the whole governmental apparatuses want to 'represent' the whole Great Society including hippies, blacks, Jews and other marginalized. They maintain such a power that voice of government must be taken as the voice of the whole nation and nationalities. This is what we call the 'representation' of the others with the help of a 'truth' that comes from the discourse of democracy - an indicator of American civilization. But this 'creation' of truth can't escape the network of power with which Americans not only 'represent' whole Americans but also try to rule them. The American discourse of civilization that emerged because of the 'archive' (flux of material conditions) prevailing in the Cold War era, in this way, became a generalized theme that the postwar American civilization was charming and humanistic.

The Armies of the Night foregrounds the basic two problems in such a complex network of American 'ways' of power and discourse. Firstly, Mainstream America suppresses the 'wills' and 'demands' of its own citizens and Vietnamese who don't want war and car. Secondly, it tries to establish an absolute and a universal concept of civilization.

People demand withdrawal of American boys from foreign land and rational heading of the government including its all citizens. They want peace, social and cultural upliftment in a humane way but ironically democratic country lacks all these and don't step forward to fulfill these gaps, rather it suppresses the twenty million people's rally employing 'technological crews and weapons'. Then, can America's civilizational superiority on the ground of democracy be justified? – absolutely unjustifiable. America tries its best to create universal indicators of modern

civilization— human right preservation, technological advancement, democratic norms, social and cultural integrity and even attempts to employ these in Vietnam. But this charming and clear visions of universal civilizational norms end in the " deepening schizophrenia, man and woman devoutly worked for American corporation and caught in an unseen vise whose pressure could split their mind from their soul" (211).

Power's attempt to subject to individual becomes successful with the help of knowledge. Mailer, in the last section, sustains hope that out of very power infrastructure may born new baby—"tender and artful" (320). Mainstream power structure subjected its citizens and even Vietnamese through its knowledge about them. It knows how to subject and so knowledge is used to support power which could subject the individuals and the theme, even though it has no any underlying truth. Mailer says that subjected individuals were "brainwashed by Hollywood, T.V. and Time" (179). Even some demonstrators say that "Americans are always correct except when they're burning babies in foreign countries they know nothing about" (195). It suggests knowing is too important before exercising power over the subject because it is necessary to amass "new facts to shore polemical walls" (200). And thus, knowledge of the subjects assist to make them consent the rule which is itself a power politics. Mailer emphasizes over knowledge:

"[. . .] the last of man's power from his senses in order to stone power in piled banks of coded knowledge. The essence of coded knowledge was that it could be made available to all because only a few had the code to comprehend it". (255)

This implies that civilization bases its justification with the help of power and knowledge which subject everything under its pervasive and disguised control.

"The center of America might be insane" (211) because Mailer's this conclusion carries the whole theme of the novel that very logic of superior American civilization, at the core, is vacuum but the power and discourse cover it, inside which "[. . .] disease of America, its oncoming totalitarianism, its oppressiveness, its smog" (211) are garbaged.

Thus, discourse of civilization becomes tool for mainstream Americans to exercise power over outcast citizens and Vietnamese. Mainstream government morally lost the 'crusade' of the Pentagon because the 'truth' it sought to establish itself through physical suppression became a banal fact of power network. American discourse of civilization is nothing else than a dominant way of controlling and preserving power relations.

Chapter- IV

Conclusion

Mailer's central concern in *The Armies of the Night* is to pose a big question before the basic relationship between historical actuality and fictional metaphoricity which unveils how realities are constructed so as to expose the contradiction in the American claim to civilizedness. At the same time, moral defeat of the mainstream government in brutally suppressing "The first greatest rally in American history" (247) of civil disobedience gives a moral punch to the Mecca of democratic practices. As the novel is a nonfiction genre written in experimental fashion, collage of events and description tacitly demonstrate the paralysis of American civilization because Mailer employs the "radical measures necessary to save the roots" (209) of uglier beauty that is America. So, Mailer's America is levitational arching towards sky like a fur of fairy tale.

Mailer confronts the mainstream grandnarrative of civilization in *Why We Are in Vietnam?* too where D.J. and Rusty become the unconscious psyche of American culturedness which is barbaric within itself. So, Mailer's judgement over American civilization is based on the fact that the American way of creating and historicizing civilizational fiction is for the "lust of power" (212).

Some of the black and minority group writers of the contemporary era have inked evils of mainstream America in their creative genres. Allen Ginsberg, poet of minority group named Beat Generation, sketched a barbaric map of the post-war technology land in his poetic manifesto 'Howl' which characterizes mainstream culture as the ghost as he mentions, "screaming, vomiting, whispering facts and memories and anecdotes and

eyeball kicks and shocks of hospitals and jails and wars" (Howl: Ginsberg). This counterculture tendency is explicit in *The Armies of the Night* too which condemns the capitalistic exploitation and marginalization that caused schizophrenic angst among the post-war Americans.

Sean McCann commented upon the mainstream democracy that the Kennedy administration had been far more interested in prosecuting the cold war abroad than in pursuing social justice at home. He claims that the Johnson administration's Commitments to the Vietnam War was a moral outrage that fatally undermined the ambitions of the Great Society. This implies the false ideology that American civilization celebrated the post-war era through dangerous tool- 'POWER'.

This study shows the banal facts of American civilizational indicators - human right, welfare foreign policy, welfare democratic state, people's sovereignty and so on which were the showcase as Vietnam war had been the showcase for the Americans - just to show power and anti -communistic sentiments to the Asians and the whole world. Mailer in the last section of the novel says, "the death of America rides in the smog. America - the land where a new kind of man was born from the idea that God was present in every man not only as a compassion but as power" (320). Mailer novelizes the American quest for power cocooned with the democratic norms and this creates a deep ridge between 'showing and doing' of American commitment to civilization. Famous critic of American foreign policy Noam Chomsky said in his visit to India in 2001, just after September crumbled the very Pentagon, that the underlying structure of 'terrorism' is America itself. It means barbarism of America is in its 'soul' while on the surface it seems to be civilized nation, pseudo model of Mesopotamic civilization to

show the scandalous, ribald and a frightening account of the American culturedness maintained by the subtle circulation of power.

Throughout this study, our main concern has been to show how Mailer questions 'official' history in order to confute the coherence of American progress and how he examines the barbaric suppression of citizens' peaceful demonstration and civil disobedience. Mailer fictionalizes the mainstream history powered up by mass media and does surgery over the mainstream belly taking out the garbage of pseudo civilization.

Mailer succeeds to confute history as 'Evolution' as he shows the poor plight of 'life, liberty and pursuit of happiness' committed by the American constitution since the era of Jefferson. Mailer says, "May be there are ten million people in America today who think we're heroes. Can't we let them be happy for a few months before they find out we're not!" (223). Through this, Mailer also rejects the humanist contention that civilization progresses from primitive state to one of the higher order. He feels that civilization, in the hands of Americans, has moved to the dead end.

American 'myth' of civilization is a fictional fact rather than historical fact. Historical facts are the oppression, militarization, jailing, social and cultural disintegration. Mailer says, "the novel has provided us with the possibility, no even the instrument to view our facts and conceivably study in that field of light" (246). Mailer's art of mystifying the hysterical fact aims to expose the paradox that the more civilized America tries to become, the more barbaric it acts.

D.H. Lawrence opines that the essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic and a killer. This "American fever" (197) is due the "totalitarian food" (199) given by the mainstream to its citizens and according to Mailer, "nihilism might be the only answer

(medicine) to totalitarianism" (199). Here, Mailer blurs the dichotomy of civilization and barbarism as it is solely formulated to fulfil the goal i.e. to practise power on other.

Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night*, if seen through the Foucauldian microscope named 'Politics of Power', crystallizes the paradoxes and contradictions slept inside the American fur of civilization. The non fiction novel makes a deep incision inside the "leprous skin" (320) of the motherland to exorcise the mainstream ghost which makes a 'diplomatic generalization' of historical facts. Mainstream America should have taken a radical step to sanctify its unholy 'Christian Heart' through the measures of humane and peaceful co-existence. But they remained deaf, rather boosted up their civilizational pretension - showing fictional charms of American civilization and doing barbaric harms over the humanity and the human race.

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