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Then, he began his history of the Pentagon. It insisted on becoming a history of himself over four days. He labored in the aesthetic of the problem for weeks, discovering that his dimensions as a character were simple: blessed had been the novelist for his protagonist was a simple of a hero and a marvel of a fool, with more than average gifts of objectivity (215-216).

These attempts of both Capote and Mailer, however, do not take them to the extent they hope, as the two texts remain in the realm of journalism rather than in that of fiction. Their efforts to subject reality to fictional representation are overwhelmed by the flood of reported accounts on the Clutters' case and the Pentagon march. The emphasis that becomes clear throughout both *In Cold Blood* and *The Armies of the Night* is that journalism remains the triumphant domain. Both works maintain that nonfiction novel adheres to the criteria of journalism more than to those of fiction. The study, accordingly, concludes that the most outstanding fashionable contribution of this genre is to make the novelist look like the reporter.

O Lord, forgive our people for they do not know, O Lord, find a little forgiveness for America in the puny reaches of our small suffering, O Lord, let these hours count on the scale as some small penance for the sins of the nation, let this great nation crying in the flame of its own gangrene be absolved for one tithe of its great sins by the penance of these minutes, O Lord, bring more suffering upon me that the sins of our soldiers in Vietnam be most utterly unforgiven – they are too young to be damned forever (287).

In view of the outstanding vacillation between fiction and journalism and the unprecedented drift towards documentation, discussed above, most critics defend the balance between fact and fiction, or reality and imagination in Capote's *In Cold Blood* and Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* is questionable. It is the coinage "nonfiction novel" invented by Truman Capote which mostly stands behind this attitude. The term implies a blend between the factual boundaries of nonfiction and the fictional horizons of novel. Affected by this coinage, some critics take this blend as the most outstanding feature of the genre.

It is evident, however, that Capote and Mailer realize that diversion into journalism cannot be a final triumph in itself. They prefer to make their narratives vacillate between the two extremes of fact and fiction. In an interview held in 1966, Capote assures that no other writer before him had thoroughly blended journalism and fiction and adds: "The motivating factor in my choice of material, that is, choosing to write a true account of an actual murder case – was altogether literary" (Hollowell, 1977, 64). Mailer, similarly, asserts in *Advertisements for Myself* that "there is finally no way one can try to apprehend complex reality without fiction" (1966, 199). Also, when Robert Lowell tells Mailer in *The Armies of the Night*: "Norman, I really think you are the best journalist in America", he, furiously, answers: "There are days when I think of my self as being the best writer in America" (22).

In both *In Cold Blood* and *The Armies of the Night*, Capote and Mailer, also, reflect this realization, where they strive to maintain that their practice of nonfiction novel does not mean that they abandon fiction or believe in its demise. They, therefore, seek to make their works distinguished from the nonfiction novel written by professional journalists like Tom Wolfe and John Didion, and to put their reportages in what Mailer describes in *The Armies of the Night* as "the costume of the novel". (215).

In *In Cold Blood*, Capote endeavors to give an impression that what he presents is a perception of reality, and that what happens is different from the representation of its happening. To create such impression, he focuses on two elements. The first is the continuous shift of reporting from scenes of the Clutters' life to those of the murderers, Smith and Hickock, in part one of the book. The Clutters go on their routine life activities, unconscious of the tragic fate that awaits them, and the killers drive their black car on the highways in their way to the village. The reader realizes that these two parallel lines of events will meet at one point. This contrast between the two contexts creates a sense of suspense and tragedy, and aims to put the whole story of the murder in a larger arena than that of actual reality.

The second element is the sense of fictional mystery that Capote attempts to create around the character of Perry Smith in part two of the book. At many sites of the book, Capote abandons the objectivity of the third – narrative technique followed throughout the story, and presents him through multiple points of view. This makes William Nance believe that Capote uses a large cast of characters that would allow him to tell the story from a variety of view points" (1970, 161). Thus, the reader sees him through the eyes of the detective Alvin Dewey, his army friend Donald Cullivan, the psychiatrist Dr. Joy, the undersheriff's wife Mrs. Meier and many others. Sometimes, Capote even shows sympathy towards him. This is evident when Mrs. Meier says that "he wasn't the worst youngman I ever saw" (253), and when the narrator writes that he is "having the aura of an exiled animal, a creature walking wounded" (407) <sup>(4)</sup>. Behind these attempted mystery and sympathy, Capote hopes to violate the sense of objective reporting, and to reflect that his work is still in the realm of fiction.

In *The Armies of the Night*, Mailer also attempts to create a sense of fictionality that can save the text from the prevailing atmosphere of bleak reality and journalism. To do this, he sometimes resorts to the techniques of flashback and past recollections in dealing with many of the characters involved in the march, and in reporting on the American society of the sixties. Yet, his main effort to effect this end lies in his treatment of the character of Mailer. Through making Mailer of the march free from the narrator, he hopes to blur the limits between what is objective and what is subjective, and to evoke an imaginative composition of reality. Chandarlapaty Raj, in this sense, believes that Mailer uses magic realism to share his collective vision with other anxious writers attending the march. (2016, 28). He strives to give the character of Mailer an air of grandeur, and to make him approach the status of a protagonist <sup>(5)</sup>. This is apparent when the narrator says: "Mailer had never had a particular age – he carried different ages within him like different models of his experience" (9), and also when he says:

Doves would reply that it was certainly an ugly disgraceful war but not necessary to our defense. If South Vietnam fell to the Vietcong, communism would be then not 12,000 miles from our shores, but 11,000 miles. Moreover, we had not necessarily succeeded in demonstrating to China that Guerrilla wars exacted too severe a price from the communists. On the contrary, a few more guerrilla wars could certainly bankrupt America, since we now had 500,000 of the North Vietnamese and our costs are \$30,000,000,000 over four years, or less than three times as much on an average year as Vietnam ... What incredible expense for so small a war ... How many more such inexpensive wars would the economy take? (182-183).

According to Bruce Bawer, "Mailer succeeded in capturing much of the rough-and-tumble of American politics at the end of the 1960's (1999, 694). This is, to a great extent, true. *The Armies of the Night* abounds in documentary reports on the different faces of American politics of that time. It presents rich accounts about the Negro-civil rights movements and the April-March (1965), planned by Martin Luther King, about the Cold War and its reflections on the whole American society, and about Right-Wing and Left-Wing politics concerning Vietnam War and the Arab-Israeli conflict. "The form of any account as well as its style " as Carolyn Yalkut believes, "is shaped by the form of the event " (2013, 131 ). The book can be also taken as a reading in the files and documents of the American left politics during the fifties and the sixties. Long reportages are given about the changes that affect and reshape Left-Wing policies. In one of these reportages, Mailer writes:

The fifties were a profoundly unhappy period for the Left Wing; in the sixties with Cuba, civil rights, Kennedy, Berkeley, the Great Society, and the war in Vietnam, the new blood of Negro movements and youth movements brought life back to the Left. By 1965 the Negroes were disaffected, even profoundly bored with Left Wing rhetoric which seemed to match little in their own imperatives, the youth were obviously contemptuous of the Old Left. By the time of the April March, the rifts were profound between the races and the generations. But the huge and unexpected success of the April March, its unanticipated size – no one had secretly believed they would attract a quarter of a million people – had given new hope to the Old Left (222).

One last aspect on which Mailer's journalism focuses, and the skills of his reporter appear at best, is the violence storming the American society of the sixties. Throughout the confrontation between the protesters who struggle to shut down the Pentagon, which Mailer describes as "the American war machine" (233), and the troops which insist to prevent them, scenes of violence accumulate. Because of the brutality attending the battle of the Pentagon, Mailer describes it as "the bad phase of the march" (274). He records this brutality by every eye-witness accounts. The demonstrators, who are shown as not having instruments to face violence, are kicked, beaten and dragged on the ground by the marhsals who are likened to the Nazis. Many are badly injured and many are arrested. The camera moves here and there to detect different images of violence. In one of these images, it focuses on a single beating of a young girl by the soldiers, which is described as follows:

One soldier spilled the water from his canteen on the ground in order to add to the discomfort of the female demonstrator at his feet. She lost her balance and her shoulder hit the rifle at the soldier's side. He raised the rifle and came down hard on the girl's leg. ... At least four times the soldier hit her with all his force... Two more troops came up and began dragging the girl toward the Pentagon. She twisted her body so we could see her face. But there was no face there. All we saw were some raw skin and blood. We couldn't see even if she was crying – her eyes had filled with the blood pouring down her head. She vomited, and that too was blood. Then they rushed her away (276).

Before Mailer's reporter ends his long journalistic journey with the Pentagon march, he gives some statements that reflect the harsh realities of the American politics. He admits that "the Americans live in a country which has developed the world's most murderous military machine" and which "trains its sons to be killers" (234). He, also, addresses the Americans, saying; "We Americans have no right to call ourselves human beings unless personally and collectively we stand up and say no to death and destruction " (234-235). Mailer, therefore, ends *The Armies of the Night* with prayers for the forgiveness of his nation.

Following the long procession of the march, Mailer's camera moves and rotates from one site to another to survey the roaring crowd. In his argument about Mailer's skill in this respect, John Muste believes that Mailer is influenced by the technique of the "panoramic-camera-eye" used by John Dos Passos in his U.S.A. trilogy (1971, 361-374). Mailer, however, reveals a wonderful ability to follow the different sides of the march. Each time the camera moves, it isolates, and brings into focus, one of the groups participating in the protest, and Mailer's reportage soon commences. He reports on the different social and political groups of the march; writers, artists, socialists, communists, anarchists, students, housewives, trade unionists and other various groups. He records the songs repeated by the protesters, like "We Are Not Afraid", "Join Us" and "We Shall Overcome". He even writes about the roads that the march takes, and about the best entrance to the Pentagon:

So the north wall with its Administrative Entrance was eventually chosen. It was the main approach to the Pentagon and the most attractive. Access roads curved up from Jefferson Davis High Way and Washington Boulevard to the large square of asphalt in front of the entrance steps and the Egyptian columns. Below was another flight of steps which led to two ramps descending to the Hall. An army would meet on the grass area for a rally, then move forward for acts of civil disobedience (230).

To maintain diversion into journalism in *The Armies of the Night*, Mailer, like Capote, occasionally stops his own reporting to present a reading of what is written in the press about the march. He, thus, quotes many of the front-pages stories of Washington papers covering the great event. An example of this is represented in what *The New York Times* writes warning both demonstrators and the troops, saying: "It will be totally unnecessary for paratroopers or police or demonstrators to provoke each other, in the exercise either of duty or self-expression, and it will be tragic if they do" (244).

Mailer's desire to write accurately is reflected in his endeavors to give reliable estimates of both the protesters and the troops attending the Pentagon march. Lee Spinks sees that he seeks the "liberation of life from its subjection to any form of abstract or impersonal power" (2015, 3). In this aspect, in particular, Mailer takes his book into statistical territories that are never expected to appear in any fictional discourse dealing with reality. As for the number of protesters, he compares the figures given by the government, by Left Wing and by some newspapers like *The New York Times* and *Times*. Then, he follows a complex statistical method to reach the right figure, which he finds to be between 75,000 and 90,000. As for the troops, Mailer gives the following report, which clearly supports the core premise of vacillation between fact and fiction in the American nonfiction novel of the sixties:

Waiting for them at the Pentagon or engaged in police work on the route were the following forces; 1500 Metropolitan police, 2,500 Washington, D.C., National Guardsmen, about 200 U.S. Marshals, and unspecified numbers of Governmental Security Guards, and Park, White House, and Capitol police. There were also 6,000 troops from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division flown in from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the same 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne which had once parachuted into Normandy on D-Day and was now fresh from Santo Domingo and the Detroit riots. MP units had been flown in from California and Texas, the U.S. Marshals had been brought from just about everywhere – Florida, New York, Arizona, Texas, to name a few states – it was to be virtually a convention for them. In addition, 20,000 troops stationed nearby were on alert (244-245).

In her essay "Four Fictional Faces of the Vietnam War", Kathleen Puhr states that "the majority of Vietnam novels are written in the realistic mode", and also adds that "Vietnam-War novels contain elements of fantasy, allegory, black humor, melodrama, and satire" (1984, 99). Yet, only documentation and plain journalism are what one senses in Mailer's treatment of Vietnam War in *The Armies of the Night*. In a clear journalistic manner, he discusses its reasons and realities. He shows that it is the fear from the spread of communism which has nourished Vietnam War, as the Americans believed that "if Vietnam fell to the communists, soon then would Southeast Asia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Australia, Japan, and India fall also to the Chinese communists" (182). He also records the impact of the war on the American society, where he states that "the real damage of Vietnam takes place in America where civil rights have deteriorated into city riots, and an extraordinary number of the best and most talented students are exploring the frontiers of nihilism and drugs" (183). He then, in the manner of journalistic reportage also, presents an account of the debate between the "Hawks" who defend the war and the "Doves" who oppose it. The Hawks, on one hand, believe that it is "perhaps the unhappiest war American had ever fought, but it was one of the most necessary" (182). The "Doves" who appear more powerful, on the other, attack the war with facts that reveal Mailer's recognition of Vietnam War's truths and figures.

he had long awaited: Die On Rope for Bloody Crime. The story, written by an Associated Press reporter, began: "Richard Eugene Hickock and Perry Edward Smith, partners in crime, died on the gallows at the state prison early today for one of the bloodiest murders in Kansas criminal annals. Hickock, 33 years old, died first, at 12:41 A.M.; Smith, 36 died at 1:19. (402)

Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* is another work that strongly ascertains the vacillation of the American nonfiction of the sixties between fact and fiction. In this novel, Mailer follows the steps of Truman Capote. He records the actual events of the four-day anti-Vietnam War march into Pentagon in October 1967. *The Armies of the Night* is divided into two parts. Book one, "History As a Novel: The Steps of the Pentagon", focuses on Mailer's involvement in all the activities of the march which starts from Lincoln Memorial to the Pentagon. Book Two, "The Novel As History: The Battle of the Pentagon", is an account of the socio-cultural background of the groups participating in the protest, and a detailed reportage about the confrontation between the protesters and the federal troops.

Like Capote, who starts *In Cold Blood* with an assignment to *The New Yorker*, Mailer starts *The Armies of the Night* with a reading of news in *Time* magazine of October 27, 1967 about the Pentagon march. He, then, moves to his reporting on the event, saying: "Now we may leave *Time* in order to find out what happened" (1968, 4). Mailer shows that the whole thing is initiated by a telephone call from the author Mitchell Goodman, inviting him to join other American writers and intellectuals in a march against Vietnam War.

The novel appears as a documentary/journalistic enterprise rather than as a novel, where a huge amount of factual material accumulates. Mailer himself admits that the desire to have one's immediate say on contemporary matters kept directing the novelistic impulse into journalism (1973, xi). Like Capote, Mailer employs a third-person narrator and furnishes him with what he calls "a telescope upon a tower" (219), that permits watching in all directions. According to Helle Sjovaag "the public sphere is idealized space of reasoned and reflexive communication enabling diverse voices discussing public issues" (2019, 160). Mailer gathers in *The Armies of the Night* voices representing all fields of the American life in the sixties.

Documenting on the American intellectual life, for example, proceeds when the leaders of the march meet at Washington Ambassador Theatre to declare the beginning of the march. We meet the poet Robert Lowell, the critic Dwight Macdonald, the novelist Bernard Malamud, the poet Denise Levertov, the author Mitchell Goodman, among others. Through their speeches and dialogues, Mailer reports on literary life in general.

A new Dimension, which does not exist in Capote's *In Cold Blood*, is Mailer's reporting about himself. Throughout *The Armies of the Night*, a flood of documentary autobiographical stuff runs parallel to the currents of objective reporting on the march, Vietnam War, the politics of the sixties and the aspects of the American life. Some critics see that Mailer exaggerates in his dedication to his own image. Robert Merideth, one of them states that "his compulsive, narcissistic concern for his image conditioned everything he says he did during the Pentagon weekend or at least controls everything he writes about it" (1971, 438). Thus, beside reporting on his own activities during the march, Mailer writes about the minute details of his private and public life. He writes about his secretary, his hatred for telephone calls, his bitter experience with drugs, and the marijuana he takes from time to time. An example of these long autobiographical sketches, which provide facts about other people as well, is the one he writes about his friendship with Mitchell Goodman, saying:

In fact Mailer had known Goodman for twenty years. They had been almost in the same year at Harvard. They were both from Brooklyn, both married young. They had met in Paris in 1947, Goodman then a tall powerful handsome dark-haired young man ... In fact the last time Mailer had heard of Mitchell Goodman was when the latter had led a small group of protesters out of the large hotel banquet hall where Hubert Humphrey was about to address the assorted literati and book reviewers of the American writing world at the National Book Award festivities in March, 1967. Mailer had not attended. He had been boycotting the affair for several years – it was the least he could do, since none of his books had ever been considered for any award (6-7).

Yet, when Mailer moves to the march and its realities, objective reporting becomes more dominating, and fiction kneels completely to journalism. "The novelist", says Mailer, "is passing his baton to the historian" (219). His insistence on objectivity is openly expressed when he reveals that "the mass media which surrounded the march on the Pentagon created a forest of inaccuracy which will blind the efforts of historians" (219), and proceeds: "let us see what the history may disclose" (220). It is evident here that Mailer does not only choose to be a reporter, but also to become an honest and trustworthy one.

Within this diversion into objective reporting, the reader of *In Cold Blood* is led, sooner or later, to ask questions about the type of novel written by Capote. The work appears outside all traditional fictional experiences. It becomes, even, difficult to judge it within the context of other modes of realistic writing. The novel sways with a flood of facts about the case and its realities, collected from police records, the documents of Kansas local authorities, Kansas State Penitentiary and Supreme Court. Thus, when Capote moves to River Valley Farm, the theatre of the crime, his field resources flow and enrich his reportages about the discovery of the crime. Accompanied by the same persons who have attended the discovery of the murder, Susan Kidwell, Mr. Clarene Ewalt, Nancy Ewalt, Sheriff Robinson and the undersheriff Meier, Capote's omniscient narrator starts to report on each of the victims. About Nancy, for example, the following account is given:

She'd been shot in the back of the head with a shotgun held maybe two inches away. She was lying on her side, facing the wall, and the wall was covered with blood. The bedcovers were drawn up to her shoulders. Sheriff Robinson pulled them back, and we saw that she was wearing a bathrobe, pajamas, socks and slippers-like, whenever it happened, she hadn't gone to bed yet. Her hands were tied behind her, and her ankles were roped together with the kind of cord you see on Venetian blinds (73).

Reflecting his narrative vision in *In Cold Blood*, Capote states: "I've often thought of the book as being like something reduced to a seed", and adds: "Instead of presenting the reader with a full plant, with all the foliage, a seed is planted in the foliage of his mind" (Hollowell, 1977, 71). In the light of Capote's premeditated effort to reconstruct reality in exact and unsophisticated way, and in view of his ultimate reliance on verifiable facts, the seed that he struggles to plant might be represented in an attempt to maintain that reportage can become a reverend literary genre.

Fundamental to Capote's adoption of the role of the reporter in *In Cold Blood* is his relentless search for journalistic material about the killers, Dick Hickock and Perry Smith. Capote does not allow his narrator to create his own facts, or to deceive the reader into an assumption about a crucial opposition between fact and fancy. All the accounts written about them are authorized ones, recorded through interviews with eye-witnesses or collected from official records. The narrator, or say the reporter, follows the killers everywhere. He takes a long journey following the same zig-zag way they have taken during their escape from Kansas to Florida and then to Mexico. He is present at the moment of their arrest and their confession. He records the same words of Hickock who admits: "It was Perry. I couldn't stop him. He killed them all". (272). He also accompanies them in their way back to Kansas and writes a report about their arrival and reception there:

The crowd started forming at four o'clock, the hour that the country attorney had given as the probable arrival time of Hickock and Smith. Since the announcement of Hickock's confession on Saturday evening, newsmen of every style had assembled in Garden City: representatives of the major wire services, photographers; newsreel and television cameraman, reporters from Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and of course, all principal Kansas papers – twenty or twenty-five men altogether. Many of them had been waiting three days without much to do except interview the service-station attendant James Spor who, after seeing published photographs of the accused killers, had identified them as customers to whom he'd sold three dollars and six cents' worth of gas the night of the Holcomb tragedy. (293).

Throughout his investigations about the killers, Capote shows unmistakable devotion to his career. He utilizes all levels of documentation. He visits the detectives Harold Nye, Roy Church, Alvin Dewey and Clarence Punte in Las Vegas, and records each word they say about the murder. He moves to Utah, Nevada and Oregon to write biographical sketches about the childhood of Perry Smith. He, similarly, meets Walter Hickock, Dick's father, and listens to his stories about the life of his son. He even makes friendship with both Hickock and Smith through which he records their personal confessions. Thus, we learn that Perry "had once beaten a colored man to death" (129), and that Hickock had a car accident in 1950, which has changed the features of his face (36). He also records, in long detailed reportages, the events of their trial until they are condemned by the jury.

The story of the murder of Herber Clutter and his family ends in away that maintains Capote's diversion into journalism, and reveals his reverence for the role of the reporter. As the Clutter's case starts with an assignment to *The New Yorker*, it ends with a reportage in *Kansas City Star* on Wednesday, April 14, 1965:

And so it happened that in the daylight hours of that Wednesday morning, Alvin Dewey, breakfasting in the coffee shop of Topeka hotel, read, on the first page of the *Kansas City Star*, a headline



Thackeray, in *The History of Henry Esmond*, and Charles Dickens, in *A Tale of Two Cities*. What, actually, effects the subordination of fiction to journalism is Capote's insistence to shape the huge material he collects about the murder in the form of reportage. It is not difficult for the reader to realize that the book is composed of eighty-five individual journalistic sketches, rather than of a story that follows a systematic plot. In a third-narrative account, Capote takes the reader from one report to another, and drowns him in a flood of documentary stuff of verifiable facts.

Capote's adherence to objective observation, and his inclination to unformulated truth are, apparently, overshadowing the whole experience. When the reader accompanies him to the village of Holcomb, he feels that the author is a researcher preparing a newsreel or a documentary film where the camera moves in all directions to record the minute details of reality in a way that goes beyond all limits of encompassing reality in fiction. He sees the buildings divided by the main-line tracks of the Santa Fe Railroad, the haphazard hamlet bounded on the south by a brown stretch of the Arkansas River, and the prairie lands and wheat fields on the east and west. He stands in front of the sign of Holcomb Bank, and a report is soon given about its deteriorating business. He moves to Holcomb School, where an account about its grades, its buses and the number of its students is presented. He is also taken to Hartman's Café, where he watches Mrs. Hartman, the proprietress, dispensing sandwiches, coffee and soft drinks to her customers (3-5). Then, he surrenders to more reporting on the village of Holcomb, its weather, its local accent and even its cattle:

The village of Holcomb stands on the high wheat plains of Western Kansas, a lonesome area that other Kansans call "out there". Some seventy miles east of the Colorado border, the countryside, with its hard-blue skies and desert – clear air, has an atmosphere that is rather more Far West than Middle West.... The land is flat, and the views are awesomely extensive; horses, herds of cattle, a white cluster of grain elevators are visible long before a traveler reaches them (3).

When Capote moves to report on the life of the Clutters, he endeavors to reconstruct it with exactness and accuracy depending on the recollections of the people of Holcomb. Long reportages, colored by the trustworthy manner of the reporter, rather than by the vision of the novelist, chronicle, in time and place, the detailed events of the life of each member of the family. Capote's realism appears extremely plain and void of authorial intrusion and fictional dimensions. Facts are never sensed a supposed fact by the reader, and questions about the genuineness of the events are not expected to be evoked by Capote's reports. Thus, as if he reads a magazine or a newspaper, the reader follows what is written about Bonnie, her health and her treatment at the Wesley Medical Center in Wichita, about Nancy, "the town darling", and about Kenyon and his school stories. "Writers", as Morroe Berger believes, "can resort to the exact reproduction of bits and pieces of reality" (1977, 4). This is the exact impression that the following report, like many others, about Herbert Clutter may leave on the readers of *In Cold Blood*:

The Master of River Valley Farm, Herbert William Clutter, was forty-eight years old, and as a result of a recent medical examination for an insurance policy, knew himself to be in first-rate condition. Though he wore rimless glasses and was of but average height, standing just under five feet ten, Mr. Clutter was a man's-man figure. His shoulders were broad, his hair had held its dark color, his square-jawed, confident face retained a healthy-hued youthfulness, and his teeth, unstained and strong enough to shatter walnuts, were still intact. He weighed a hundred and fifty-four – the same as he had the day he graduated from Kansas State University, where he majored in agriculture. (6).

Capote's journalistic talent and his interest in mass media in general are evident in the scene where he follows and records the news broadcast about the murder on the evening of Tuesday, November 17, 1959. Though a pair of radio earphones clamped to the head of Floyd Wells, a thief spending a sentence of three to five years in Kansas State Penitentiary, we are allowed to listen to this news. Capote does not forget to give us a report about this prisoner and his case. He also records all the events of that day as they are broadcast by the radio. He lets us listen to the news of the murder with exactness and unmistakable accuracy:

Officers investigating the tragic slaying of four members of the Herber W. Clutter family have appealed to the public for any information which might aid in solving the baffling crime. Clutter, his wife, and their two teenage children were found murdered in their farm home near Garden City early last Sunday morning. Each had been found, gagged, and shot through the head with a 12-gauge shotgun. Investigating officials admit they can discover no motive for the crime, termed by Logan Sanford, Director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and the most vicious in the history of Kansas (189).

This study, however, is motivated by a striking fact about the critical reception of nonfiction novel. In most of the studies dealing with the genre, or with the works of its authors, critics, outstandingly, endeavor to ascertain that nonfiction novel is a genre of fiction that effects a successful balance between reality and imagination or fact and fiction. Robert Siegle, one of those critics, reveals that nonfiction novel impresses readers by "its mixing of reality and fiction" (1984, 437). John Hollowell, the author of a full-length study on nonfiction novel, similarly, describes nonfiction-novel works as "hybrid forms that combine fictional techniques with the detailed observation of journalism" (1977, 10). John Hellmann, an important critic of the genre, also stresses that the terms "new journalism" and "nonfiction novel" serve as "names for a contemporary genre in which journalistic material is presented in the forms of fiction" (1981, 1).

Throughout the history of the novel, different paths have been taken by novelists to portray life accurately and to create a fictional world-like to the real one that the readers inhabit. Yet, the storyteller's informing about reality has never reached such a degree of accurate direct observation and bare factual documentation as in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* and Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night*. Both novels incarnate, in good ways, the subordination of fiction to fact and the unreserved diversion into journalism that have characterized the American novel in the sixties.

*In Cold Blood*, which is subtitled "A True Account of Multiple Murder and Its Consequences", is a story of an actual murder of an American farmer and his family in a small village called Holcomb in Kansas. The text, which Capote develops from an assignment to *The New Yorker* in 1965, is a rich journalistic account of all the events of the brutal murder of Herbert William Clutter, his wife Bonnie and his two children Nancy and Kenyon by two ex-convicts; Dick Hickock and Perry Smith during the robbery of their house on 15 November 1959.

The book, which lies in more than four-hundred pages is divided into four parts. The first, "The Last to See Them Alive", reconstructs the true events of the life of the Clutters before the murder. The second, "Persons Unknown", records the arrival of the killers, Hickock and Smith, to the village and the terror that the murder stirs in both Holcomb and Kansas. The third, "Answer", follows the escape of the murderers to Mexico, the investigations of the chief detective Alvin Dewey and their arrest. The fourth "The Corner", concentrates on the life of Hickock and Smith before and after the crime, their trial and final death on the gallows. Capote follows the steps of the reporter and shows reverence for objective reporting. This manifest journalistic strategy is revealed, clearly, in his "acknowledgement" to the book, where he addresses the reader, saying:

All the material in this book not derived from my own observation is either taken from official records or is the result of interviews with the persons directly concerned, more often than not numerous interviews conducted over a considerable period of time. Because these "collaborators" are identified within the text, it would be redundant to name them here (1992, Acknowledgement).

These words reveal much about the novelist who puts on the cloak of the journalist and leads an intensive research that enables him to reconstruct reality with its minute details. Capote has been following two approaches. The first is related to the reconstruction of the events which have taken place before the murder, events of biographical nature, like the life of the Clutters and the childhood of Dick Hickock and Perry Smith. Here, Capote depends on the confessions he gets from the eye-witnesses who have been attending those events in personal interviews. The second is related to the reorganization of the events of the crime and its consequences in the same order and nature of their occurrence. Here, Capote resorts to the official records of the local and federal authorities dealing with the case. These two approaches, followed by Capote in reshaping the whole story of the Clutters' case, are characteristic of journalism rather than of fiction. It is remarkable that Capote does not even hesitate to mention the names of his collaborators, where many of them fill the pages of his work. Commenting on the strategy followed in *In Cold Blood*, John Hollowell argues that Capote follows the journalistic technique of "saturation reporting" invented by the journalist/novelist Tom Wolfe. Hollowell describes this technique, saying:

In order to record accurately the scenes and dialogue of events as they occur, he journalist must saturate himself in particular environment. This method frequently requires the reporter to follow his subject around for days or even months and years with a sensitivity to certain people and events and often a special atmosphere. Capote spend six years researching *In Cold Blood* and formed many close friendships with the people of Holcomb, Kansas, where the murders took place (1977, 32).

This intensive search for actual material is not what finally creates diversion into journalism in *In Cold Blood*. A similar approach has been followed by great novelists like Sir Walter Scott, in most of his historical novels, W.M.

The art/reality problematic has been, and will remain, a core issue, a living question and a theoretical construct around which controversy ever revolves. "Whatever purpose, function, or value has been ascribed to art", says Morroe Berger, "its relation to life or reality has been central to almost every speculation since antiquity" (1977, 1). From Plato's concern for artistic production in the *Republic* and Aristotle's argument about poetic imitation in the *Poetics* to the debate over the aesthetic quality of art and its sociological significance in the recent critical theory, the relation between art and reality has continuously been a recurrent persistent theme in the works of philosophers, authors, theoreticians, critics and researchers.

Reflecting the centrality of this problematic in literary thought, Angus Fletcher asserts that "literary imagination is always somehow connected with reality" and adds that "literature can hardly be disconnected from fact" (1976, vii). Adherence of literature to reality, however, is nowhere more overriding than in American fiction. Reviewing its offspring from the early dawn to the contemporary scene, one can observe unmistakable drift towards actuality, which takes different disguises as naturalism, provincialism, social realism and war-novel. Manifestations of this drift illuminate the works of many prominent American novelists like James Feminine Cooper, Herman Melville, Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, John Dos Passos, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, E.L. Doctrow and John Barth, among others .

The study explores the world of a literary genre which extremely blurs the boundaries between reality and imagination. It treads the world of American nonfiction novel of the 1960's. The main premise upon which the study is based is that the vacillation between fact and fiction remains the most outstanding fact about nonfiction novel. Through a close critical reading of Capote's *In Cold Blood* and Mailer's *The Armies of the Night*, the researcher seeks to prove the reliability of this core premise.

The term "nonfiction " was coined by Truman Capote in 1965 to describe the diversion into the objective reporting of journalism in the works of many American novelists like Norman Mailer, James Baldwin, John Barth and Capote himself. This term has been, simultaneously, rivaled by the term "new journalism" coined by the journalist/novelist Tom Wolfe, also in 1965, to describe narrative works written by journalists. In his book *Fables of Fact. The New Journalism as New Fiction*, John Hellmann defines nonfiction novel as "the genre in which the text points outward towards the actual world without ever deviating from observation of that world" (1981, 27). The genre is also defined by M.H. Abrams as "a graphic rendering of recent characters and happenings, based not only on historical events, but often on personal interviews with the chief agents" (1993, 133).

Although the word "nonfiction" is an old term that has been customarily used to refer to forms based on actual events like biography, autobiography, memoir and similar documentary writing, the coinage "nonfiction novel" is the newborn of the American culture of the sixties. Nonfiction novel has been the product of certain social, political and cultural transformations that have stormed American society during that decade. Ahab Hassan, in this sense, expounds that the writers of nonfiction novel "preconceive fiction in terms more adequate to crucial changes in American culture and consciousness" (1973, 173-174).

The era of the sixties was the time of civil-rights movements, of left politics and of the strong opposition to the inhuman war waged by America in Vietnam. It was also a decade dominated by violence, which has culminated in the assassination of Kennedy in 1963 and Martin Luther King in 1968. The daily broadcast of news about the current events of American life has become an exciting experience which attracted a great part of the reading public. Thus, within what Frank McConnell calls "the climate of America in the television era" (1977, 58), novelists were faced by the great challenge of mass media. Many of them have responded to this challenge, and the outcome was the emergence of nonfiction novel, which has become a popular form of writing during the sixties. Journalism, in particular, has been very influential in creating this genre. John Hellman, in this sense, writes:

American reality was undergoing a profound transformation ... Mass media journalism was now present as an added force, making its versions of events part of the national consciousness. The individual American found himself daily confronted by realities that were as actual as they seemed fiction. Both novelists and reporters found themselves faced with situations demanding responses ... A significant number turned to the form that is the subject of this book (i.e. nonfiction novel or new journalism) (1981, 2).

Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965) and Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* (1968) are good examples of the novelists' reaction to the appeal of the current events of the sixties. The first is inspired by the dominance of violence and the latter by the wide protest against Vietnam War. They are also good incarnation of the diversion into the objective reporting of journalism which has colored the works of many novelists during that decade.

## التأرجح بين الحقيقة والخيال في الرواية الصحفية الأمريكية: دراسة لرويتي "بدم بارد" لترومان كابوتي و"جيوش الليل" لنورمان ميلر

أحمد محمد عبود محمد

أستاذ الأدب الإنجليزي - قسم اللغة الإنجليزية،

كلية العلوم والدراسات الإنسانية - جامعة شقراء

المملكة العربية السعودية

### ملخص الدراسة

تناقش هذه الدراسة الرواية الصحفية الأمريكية التي ظهرت في ستينيات القرن العشرين باعتبارها جنس أدبي يمزج بشكل كبير بين الواقع والخيال، وذلك من خلال رصد معظم الدراسات التي تناولت نصوص الرواية الصحفية الأمريكية أو ما أطلق عليه بعض النقاد "رواية اللاخيال". وتظهر متابعة كثير من الدراسات والمقالات النقدية في هذا السياق سعي النقاد والباحثون إلى إثبات أن هذا النمط الروائي يخلق توازناً بين الحقيقة والخيال مجسداً دور كل من الروائي والمراسل الصحفي. وتقوم الدراسة على فرض أساس مفاده أن الرواية الصحفية الأمريكية تمثل تأرجحاً واضحاً بين الحقيقة والخيال وأن كتابها يسعون لتقديم الواقع المجرد من خلال معطيات فن الرواية بما يتميز به هذا الجنس الأدبي من أفاق الرؤية والخيال. ومن هنا تعد الدراسة قراءة نقدية يسعى فيها الباحث لإثبات أن الرؤية الروائية لكل من كابوتي وميلر تراوح بين معايير وتقاليد الصحافة وتلك المرتبطة بفن الرواية بما يؤكد على إلباس الروائي ثوب المراسل الصحفي. وتسعى الدراسة لإثبات صحة ومصداقية فرضها الأساس من خلال تحليل روايتي "بدم بارد" (١٩٦٥) لترومان كابوتي و"جيوش الليل" (١٩٦٨) لنورمان ميلر.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الحقيقة، الخيال، الصحافة، الرواية الصحفية، التقرير الصحفي، المراسل الصحفي.

## **The Vacillation between Fact and Fiction in the American Journalistic Novel: A Study of Truman Capote's In Cold Blood and Norman Mailer's The Armies of the Night**

**Ahmed Mohamed Aboud Mohamed**

Professor of English Literature - Department of English  
College of Science and Humanities - Shaqra University  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

### **Abstract**

This study explores the world of the American journalistic novel of the 1960s, a literary genre which extremely blurs the boundaries of fact and fiction. In nonfictional texts, critics and scholars endeavor to prove that the nonfiction novel is a genre of fiction that shows a successful balance between reality and imagination. Pivotal to the study is the manifestation of the journalistic fiction as a genre of fiction in which the author seems to vacillate between fact and fiction; playing the role of both the narrator and the reporter. However, the genre shows unprecedented adherence to the techniques of journalism in which the role of the reporter overshadows that of the narrator. This is critically dealt with in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965) and in Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* (1968). The study proceeds to conclude that the novels in question are closer to the realm of journalism than that of fiction. Both novels show that nonfiction novel adheres to the criteria of journalism rather than to those of fiction in ways that make the novelist look like the reporter.

**Keywords:** Fact, Fiction, Journalism, Journalistic Novel, Reportage, Reporter.

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**Ahmed Mohamed Aboud Mohamed**

Professor of English Literature - Department of English  
College of Science and Humanities - Shaqra University  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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