CHAPTER 1

THEORY OF AMERICAN LITERARY JOURNALISM

What can I say about journalism? It has the greatest virtue and the greatest evil. It is the first thing the dictator controls. It is the mother of literature and the perpetrator of crap. In many cases it is the only history we have, and yet it is the tool of the worst men. But over a long period of time and because it is the product of so many men, it is perhaps the purest thing we have. Honesty has a way of creeping in even when it was not intended. (Steinbeck 256)

American journalism has established itself as a powerful medium for communication. It has been performing a pioneering act in conveying messages to people around the globe. Journalism provides information such as sports scores, what a politician said, or what the next day’s weather might be like, but at the same time it goes on to try and find meaning or provide understanding. Journalists are not simply reporters who pass on information. They do field-work, meet people, interact with men and deal with situations so as to collect bits of information. Not only is it essential for the journalist to help educate the citizens, but he must also serve as the citizens’ eyes and ears in scrutinizing the powerful forces of nature and society. It is in this ideological framework that the journalist functions as investigative reporter (Altschull 263). He shows us a way to see and understand the world.

However, journalism is a comprehensive term which encompasses magazines, radio and press associations, and aims at diffusion of information. Journalism refers to a process of active fact-gathering, not just working from memory or sensory observation, but doing what reporters call reporting. The term journalism is derived from the French word ‘journee’ meaning work performed, and in Latin ‘diurnalis’ conveying daily recurrence. Kipling’s six questions— who,
what, how, where, when, why- are a useful checklist for news stories, and it is certainly possible to write an introduction that includes them all. The much-quoted textbook example is: ‘Lady Godiva (WHO) rode (WHAT) naked (HOW) through the streets of Coventry (WHERE) yesterday (WHEN) in a bid to cut taxes (WHY)’ (Wynford Hicks, Sally Adams and Harriet Gilbert 15), being complete in every sense. Journalists identify pertinent topics, write about them in accessible prose and are usually paid for it. Their aim is to work in the direction of accuracy, fairness, truth, free speech, objectivity, skepticism, originality, and creativity. They also care for the knowledge of current events, readerships and public policies, respect for deadlines and textual discipline and clarity.

Novelists also share many of these functions and values. They believe in informing, educating and entertaining readers through texts with creativity, clarity, vision and forms of truth. They arrange things so that the reader can see patterns and shapes in the chaos of life. They also provide a glimpse of the subjective universal, which is only accessible through art and literature. With the use of language, symbols, narrative, metaphor, character and all other literary tools, novelists allow readers access to meaning and truth. Literature may not provide meaning, but it enacts, nevertheless, a search for meaning and understanding that, in turn, provides readers with the tools to come to terms with the world around them.

Building narrative in reporting is the toughest challenge for writers. Facts are so messy that they don’t yield to the demands of a story. Some American journalists adopted various experimental techniques from the mid-1960s onwards allowing journalism to enter literature, which came to be known as New Journalism, or literary journalism or creative nonfiction or journalistic fiction. The literary journalists learnt the techniques of social realism and adopted such devices as realistic dialogue and scene-by-scene construction (telling the story by moving
from scene to scene rather than by historical narrative). Now the writing was not just ‘necessarily plain and simple’ but had ‘life, colour and immediacy’ (Ibid. 133). Literary journalism blurs the line again between ‘factual fiction’ and ‘fictional fact’, which, according to Carey (2007: 7), was drawn to separate reporting from social commentary in the advent of realist writing. Moreover, literary journalism rebelled against the objective ideals of modern journalism, bringing it closer to the novel.

Literary journalism is also criticized as being the bad child of “the modern age of media and hype” (Yagoda 1998). But, looking back through the ages, there are many examples of what is now called literary journalism, of blurring the line between fact and fiction. Yagoda believes that what has changed “is not the practice of literary journalism but expectations about truth” (1998). The concept of journalistic fiction is one that has sparked much debate. In contrast to standard reportage, which is characterized by objectivity, direct language, and the inverted pyramid style (letting the writer rank the information in the article in order of its importance), journalistic fiction seeks to communicate facts through narrative storytelling and literary techniques. In contrast to the difficult, angular shape of the pyramid story, Yaros (2006: 287) suggests that the narrative structure enables an audience with ‘low levels of (background) knowledge’ to process meanings more effectively. It is surely the case that narrative form communicates information better, and is suited to the complex information demands of the postmodern society.

The concept itself has been described with different terms, like new journalism (Wolfe), creative nonfiction (Lee Gutkind), literary journalism (Norman Sims and Mark Kramer), New New journalism (Boynton), and dramatic nonfiction (John Franklin). Hartsock suggests that the multiplicity of terms for this form indicates the ‘fluid nature of its boundaries.’ He also describes
it as ‘epistemologically fluid’ – like the early novel, a ‘shifting form’ which attempts to mirror a changing reality that combines ‘the interplay of consciousness’ and phenomenal experience. (1999: 433). Connery, who has taken the lead in defense of “literary journalism,” acknowledges the difficulty of the form’s identity when he cites the need for a justification for the name in his *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism*: “Use of the word ‘journalism’ is preferred over ‘nonfiction’ because the works assigned to the literary form are neither essays nor commentary. It is also preferred because much of the content of the works comes from traditional means of news gathering or reporting” (15). In his book *New Journalism* (1974), literary journalism expert Tom Wolfe writes that literary journalism is superior to prose fiction because of “the simple fact that the reader knows all of this actually happened” (9). As Cindy Royal explains (2000), literary journalists attempt to convey deeper truths than what simple facts alone cannot (3).

This chapter reviews the theories of journalistic fiction laid down by critics, literary journalism historians, and contemporaries. Literary journalism seems to be a response to an issue raised by the novel in the nineteenth century, namely, the correspondence between literary illustration and the reality that it imitates (Watt and Carnochan 2001: 11). Although the seeds of the journalistic mode in American literature might have been unintentionally sown in the beginning of the nineteenth century, yet the possibility of a prose form having the elements of journalism and fiction was recognized by the New Journalists in the 1960s and 1970s. The search for better know-how lead the writers to explore new material, and strive for natural expression. Literary journalist Tom Wolfe has written in *New Journalism*:

> The most gifted writers are those who manipulate the memory sets of the reader in such a rich fashion that they create within the mind of the reader an entire world that resonates with the reader’s real emotions. The events are merely taking place
on the page, in print, but the emotions are real. Hence the unique feeling when one is absorbed in a certain book, ‘lost’ in it. (48)

This ability to provoke an emotional response in his readers has become one of the cornerstones of the controversial author’s legacy.

Paul Many asserts that the Post-Civil War period marks “the true beginning of ‘literary journalism’” (1992: 565). Crane, the novelist, was a practitioner of narrative literary journalism since 1892 when his first *New York City* sketches were published which dealt with human interest stories about daily life in the expanding metropolis. Further, Nathan Asch observed in a 1935 review that a journalism was emerging which would leave it “up to the reader to draw his own conclusions” (108). More such attempts to apply the techniques of novel writing to journalism were seen in 1890s in works like Lafcadio Hearn’s portraits of *African American Life on the Cincinnati levee*, and Mark Twain’s *Life on the Mississippi* and *Innocents Abroad*. A second era during the 1930s and 1940s included such luminaries as Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, Edmund Wilson, James Agee, and John Hersey. In more recent times, authors most often associated with literary journalism included John Heresy, Truman Capote, Joan Didion, Edward Eoagland, Tracy Kidder, Michael Herr, Adrian Nicole Leblanc, Norman Mailer, John McPhee, Richard Preston, Richard Rhodes, Hunter S. Thompson, Tom Wolfe, and Don DeLillo.

There is, of course, a large body of theoretical as well as critical work on journalistic fiction which is regarded, from different angles and viewpoints, as more or less novelistic, narrative, literary, and creative. This kind of genre has received attention from a number of critics and scholars, including John Hartsock, Norman Sims, Mark Kramer, Chris Anderson, John Hellmann, John Hollowell, Barbara Lounsberry, Thomas Connery, A. J. Kaul, Kevin
Journalistic fiction is a true, well-researched, authentic story that could have been written in a dry newspaperly manner, but is written with style, vivid description, and narrative flow that immerses the reader in the story. Here the quality of writing used to tell the story is considered as important as telling the truth of the story. This method of depicting facts is also known as New Journalism. The phrase “New Journalism” was popularized in *New Journalism*, by Tom Wolfe in 1974. He described new journalism as “intense” and “detailed” reporting presented “with techniques usually associated with novels and short stories” (1973: 15). Basically, four techniques or narrative devices were elucidated by Wolfe which are common to the new journalists and connect them to fictional realism: (1) scene-by-scene construction, or depicting people in dramatic scenes as in traditional storytelling; (2) complete dialogue as recorded and remembered rather than journalism’s selective quotations to “involve the reader” and define characters; (3) the act of presenting scenes through characters’ eyes i.e. using third-person point of view; and (4) “status details,” which is explained extensively:

This is the recording of everyday gestures, habits, manners, customs, styles of furniture, clothing, decoration, styles of traveling, eating, keeping house, modes of behaving toward children, servants, superiors, inferiors, peers, plus the various looks, glances, poses, styles of walking and other symbolic details that might exist within a scene. Symbolic of what? Symbolic, generally, of people’s *status life*, using that term in the broad sense of the entire pattern of behavior and possessions through which people express their position in the world or what they think it is or
what they hope it to be …. It lies as close to the center of the power of realism as any other device in literature. (31-33)

Wolfe cited the works of talented feature writers of the day, like Gay Talese, Jimmy Breslin, Truman Capote, Hunter S. Thompson, as well as examples of his own writings.

One of the important differences between new journalism and conventional reporting practiced in newspapers is the changed relationship between the reporter and the people and events described by him; the reporter becoming somewhat subjective towards presenting the facts instead of being purely objective (telling the truth as it is). John Hollowell in Fact & Fiction: The New Journalism and the Nonfiction Novel, defines new journalism against traditional news reporting: “The most important difference […] is the writer’s changed relationship to the people and events he depicts” (1981: 22). He observes that style—“the use of fictional devices borrowed from short stories and novels”—was an important feature that set new journalism apart from conventional newspaper stories (22). Moreover, ‘New journalist records his personal reactions to the people and events that make news,’ (22) and ‘The new journalist, also strives to reveal the story hidden beneath the surface facts, but the conventional reporter must dutifully report their statements’ (23). John Hellmann, on the other hand, considered new journalism to be new. In Fables of Fact: The New Journalism as New Fiction, he states:

First, it overcame the weaknesses of the traditional fictional contract, in which the author promised plausibility, by replacing it with a journalistic one promising factuality; second, it overcame the limitations of conventional journalism and realistic fiction by exploiting fully and frankly the power of shaping consciousness found in fabulist fiction. The result was a new form both wholly fictional and wholly journalistic through which the individual human
Consciousness could directly make or organize the seemingly chaotic world into a work embodying a meaningful engagement of the two. (1981: 19)

Consequently, Hellmann classifies new journalism as a genre of its own. He asserts that new journalists aimed to create an aesthetic experience, which is read because it contains not just factual information, but also the author’s interpretations, impressions, and personal experiences of a certain subject matter (24–25).

Fiction writers are free to create stories, but literary journalists write using dialogues and scenes they have witnessed, having discussions with other witnesses, or research conducted by them. Thomas B. Connelly defines the practice of literary journalism as ‘nonfiction printed prose whose verifiable content is shaped and transformed into a story or sketch by use of narrative and rhetorical techniques generally associated with fiction’ (1992: xiv). He argues that a fundamental quality of literary journalism is that it is based on ‘actuality,’ or real people, places, and events; ‘verifiable detail is essential’ (Ibid. 6). At the time of emergence of journalistic fiction, the realistic novel had declined due to its failure to give expression to the greatly altered consciousness of our experience. The novelist’s dissatisfaction with realism was also another reason which led to experiments with language and with narrative form.

Sometimes, literary journalism is also the written equivalent to a documentary, or movie based on a true story or real event, for example, the movie Infamous (1966) is based on In Cold Blood by Truman Capote. The new form was more closely fitted to the bizarre social reality of American life. Tom Wolfe argues that the conventional journalistic practices reflected ‘who-what-where-when’ reporting which usually served to reinforce the middle-class reader’s values. But the best new journalists use a variety of writing techniques to place the reader “inside” a world he may find quite different from his own (Hollowell 26).
However, the form and style of the news story was transformed by the use of fictional devices borrowed from stories and novels because of the ever-increasing “knowledge explosion” in the society which demanded a news coverage with greater depth and background, with psychological insights into the major figures behind the news, and with interpretation and analysis, placing the news in a broader context. All this required greater freedom for writers in terms of style and form.

The formulas and conventions of the conventional reporting as explained by *Esquire* editor, Harold Hayes, are:

There was an anecdotal lead opening into the general theme of the piece; then some explanation followed by anecdotes or examples. If a single individual was important to the story, some biographical material was included. Then there would be a further rendering of the subject, and the article would close with an anecdote. (qtd. in Hollowell 25)

So, in a usual news story the basic units are facts and quotations, but in journalistic fiction a writer’s aim is to reconstruct the experience as it might have unfolded; to portray characters with psychological depth; and to convey information while providing the background which is usually not possible in newspaper and magazine reporting due to space requirements.

Norman Sims goes on to say that literary journalists “view cultural understanding as an end” and present that understanding by letting “dramatic action speak for itself” (1995: 6). He also enlisted “the boundaries of the form”: (1) immersion, or what Wolfe calls “saturation” reporting; (2) structure; (3) accuracy; (4) voice; (5) responsibility; (6) underlying meaning or symbolism (8). Sims lists ‘accuracy’ as one of the defining characteristics of literary journalism. Mark Kramer, a practicing literary journalist and educator, believes that there is a contract
between the literary journalist and readers that ‘the writers do what they appear to do, which is to get reality as straight as they can manage, and not make it up’ (1995: 23). L. Wilkins (1989: 181) also demands verifiability by defining literary journalism as a story ‘which connects the objective facts of the event with the cultural facts of symbols and myth.’ Characters, also, should not be wholly invented by the author nor composed from two or more real people (Sims 1984: 15). For Barbara Lounsberry the basic four features of literary or artistic nonfiction are: (1) documentable subject matter; (2) exhaustive research; (3) the scene; and (4) fine writing. To emphasize the fourth element she writes: “Verifiable subject matter and exhaustive research guarantee the nonfiction side of literary nonfiction; the narrative form and structure disclose the writer’s artistry; and finally, it’s polished language reveals that the goal all along has been literature” (1990: xv).

Characterizing the genre further, Hollowell adds two more fictional devices to the four listed earlier by Wolfe i.e. “interior monologue” and “composite characterization,” which means compressing evidence of multiple real personalities into one fictional character (26). Another characteristic of new journalism identified by Wolfe and Hollowell, is the authors’ intensive and time-consuming commitment to the topic at hand. For example, Truman Capote studied the events surrounding the murders of a Kansas farmer family for six years before giving a final shape to In Cold Blood (1966).

Thus journalistic fiction involves exhaustive research and a closer and in-depth experience of the events. It is based on accuracy i.e. verifiability of the subject matter. It uses subjectivity and rhetorical approach towards reality. It employs scene-by-scene detailed description and attempts to give structure to otherwise transient and inexplicable events of past or current times. It further tries to provide motives and closure to otherwise frenzied experiences
and presents live examples of individuals’ fates over a long period of time before and after the event. Its authors’ priority is educating or informing the reader.


In *Post War American Writing* (1991), Suresh Chandra has discussed themes of such fiction, summarizing some American authors’ texts like Tom Wolfe’s *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, Norman Mailer’s *Tough Guys, Ancient Evenings, Miami and the Siege of Chicago, Advertisements*, and Truman Capote’s *Other Voices Other Rooms. The Political Imagination of Norman Mailer* written by Dr. Reetinder Joshi, as the title indicates, examines the political aspect in the fiction as well as nonfiction of Norman Mailer, and deals with the narratological and rhetorical aspects. Another work entitled ‘*The Poetics of Norman Mailer’s Nonfiction*’ by
Markku Lehtimaki, deals with a survey on the nonfictional features visible in Norman Mailer’s texts.

So this study in particular provides insight into the literary journalistic works not only of Norman Mailer, but also of John Hersey, Truman Capote, and Don DeLillo. For the purpose of my study, I have chosen *Hiroshima* (1946) by John Hersey; *In Cold Blood: A True Account of Multiple Murder and Its Consequences* (1966) by Truman Capote; *The Armies of the Night: History as a novel/ The Novel as History* (1968), *Of a Fire on the Moon* (1970) and *The Executioner’s Song* (1979) by Norman Mailer; *Libra* (1988), *Underworld* (1997) and *Falling Man* (2007) by Don DeLillo. These narratives vary in form and the use of new journalistic techniques to portray different aspects of the American counterculture.

Although most of the critical studies have been done on the fictional aspect, yet a lot needs to be done from the factual and nonfictional perspective. Not only the selected texts are journalistic fiction, but they are also written in the form of narratives. The aim in this research is to study and apply theories of narratology and rhetoric to these texts (to be discussed in the next chapter), and to find out how these authors have tried to express their ideas and themes. This thesis also aims to find whether these narratives have helped their authors to awaken the readers through appropriate rhetoric or not.

For decades author Truman Capote has been praised for the resonant and literary quality of his book *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences*. It is a seminal example of the strengths and weaknesses of journalistic fiction. A fitting comparison to *In Cold Blood* is John Hersey’s *Hiroshima*, which recounts the experiences of six survivors of the first atomic bomb attack. Hersey’s dramatic reconstruction of events, which was published twenty years before Capote’s book, is probably closer to the accepted conception of being
immaculately factual. Marc Weingarten believes that what makes Hersey’s *Hiroshima* an “antecedent” to the genre, “among other things, is the way Hersey assiduously describes his characters’ internal reactions, the thoughts racing through their heads when the ‘noiseless flash’ makes its appearance over Hiroshima” (Weingarten 24).

Wolfe in *New Journalism*, states that ‘Capote’s success after publication of ICB gave the New Journalism, an overwhelming momentum’ (26). In his biography, *Capote*, Capote argues, “journalism is the most underestimated, the least explored of literary mediums” (1974: 188). F. W. Dupee designated *In Cold Blood* as “the best documentary account of an American crime ever written”; a reviewer from *Newsweek* called it “the product of one of the most astonishingly sustained acts of will and hard work in the life of any writer.” William L. Nance remarked about Capote’s work being judged as a nonfiction novel, “ICB is certainly one of the finest specimens of that ‘impure genre’ and quite possibly the best piece of artistic journalism ever written.” (qtd. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism* 1990: 85). Like Capote, Mailer was also a novelist before being a journalist. Being a novelist gave him the background to write the premier examples of New Journalism, in the form of *The Armies of the Night, Of a Fire on the Moon* and *The Executioner’s Song*. An entry in the Encyclopedia Britannica about him also states, “American novelist and journalist, best known for using a form of journalism—called New Journalism—that combines the imaginative subjectivity of literature with the more objective qualities of journalism” (2007).

Journalistic fiction takes as its subject a broad social portraiture difficult to define topically. Hollowell observes that the new journalists often wrote about personalities and phenomena unfamiliar to the average, middle-class American reader. The subject matter revolved around “emerging patterns of social organization that deviate from the mainstream
culture,” such as subcultures, gangs, artists, celebrities, and criminals (40). In order to recognize “society as a tableau of interesting races, age groups, subcultures, and social classes,” new journalists wrote with a “detachment of the self from various conventional sources of identification” (Eason 191), showing that New Journalism was essentially a personal commentary on diversity in society. Mailer’s success through the publication of *The Armies of the Night*, two years after Capote’s *In Cold Blood*, was in its own way quite spectacular. It improved Mailer’s reputation which was deteriorating at the time due to his two inept novels, *An American Dream* (1965) and *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967). Later, Mailer dealt with the whole panorama of society in *The Executioner’s Song*: Gary Gilmore’s family and friends, the prisons, the criminal justice system, Gilmore’s victims and their families, Schiller and the account of how the press helped create the story, the state of Utah and the Mormons who figured centrally in Gilmore’s upbringing and crimes. Mailer persisted in seeing Gilmore as “another major American protagonist” who encompassed “a deep contradiction in this country and lives his life in the crack of that contradiction,” a man who was “malignant at his worst and heroic at his best” with enormous desire for “revenge upon the American system” (Rollyson 287).

Works of journalistic fiction can be studied on the basis of two merits: artistic merit (creativity) and journalistic merit (credibility). These criteria, according to, Gay Talese and Barbara Lounsberry’s objectives of literary journalism (i.e. literature of reality): “… should have the texture, the rhythm, the pacing, the colouring, and the drama of a work of art, yet it should hold to the standard of verifiable truth” (1996: 31). Ronald Weber discussed the concept of artistic merit or what makes Capote’s work of journalism-literary journalism-when he noted that the author “through selection, arrangement, emphasis, and other literary devices, discovers some
meaning or theme in his factual materials. The difference is the difference between journalism and art” (1980: 73).

The debate around journalistic fiction is about giving attention to detail and presentation of facts. For Connery, literary journalism rather than just relating the informational who, what, or where, depicts and conveys moments in time, behaviour in society and culture. It broadly and subjectively explores how and why (1992: iv). Jon Franklin says “literary journalism does more than shovel data at readers. Instead, it uses carefully selected data from which it constructs patterns” (1987: 10). Literary journalists make available the facts and particulars which are more accurate and verifiable. Alan Palmer also refers to “the basic reality of our lives that we do not have direct access to the thought of other people” (2002: 29). Nonfiction is different from fiction in the sense that the former includes its sources and references and stresses on how these mental images and inner thoughts of another person have come to the knowledge of the author, whereas in the latter the author invents any thought or vision about his or her imaginary character. So in nonfiction the thoughts of another person are available to the reporter mainly through narrative acts like interviews, possible letters, diaries, testimonies, and so on. For instance, The Executioner’s Song is based on a large amount of documentary material, especially on taped interviews of real-life people. It displays self-conscious novelistic and “fictionalizing” techniques.

It has been observed that what is on the periphery of a subject for the conventional journalist is usually of central interest to the literary journalist. For instance, Twain’s book Innocents Abroad was about “the realities of human life everywhere” (Anderson 1971: 28-29). Similarly, Stephan Crane was interested in depicting human life, and said that in his writing he wanted “to give readers a slice of life” (1960: 158). This desire to capture people as they are was
also crucial to the new journalists of the 1960s and 1970s. According to Wolfe, the new journalists were motivated by “that rather elementary and joyous ambition to show the reader real life—‘Come here! Look! This is the way people live these days. These are the things they do!’” (Wolfe 1973: 33) Connery suggests that literary journalists make judgments and interpret by showing and dramatizing, as the fiction writer does, and by selection and arrangement of detail and imagery. Seabrook (2000) says that literary journalism stories give writers a chance to become part of the audience, which in turn makes the reader feel a part of the story. He also says:

The writer’s authority is now going to be based not on having a greater knowledge at the beginning, but rather your authority is going to be based on establishing a connection with the reader saying, I’m just like you. I’m an average Joe, and I want you to listen to me and believe me because in the course of this story, we’re going to share some experiences that we both perhaps would have in common as we encounter whatever the subject is going to be. (qtd. in Kenny Boudreaux 2010)

Literary journalists use precise description as a means of comprehension. For instance, John Hersey achieves a sense of authenticity by adopting an almost clinical tone in his prose. In Hiroshima Hersey provides spare and meticulously documented details gleaned from close observation and careful research. The exact location of the center of the blast, for example, is identified as “a spot a hundred and fifty yards south of the torii and a few yards southeast of the pile of ruins that had once been the Shima Hospital” (Hiroshima 96). This detail demonstrates to the reader that much about the bombing can indeed be ascertained and communicated in familiar terms.
The authors of journalistic fiction include voice or an individual point of view in their works, causing them to become a character in their own story, casting a new light on the events. In any narrative an author’s “voice” affects a reader’s perspective of looking at the characters and situations, thus presenting the author as an actual presence within the body of the text. The author becomes as much a character as any player in the story which he or she has written. Point of view, Tom Wolfe explains, is used by the journalistic writer to “present every scene to the reader through the eyes of a particular character, giving the reader the feeling of being inside the character’s mind” (Hollowell 28).

In *Armies* Mailer participates as a character, in addition to being the narrator and author of the text. The reader also finds a glimpse of the real writer who has written the text and whose image is self-ironically described and analyzed by the narrative. This inclusion of voice and the author’s perspective is an important feature when classifying a work as journalistic fiction. Such fiction written in the third person includes the presence of an outside narrator being the author who has initiated the research, conducted interviews, assembled notes, established a narrative, and witnessed the life of their subjects. Often, the manners in which characters and events are presented are extremely telling of the author’s position regarding the content of his or her narrative. According to Stephen Minot, author of *Literary Nonfiction: The Fourth Genre*, literary journalism:

reflects the feelings of the author, the emotions that in varying degrees make it a personal account …. [The author’s] writing has to convey subtle reactions and responses to the subject regardless of whether that subject is a person, a place, an event, or a conviction. To earn the title of ‘literary,’ it must communicate not only direct meanings but overtones, shades of meaning. (35)
Because authors choose to include their own perspective in a work, they become a character. If the authors intrude upon their narratives, it affects the reader’s conceptual vision of any given character or event, turning the author into an omnipotent character himself.

In the same way, Capote used a third-person, omniscient point of view in writing the account of the Holcomb, Kansas, victims, and murderers. He tried to keep himself out of his manuscript so as to provide a more flexible point-of-view presenting the thoughts and actions of the characters. Capote remarked to George Plimpton in an interview, “For the nonfiction novel to be entirely successful, the author should not appear in the work. Once the narrator does appear, he has to appear throughout, all the way down the line, and the I-I-I intrudes when it really shouldn’t” (1966: 38).

An author of journalistic fiction uses a variety of tools and techniques to develop a character. To depict a rich picture of the subject of his work an author not only describes the physical attributes and appearance of a character, but also develops implicit thematic concepts about that character. The journalistic aspect of literary journalism is actually the genre’s observance of truth, accuracy, and reportage. A common technique for character development is physical description, used effectively by these writers. For example, Capote in *In Cold Blood* wrote that Herb Clutter’s teeth were “unstained and strong enough to shatter walnuts” (6) to highlight his personality. He portrayed Mrs. Sadie Truitt, the town’s mail messenger as “A stocky, weathered widow who wears babushka bandannas and cowboy boots” (66). Likewise, Hersey wrote descriptively with each detail appearing to have been meticulously documented and gathered from close observation and careful research. Basically these authors’ aim was to let the story speak for itself through description. Boynton asserts that the newest generation of journalist-authors more stringently adheres to reportorial standards, and ideals of objectivity and
accuracy: “[T]heir most significant innovations have involved experiments with reporting, rather than the language or forms they used to tell their stories” (2005: xii). Most of the writers find creative ways to become “part of [the] lives” of their subjects.

Authors of journalistic fiction also wrote effective dialogues which not only acted as a means of reporting but also as a means of establishing character’s motives, mood, and other personality traits that help in developing the theme of the narrative. According to Wolfe, Capote was employing “the technique of presenting every scene to the reader through the eyes of a particular character, giving the reader the feeling of being inside the character’s mind and experiencing the emotional reality of the scene ...” (1973: 53). Mailer is a character in Armies of the Night and an omniscient narrator in The Executioner’s Song. In The Executioner’s Song he used “very little invention” because the interviews with the witnesses were so detailed. In providing symbolic details to the narratives, the author purports to convey greater meaning with every word or phrase. Literary journalists sort through, select the perfect symbol, and pride themselves on making the most obscure references. In 1980, Ronald Weber concluded that the author strengthens his credibility by including within the finished work some account of how he went about this effort (163).

Benjamin Harris, the America’s first newspaperman, wanted to publish truth as it was, with accurate reporting (Sloan 4). Similarly, in their search for truth and its representation, Wolfe and the New Journalists engrossed themselves in their subjects, often spending months, and sometimes, years with their subjects. Since, the truth is always all too complex, the search for it may be “well served by inventions, exaggerations, and other transformations of fact” (Heyne 486).
These authors show the lives of their stories’ protagonists through a sociological lens on peculiar subjects, by themselves getting dirty and living amongst their subjects, as done to develop the themes of the atomic detonation in Hiroshima, the assassination of President Kennedy (1963), the march on the Pentagon (1967), the Apollo 11 moon flight (1969) by Hersey, Mailer and DeLillo, respectively. One of the important journalistic criterions is currency i.e. getting on the events soon after they happen. The facts are, however, arranged afterwards, involving both scrupulous evidence and constructed interpretations usually in the form of texts and images. The longer the gap, the more the resulting work edges into the realm of history. Due to this, the reporters have been, sometimes, accused of tampering with the truth, making up facts or creating subjects in their stories. Sometimes the writers are also criticized for their ability to recreate extended dialogue or recount situations. Thus the facts such as those pertaining to past historical events are always open to negotiation, revision, correction, and interpretation. These facts have been used and interpreted in different manner by the authors and readers, respectively.

So new journalists coalesced all the techniques mentioned above to present a unique and sophisticated style which requires extensive research and even more careful reporting than done in the typical news articles. The subject and themes of journalistic articles and fiction reflected the social and political climate of the decade, which was usually unfamiliar to middle-class readers. Hollowell has classified four main categories of the subjects of new journalism: (1) Celebrities and personalities; (2) the youth subculture and the still-evolving “new” cultural pattern; (3) the “big” events often violent ones such as criminal cases and antiwar protests; and (4) general social and political reporting (1981: 40).

Famous interviewers like Gay Talese and Rex Reed portrayed movie stars and heroes. Lillian Ross’s infamous sketch of Hemingway and Capote’s treatment of Marlon Brando were
visible on the pages of *New Yorker* “Profiles.” Many authors also emphasized the lives of petty criminals like Perry and Dick in *In Cold Blood*, and Gary in *The Executioner’s Song*. Another category which caught the attention of the journalistic writers was the new pattern of social organizations and trends i.e. the shifting patterns of life-style, and leisure pursuits. Wolfe’s article in *Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* was one such work which threw light on new life-style patterns of the time.

The third category of the new journalistic exploration was the highlighting of violent events, for instance, Hunter S. Thompson’s *Hell’s Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga* (1967), John Hersey’s *Algiers Motel Incident* (1968) and Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood* (1965). Further, in the fourth category, authors represented the political and social subjects, ranging from the Civil Rights Movement to political conventions. The popular examples of this category are Norman Mailer’s *The Armies of the Night, Of a Fire on the Moon*, and Don DeLillo’s *Underworld*.

Many novelists began as reporters and then went back into reporting, in the midst of their novel-writing. For instance, Ernest Hemingway, Stephan Crane, and Dos Passos are such novelists. John Hersey was the celebrated writer of fact and fiction, best known as the author of *Hiroshima* (1946) and *A Bell for Adano* (1944), which won him the 1945 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Hersey was the author of more than twenty books, and many magazines and newspapers articles. He was best known for the passion and simplicity of his prose, and variety of subject matter. His other works include *The Wall* (1950), a fictional achievement of the life in Warsaw Ghetto during the World War II, *The War Lover* (1959), a novel about the World War II American airman who loved dropping bombs on enemy cities, and *The Algier’s Motel Incident*
(1968), which described the killings of three black youth in Detroit’s Algier’s Motel during the 1967 riots.

*Hiroshima*, the most famous of all, awakened Americans to the horrors of atomic warfare and threw light on the beginning of a nuclear age. It was a literary classic in which Hersey wrote a straightforward account of what happened on the day of the attack, and in the year afterwards, to the city’s inhabitants, especially to six survivors chosen by Hersey for in-depth study. *The New York Times* ran an editorial calling attention to the piece, and Lewis Gannett, writing in *The New York Times Herald Tribune*, called *Hiroshima* “the best reporting” of the war. According to Richard Severo, “From the beginning of his career, Mr Hersey won praise for the directness of his style, his eye for detail and his ability to get to the heart of any situation” (qtd. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism* 1994: 333). Thirty-nine years later, Hersey updated his original in “Hiroshima: The Aftermaths,” published again in *The New Yorker* on July 15, 1985, when two of his six original subjects died; one had become a prosperous physician; the other mother superior; another had won aid from the Japanese government after years of struggle; and the fourth had toured the United States seeking help for his Protestant church.

Earlier most of the material written about the bombing tended to focus on the science and engineering like the force of the blast, the physical principles governing the explosion, but by contrast, *Hiroshima* depicted the impact of the bomb on every day human beings, leading everyday lives. *Hiroshima* was actually a relatively objective, non-judgmental account of the bombing, recreating the entire experience from the victims’ point of view. Hersey moves from one personal narrative to another so that the time sequence of all the six stories is carried forward simultaneously.
Hersey’s journalistic agenda in *Hiroshima* is thus not only to report the facts, but also to accommodate the needs of his American readers by providing a perceptual frame within which the events assume significance. The true achievement of *Hiroshima* is that its journalistic credibility is not flawed by the injection of moralistic sentiments. *The Algiers Motel Incident* represents Hersey’s only other significant attempt at extended literary journalism. Unlike *Hiroshima*, in which the author remains invisible, and *Here to Stay*, in which he appears only in the preface and the introductions to individual stories, Hersey enters directly into the telling of *The Algiers Motel Incident*. *Hiroshima* represents Hersey’s most successful blending of literary techniques with journalistic content, largely because it is one of his least self-conscious works. The novel provides an honest and compelling account of a morally ambiguous event in a journalistically credible fashion, as well as in aesthetically and dramatically effective terms. Perhaps unwittingly, Hersey has provided in *Hiroshima* one of the seminal examples of contemporary journalistic fiction.

*Hiroshima* was followed by Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood* which claimed to have invented it or inserted it into a larger historical context. It took two decades for another author to apply, on a broad scale, the innovations of John Hersey’s *Hiroshima*—that is, to write a book of journalism in the form of a novel. Truman Capote is regarded by many as the founding figure in the 1960s movement referred to as the “New Journalism,” which sought to apply fiction–writing techniques to news reportage. Capote, in 1959, read a short newspaper story about a brutal murder in Kansas and decided to investigate it. The result was *In Cold Blood*. Like *Hiroshima*, it was first published in *The New Yorker* and made even more of an impact. The long middle section of the book is cinematic as well as novelistic, as the narrative cuts back and forth between the killers: Hickock and Perry Smith—and their pursuers, agents Alvin Dewey and
Harold Nye of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. For a journalist to recreate events require a prodigious amount of reporting, and Capote could not have written *In Cold Blood* had he not met the two men after their capture, obtained their sympathy and cooperation, and interviewed them for hours and hours, for a long period of six years.

It was the iconoclastic Norman Mailer, an outstanding figure in the artistic scene of America, who became the next major author to recognize the value and power of writing in this tradition. Mailer, by using journalism, kept his work rooted in the real world, and through literature he transcended the simplistic objective/subjective dichotomy of news reporting. He particularly used this genre for keeping himself connected to the rapid changes of the sixties, and afterwards, it also kept literature relevant in this emerging postmodern world.

Mailer wrote plays, novels, screenplays, newspaper articles, and directed movies. His first novel, *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), was a bestseller and made this 25 years old author famous and financially well-off. After his next novels, *Barbary Shore* (1951) and *An American Dream* (1965), he wrote many fictional and nonfictional works. Mailer was a central countercultural figure, often sharply criticizing the American society in his writings and public speeches. In 1955 Mailer co-founded the magazine *Village Voice*, an alternative weekly newspaper featuring politics and arts. From 1952 to 1963 he was also the editor of *Dissent*, a magazine concerned with culture, society, and politics. He was a Democratic candidate for Mayor of New York in 1969, but failed to be elected. Mailer won the Pulitzer Prize twice: in 1968 for *The Armies of the Night*, and in 1979 for *The Executioner’s Song*.

First famous as a novelist, then as an essayist-celebrity-provocateur, Norman Mailer became a journalist in 1964, when he was assigned by *Esquire* to cover the national political conventions. His choice to refer to himself in the third person can be seen in many articles and
most of his subsequent journalistic works— including *Of a Fire on the Moon*, *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* and *The Armies of the Night*. A person like Mailer was not a mere reporter, but a man of immense talent and imagination. The basic concern in his work was to provide great psychological depth to the portrayal of social reality. To achieve these ends, he fused the journalist’s concern for detail with the novelist’s personal vision.

*The Armies of the Night* is Mailer’s first celebrated piece of journalistic fiction, published in 1968. It is Mailer’s participant-observation of the 1967 march on the Pentagon to protest against the Vietnam War. *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* and *The Armies of the Night* are the clearest and most successful of Mailer’s journalistic fiction. Both utilize the literary devices of realistic novels adopted by new journalism. Each book comprises of a series of short chapters depicting, scene-by-scene, the author’s observation and experiences of the context under scrutiny. The characters and the nature of scenes are developed through careful and complete recording of dialogue that the author overhears, or in which he participates. Furthermore, the details of the characters’ appearance, manners, and surroundings in which the author finds himself are described in almost obsessive detail. While the other techniques are important elements of Mailer’s style, it is his use of multiple narrative personae that distinguishes his literary journalistic works from those of others associated with the genre.

Another important work of journalistic fiction by Mailer is *The Executioner’s Song* (1979) that depicts the events surrounding the execution of Gary Gilmore by the state of Utah for murder. The most striking aspect in *The Executioner’s Song* is that Mailer’s personal voice is here largely replaced by flat and banal language. The style of the book appears to be quite different from that of the earlier books. Mailer tells the story from different perspectives.
Norman Mailer’s *Of a Fire on the Moon* was serialized in *Life* magazine in 1969 and 1970, and later published in 1970 as a book. It is an intensive documentary and reflection on the Apollo 11 moon landing from Mailer’s distinctive point of view. After spending time at the space center and mission control in Houston, and witnessing the launch of the colossal Saturn V rocket at Cape Kennedy in Florida, Mailer began writing his account of the historic voyage at his home in Provincetown, Massachusetts during marathon writing sessions to meet his deadlines for the magazine. Before being published as a book, his epic account was published in three long installments: *A Fire on the Moon* (*Life*, 29 August 1969), *The Psychology of Astronauts* (*Life*, 14 November 1969), and *A Dream of the Future’s Face* (*Life*, 9 January 1970).

Don DeLillo is one of the most celebrated contemporary American novelists. His works have established him as a talented novelist often associated with Thomas Pynchon and William Gaddis, for the sense of social and political paranoia visible in his fiction. His works have covered subjects as diverse as television, nuclear war, sports, the complexities of language, performance art, the Cold War, mathematics, the advent of the digital age, and global terrorism. His first novel, *Americana* (1971), depicts the odyssey of a television executive through the late 1960s America. DeLillo uses fast-paced, fragmented presentations, and other stylistic techniques. He is also known for experimenting with the form and structure, and also for deemphasizing plot. DeLillo first gained attraction with *End Zone* (1972), in which a young man has two consuming passions: football and nuclear warfare.

His next major success is *Ratner’s Star* (1976), depicting a condition where verbal ideas cannot compete with the clarity and order of mathematics. It has been observed that in DeLillo’s novels knowledge is not static but always in flux. *Players* (1977) and *Running Dog* (1978) focus on the urban America with pawn-like characters, lost in a surreal nightmarish existence.
Amazons (1980), discusses the first woman to play the National Hockey League, and it was written under the pseudonym of Cleo Birdwell. In 1982 came The Names, which continues to examine the language and accurate characterization of American cultural values. Libra (1988) depicts the assassination of John F. Kennedy which inaugurated the era of media spectacle.

DeLillo depicts Lee Harvey Oswald as the first truly postmodern figure, desiring his ten minutes of media fame. In 1991, DeLillo published Mao II, which was influenced by the events surrounding the fatwa placed upon the author Salman Rushdie, and the intrusion of the press into the life of the reclusive writer J. D. Salinger (Passaro).

Of his numerous works Underworld (1997) is arguably the most ambitious. The title “underworld” portrays many things like the underground nuclear waste, the graffiti artist who lives and works in the New York subway system, the mafia underworld that is reported to have infiltrated the waste management industry, the desolate urban landscape of the Bronx with its population of underclass dwellers, and parts of the Cold War history. In other words, the “underworld” stands for things hidden, buried underground either because they are disagreeable, filthy, dangerous or criminal, but nevertheless, unavoidable in every society.

He wrote The Body Artist (2001), Cosmopolis (2003), and his fourteenth novel, Falling Man (2007) in which he describes a family’s attempt to rebuild their lives in the dim weeks and months following the September 11 attacks. Instead of creating a documentary styled account, DeLillo charts impressionistically the complex psychological and existential rearrangements wrought by the attacks. His main characters are Keith and Lianne Neudecker, and their son, Justin. DeLillo published Point Omega, his fifteenth novel, in February 2010, dealing with an important theme. The ‘Omega Point’ of the title “... [is] the possible idea that human
consciousness is reaching a point of exhaustion and that what comes next may be either a paroxysm or something enormously sublime and unenvisionable” (Alter).

Few writers have been as effective at conveying the mood of ennui and menace that underlines the modern era. Alter argues, in an article, “Don DeLillo on Point Omega and His Writing Methods - WSJ.com,” that for doing so DeLillo even marked a shift ‘... away from sweeping, era-defining novels such as White Noise, Libra and Underworld to a more “spare and oblique”’ style. DeLillo’s works are very much suited to the uncertainties of the time. His list of awards is extensive, including the PEN/Faulkner Award (for Libra), the National Book Award (for White Noise), a PEN/Faulkner Award and a Pulitzer Prize finalist nomination for Mao II in 1991 and 1992, respectively. Underworld earned nominations for the National Book Award and the New York Times Best Books of the Year in 1997, and a second Pulitzer Prize for Fiction nomination in 1998. The novel also won the 1998 American Book Award, the 1999 Jerusalem Prize, and both the William Dean Howells Medal and “Riccardo Bacchelli” International Awards in 2000. It was a runner-up in The New York Times’ survey of the best American fiction of the last 25 years (announced in May 2006). On April 25, 2009, DeLillo received another significant literary award, the 2009 Commonwealth Award for Literature, given by PNC Bank of Delaware. DeLillo received two further significant literary awards in 2010: the St. Louis Literary Award for his entire body of work to date on October 21, 2010. Recently DeLillo received the 2012 Carl Sanburg Literary Award on October 17 2012 on the campus of the University of Illinois at Chicago. During an April 2012 interview promoting the release of David Cronenberg’s adaptation of his 2003 novel Cosmopolis, DeLillo revealed that he is currently at work on a new novel (his sixteenth), in which “the [main] character spends a lot of time watching file footage on a wide screen, images of a disaster.”
The new journalism which came afterwards was deviating from the track, for instance, Don DeLillo’s *Libra, Underworld, and Falling Man*. Though these are not fitting examples of journalistic narratives, yet they have been selected for representation. The purpose here is to understand the techniques used by all the selected authors to represent the facts and to verify as to what extent they have applied the fictional and journalistic techniques used by reporters, making them fit into the category of journalistic fiction. These authors have taken up journalistic fiction as a means to emphasize the artist’s role in society. For Capote, this kind of literature was a “new art form.” William L. Nance in *The Worlds of Truman Capote* holds that the ingredients of this new form for Capote were: (1) the timelessness of the theme; (2) the unfamiliarity of the setting; and (3) the large cast of characters that would allow him to tell the story from a variety of points of view (qtd. in Hollowell 161). Capote has allowed the “facts” to speak for themselves by keeping the narrator i.e. himself, out of sight while describing the Clutter murders. According to Hollowell, it gave Capote’s narrative a “you-are-there” immediacy (Ibid. 91).

Mailer, on the other hand, wrote *The Armies of the Night*, instinctively, and in an autobiographical manner. His talent for social observation and his passion for understanding the sources of political power contribute to his effectiveness. Richard Gilman, in an article ‘Mailer’s Vision,’ explains that Mailer is a novelist primarily because novelists command the largest audiences. His more profound ambition is to be a kind of psychic president, a moral leader, the country’s savior (qtd. in Hollowell 89). *The Armies of the Night* is Mailer’s protest against the Vietnam War which blends art and life, journalism and the novel, and most importantly, Mailer the man and Mailer the would-be prophet. Basically, at the heart of *The Armies of the Night*, lies Mailer’s deep concern for the individual in a society increasingly governed by bureaucratic and totalitarian impulses that threaten personal responsibility.
So the first task of a journalistic fiction writer, whether he works within the forms of fiction or the journalistic report, or combination of the two, is always to convince the reader that his work is adequate as history. He does this by his reporting and research, by asking all the questions that can be asked, reading all the documents, and evaluating all his material by applying usual means of verification. He further strengthens his credibility by including within the finished work some account of how he went about this effort. His primary task, at any event, is always to persuade the reader that he has indeed come to sufficient terms with what Michael Arlen called “the actuality, the nonstory book element in life” (254).

The goal of all great art is to provide a picture of reality in which the contradiction between appearance and reality, the particular and the general, the immediate and the conceptual, is so resolved that the two converge into a spontaneous integrity. According to Barbara Foley, the borderline between nonfictional and fictive discourse is an arbitrary boundary because “reality is amenable to any construction that is placed upon it” (qtd. in *Telling the Truth: The Theory and Practice of Documentary Fiction* 10). According to Mas’ud Zavarzadeh, “[The nonfiction novel] is a narrative which is simultaneously self-referential and out-referential, factual and fictional, and thus well equipped to deal with the elusive fusion of fact and fiction which has become the matrix of today’s experience” (56-57). Zavarzadeh also argues that the “bizarre” and “fictional” nature of contemporary reality is a result of “runaway contemporary technologies” (21).

In *Fables of Fact*, John Hollowell suggests that the apocalyptic mood of the sixties, with the political protests, televised assassinations, and hippie counter culture, resulted in a “blur … of the comfortable distinctions between reality and unreality, fantasy and fact” (5). He further states that because of the “added force” of “mass-media journalism,” the individual American
“found himself daily confronted by realities that were as actual as they seemed fictive” (2). The forthcoming chapters would deal with how, and to what extent these narratives depicted the real historical atmosphere and events of their time, and added to the knowledge and awareness of their readers. To understand the narrative styles used by these authors the next chapter deals with various existing theories of narratology.