ABSTRACT

Chapter I is an introduction to the thesis argument. It gives the prime focus on Norman Mailer’s vision and his views on writing and reading of novels. As a sequence, the chapter deals with the biographical information of Norman Mailer which influenced and encompassed his writing career, and also it switches over to give a brief note in chronological order on the select works. The chapter further tries to outline the historical background on the war novels, the birth of New Journalism and Teaching Dossier.

Chapter II provides the brief survey of literary criticisms on Norman Mailer and his works to show the expanded development of this thesis argument from the other criticisms. It also stretches the information for considering Norman Mailer as the social critic, existentialist, and Marxist. The chapter deals with various critical comments on Norman Mailer’s works to prove that the choice of words, usage of language, theme, and genre of his writings have been analysed and criticised in most theses in different perspectives, whereas the argument of this study aims to assert that a few of his novels withstand as Teaching Dossiers.

Chapter III deals with Norman Mailer’s first novel, The Naked and the Dead. It projects Norman Mailer’s scholarly contribution to social criticism and his approach of handling totalitarianism as a chief target of his attack by submitting many individual and social ills that were widespread in America. It further presents Norman Mailer’s concern for society and his views on the reality
of man. It also discusses that Norman Mailer had a notion of teaching a lesson to his people through his criticism on social events and ills.

Chapter IV attempts to explore that The Armies of the Night is a righteous book of the movement which teaches a lesson, though it is a record of the protest to Vietnam War. It focuses on Norman Mailer’s skills in employing the subjective journalism to stir the mind and heart of the implicated readers to accelerate the peace movement in America. Further, it discusses that Norman Mailer portrays the protesters as real patriots of America and also teaches counterculture in America through this record.

Chapter V asserts that the novel, The Executioner’s Song, is a dossier of an American executioner written with an idea of posing many questions which could make the readers think and get an enhanced response for reforming the society. It also focuses on two vital points. One is The Executioner’s Song, the dossier of an American executioner, endowed with multiple questions on capital punishment towards its readers. The second thing is that though Norman Mailer is one of the innovators of New Journalism, he has used objective journalism rather than subjective journalism in The Executioner’s Song to make the readers respond and react to the events happened in America.

Chapter VI is a concluding chapter which summarises all the chapters on the thesis argument that a few of Norman Mailer’s novels are written as Teaching Dossiers which have taught lessons to his people as well as to the rest of the world.