

Writing Out of the Box: Literary Journalistic Tropes in Norman Mailer's *The Armies of Night*

*Wael M. Mustafa**

Introduction

In the 1960s, literary journalism emerged as a new hybrid genre that combines the best practices of both factual journalism and fictional literature. It represents a body of work that “reads like a novel or short story except that it is true or makes a truth claim to phenomenal experience” (Hartsock 2000, 1). Literary journalism has various labels that are used interchangeably. The “terminological inconsistencies” inherent in this hybrid genre have led critics to employ various concepts to label this genre such as “nonfiction novel”, “faction”, “historiographic metafiction”, or “historical narrative” (Flis 2010, 1-2). Other labels of the genre include “literary nonfiction,” “new journalism,” “literary journalism,” “literary reportage,” “factual narrative,” “literature of fact,” and “the true-life story.” The plenty of the concepts for this genre makes “finding a uniform and a fixed definition ... a virtually impossible task” (Flis 2010, 6). This terminological cornucopia is due to the “epistemological fluidity” of its boundaries (Hartsock 1999, 446). The emerging genre dates back to the publication of *In Cold Blood* (1965) by Truman Capote and *The Armies of the Night* (1968) by Norman Mailer. In the year of its publication, Mailer's *The Armies* has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction. Since then, it has been the focus of critical investigation as a major work of American literary journalism.

The emergence of literary journalism witnessed a large debate concerning its historical beginnings. Some critics, such as Doug Underwood who, in his book *Journalism and the Novel* (2011), traces the early seeds of the genre in the works of Daniel Defoe and William Hazlitt as the precursors of literary non-fiction. In the same vein, Charles Dickens, Ernest Hemingway, Mark Twain, John Hersey, and many others lend themselves to the genre of literary journalism. Literary non-fiction depends more on facts rather than on fiction. However, there is a consensus among the critics that “literary journalism” has become a genre-

* Lecturer in the Department of English, Fayoum University, Egypt.
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concept characterizing the distinctive form of American literature of the 1960s (Underwood 2011, 9). The genre originated in the United States where it “has developed in a truly versatile and abundant way” (Flis 2010, 2). The emerging genre has added a new color and taste to the journalistic discourse in which journalistic material is presented in a literary narrative form. Such a new genre of literary writing has focused on the formalistic narrative strategies of foregrounding and backgrounding according to which the writer’s subjectivity, ideas, and perceptions are foregrounded while factual and historical journalistic news are backgrounded. These strategies create a sense of amalgamation between the fictional and the factual narratives of literature and traditional journalism. The hybrid quality of the works of literary journalists locates them in the halfway between the distinct discourses of both genres where they “have lost an opportunity to gain special insight into the limits and potential of different narrative forms” (Fishkin 1985, 3).

Norman Mailer (1923-2007) is considered the co-founder of the hybrid genre of literary journalism with Truman Capot during the 1960s. He has created a discursive narrative that problematizes the generic boundaries of journalistic and novelistic discourses. Moreover, he recognizes the value and power of literary journalism in both its literary dimensions and political associations. The genre allows him to acknowledge the tension occurring within contemporary literature and journalism without having to abandon either form. Furthermore, Mailer utilizes literary journalism to find a contact zone through which he can incorporate the values of these distinct genres while avoiding their flaws. He keeps an eye on the real world by inducing his work with journalistic information. Meanwhile, he subverts the simplistic objective/subjective binary of news reporting through novelistic narrative. In short, Mailer finds in the emerging genre an outlet to keep himself connected to the rapid changes of the sixties. The main characteristics of his texts are their modern topics and experimentations with form that provoke new literary genres. Such new genres have got rid of the mediocrity of the traditional genres caused by the “used-upness of certain forms, or the felt exhaustion of certain possibilities” (Barth 1984, 64). Mailer’s novels, thus, depict the status of American fiction “at the end of one age and on the threshold of another” (Coover 1973, 61–62) by reflecting the interplay and the overlapping of both journalistic modes of factual presentation and the novelistic fictional forms.

Mailer has positioned himself as a prolific and controversial writer who resists categorization within any dogmatic form. Not only was he a novelist, journalist, critic, and essayist, but he was also a director, screenwriter, actor, poet

and politician. He experimented with every sort of narrative form, including what he invented himself. Many critics, such as Robert Lucid (1971) and Michael Lennon (1982), regard Mailer as one of the greatest voices of his generation. Mailer delves deeply into political issues and meanwhile pursues his new interest approaching the area between fact and fiction. In an interview with Richard Stern and Robert Lucid, Mailer identifies himself as one who “started as one kind of writer” and has been “evolving into another” (Lennon 1982, 1). This evolution induces Mailer to combine journalistic and novelistic discourses into a new discursive genre that paves the way for more aesthetic value. Furthermore, Mailer gives priority to the articulation of the dialogic interactions that occur among the text, the author, and the reader. In this respect, Robert Lucid points out, “Mailer enunciates, more clearly and consciously than had any of the public writers in the tradition before him what the real relationship is between the public writer and his audience” (1971, 6).

This paper is an attempt to approach the various tropes of literary journalism examining how they creatively shape the factual material into novelistic form. To show the theoretical manifestation of literary journalism in practice, the paper provides a critical reading of Mailer’s *The Armies of the Night* (1968) as a literary journalistic text *par excellence*. Such a reading can elucidate how the emerging genre effectively occupies a third space between the well-established genres of fiction and non-fiction. The researcher proposes three tropes of literary journalism: *the intertextual*, *the self-reflexive*, and *the autobiographical* and critically discusses Mailer’s *Armies* as both explicit and implicit applications of the new genre.

Multiple Discourses of Literary Journalism

The literary journalistic narrative is a discursive genre that “conveys the hybrid nature of the texts and thus their paradoxical, threshold, problematic nature” (Anderson 1989, ix). It is characterized by its foregrounding of the poetic and referential aspects. According to Barbara Lounsberry, this genre paradoxically represents a fertile ground for literary criticism though it remains greatly unexplored by contemporary critics (1990, xi). The cornucopia of theoretical and critical vectors on literary journalism tends to investigate the reasons behind the emergence of this discursive genre. The rupture that occurred in the 1960s within literary realism and traditional journalism because of the dominance of television and other social and political forces results in the perpetuation of this genre. Within the American context, television, as a powerful social medium, has concurred with the absurd reality in the literary scene. Thus, the classical sense of reality has been degenerated by the radical

shifts in all cultural, social, political, economic, and informational spheres. Such a sense of reality has dismantled the worldview and the people's perception of it. In this respect, the novelist, Philip Roth, stated that "credible" reality was absent in the fiction of the 1960s as absurdity replaced the common, ordinary perception of life. Realistic fiction witnesses the absence of modern reality due to its resistance to the realistic treatment in such a type of fiction. For Roth, the American actuality is "a kind of embarrassment to one's own meager imagination" as it "is continually outdoing our talents" (1961, 224).

The impossibility of understanding, the indescribability, and the incredibility of American reality suit the "altered nature of reality" in the mid-twentieth-century. This explains the turn towards "the mythicizing objectification of the world by the media through which we get much of our 'news.' The 'reality' the mass media cover—objects of their attention—has become indistinguishable from the way they cover it" (Frus 1994, 164). Phyllis Frus points out that mass media had utterly transformed the way that American society saw itself. The new paradigm creates a sense of menace for both traditional journalists and novelists as it blurs the distinctive characteristics of both genres. In this regard, Edward Epstein assumes that journalistic narrative can allure its audience only through adopting fictional imagery in which characters are cast "in the form of the fictive story, with narrative closure" (2000, 263). Therefore, visual media emerges as a "menace" to print journalism in such a context of shifting paradigms. To resolve this devastating situation, the journalists managed to find a new role in the journalistic narrative through which they used tropes of fiction to tell news stories. This marked the emergence of literary journalism in the 1960s.

Literary journalists attempt to overcome the crisis of reality through the depiction of a complex and multi-faceted world, in which the central events of the story become even more obscure. They use journalistic narrative as a trope to explore reality that conventional realistic mimesis has failed to depict adequately. According to David Lodge, "There is no point in carefully creating fiction that gives an illusion of life when life itself seems illusory" (1971, 33). Literary journalists do not adopt the escapist formula of Romanticism with its tendency for a retreat from the world of reality. Rather, they attempt to delve into reality and to explore the world as if it were art. They not only construct but also attempt to understand reality out of the fragmented ambiguity of journalistic facts. In brief, literary journalism, manipulating literary techniques, attempts to break with the singularity of historical narrative in favor of a far more complicated reality. Literary journalists strive to uncover the more universal and artistic truths about the world in which we live.

The technique of mixing a fictional narrative with a journalistic discourse is anew as it first appeared in the early eighteenth and nineteenth century novels such as *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) by Daniel Defoe and *The Flight* (1822) by William Hazlitt. However, despite the early use of this technique, the modern version differs from the old one as the historical circumstances and intentions of these literary journalists were unique to this era, as was the proliferation of writers, new and old, who quickly adopted the style for their own reasons. In the “Introduction” to *The New Journalism* (1975), Tom Wolfe states that literary journalism, as a discursive literary genre, emerged as a response to the crisis of realistic representation in the contemporary literary scene. Wolfe asserts that the intersection of novel and journalism is largely due to the abandonment of realism by authors and the need to bridge the gap between fact and fiction. For Wolfe, the novel had been “an American dream” in the forties, fifties, and the early sixties of the twentieth century. It “was no mere literary form. It was a psychological phenomenon. It was a cortical fever” (1975, 19). Moreover, Wolfe sees the crisis of the 1960s novel had occurred when “the richest terrain of the novel” had been abandoned in favor of mythologies and fabulism (1975, 43). Therefore, it was an opportunity for both journalists and novelists to come closer and to play a shared role in establishing the hybrid genre of literary journalism that “reaffirms the primacy of that form as a mode of exploring and interpreting experience” (Lodge 1971, 12). Rather than seeing the novel as a fading genre of literature, literary journalists saw the novel as having a promising role in interpreting human world experience. They found in the novel the generic functions that could allow for the breadth and scope to deal with such a complex subject as the modern world.

Mailer’s *The Armies* is written in an overtly self-conscious manner as Mailer assumes the roles of both the author and the central character. It models itself on the tradition of the more experimental fiction of the time. In this novel, Mailer does not abandon reality like fabulists but rather he extends the literary range to make reality relevant and meaningful in this multi-faceted and complex world. In this novel, Mailer attacks traditional reporting that rarely gets at the truth of a situation such as the march on the Pentagon. Kathy Smith points out that Mailer, throughout the text, uses literary journalistic narrative strategies to “question the authority of the newspaper text and to discover the limits of the reporter’s narrative practices” (1994, 179). For Mailer, these limits exist because reporters do not simply list facts, but retell stories and thereby insert, consciously or not, their own bias and subjective view into their reports. Mailer explains that the journalistic historical discourse “is so incoherent, inaccurate, contradictory, malicious, even based on error that no accurate history is conceivable” (1968,

284). Thus, journalistic dictum of objectivity is simply a myth or a lie that Mailer earnestly seeks to uncover and undermine by “giving way to a more active, mediated, journalist-centred form of reporting” (Hallin 1992, 18). Hartsock states that “a rift occurred between literature and journalism ... as a result of the objectification of news to which narrative literary journalism would prove the reaction” (Hartsock 2000, 17).

The Armies has often come under critical scrutiny as a literary journalistic text that amalgamates fictional narrative with factual discourse concerning the Peace March to the Pentagon in October 1967 against the war in Vietnam. Phillip Bufithis states that in the *Armies* “the events are shaping the book instead of novels shaping the events” (1978, 87). Mailer’s text shows the literary talents of its author as a journalist, who has an inner desire, not to tell the news objectively, but to narrate, interpret, and reflect upon such news subjectively. The text is divided into two books as indicated in the subtitle. The first book, entitled “The History as a Novel: The Steps of the Pentagon,” tells the story of the March and Mailer’s active participation in it (historical fact) from the highly subjective perspective of the author (narrative technique). Moreover, Mailer, adding a dramatic touch to the book, inaugurates the first book *in medias res* as he indicates that his participation in the activities of the March comes after a phone call invitation. Another dramatic touch is added to the *dénouement* of the first Book. Mailer, the author, prefers the open ending of his narrative by closing the first book with his protagonist, Mailer the character, being released after his arrest during the March. This helps the readers to contemplate on the unanswered questions of the text concerning what happened during the arrest and the release of the protagonist. It also paves the way for the text to have a sequel, the second Book, entitled “The Novel as History: The Battle of the Pentagon”.

In the second book, as its title indicates, the author adopts a highly objective and omniscient point of view to give a realistic account of “the Battle of the Pentagon” that occurred after the arrest of the protagonist between the demonstrators and the police. Therefore, the framework of the text indicates that it provides a two-fold perspective in dealing with the political issue of the war in Vietnam. The first book presents a subjective view from within the march. As fiction, it unravels the protagonist’s personal experience and his engagement in the event of the March. In the second book, Mailer, the author, establishes himself as the journalist or the historian who objectively and omnisciently accounts for the March as an outsider. Uniquely, then, *The Armies* interweaves the separate discourses of fiction, journalism, and history into a distinctive hybrid genre that launches “an explicit attack on the objectivity and

impersonality of the conventional media” (Hollowell 1977, 92). The discursive narrative of *The Armies* subverts the hierarchies of the traditional genres. It creates a hybrid matrix of discourses in dialogue with each other with no one discourse claiming the ultimate truth or superiority over another.

Three Tropes of Literary Journalism

Literary journalists have a sense of literary aspirations that enable them to overcome and to challenge the hurdles of objectivity. According to John Hollowell, the emerging genre of literary journalism foregrounds the subjective over the objective in an attempt to report “stories hidden beneath the surface facts” (1977, 23). Moreover, literary journalists not only write the news stories from their own point of view but also become the story by involving themselves into it. By so doing, they manage to depict a vivid picture of life that standard objective reporting cannot achieve. Ironically, this subjective journalism “strives for a higher kind of ‘objectivity’” (Hollowell 1977, 22). Such an objectivity is achieved through the treatment of the subject of the stories. The use of the subjective style in treating ‘objective’ subjects results in a far deeper and more meaningful story than could ever be told through the conventions of traditional journalism that fails to “offer the individual a meaningful relation to” the story (Hellmann 1981, 5).

Another feature of literary journalism is its ability to demystify the shifted reality of the age. Literary journalists allow themselves to be involved in the story being told. By being involved in the story, literary journalists manage to get their ordinary reader suddenly familiarized with the alien and shocking tone of their stories. Through all the craziness and absurdity, literary journalism allows humanity to come through. Literary journalism, furthermore, utilizes novelistic techniques such as the portrayal of dramatic scenes, dialogue, recording narrative/descriptive details, and point of view in writing news stories. Thus, it serves “two strains of rhetorical intention: on the one hand, to provide a factual account, on the other, to tell a story” (Hartsock 2000, 80). This adds a visual scope to literary journalism and enables it not only to recount events to the readers or audience but also to bring them there. The literary journalist, by using novelistic techniques, attempts “to convey information and to provide background not usually possible in most newspaper and magazine reporting” (Hollowell 1977, 25).

Motivated in part by their inner desire to be novelists as well as journalists, literary journalists attempt to achieve the Horatian pragmatic formula of literary writing, that is, to *dulce et utile* – “amuse and inform” – to justify their literary journalistic writings. In other words, literary journalism should aim to provide

the readers with pleasure, which they usually entertain as a matter of style, and with utility, which they usually get as a matter of information and facts. In this respect, moreover, pleasure is almost seen either as independent of, but consistent with, journalistic instruction, or as subordinate to it. This may shatter the illusions and the fears of the conventional journalistic community who fear that the information might become secondary to the entertaining elements of the story. Bored with traditional news reporting, readers find the appropriate alternative in literary journalistic texts that simultaneously move, delight, and inform them. Such texts give them “the feeling of being inside the character’s mind and experiencing the emotional reality of the scene” (Wolfe 1975, 53). Therefore, literary journalism blurs the boundaries between literary narrative and journalistic discourse or between the literary form of the novel and journalistic report. It establishes itself as a powerful force in forming cultures and societies.

The novelists, as well as the journalists, at the time, found that the new social reality could not be represented through old flawed conventions. There was a need for a new mode and medium of representation of reality in order to mediate the gap between reality and art. Literary Journalistic narrative, thus, is a hybrid anti-canonical discourse that aims at transforming news or historical stories into literature through an act of what Bakhtin (1981) has called “novelization”, that is, the generic effect of novel on other genres. Leonora Flis discusses this novelizing effect stating, “the novel can indeed include, ingest, and devour other genres and still retain its status of a novel” (2010, 65). This novelizing effect is due to the dialogic nature of the novelistic genre that makes other “monologic” genres “more free and flexible” (Bakhtin 1981, 7). It results in “incorporating extraliterary heteroglossia and the ‘novelistic’ layers of literary language” in any monologic genre to make it “dialogized, permeated with laughter, irony, humor, elements of self-parody” (Bakhtin 1981, 7). Through this novelizing effect, “the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic open-endedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality” (Bakhtin 1981, 7). Literary journalism utilizes this novelizing effect by its tendency towards subjectivizing journalism as well as journalizing or objectivizing the novel (Flis 2010, 27). Thus, it explores the very nature of how reality is constructed in an attempt to simultaneously document and interpret a historical situation.

In a literary journalistic text, the objective truth of traditional journalism and history intersects with the subjective truth of art and literature. In this respect, Don DeLillo, in an interview in 2007, distinguishes between journalism and

fiction. He states that “journalism is the first draft of history” whereas “fiction is the final draft” as “a writer can work his way into the impact of history on interior lives” (Binelli 2007). Therefore, the great significance of literary journalism lies in its ability to orchestrate unobtrusively the objective historical discourse with the subjective and speculative narrative of literature. Hence, it is through this critical lens that the present paper can map out the three tropes of literary journalism, proposed by the researcher, and their manifestation in Mailer’s *The Armies*.

a) *The Intertextual*

Literary journalists significantly share an intensified awareness of intertextuality. There is a common consensus among them that a meaningful world can always be projected not through a process of mythos-making but rather through the operation of various versions of the same story in a certain text or the interaction of the text itself with other texts within it. Intertextuality has particularly permeated the theoretical framework of literary journalism. Julia Kristeva, Mikhail Bakhtin and Roland Barthes are among the major critics who seek to give a thorough definition of the term, “intertextuality.” According to Kristeva, “Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another”; it is through intertextuality that the “poetic language is read as at least *double*” (1980, 66). It is obvious that this definition aptly recapitulates the main characteristics of intertextuality. First, any text relates in a way or another to other texts constituting a mosaic. Second, any text enthralls other texts within itself in a process that results in a metamorphosis of the text into another new form. Third, such a textual metamorphosis creates a sense of doubling and infinitude that denies originality. Every text is an intertext in another text. Therefore, intertextuality is “the most important tool” through which, the intertext endows itself with “creativity and productivity” undermining any sense of authorial control over the narrative (Pfister 1991, 212). In brief, intertextuality assumes that a text may thrive on other prior texts in a flux of play to endow itself with new meanings and significance.

Intertextuality creates a condition in which every text is replete with a mutiny of simulacra of stories or inter-texts deprived of any privilege of origin or essence. Barthes explains how intertextuality creates a labyrinthine discourse with a textual infinitude that signifies the “impossibility of living outside the infinite text” (1973, 36). Similarly, McHale draws an analogy between the labyrinthine narrative of intertextuality and “Chinese-box worlds” to show the process of blurring and subverting the fact/fiction binaries. Both intertexts and Chinese-box structures tend to create mutiny of textual worlds through a series

of “recursive structures” and a *mise-en-abyme* or a labyrinthine discourse within the text itself. Such self-conscious labyrinths or abysses of the text “have the effect of interrupting and complicating the ontological ‘horizon’ of the fiction, multiplying its worlds, and laying bare the process of world-construction” (McHale 1987, 112). This means that the “recursive structures” are designed meta-narratively to force readers to be lost in the labyrinths of the text’s narrative worlds and construction. Therefore, intertextuality presupposes “recursive structures” through which issues of representation and narrativity are questioned producing infinite gaps between texts and their construction and the worlds they represent it.

The intertextual trope in literary journalism intersects with Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism according to which novel is considered the most dialogic genre with its rejection of the monolithic discourses of other genres that are “encased in a firm and stable monologic framework” which does not “rip apart the presented world” (1984, 17). In literary journalistic theory, such a dialogic discourse is privileged over the monologic discourse of traditional journalism. This dialogic discourse manifests itself in inter-texts or competing stories within a certain text that subvert any idea of originality, hierarchy, or a prior discourse. In a traditional journalistic context, the language of the reporter or the journalist functions in an authoritative zone where it “is not a question of choosing it from among other possible discourses that are its equal” (Bakhtin 1981, 342). So, the rejection of the monolithic journalistic text for a dialogic novelistic one is an evidence of a literary journalistic rejection of the traditional journalistic text whose function is simply to tell “an ‘objective’ and ‘truthful’ picture of the world” (Underwood 2013, 7). Rather, the literary journalistic text is a product and reflection of history as it will always carry the “survivals of the past” (Bakhtin 1981, 66). Moreover, literary journalistic texts are consciously intertextual, as they exist “in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions” (Bakhtin 1981, 294). As a novel, a literary journalistic text reveals its dialogic and intertextual nature. It has a structure in which stories and texts interact dialogically creating various intersecting frames of narrative. In brief, intertextuality moves beyond the individual textual constructs of storytelling to comprise the dialogic flux of texts playing together to constitute inter-texts. Therefore, intertextuality is a defining feature of literary journalism that distinguishes it from historical and journalistic discourses. The latter are monologic discourses that “report everything from an impersonal viewpoint;” on the contrary, the former are intertextual and dialogic discourses

that create “a typology of discourses” in which competing texts and stories are in a constant dialogue with each other (Carrard 1995, 109).

Literary journalistic discourse is “perhaps the most intertextual of all texts, referring to other texts” in terms of transforming prior historical stories and restructuring conventional literary and journalistic genres and discourses in an attempt to generate a new one, that is, literary journalism (Mills 1997, 65-66). Thus, the journalistic discourse cannot be but dialogic and intertextual as literary journalists manipulate it to compete with other versions of the story. It creates a variety of interrelated discourses; each of which questions and sometimes dismantles the authority of the others (Waugh 1984, 6). Literary journalists, thus, are actively engaged in interpreting and scrutinizing the discursive practices of intertextuality in order to generate their distinctive but hybrid discourse. This hybrid discourse can be conceptualized using Edward Said’s notion of the “contrapuntal”. As the adjective “contrapuntal” implies, the literary journalist discourse exhibits a counterpoint among diverse stories that “play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one” (Said 1993, 51). The competing stories enter into an interplay that results in a new alternative narrative colored with the individual’s perception of reality. The contrapuntal discourse of literary journalism is intertextual in two senses. First, any one story adopted by the narrator or the author might work independently and seem aptly complete to itself without any type of support from other competing stories. Second, the story adopted by the narrator can be combined with other independent stories. In this way, the intertextual or contrapuntal discourse of literary journalism deploys various stories that are entangled with one another as none of them “can exist without the others; they illuminate and explain one another as they explore a single theme” (Kundera 1988, 76).

Mailer’s *The Armies* is an intertextual literary journalistic text which narrates the story of the anti-war March to the Pentagon in 1967 from the perspective of Mailer as a participant and eyewitness. In *The Armies*, Mailer attempts to put all the intertexts and their worlds in an interplay subverting any priori narrative based on political agendas. Therefore, the story of the March has many divergent intertexts each of which, “in [its] own separate way” represents a voice or a counterpoint to the main story; according to Mailer, “The Old Left,” has its own intertext of the story of the March that reads it as a “brickwork-logic-of-the-next-step” (1968, 102).

The Old Left has to adapt this version of the story to get political benefits. The Old Left “would always find a new step – the Left never left itself unemployed” (Mailer 1968, 102). “The New Left”, with “its political esthetic from Cuba”, provides another intertextual layer of the story. This layer has a

revolutionary spirit that “existed in the nerves and cells of the people who created it and lived with it, rather than in the sanctity of the original idea” (Mailer 1968, 104). A third intertextual layer is that of the Negroes or “The Black Militants,” who read the event as “a White War” of the “White Left” and announce “their reluctance to use their bodies in a White War” (Mailer 1968, 120). The White House officials interweave a fourth intertextual layer of the main story of the march. They read their involvement in the story of the March as a story of standing “in sharp contrast to the irresponsible acts of violence and lawlessness by many of the demonstrators” (Mailer 1968, 316).

All intertextual layers can be misinterpretations of the story of the March which is “so odd and unprecedented” with “its monumental disproportions” (Mailer 1968, 68). In accordance with the intertextual trope of literary journalism, no intertext can claim dominance, authority, or privilege over other intertexts in this discursive play on a real event. This discursive play urges Mailer, the narrator, to provide his own intertext of the story from the point of view of “an eyewitness who is a participant but not a vested partisan... ambiguous in his own proportions”— “a comic hero” (Mailer 1968, 67). Mailer, the author-narrator, chooses for his own intertext, a character named Norman Mailer as the protagonist and “the narrative vehicle for the March on the Pentagon” (Mailer 1968, 68). Mailer’s intertextual layer differs from other interrelated intertexts because of its being ideologically and politically free of interest. All the intertexts of the event are historically dependent since the raw material of the story is the historical fact of the October 1967 March on the Pentagon. While the other intertexts are invested politically, the author/narrator’s intertext alone is induced esthetically with its focus on the intrinsic construction of the intertextual narrative.

In *The Armies*, the contrapuntal dimension of intertextuality that characterizes literary journalism proves the idea that the literary journalist has the potentiality of refutation of competing stories. By looking at a literary journalistic text contrapuntally, intertwined histories and perspectives are taken into account. Such a contrapuntal analysis, developed by Edward Said, can interpret and explore literary journalistic texts, considering both perspectives of the journalist and the artist. This approach is not only helpful but also necessary in making important connections in a non-fiction novel. The contrapuntal discourse, according to Said, shows an “awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts” (Said 1993, 51). It takes in various accounts of socio-

political issues by tackling simultaneously the factual historical perspective of journalism and the literary fabrications of it.

At the outset, Mailer interweaves the narrative of *The Armies* explicitly in a way that both the point and the counterpoint to a *Time* magazine story about the March are orchestrated skillfully. The story of the *Time* gives a picture of Mailer as an “unscheduled scatological solo” protagonist (Mailer 1968, 13). The *Time* endows its version of the story with a thorough depiction of Mailer and the scenes of the Pentagon March. Mailer is depicted as a poseur and phony protagonist of the Pentagon March; his major preoccupation in life is “[s]lurping liquor from a coffee mug” and “[m]umbling and spewing obscenities” (Mailer 1968, 13). The argument of the *Time* gives evidence that “by the time the action shifted to the Pentagon, Mailer was perky enough to get himself arrested by two Marshals” (Mailer 1968, 14).

Mailer, then, offers his counter-argument to the *Time*’s version of the story. In the very outset, he refutes the story of the *Time* by declaring, “Now we may leave *Time* in order to find out what happened” (Mailer 1968, 14). His version of the story stands as a critical refutation that is based on the re-presentation, re-description, and re-enactment of the incidents and scenes mentioned in the *Time*’s story. Thus, his story presents a much greater complexity of the scene because all circumstances are imbued with the thoughts of the reporter-protagonist. For example, on the eve of the March, Mailer appears onstage at the Ambassador Theater in Washington to give a pro-demonstration speech. He is a bit drunk, holding a mug of bourbon he had brought from a party hosted by “an attractive liberal couple” (Mailer 1968, 24). Little is obtained from the sensory details of the theater or the multitude that awaits it; instead, the focus is on its uneasy pathways in which each action is interrupted by an intense inner monologue.

Thus, on the way to the theater, sensory details (fresh air, bourbon) quickly become inward meaning: “The *fresh air* illumined the *bourbon*, gave it a cerebrative edge; words entered his brain with the agreeable authority of fresh minted coins” (Mailer 1968, 40). The author impregnates the scene with the character's mood. Mailer, the character, motivates the next action, in which he goes behind a urinal “Flush with his incandescence, happy in all the anticipation of liberty which this *Götterdämmerung* of a urination was soon to provide”; he “did not know, but he had already and unwitting to himself metamorphosed into the Beast” (Mailer 1968, 42). Mailer refers, here, to the impact generated by his rowdy presentation at the event at the Ambassador Theater. It is obvious that Mailer, in his story, seeks to subvert the story reported by “the young man from *Time* magazine” at the very outset of the text. Through intertextuality, Mailer

manages to displace the position of the journalist by reducing it to a character in his story. He, thus, deprives the journalist of any notion of reliability or impartiality.

Through intertextuality, Mailer seeks to distance himself from both the formula of the realistic novel and that of essentially referential journalistic impartiality. The two intertexts intertwine historically in an attempt to perpetuate what Barthes called the “*referential illusion*,” that is, the exclusion of the subject for the sake of the object. In other words, both intertexts presuppose the idea of a cohesive world to be discovered under neutral intermediation of an anticipating subject, simply an observer. In opting for an open, fragmentary, and frankly subjective character, Mailer depends on a metafictional strategy, together with parody mockery, and hilarious mood, to mock the *Time* reporter and the alleged impartiality and reliability of his journalistic narrative. In short, the metafictional form in *Armies* seeks a warning about the unresolvable character of reality and its possible narrative transformations.

The norms that govern journalistic discourse – mainly information, actuality, objectivity or neutral style – creates a “*reality effect*” (Barthes 1989, 139). Thus, the will of meaning precedes the idea of “fact”, or “real”, which “is never anything but an unformulated signified, sheltered behind the apparent omnipotence of the referent” (Barthes 1989, 139). In *The Armies*, Mailer interweaves two versions of the same story with different perspectives to highlight the schism between the novelistic discourse with its focus on experience and the journalistic discourse with its emphasis on information. In other words, the fundamental tenet of the novelistic discourse is the fidelity to the individual experience; in contrast, the journalistic discourse seeks to “let know” in an attempt to achieve the “referential illusion” or referential function of such a discourse.

In brief, literary journalism adopts an intertextual trope or paradigm to render a new narrative form that deliberately comprises factional threads interwoven in a fictional form. Such an intertextual formula renders a narrative in which the author conveys his own perspective and experience of the world but in a dialogic play with other contrapuntal perspectives and experiences. Mailer’s *The Armies* skillfully embodies this intertextual trope by presenting Mailer as both a character and an author. Mailer attempts not only to narrate the story of the anti-war march from his own point of view but also to show how his narrative is in a continuous flux and in a contrapuntal dialogue with other perspectives of the same incident. By so doing, Mailer succeeds in casting a spell of doubts on the claims of objectivity endorsed by traditional journalism.

b) The Narcissistic

The second interrelated trope of literary journalism is its tendency towards narcissism. This trope is based on the narrative theories of Mieke Bal (1991) and Linda Hutcheon (1980; 1988). Literary journalistic texts entail a self-reflective mode of writing and reading in an attempt to replace the old author-text relationship with that of text-reader. They subsume the reader into the text. Thus, “literary journalism offers more of an opportunity for reader engagement precisely because its purpose is to narrow the distance between subjectivity and the object, not divorce them” (Hartsock 2000, 132). In most of these texts, the journalist/author is involved in the composition as a writer and as a character involved in the events and incidents of the text. Therefore, the readers have a paradoxical role in the narrative construction, for just as they are forced to recognize the artifice of art in what they are reading, they are still compelled to participate as participants in the process of narrative construction. Thus, narcissistic narrative uses metafictional strategies to lay bare the reader’s narcissism and to offer “a critical perspective on the world and its changeability” (Bal 1991, 257). Hutcheon labels this kind of writing as narcissistic. Literary journalism has a two-fold functional formula. It is both reflexion and reflection.

Reflexion is a text-oriented process whereas reflection is a context-oriented process. In the former, a literary journalistic text aims at throwing back “or mirroring itself and other texts as a narrative strategy of subverting and dismantling any explicit relation between the text itself and the world which it represents. This sense of the concept draws the attention to “mirror structures (doublings, analogies, frames, *mise en abyme*)” of the text (Onega and Landa 1996, 31). The other function entails that a literary journalistic text invites the reader to reconsider, contemplate, and evaluate the textual construction and the world represented in the literary text. Thus, a literary journalistic narrative endows its readers with a functional role in constructing the meaning of the text. It is a type of a narcissistic narrative that “make[s] this act a self-conscious one”; the reader is integrated into the narrative and is involved “in a creative, interpretive process from which he will learn how the book is read” (Hutcheon 1980, 139). Narcissism, thus, is a playful meta-fictional game in which the main players are the text, the world, and the reader.

The literary journalistic narcissistic trope focuses on the turn towards metanarrative. According to Hutcheon, metafictional narrative refuses the univocal meanings of realistic narrative and modernistic tradition in favor of a multiplicity of meanings, textual self-consciousness, and historiographic self-reflexiveness. Such a narrative is “contextual and self-reflexive, ever aware of its status as discourse, as a human construct” (Hutcheon 1980, 53). Metafictional

narrative, thus, is characterized by the fusion of literary self-creation and critical thinking about literature itself.

According to Waugh, metafictional narrative seeks “simultaneously to create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction” (1984, 6). It paradoxically functions on two levels: the reader and the text. On the level of readers, it requires them to participate, to be involved intellectually, imaginatively and effectively in its own re-creation. On a textual level, it is all narcissistically self-reflective and explicitly self-conscious. Therefore, it “enacts or performs what it wishes to say about narrative while itself being a narrative” (Currie 1998, 52). Based on Hutcheon’s contention, literary journalistic discourse lends itself into meta-nonfiction or meta-fiction. Like metafiction, the narcissistic meta-nonfictional narrative includes many allusions or indirect references to other literary or non-literary texts that make it comprehensively in touch with reality. A literary journalistic text is self-reflexive or “meta-factual” (Zavarzadeh 1976, 123), or “meta-nonfiction” (Lehman 1997, 179). Thus, meta-factual or meta-nonfictional literary journalistic narrative can provide insights into the ontological status of non-fiction, as well as, to the complex nature of writing such a narrative.

It is obvious, thus, that the formal and thematic self-consciousness of meta-nonfiction is paradigmatic of literary journalism, where self-reference and the process of infinite mirroring are frequent. Meta-nonfiction tends mainly to play with the possibilities of meaning and form, demonstrating an intense self-consciousness in relation to artistic production and the role to be played by the reader who, invited to enter both the literary space and the space evoked by the journalistic narrative, thus participates in its production. The literary journalistic narrative, with its narcissistic meta-non-fictional strategies, aims to explore the impossibility of imposing a single meaning or a single interpretation on any news story. In literary journalistic narrative, the narcissistic trope is used in relation to the text itself to refer to its introvert, introspective, and self-conscious nature, not to the author/reporter. In such a narrative, the link between the outside world and textuality has been refashioned on the level of the imaginary process of telling history, not in the product itself -- the storytelling. Therefore, “the story of the writing of the text” becomes the main focus of such a narrative (Anderson 1987, 35).

The Armies is narcissistically structured in two parts where “the long, personal, novelistic first part of the book is a necessary prelude to the brief, impersonal (more or less), historical second part” (Weber 1974, 19). The narcissistic narrative in *The Armies* “is not just stated in the book but enacted in

its very narrative fabric and point of view” (Zavarzadeh 1976, 175). In the same vein, Hutcheon points out that *The Armies* operates narcissistically in two modes: the diegetic and the linguistic. In the diegetic mode, *The Armies* provides its readers with a parodied, backgrounded, self-reflexive narrative through which they can be self-conscious of their active role in the continuous creation and recreation of the “fictive universe complete with character and action” (Hutcheon 1980, 28). The narrative world of *The Armies* provides readers with multiple and diverse meanings to the incident of the anti-war March towards the Pentagon. Multiplicity emerges out of the various perspectives of the same story told by the reporter of *The Time* and retold by Mailer, the narrator. In the process of the *Time* reporter’s telling and the narrator’s retelling of the scenes of the March, readers become aware of their involvement in the process of creating the fictional universe of the text. The Reporter of *The Time* and Mailer, the narrator, alternatively exchange roles as a reporter/narrator and as a reader of the same story.

However, in the linguistic mode, *The Armies* constitutes itself as a quintessential narcissistic text with its “building blocks,” that is, “the very language whose referents serve to construct that imaginative world” (Hutcheon 1980, 29). On the linguistic sphere, Mailer, in *The Armies*, skillfully reconciles the generic opposites by deliberately subtitling the text: “history as a novel” and “the novel as history”. The text shows its linguistic narcissism by explicitly referring to the referents of two contradicting genres history (factual narrative) and the novel (fictional narrative) as a unity inside the text itself. Another narcissistic feature of *The Armies* is its ability to interweave the narrative and the linguistic modes of narcissism in a way that the author-narrator always invites the reader into the textual self-consciousness and the narrative self-reflexivity of the text. In *The Armies*, the narrator explicitly lays bare the narcissistic nature of the text by declaring, “The first book is a history in the guise or dress or manifest of a novel, and the second is a real or true novel – no less! – presented in the style of history” (Mailer 1968, 283-84).

The narcissistic nature of the text, thus, is indicated clearly in two ways. First, the author/narrator holds the mirror up to the text itself to show the dialectical relationship or the fictional game in which the binaries or the “comfortable opposites” of history and the novel are somewhat blurred. In this respect, Thomas Vernon Reed points out that this reconciliation of the generic opposites that “are fused and confused self-consciously” gives birth to “nonfiction novel”, a new hybrid genre that “questions the existence of novel and history as discrete writing forms, and that, in turn, questions the epistemological bases of these forms” (1992, 98). Second, Mailer, as the author/narrator of the narrative, holds

up a mirror to the readers through textual self-consciousness imploring them to read “the work in the way it wants to be read” (Dällenbach 1989, 100).

The narcissistic trope in *The Armies* is apparent in its form and content. It enables the author to engage himself into the narrative itself to reiterate the textual self-consciousness and self-reflexivity of the narrative by frequently drawing the attention to the writing process of the narrative. By so doing, the author asserts historically his own presence and participation in both the historical moment and the narrative. Thus, the narcissistic trope in *The Armies* “strengthens and points to the direct level of historical engagement and reference of the text” (Hutcheon 1988, 117). The meta-factual and narcissistic elements appear everywhere in the text. After holding the mirror twice before, up to the text and the reader, the author/narrator holds it again up to the character of Mailer himself.

Therefore, in the last chapter of the first part, the author/narrator confuses and blurs the boundaries between Mailer as an author/narrator and as a character. Mailer discovers 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*” (Mailer 1968, 241). It is obvious that the narcissistic trope of *The Armies* asserts its own textual and fictive strategies. By merging the real with the fictive, Mailer, narcissistically, shows “a fiction masquerading as a fact, and the fictive, which asserts its own principles of narration and perception” (Bradbury 1993, 202); the text is linguistically in a constant engagement with its own textuality and the processes of its own writing. Meanwhile, it encourages its readers to participate in the narrative in which the author/narrator explicitly addresses them to be actively involved. Therefore, Mailer manages, using diegetic and textual narcissism, to create a literary journalistic text which “will be at once a symbolic act [a novel] and a real act [a history]” (Mailer 1968, 60).

In brief, the narcissistic trope of *The Armies*, as a literary journalistic text, functions on various levels of novelization. First, it foregrounds the crisis of representation of reality through reflection and reflexion of the text’s own structure. Second, it calls the text’s own representational practices into question. Third, it makes use of meta-factual strategies to explore a text in the flux of its own making and becoming. Fourth, it asserts the death of the author as a creator of the narrative but meanwhile, it grants him another life in the narrative world of the text in which he becomes a visible figure. Fifth, it calls for the reader to participate actively in the narrative and to be self-conscious of his active involvement in the ideological and formal constructions of the narrative. Sixth,

the textual play with form and content foregrounds the idea of the text as an artifice with explicit references to its own nature and blurs the long-held boundaries between fact and fiction.

c) The Autobiographical

A theory of literary journalism has to go beyond the surface news stories and to conduct an in-depth exploration of real lives through the unique combination of history, novel, and autobiography. It delves deeply into further issues than a standard news story could, and endows the stories with a form that appropriated tools and techniques previously confined to fiction. By so doing, literary journalism challenges the traditional journalistic convention with its emphasis on rejecting style in order for a story to be considered realistic. The literary journalists, on the contrary, adopt a literary style with fictional elements merged with a journalist's eye. Therefore, it is an alternate way of conveying stories: no less authentic than traditional forms. Paradoxically, Philippe Lejeune argues that the intrusion of the self can represent a higher sense of authenticity. His notion of autobiography indicates that when authors attach their own names to characters in their stories, they unconsciously agree that the story is verifiable — after all, they have an off-page identity to protect; thus, “the author's presence in the text is reduced to just this name. But the place assigned to the name is highly significant: by social convention, it is connected with accepting responsibility by a real person” (Lejeune 1989, 200).

The autobiographical trope enables the author to function as an on-page character and as a real-life human being. According to Lejeune, the author “is not just a person, he is a person who writes and publishes. With one foot in the text, and one outside, he is the point of contact between the two,” (1989, 200). In order to maintain a sense of verisimilitude, a cohesive identity emerges between the self in the story and the author's own self. Thus, the autobiographical intent of the text “is the affirmation in the text of this identity, referring in the last resort to the name of the author on the cover” (Lejeune 1989, 200). Hence, a writer, who appears in his/her own text, automatically becomes in contact with the reader— that the facts, events, and personalities in his/her text do occur as recorded, and that these elements can be proven off the page—where the author's name on a cover serves as a promise. The literary journalistic autobiographical trope is “a discourse of identity, delivered bit by bit in the stories we tell about ourselves day in and day out” (Eakin 2008, 2). In such a repeated narrative, “the extended self as the protagonist of self-narration enjoys so central a place in our lives that we are conditioned to accept it as identity's signature,” (Eakin 2001,

121). Thus, such a narrative is infused with self-identity in a way that reflects a shifting desire in producing autobiographical literary texts.

The autobiographical trope skillfully creates a compromise between the preference of the literary journalist and the intrinsically subjective features of the genre. One of the tenets of literary journalism is to represent “a response to and rejection of traditional journalistic objectivity” (Stull 1993, 3). In order to achieve this principle, literary journalists have fused the objective with the fictional by endowing the historical event with subjective autobiographical inclinations. Therefore, the autobiographical trope of literary journalistic narrative establishes itself as a textual metaphor that brings forth the imaginative intersubjective experience side by side with the objective historical event of reference as sources for meaning making of the narrative. Nevertheless, literary journalists, usually, omit the explicit projection of the authorial subjectivity using a fictional point of view to ensure a sense of historical objectivity. They overcome the borderlines between public events and their intersubjective experiences by approaching “public fact through a frank, obtrusive, liberated assertion of their private consciousness” (Hellmann 1986, 52). In other words, literary journalists indulge themselves in an intersubjective experience of narrating public historical facts from an individual perspective that problematizes the binaries of public/private, objective/subjective, historical/personal, and consequently journalistic/literary.

The autobiographical trope can be traced in *The Armies* as the narrative opens a window of intersection between a highly intersubjective experience and reporting a historical event. Through the formal division of the book into two parts, Mailer seeks to establish an inquiry about the status of genres traditionally polarized as fiction and history, literature and journalism, novel and history. In this sense, the first part of the text, by using fictional techniques, appears to be a novel about the March. Meanwhile, it also reflects a kind of autobiographical approach that reflects “the author’s memory scrupulous to facts” (Mailer 1968, 281). According to Mailer, such an approach would be history, a true story. The second part of the text is “dutiful to all newspaper accounts, eyewitness reports, and historic inductions available;” such a narrative is “even obedient to a general style of historical writing” (Mailer 1968, 281). However, this part is “disclosed at some sort of condensation of a collective novel” though it pretends to be a history as designated in its introduction (Mailer 1968, 281).

The autobiographical trope works when the author, implicitly, is himself or herself a protagonist. In *The Armies*, Mailer is indeed a protagonist - not of the march, but of his own history. In this respect, the authorial self of Mailer

explicitly states that “[t]o write an intimate history of an event which places its focus on a central figure who is not central to the event, is to inspire immediate questions about the competence of the historian” (Mailer 1968, 67). Mailer continues to argue that, “to place the real principals, the founders or designers of the March” in the center of the narrative “could prove misleading” because “their position in these affairs, precisely because it was central, can resolve nothing of the ambiguity” (1968, 67). Here, Mailer makes use of what Wolfe calls the “third-person autobiographical form” in which the first person disguises in the third person to create a Barthesian reality effect of the subjective narrative (Wolfe 1975, 189). This fictional trick helps to create sympathy for the character constructed fictionally. It distances the fictional character from the authorial figure. Mailer as a character assumes the function of “an eyewitness who is a participant but not a vested partisan,” and that is “ambiguous in his own proportions, a comic hero” whose category is difficult to establish (Mailer 1968, 67).

Designing the narrative in the style of a “mock-heroic” epic, the author/narrator invites readers to reflect critically on the status of the autobiographical self of Mailer himself as a protagonist: “is he finally comic, a ludicrous figure with mock-heroic associations; or is he not unheroic, and therefore embedded somewhat tragically in the comic? Or is he both at once, and all at once?” (Mailer 1968, 67). Thus, the author/narrator self-consciously shows his commitment to his own intersubjective experience as the only possible way to establish a meaningful narrative about the events witnessed and meanwhile, he urges the reader to take part in determining the meaning of the narrative.

Mailer highlights this narrative feature to emphasize its own presence in the reports of “an enormously personalized journalism where the character of the narrator was one of the elements not only in telling the story but in the way the reader would assess the experience” (Lennon 1982, 145-146). The freedom granted for the reader does not prevent the autobiographical self of the narrator/author from expressing his own perspective of the protagonist as a mock-heroic hero and as a figure dedicated to writing his personal history of the March on the Pentagon. Earlier in the text, he suggests to “make [his] comic hero the narrative vehicle for the March on the Pentagon” (Mailer 1968, 68). Mailer, here, continues to explain why he adopts the subjective point of view; according to him, “what was wrong with all journalism is that the reporter tended to be objective, and that was one of the great lies of all time” (Mailer 1968, 195).

The autobiographical trope of the literary journalistic narrative manifests itself in the act of doubling in *The Armies*. Mailer frequently uses this act of doubling in the text. Thus, the narrative is doubled as a novel and as a history;

the author's own self is doubled as a narrator and as a character; even the story of the event undergoes this act of doubling from the perspective of the *Time* reporter and that of the narrator. Such a doubling of the autobiographical act traces the inward and outward movement of the self into history in a way that "all experience except that limited to a meaningless surface inquiry, all knowledge which goes beyond mere gathering of data is inherently fictional" (Hellmann 1981, 42). Furthermore, the act of doubling of the self, the genre, the personae, the plot, and even the reading process grants Mailer the freedom to play with the epistemological and aesthetic concerns of his own narrative. Thus, the implicit autobiographical traces in the narrative "attempt to move closer to the reality of an event by examining the lens through which that event is viewed" (Kraus 2003, 292). By narrating "the personal history" and communicating his own intersubjective experience of the historical event of the March, Mailer seeks to subvert the sense of objectivity and to foreground his subjective point of view. By so doing, Mailer skillfully interweaves all autobiographical, historical, journalistic, and novelistic elements into a hybrid narrative that blurs "the line between the objective and subjective in nonfiction" (Jelinek 1986, 179). Mailer's attempt in this text is to fuse the personal and the historical. Overall, the autobiographical trope, along with other tropes, creates a self-conscious and self-reflexive narrative whose meaning is always indeterminate. The autobiographical act of doublings enables Mailer to appropriate historical facts for writing an intersubjective experience of the event as a "personal history". It also encourages readers from within or outside the narrative to reflect upon and determine the indeterminate significance of the events.

Factual and Fictional Intersections

This paper has explored three tropes proposed by the researcher to constitute the poetics and the politics of literary journalism. It illuminates through theoretical analysis how these tropes are at work in Norman Mailer's literary journalistic text, *The Armies of the Night*. The three tropes discussed in this paper are *the intertextual*, *the narcissistic*, and *the autobiographical*. These tropes indicate that literary journalism emerges as an attempt to question, challenge, and defy objectivity. The intertextual trope is a mode of writing in which the fictional and factual discourses intersect. It examines how literary journalists go beyond the rigid boundaries of distinctive genres using the labyrinthine and contrapuntal narrative of intertextuality. Stories, texts, and genres overlap and intersect in the discursive literary journalistic discourse to transcend the dichotomy between the fictive and the real through intertextual narrative

glimpses of self-consciousness and self-reflexivity. Through the provision of contrapuntal inter-texts, reality becomes unreachable, meaning indeterminate and traditional roles of character, the narrator, author, and reader changeable and unstable. In *The Armies*, this trope manifests itself in the two contrapuntal versions of the story of the March by the *Time* reporter and by the narrator.

The narcissistic trope shows the idea of linguistic and narrative playfulness in flux through processes of reflection and reflexion as prominent characteristics of the meta-factual texts of literary journalism. Historical and realistic representations are problematized by alternately holding the mirror from various lenses up to the text, the author, and the reader. In *The Armies*, Mailer uses this trope linguistically and diegetically to tremble the static roles traditionally played by author/narrator, character, and reader within a self-reflexive text. The autobiographical trope, in turn, is invested by literary journalists to subvert the claims of objectivity and impersonality of conventional journalism. Such a trope enables literary journalists to reinterpret a historical fact from the lens of an inter-subjective experience; to portray characters with psychological depth, and to convey information. All these features are usually not possible in conventional journalism.

In *The Armies*, the author/narrator's autobiographical self, consciously and reflexively, defies, by form and content, the idea of absolute truth and objective reality. In so doing, the autobiographical trope in *The Armies* suggests the possibility of a new discursive narrative, permeated with the living presence of an author/observer of the world, inserted discursively in the great history and in his own story, prepared to refuse, to some extent, the most restrictive path of generality and the will to total omniscience. Overall, *The Armies* utilizes the three literary tropes of literary journalism by developing a discursive narrative in which intertextual, narcissistic, and autobiographical tropes overlap. Such a combination is an important characteristic of Mailer's style that brings together the historical and novelistic narrative in one discourse, holding them together, and making them inseparable parts of the same story. It calls for novelization, explanation, evaluation, and understanding of the historical event of October 1967 March in Washington.

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