

**From New Journalism to Fiction: Truman Capote's
Narrative Innovations in *In Cold Blood***

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Abstract

This paper investigates the techniques used by Capote in the practice of New journalism, a form of non-fiction narrative which emerged in the 1960s. The paper aims at proving the fictionality of Capote's *In Cold Blood* through delineating the borderline between New journalism and fiction and through exploring Capote's narrative innovations. To ensure the validity of this objective, the researcher employs the formalistic approach through applying some of Gerard Genette's devices to Capote's *In Cold Blood*. Utilising scene by scene construction, authorial silence, rhetorical dialogues and anachrony through the use of flashback and flash forward techniques, camera eye, convicts' interviews, cross-examination, montage and creative reportage, Capote engages his readers powerfully, creating a suspenseful detective novel. Though in a detective novel, readers must be given the same opportunity to solve the mystery of crime as the police themselves, Capote does not offer readers the same evidence at the same time it is made available to the detectives, something which weakens his story line. The paper concludes that because of Capote's new novelistic experience, he innovates a new approach. He experiments with many artistic techniques which surpass Genette's approach; he builds on it and takes a step forward through new manipulations of other cinematic techniques. These narrative innovations add to the making of a detective novel. Capote employs objectivity to escape story line flaws and to represent reality that owes much to fiction than new journalism.

Key words:

Truman Capote, discourse, Camera eye, Reportage, Nonlinearity, Fictionality

Truman Capote's (1924-1984) *In Cold Blood* is his bestselling book in which he selects an actual crime of double brutal murder of a Kansas family of trio daughters and a son to be his main focus. He imports the journalistic techniques into that factual event, which he happens to encounter in a newspaper, therefore creating the first non-fiction narrative. Since the bulk of criticism on Capote's *In Cold Blood* focuses on art/reality debate and the thematic analyses of the work as a nonfiction, the present paper aims at investigating the techniques used by the author who is widely famous for a new style of writing that blends journalistic reporting with literary writing. It investigates the narrative discourse, and the artistic and literary techniques of Capote's *In Cold Blood*. It answers the question: Does Capote remain entirely consistent with the exact factual events to write a nonfiction novel? If not, what are

the literary devices Capote employs and the narrative innovations he experiments with to produce a detective novel? What are the significance of these artistic plot devices and narrative innovations?

New journalism is a kind of writing that emerged early in the 1960s. It is based on an authentic experience taken from factual reports combined with fictional techniques and artistic devices. Capote admits in an interview with George Plimpton in 1966 that he "feels he is one of the rarely skilled and creative writers who takes journalism seriously". He seeks to seize an opportunity to put his rare skills into use. He finds journalism to be a valuable source for creating works that appeal to both critics and popular readers. He planned to write a book using artistic devices and journalistic techniques in nonfiction for several years before a small headline in the *New York Times* in 1959 caught his observant eye. This headline was *Wealthy Farmer, 3 of Family Slain*¹. Capote claims to "train [himself], for the purpose of this sort of book, to transcribe conversations without using a tape recorder" (Plimpton par.26). By selecting the real Clutters' murder to be the core of his intended work, by having a natural gift for storytelling, and by moulding certain journalistic aspects to enhance the narrative, Capote manifests that he predates the rise of the nonfiction novel and creates "a work of art"(par. 32).

Published in installments in 1965, *In Cold Blood* receives public applause. Capote focuses the events of his book on six years of exacting investigation, meticulous research, and constant interviews with neighbors and friends of the victims, and the two captured murderers; Dick and Perry Smith. He declared that he wrote *In Cold Blood* without "taking notes or using tape recording (Plimpton par.6). A six-year-span is the real time at which the sequence of events is presented as it occurs in real life, without edits or jumps in time. Yet, a critical and scholarly attention is given regarding the borderline between nonfiction and fiction. Despite Capote's manifestations that *In Cold Blood* is a non-fictional narrative, the main argument here is that *In Cold Blood* is to be regarded as a literary detective novel based on Capote's experimenting with new narrative innovations, and it follows the conventional structure of a detective novel. To validate my argument, and to answer the questions of the paper, I am going to analyze *In Cold Blood* in the light of Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* in order to prove that Capote's work moves towards the borderline of fiction. Gérard Genette's groundbreaking book "lays bare narrative techniques, devices, patterns, relations that would otherwise remained invisible" (Puckett 257). Some of these plot devices and narrative techniques such as, anachrony, analepsis, prolepsis, in medias res, authorial silence, mimesis, paralepsis and others are applied

to my analysis of *In Cold Blood*. Before embarking on that analysis, I find it necessary to refer precisely to the story of *In Cold Blood*.

In Cold Blood recounts a Kansan man named Herbert Clutter along with his wife and two young adult children, named Kenyon and Nancy, who have been brutally murdered, with no apparent motive. There were no suspects for the crime as the whys and wherefores of the crime remained hidden. Herbert Clutter was a self-made-man who built a prospering ranch and employed a great number of farm hands who respected and admired him. Curiously, Capote left for the site of the murders, Kansas, three days after the killings. He was helped by his childhood friend, Harper Lee. He immediately began interviewing friends and neighbors of the murdered family, as well as members of the local police force. The police caught two killers, Richard Hickock and Perry Smith, and charged them with the murders. Floyed Wells, a former cellmate of Dick, once told him about the extremely affluent Clutters for whom he was working as a farmworker. In talking about the prosperous Clutters, Floyed inspired Dick to achieve his dreams of becoming rich. Acting upon the mistaken belief that the Clutters had a safe hidden inside their farmhouse, Perry Smith and Richard Hickock invaded the Clutters' residence in the late evening. Having discovered no money, they murdered all the four Clutters. The family was discovered bound and shot to death. Capote made an acquaintance with the murderers while they were in prison. Capote frequented them a lot that they requested he attend their execution. He was "the very last person to speak to them". With their execution, the story reached its climax and Capote finished writing and publishing it in four successive issues in *New Yorker*.

Capote employs a conventional classical structure of a detective novel which comprises four sections. He attempts to present the reader with real time for each of the four sections: I. The Last to See Them Alive II. Persons Unknown III. Answer IV. The Corner. These four successive sections are presented logically in a causal relation. Yet, *In Cold Blood* does not have a chronological order of occurrence. If the entire span of narrated events is taken into account, there is no chronological sequence of events in the novel. The chronological sequence of the story begins in 1959 and ends in 1962, yet the novel begins and ends in 1965.

Capote follows the Western literary tradition of using a non-linear course in his narrative. There is a disparity between the order in which events are presented in the discourse and that of the events which are reported in the story. He employs "anachrony"; he follows what Mieke Bal termed "chronological deviation"(86). Though "the construction of a coherent chronology, the development of a connected plot-line and the predictability of character's attitudes to the story" (Landa 13) are the

bases of a good story, Capote abandons the chronological presentation of events. Capote's use of nonlinearity is tackled through the use of anachrony which involves prolepsis, analepsis and in medias res. "The Last To See Them Alive" (3-74) contains numerous foreshadowing and repeated references to the Clutters' murders before they occur. Capote employs "prolepsis", a term used by Genette and others which means "evoking in advance an event that will take place later"(40). Capote uses flash forwards, as a part of his storytelling process. The first scene is a "prolepsis" to what is going to happen to the Clutters soon, including the murderers' preparatory steps for the crime. While the Clutters are entirely ignorant that they are going to die, the readers already know. After quarrelling with a bird hunter, Mr Clutter is described as heading towards home, "unaware that it would be his last"(13). This serves as dramatic irony. The omniscient narrator uses a rhetorical device to narrate future events out of turn. For example, Nancy, the Clutter's daughter, is portrayed as setting out the kind of clothes she is going to put on to church next morning: "her prettiest, which she herself has made. It was the dress in which she was to be buried" (56). Ironically, Nancy's Sunday dress turns out to be her burial garment.

Capote keeps making an advance notice, or a "repeated prolepsis", of a piece of information that is to be provided later in the narrative. It tells about an event or events that will happen in the future. In this sense, the third person omniscient narrator suggests something awfully ominous to come, foreshadowing a horrific night from which there is no escape. When he refers to Mrs. Clutter, always depressed since the birth of her last two children and frequently hospitalized, Capote starts a paragraph writing: "Now, on this final day of her life" (30). The omniscient narrator makes a premonitional note about the lady's approaching destiny, foreshadowing a tragic end. He foreshadows an event that will happen later in the narrative. Capote keeps writing about the Clutters family members using: "it will be their last day", creating fear of the unknown. A case in point is Nancy's detection of smoking tobacco in her father's study; it foreshadows something unexpected about to come because her father is neither a drinker nor a smoker. Kenyon's unrecognition of the insurance agent coming to their home upon Mr. Clutter's request is another case that foreshadows impending danger about to happen inside the Clutters' house. Here, there is a dramatic irony: Mr. Clutter made a life insurance policy only twenty-four hours before his murder. Capote establishes the murderers' crime early in that narrative: "Four shot gun blasts that, all told, ended six lives" (5). An expectation is built in the minds of the readers who assume that an end will be reached soon and that the sequence of the events moves towards that dreadful end. Readers

are drawn into the events. This focus of interest recalls Northrop Frye concept of "centrifugal" text(73), which owes much to fiction.

To build up suspense, Capote uses rhetorical devices such as direct foreshadowing as he gives away the end at the outset of the narrative. This foreshadowing of events creates a state of dramatic irony, whereby readers are sure of what is about to happen while the characters are totally ignorant. Moreover, the six lives indicated in the opening chapter are those of the four members of the Clutters' family in addition to the two murderers who are to be executed for their double brutal murder. This is a novel tackling all the characters, each having his/her own story. Through the words offered by the last people to see the Clutters alive, Capote describes the way these family members live in Holcomb, Kansas; he details their points of weakness and those of strength through the other people's perspectives. The basic narrative mode Capote claims to choose is mimetic. Mimesis, according to Genette, is "direct speech in the manner of drama"(163). A mimetic narrative is supposed to comprise a lot of action and dialogue. Capote presents the parts in the narrative in a scenic way. Furthermore, he uses story slow "telling" in which everything said or done is staged for the reader. He slows down the pace of the story. This is done to create the illusion that we are seeing and hearing everything for ourselves. For instance, the last day in the Clutters' lives is marked by its normality, just as the all-day-journey of both Perry Smith and Dick Hickcock is marked by its forgetfulness, on their part, to the atrocity of what they resolve to commit. Utilizing his journalistic bent, Capote reports only fragments of dialogue about the Clutters' last day though they go through the same day-today domestic routine.

Capote departs from the "mimetic" representations of the world; he turns towards a more "diegetic" engagement through striving to create a more perfect eye to perceive the world. That is why he adopts the camera-eye-technique. In the first scene we follow the Clutters' lives, then we switch to their to-be-murderers. In this way, the section has two perspectives: that of the Clutters and that of the murderers, and has twenty two scenes switching from the Clutters to the murderers. He switches from one perspective to another. He presents movie-like scenic structure. He literalizes modes of seeing through exchanging the camera lens for the human eye. Capote manages to let the readers see through his style of writing. He follows a style that helps accommodate understanding through presenting modes of seeing, thus achieving narrative temporality.

Using a non-linear plot, Capote starts the first section *in medias res* (in the middle of the events) to emphasize certain story events and to focus on the kind of people the Clutters are. The events are constructed through a kind of perpetual "anachrony", to quote Genette's term, as the

narrator moves forward and backward (40). In Section I, Capote introduces The Clutter family on the day they were murdered, November 15th, 1959. He depicts an idyllic life scene of that family in Holcomb, a peaceful American town, where its residents leave their doors open as they feel quite secure. At the same time, he constructs another intriguing scene in which he follows the murderers on their way to kill the whole Clutters. He strives to create a perfect eye with which readers perceive the world. The events are explained by considerable social details. Capote works on filling in the background later through discursive discussions that are slightly connected with the main topic to smooth the chronological story. There is a temporal duality between story time and discourse time; events occurred in one order and narrated in another. This order, according to Genette, involves techniques like flashback, flash forward, foreshadowing, *in medias res* (9).

Capote employs various selections of incidents, new journalistic and literary techniques to form the narrative discourse. He molded material into the story to enhance the narrative, manipulating the plot. In his book *Style as Argument*, Chris Anderson demonstrates the importance of using reportage in a work of art. According to him: "[I]t is an effort to persuade us to attitudes, interpretations, opinions, even actions... Only a naïve reader... could regard the novel as free from the author's shaping attitudes and perceptions" (2), which means that the reportage represents the point of view of the author himself. Capote initiates journalistic techniques in the making of a detective novel.

Utilizing camera eye technique—a term first described by Norman Friedman as "the ultimate in authorial exclusion" (1178-1179)—Capote makes transitions between the Clutters actions and those of the Perry and Dick; each scene echoes one another. The aim of this technique is to "transmit, without apparent selection or arrangement a 'slice of life' as it passes before the recording medium" (Friedman 1179). Capote creates a scene and goes from one scene to the other; each scene feels realistic. He creates live scenes that feel more like watching a movie. The events of the story are cinematically manifested. Capote describes scenes and uses language to investigate the ways we perceive the world, perfecting new modes of seeing the world of the events narrated.

Readers see the world Capote intends as he projects the details in a metaphorical language. He uses clear imagery to describe the village of Holcomb as a "lonesome area that other Kansans call 'out there' nobody had ever heard of until the day of the murder"(3). After the Clutters' murder everything is turned upside down in this calm peaceful place. Capote figuratively describes the village in blatantly noisy terms: "Like the waters of the river, like the motorists on the highway, and like

the yellow trains streaking down the Santa Fe tracks, drama...had never stopped there"(5). Moreover, the narrator describes the orchard of Mr. Clutter before the murder as "seldom encountered [by] trespassers; a mile and a half from the highway... it was not a place that strangers came upon by chance" (13). He, for example, describes the setting in abstract terms. He sets the scene in such a way to reflect the mood of the Clutter's family who lives in a quiet farming community in Holcomb, Kansas. The narrator repeats his note: "few Americans—in fact, few Kansans—had ever heard of Holcomb" (5). Though all description shows that this town is almost unknown, Mr. Clutter optimistically views his orchard as Eden on earth, wishing "an inch of rain and this country would be a paradise" (12), something that enhances the fictionality of the work.

In his novel, *In Cold Blood*, Capote uses fertile imagination that shows clearly in the meticulous descriptive details of the characters' physical appearance. This imagination adds to the fictionality of Capote's novel and gets it out of the limited domain of New Journalism and non-fiction narratives in which authors usually cling more to reality than to invented imaginary plots and people. Capote's characters reveal themselves through behaviors, dialogues and mannerism. Through using similes, he provides details about the convicts' queer appearances, eating habits, manners of speaking and style of clothing: "Like Mr. Clutter, the young man breakfasting in a café called Little Jewel never drank coffee....He preferred...cold root beer, and a chain of Pall Mall cigarettes...."(14). Showing similarities and contrasts between the characters, Capote does not grant both Dick and Perry the same status as that given to the respectful Clutters. Capote grants the head of the Clutters family an accepted title, Mr. Herbert Clutter while denying both murderers that title because of their evil intentions. Though the Clutters are ideal prosperous Americans—the kind of people everybody can aspire to reach their status—, the people who wronged them are quite the opposite. Failing to accomplish the American dream leads the convicts to behave uncontrollably. Capote goes at length describing their facial expressions and body language. Capote uses figurative language describing their tattoos, expressing his opinion with no direct comments. Perry, for instance, is compared with a seagull: "He looked as lonely and inappropriate as a seagull in a wheat field"(Capote 272). There is a connection between Perry and the bird since birds signify freedom and the convict craves for a better lifestyle. Early in the novel, Capote shows that Perry often dreams of a wonderfully colored parrot. Now Perry is compared to a seagull which cannot make use of the abundance of prosperity of the wheat field because wheat is not its usual food. These figurative descriptions are evidence of the fictionality of *In Cold Blood*.

Influenced by his journalistic bent, Capote uses reportage in writing *In Cold Blood*. The chapter comprises twenty two scenes switching from the Clutters' mundane daily life to that of the murderers'. Each scene is report like. First, Capote includes Mr. Clutter allowing pheasant hunters to shoot on his ranch. Second, Nancy teaches Jolene Katz how to make a Cherry pie. Third, Mrs. Clutter shows the girl, who awaits for her mother to pick her up, her miniatures and gives her a small fan then retires to bed. Fourth, Kenyon, the Clutter's 15-year-old uncoordinated son, varnishes a mahogany chest as a wedding present. Fifth Mr. Clutter presides over a meeting, nominating to honor a neighbor, Mrs. Ashida, for an award at an Achievement Banquet. Six, the benevolent Mr. Clutter gives that neighbor a ride home. Seven, Nancy gives Jolene the pie lesson, and rushes off to help another neighbor's child with a trumpet solo. Lastly, the family members, along with Nancy's boyfriend, watch television together in the evening (Capote 11-50). However, Capote employs literary techniques such as using developed dialogue when a resident employee asks Mr. Clutter if he can return to his wife to care for their sick infant. Then Mr. Clutter feels disheartened to the news of a neighbor's plans to move to Nebraska (12-50). The family members' daily life activities indicate the fact that they are an epitome of the American dream; they are kindhearted, benevolent and prosperous. They were the least people to be disliked. That is why their brutal murders remain ambiguous for a long time.

Utilizing cinematic techniques, he uses montage at the end of Section I; he cuts the events from the murderers' driving close to the side of the Clutters' ranch in the middle of the night till next morning when Nancy's best friends come to escort her to Sunday prayers at church and discover the slain bodies. Capote postponed the murders' scene till the moment Perry and Dick were arrested at the end of Section IV and were obliged to confess the minutest details of their committed crimes in section V. Measuring the narrative anachronies assumes no perfect temporal correspondence between discourse and story.

Capote frequently uses the flashback technique to portray the past lives of the convicts, giving readers a hint of the kind of life both led, and giving reasons for the criminal life they lead. While the use of camera eye technique involves "a depersonalization of the narrator's consciousness," it has no access to the memory (Rutger 119). Yet, sometimes we get to know the narrator's opinion of the events. In order to understand the motives behind the convicts' brutal conduct, Capote moves backwards to the murderers' past. Through the various forms of "analepsis", he lets readers take excursions into the past of the characters. In a flashback, we get to know that Perry embittered as he suffers terrible abuse at the hands

of his family members and some other caretakers. Unlike the Clutters, Perry goes through life without getting anything to which he aspires. Capote melodramatically gives the inner feelings of Perry:

Oh Jesus, was she an Evil Bastard! incarnate. What she used to do, she'd fill a tub with cold water, put me in it, and hold me under until I was blue" (82).

Capote painfully describes how Perry was abused at the hands of the nurse at the orphanage house after his addicted mother abandoned him. This cruel incident provides psychological depth for the character and gives insights into the traumatized Perry when he was a child. In this sense, getting a glimpse into Perry's tormented past foreshadows his current criminal actions and produces emotional impact. Leading miserable childhood could, in one way or another, foster uncontrolled bad behaviors. Though Capote claims to be detached, he goes into great detail about Perry's tragic past to justify his current criminal actions up until the very end.

The first time Capote uses real dialogue that has an initiative turn and a response is when the Clutters' neighbors discover the double brutal murder of the slain Clutters:

His daughter shouted, "She's dead!" and flung herself into his arms. "It's true,

Daddy! Nancy's dead!"

Susan turned on her. "No, she isn't. And don't say it. Don't you dare. It's only a nosebleed. She has them all the time, terrible nosebleeds, and that's all it is." "There's too much blood. There's blood on the walls. You didn't really look."
(60)

The above quote is a kind of mimesis; Capote employs direct speech as a great tool to liven up his narrative. He utilizes the "showing mode" (Booth 8), an artistic one for the first time. For instance, Susan, Nancy's best friend, is one of the last people to see the Clutters alive and she becomes intensely grievous discovering the bodies after the family members are killed. Unlike the other scenes in the narrative, Capote employs first person narration in this tragic and personal scene as it has a great impact on the alert reader who is set on edge while reading about the double brutal murders; this perspective grants the scene a huge sense of immediacy. Readers are touched through this scene which brings out the unspoken in the dialogue: the simple act of flinging herself into her dad's arms implies Susan's utter shock.

As a keen journalist, Capote relies his discourse on objective reporting. Susan's extreme grief drives her to form an intense bond with Nancy's boyfriend, Bobby Rupp, to lessen his setback, being investigated

as the principal suspect of the Clutters crime. Capote uses his observation and imagination to give the reader a more realistic experience through depicting other witnesses experiencing an event. Capote does not describe the murders themselves. In this section the reader does not find out how the murder was committed; it remains an "enigma" till the last section of the novel. This, in turn, increases the effort and duration of perception which "is an end in itself and must be prolonged accordingly" (Shklovsky 20). He removes art from autonomous perception, indicating that the task of the artist is to *defamiliarise*, thus his message is to engage his readers forcing them into a more active perception (5). Capote describes the scene of the murder, presents the mystery at the beginning, arousing readers desire to know what happened. What took place first in the story is revealed only at the last part when the convicts were closely investigated. Capote kept his readers guessing, arresting the enigma until the final chapter when all is revealed. Readers are driven by 'epistemophilia', which is the desire to know and to find out the truth behind the events (Culler 91). We, as readers, are kept guessing. Instead of narrating the events at the time they happened, Capote waits until the murderers confessed what they committed before telling the readers how they did it. In this way "readers are absorbed in the world of the text". Since the focus is 'inward', readers are reading fiction (Heyne 327). This helps in constructing a live scene in which readers relive and experience the same feelings experienced by the citizens and police of Holcomb till all loose ends are tied and the closure is achieved at the end.

Capote engages the minds and emotions of the readers powerfully. The text draws avid readers into a complex mental engagement with the narrative world. At the same time Capote allows readers to see from different perspectives: the Clutters, the convicts and the investigators. He suggests a variety of possible versions of events. We get more information about the Clutters' murders from the eyewitness accounts of friends and neighbors who spent time with the Clutters before they met their brutal fate and after the discovery of their slain bodies. Capote employs cinematic techniques. He manages to create live scenes that feel more like watching a movie. The funeral scene in which Susan Kidwell, Nancy's best friend and nearest neighbor, insists that she say farewell to her best friend and see her along with the rest of the family before their caskets are closed. Using an elastic narrative perspective, Capote lets Susan describe the tragic and emotional incident of seeing her beloved neighbors for the last time inside their coffins:

Nancy wore her dress of cherry-red velvet, her brother a bright plaid shirt; the parents were more sedately attired, Mr. Clutter in navy-blue flannel, his wife in navy-blue crepe;

and-and it was this, especially, that lent the scene an awful aura—the head of each was completely encased in cotton, a swollen cocoon twice the size of an ordinary blown-up balloon, and the cotton, because it had been sprayed with a glossy substance, twinkled like Christmas-tree snow. (95)

The description of Nancy is very marginally anchored in direct observation of the coffin. Susan, reflecting her inner feelings, goes on saying "all I could see was Nancy's red velvet. And Nancy in it. Dancing" (53). Losing her dearest friend, Susan was in a sort of deep trance. Capote builds in Susan's perception of her beloved friend shades of childhood. He manages to powerfully engage the readers emotionally and critically.

Anderson believes that not only does authorial silence make the reader part of the action, but it also makes the reader work harder to understand what takes place; it initiates the reader's curiosity. This is achieved in Capote's *In Cold Blood* via the way the author lets the reader gather pieces of the puzzle leading up to the murder of the Clutters' four family members. Ultimately, the paths of the murderers and their victims come together and climax in the multiple shotgun murders. To support his authorial silence, Capote includes newspaper articles about the Clutter murder. Dick and Perry followed the press news, disbelieving the article: "no-clue-stuff"(89).

Though Capote fully integrated the factual with the fictional, he invents some imaginary incidents. For example, reading about Nancy baking a pie, listing its ingredients and describing it to be "her last pie", is one of Capote's creative additions and narrative innovations that no newspaper would ever have. Another artistic detail is reading about the murderers' exaggerated tattoo:

Dick stripped to his briefs was not quite the same as Dick fully clothed... The tattooed face of a cat, blue and grinning, covered his right hand; on one shoulder a blue rose blossomed. More markings, self-designed and self-executed, ornamented his arms and torso: the head of a dragon with a human skull between its open jaws... (31)

Though nonfiction narratives do not claim invention nor imagination, Capote in *In Cold Blood* uses huge lashings of imagination as it is displayed in meticulous details about the character's physical description which owes much to fiction than to new journalism. The depiction of Dick's tattoo as "a dragon with a human skull between its jaws" refers to his overwhelmingly controlling cruel nature. Perry, too, had tattoos but fewer and more elaborate. COOKIE, the name of a nurse he loved, was

"tattooed on his right biceps. Blue-furred, orange-eyed, red-fanged, a tiger snarled upon his left biceps, a spitting snake, coiled around a dragger, slithered down his arm, and elsewhere skulls gleamed, a tombstone loomed, a chrysanthemum flourished." (32) Capote metaphorically represents Perry's mental pain through the depiction of his highly elaborate tattoos, adding a psychological depth to the characters. This, in a way, can be taken as a piece of evidence to the fictionality of *In Cold Blood*

Since "[t]he difference between fiction and nonfiction is quite reasonably assumed to depend on whether stuff is invented or factually reliable (Dyer par.8), Capote inserted some imaginatively meticulous details in his novel, *In Cold Blood*. Meticulously descriptive details about the killers are not published in newspapers, yet Capote adds them to indicate the mysterious nature of the killers and to give credence for his fictional characters. Yet, they do not predict the characters' attitude to the story. A third invented incident is the portrayal of Mrs. Clutter as invalid, a piece of news that affected both her surviving daughters after the book publication; they were angered by the book's inaccuracies regarding Capote's description of their mother as an invalid, something they and others close to the Clutters contend was not true. He inserted these private details to give the impression of authenticity. Though Capote tries to give authenticity to his work, these meticulous details and rhetorical devices give the impression that the author uses his fertile imagination and gives a diegetic representation of reality not a mimetic one which adds to the fictionality of *In Cold Blood*.

The Second Section entitled "Persons Unknown" depicts the neighbors' discovery of the brutal murders and police's perplexity as they have little clues to connect the killers to the crime. Al Dewey, the head of the murder investigation, becomes completely haunted by the Clutters' murder and obsessed with their case. His motivation compelled the reader to go on reading with the narrative. Al Dewey believes that the motive behind the Clutters murders, particularly Herbert, was a combination of "hatred and thievery." This piece of information is constantly foreshadowed through "Nancy's purse found lying in the den", "Nancy's watch tumbled into her shoe" (103-237), "Kenyon's little radio" (102), and "Mr. Clutter's wallet open and empty on his bed" (238). The omniscient narrator describes Mr. Herbert as "always certain of what he wanted from the world" (6). It takes time for the investigators to figure out what took place at the night of the Clutters murders. The longer the Clutter case goes unsolved, the more horrified Holcomb's citizens become, and the

greater the built suspense. The text is a mysterious puzzle that the reader along with the investigators tries to put together, something that owes much to a detective novel than to new journalism.

Capote keeps alternating the steps the investigators of the Kansas Bureau are taking with the movements of Dick and Perry who travel from Mexico to Las Vegas. In doing so, he builds suspense. While the First Section of the narrative is narrated through a very limited perspective, whereby it recounts actions without giving access to the character's thoughts, great variations happen in the Second Section. Capote employs a "zero focalizer", to use Genette's term, which is an omniscient narrator who accesses the thoughts of the characters and displays knowledge of how events take place or will turn out. Capote lets the reader enter the character's mind, presenting the event through the character's thoughts without using direct quotations. S/he reports on other characters conversation. He, sometimes, uses interior monologues. The reader hears the inner thoughts of the characters, especially those of Dick and Smith. Harold Nye along with the detective of Las Vegas get to know the whereabouts of Kenyon Clutter's Zenith portable radio which they think was stolen during the Clutters' murders. Capote gives the answer from the perspective of Dick and Smith:

The answer was that they had very little, for they had by now mostly disposed of the stuff acquired the day of the Kansas City check—passing spree—the camera, the cuff links, the television sets. Also, they had sold, to a Mexico City policeman with whom Dick had got acquainted, a pair of binoculars and a gray Zenith portable radio. (118)

Capote interferes in the narration when citing important turning points or emotional incidents. He uses indirect reporting throughout most of *In Cold Blood*. Since the answer comes from Dick and Perry's perspectives, readers discover that the stolen Zenith Portable radio is already sold. This affects a later scene in the narrative. In section III entitled "The Answer", the detective of Las Vegas along with Harold Nye

had checked every pawn ticket issued during the past month. Specifically, Nye hoped to find a Zenith portable radio believed to have been stolen from the Clutter house on the night of the crime, but he had no luck with that. One broker, though, remembered Smith ('He's been in and out of here going on a good ten years'), and was able to produce a ticket for a bearskin rug pawned during the first week in November. (176)

Harold Nye seeks to track down the zenith portable radio. Since readers know the first quote, this scene is more suspenseful. Readers know what

happened to the radio and wonder if Nye will find it and track down Dick and Perry. The two different perspectives add suspense to the story. The only clues the investigators have are footprints "cat's paw half solo" and shoes with "diamond pattern soles"(125), a definite indication that there are two killers.

The huge discrepancy between what the investigators think might have happened (their detective findings) and the truth begins to tighten and the mystery is about to be solved. Floyd Well, a former cellmate of Dick, hears about the Clutters murder on the radio, and he immediately knows the identity of the killers. The money reward offered by a local newspaper for information on the Clutter case appeals to him so much that he admits what he knows to a friend and the information passes to Al Dewy along with a file containing shots of Dick and Perry. It takes the investigators some time to catch the killers because all the previous weeks they limit their doubts to investigations in the local Holcomb. The killers cross the country twice travelling from Kansas to Mexico without being arrested. Capote delineates how Nye constructs his case against both killers and how he uncovers clues and solves puzzles to learn their identities. Nye states that he seeks them only for parole violation and passing bad checks. He travels to Las Vegas circulating the photo of Perry in pawnshops. He investigates the landlady of the rooming house where he has stayed, and she shows him a box of junk mementoes tied with a cord Perry asked her to keep for him until he returns. Nye interviews Dick's employer who testifies that: "If ever I met the devil! Steal? Steal the weights off a dead man's eyes!"(168)

Capote moves to another scene depicting Nye while interviewing Dick's parents at the Hickock's home. Nye notices a hunting trifle he is damn sure had been used to kill the Clutter family, yet he leaves it with the Hickocks because he is supposedly seeking Dick and Perry for parole violation and passing bad checks. For the first time readers learn of the alibi Dick devised to shield where he and Perry were after the murder of the Clutters, namely, visiting Perry's sister in Fort Scott although she lives in San Francisco. When investigated, she admits that she is afraid of her brother, Perry, and asks Nye not to tell Perry her whereabouts; she wants to remain distanced from her brother. It is clear now that none of the convicts' relatives will ever raise a hand to protect either of them. Dick and Perry feel immune to any connection with the Clutter murder case and are confident to escape their bad checks in Kansas city. Yet, Dick worsens the situation by stealing a black and white Chevrolet car with a key in its ignition, left in an empty barn. They leave for Las Vegas because Perry wants to retrieve his box of mementoes from the rooming house and to pick up the second box containing the boots they wore the

night they murdered the Clutters from the post office. Both drive to Perry's rooming house, where the police arrest them. They are kept in separate cells in jail. Dick is investigated first.

Though Capote claims to resort to "the disnarrated" on the level of the story, a term first identified by Gerald Prince, which means "the narration of something that might have happened or was imagined to have happened that did not actually happen" (in Rabinowitz 7), he does utilize "the unnarrated" on the level of the discourse too. In mimetic fiction, the function of the disnarrated is a rhetorical one as it foregrounds ways of creating a situation and emphasizes the realities of representation (Prince 7). The "disnarrated" differs from "the unnarrated" in that the latter refers to "the lack of narration about something that did happen; it can be found in those passages in a narrative that explicitly do not tell what is supposed to have happened, foregrounding the narrator's refusal to narrate" (7). The unnarrated refers to events or details that cannot be narrated either because they "transgress a law...or because [they] def[y] the powers of the narrator ... or because they fall... below the so-called threshold of narratability" (Prince 1). For example, each of the murderers—at first—abides by the alibi Dick concocted, something readers are quite ignorant of. Nye and Roy Church friendly interrogate Dick, allowing him to tell his story which includes a lie he devised about visiting Perry's sister in Fort Scott and dating whores who robbed both Dick and Perry.

Though in a detective novel readers must be given the same opportunity to solve the crime as the police themselves, Capote does not offer readers the same evidence at the same time it is made available to Nye and Roy Church, something which weakens Capote's story line. Capote transgresses the information norm using Genette's term: "paralepsis", which means to take on something after the event"(41) . Dan Shen elaborates on the term describing it as "the inclusion of an event against the norm of a particular focalization" (Shen 171). For instance, Nye surprises Dick of being quite sure that Perry never has a sister living in Fort Scott. He tightens the investigation telling him that he left a live witness and two footprints at the Clutters' crime scene. When the investigators accuse him of being in charge of the whole Clutters' brutal murders, Dick confesses: "It was Perry. I couldn't stop him. He killed them all" (230). His selfish attitude appears in ratting on Perry who acknowledges all details of the murders when the agents turn them against one another. Perry finds only a silver dollar fallen out of a doll's purse in Nancy's room, he becomes frustrated, retelling.: "I was just disgusted ... One dollar. And I'm crawling on my belly to get it" (238). He realizes that he was creeping for attaining the American Dream, yet it ends up in abject desperation and criminal acts.

Capote experiments with narrative innovations and journalistic techniques which enrich the text. Employing a camera eye technique leads to a storytelling situation where first person narrator and third person narration "efface themselves in a reporting function" (Hartner & Schneider 210). Capote uses authorial silence. He does not speak directly to his readers. In *Rhetoric of Fiction*, Booth describes three functions for the authorial silence: first, a means for the author to control sympathy; second, as a way to control clarity and confusion; and lastly as a masterful means to instill a secret communion between the author and readers (272). Capote does not comment on events nor does he interpret important details. He does not intrude in the story; he only observes what happens. Yet, it is a heinous crime that is worth the reader's time and effort to solve. Readers are left picking up clues and piecing them together to find out how the murders are committed, a feature of detective fiction. As he refrains from providing direct commentary in the narrative, Capote still controls the reader's sympathy.

The last part is Section IV entitled "The Corner", foreshadowing Dick and Perry on the death row. It is Perry who gives more information and minute details about the murders to the investigators. He allows them to recover the Zenith portable radio he stole from the Clutters' house on that tragic night. Perry is put in an isolated cell inside the adjacent residence of Sheriff; the sheriff's wife, Mrs. Meier, narrates this scene. It is through her eyes that we see the events. She heard [Perry] crying...Crying like a child" (345). She sympathizes with him and frequently chats with him, fixes his shirts and cooks him meals. Perry, receiving a photograph and a letter from an army mate named Don Cullivan, corresponds with him regularly. Both Perry and Dick devise escape plans in jail, which do not succeed. Dick even fashions a makeshift weapon from wood and wire; the policeman finds it under his mattress during a cell search.

Capote even keeps his readers on the edge of their seats, thus heightening suspense, about the time the executions will take place when the convicts are on death row because appeals are filled and the date of execution is constantly being postponed. Though there must be a fair play rule to which Capote must adhere, he keeps the reader wondering if the killers will be executed or will meet life imprisonment. Three more years pass during which two more lawyers bring the case of Perry and Dick before the U.S. Supreme Court. As in most detective fiction, there is suspense as to what will happen to Perry and Dick. Capote describes the scene of capital punishment most vividly, including how long it takes a victim's heart to stop on the guillotine. Andy takes a long time to die; "his

heart kept beating for nineteen minutes" (332). Dick liked Andy, who was "innocent as a little child ... He'd never once been with a woman" (333).

Every few minutes the doctor came to the door and stepped outside, and stood there with this stethoscope in his hand. I wouldn't say he was enjoying his work-kept gasping, like he was gasping for breath, and he was crying, too, Jimmy said, 'Get a load of that nance.' I guess the reason he stepped outside was so others wouldn't see he was crying. Then he'd go back and listen to hear if Andy's heart had stopped. (332)

The above quote is a case of "narratised speech" which conveys the substance of what was said but not the actual verbal formula. Though Capote uses authorial silence and does not directly comment on nor does he interpret important details, he still controls readers' sympathy and builds a reciprocal communication between him and the readers.

The title of the narrative *In Cold Blood* is significant since it is quite obvious that it conveys two senses. At first thought, reader may assume that it refers to the terrifying murders of the whole Clutters family that were committed in cold blood. Reaching the climax of the narrative, smart readers can detect that it may also refer to the death penalty for felony committed by Dick and Perry which is carried out in cold blood despite many defences and retrieves. It becomes evident when the Row's guards tell Dick that he seems to expect company that will have death penalty too, Dick retorts: "Sure. It's very popular in Kansas. Juries hand it out like they were giving candy to kids" (322). Detective fiction does not encourage revenge nor does it promote punishment outside the order of the law. In this sense, it exists "within" the law (James *Detective* 8). Once again, Dick gives his thoughts on death penalty to a journalist, whom he frequently corresponds with, telling him that he is not against taking revenge for wrong doings and that he believes in hanging, "just so long as I'm not the one being hanged" (326). This journalist seems to be Capote himself; he engages himself in the events.

Many a time does Capote encircle the viewpoints of a character in quotation marks. A case in point is Capote's depiction of Willy-Jay, the Chaplain's clerk at Kansas State Penitentiary, as Perry's "real and only friend" (42). By enclosing statements in this way, Capote suggests a dialogue between the characters and their narrator. The narrator repeats forensic investigation and includes confessed pieces of information, witness testimonies, police reports, culminating in Capote's allusion to his own prison visits between 1960 and 1965: "Nobody ever comes to see

him except you," he (Dick) said, nodding at the journalist, "with whom he corresponded and who was periodically allowed to visit him"(331). Capote left the *Corner* before witnessing the executions of Perry and Dick. Yet their executions are narrated by Agent Alvin Dewey, the detective, who overhears observers discussing whether or not victims feel pains while being executed. Capote ends his book with a fabricated scene, despite claiming in an interview with George Plimpton that his is "immaculately factual"(par.5). Capote's biographer, Gerald Clarke, quotes Capote's revelation

I could probably have done without that last part, which brings everything to rest. Capote admitted, I was criticized a lot for it. People thought I should have ended with hangings, that awful last scene. But I felt I had to return to the town to bring everything back full circle, to end with peace. (359)

This fabricated scene is the concluding one in Capote's work in which Dewey happened to be in the cemetery four years after he had supervised the investigation, seeing the four graves of the Clutters and he found Susan Kidwell, Nancy's faithful friend, visiting the Clutters' graves (342). This scene is a definite mark of a narrative innovation made by a literary artist and not a journalist who seeks accuracy and who is consistent with the factual details, something that much owes to fiction than new journalism.

Capote employs an objective third person omniscient narrator. To engage the readers powerfully into the narration, Capote, in some scenes, has to change the objective third person narrator into a first-person narrator to give immediacy to his discourse. Though a good story should be based on a coherent chronology, a connected plot-line and predicted character's attitudes to the story, Capote abandons chronological presentation of events. He breaks the logical sequence of time and space in the story. This spatio/temporal distortion creates the cinematographic effect that engages the readers. Though *In Cold Blood* is based on true events and people, Capote fictionalizes it through using huge lashings of imagination. Through discourse and experimenting with narrative innovations, Capote represents reality and does not imitate it. He reveals the core behind the text in a strictly objective manner.

To recapitulate, Capote innovates a new approach by experimenting with new technical devices. Whether he reads Genette or not, Capote surpasses all artistic techniques and plot devices introduced by him because Capote has a new novelistic experience. He builds on Genette and takes a step forward through making new manipulations of

other narratologists such as Wayne Booth, Gerard Prince and Mieke Bal, and many cinematic and journalistic techniques. Though the events of the story occurred in one order, the narrative discourse is narrated in non-linear sequence; Capote abandons chronological presentation of events. He breaks the logical sequence of time/space. He does not follow a cause and effect order. This temporal distortion establishes a cinematographic effect. Capote experiments with new techniques and crafts his story in such a way as to build suspense. Using a nonchronological plot, he emphasizes key scenes in his narrative, *In Cold Blood*. Utilising scene by scene construction, authorial silence, rhetorical dialogues and anachrony, Capote creates a suspenseful detective novel that engages his readers. He employs journalistic techniques and cinematic devices into *In Cold Blood* such as the Camera Eye technique, interviews and reportage, detective findings, and newspaper reports withholding pieces of information to keep the readers on the edge of their seats, thus achieving suspense. All the materials Capote adds to his story such as simile, metaphor, prose, montage, camera eye refers to his narrative discourse.

Since a narrative can be a tool for better understanding of a departed age, Capote attempts to represent real life events and incidents on the pages. Utilizing narrative as one of the constituents of one's understanding of reality, Capote depicts the social evils and appalling crimes in the American society such as ignorance, gruesome murders and petty theft. He aims at showing degradation and decline of values in a vanished peaceful America as the work is void of any moral stance. Through the benevolently prosperous Clutters' brutal murders happening in a quiet peaceful town like Holcomb, Capote is emphasizing that nowhere is ever safe in his country. Capote employs objectivity both as a cover to escape story line flaws represented in puzzling plot devices, and as a tool of representing reality and uncovering the disastrous diseases of a modern age. To conclude, I can say that Capote initiates unprecedented techniques and experiments with a new style into the making of a detective novel that owes much to fiction than new journalism.

Endnotes

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- ¹ i. The relationship between story events as they originally happened and the text time as to replace such incidents in the text
- ii. This piece of news was published in the New York Time Archives Nov 16, 1959
<https://www.nytimes.com/1959/11/16/archives/wealthy-farmer-3-of-family-slain-h-w-clutter-wife-and-2-children.html>
- iii. This paper follows MLA Handbook (8th ed.).

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