

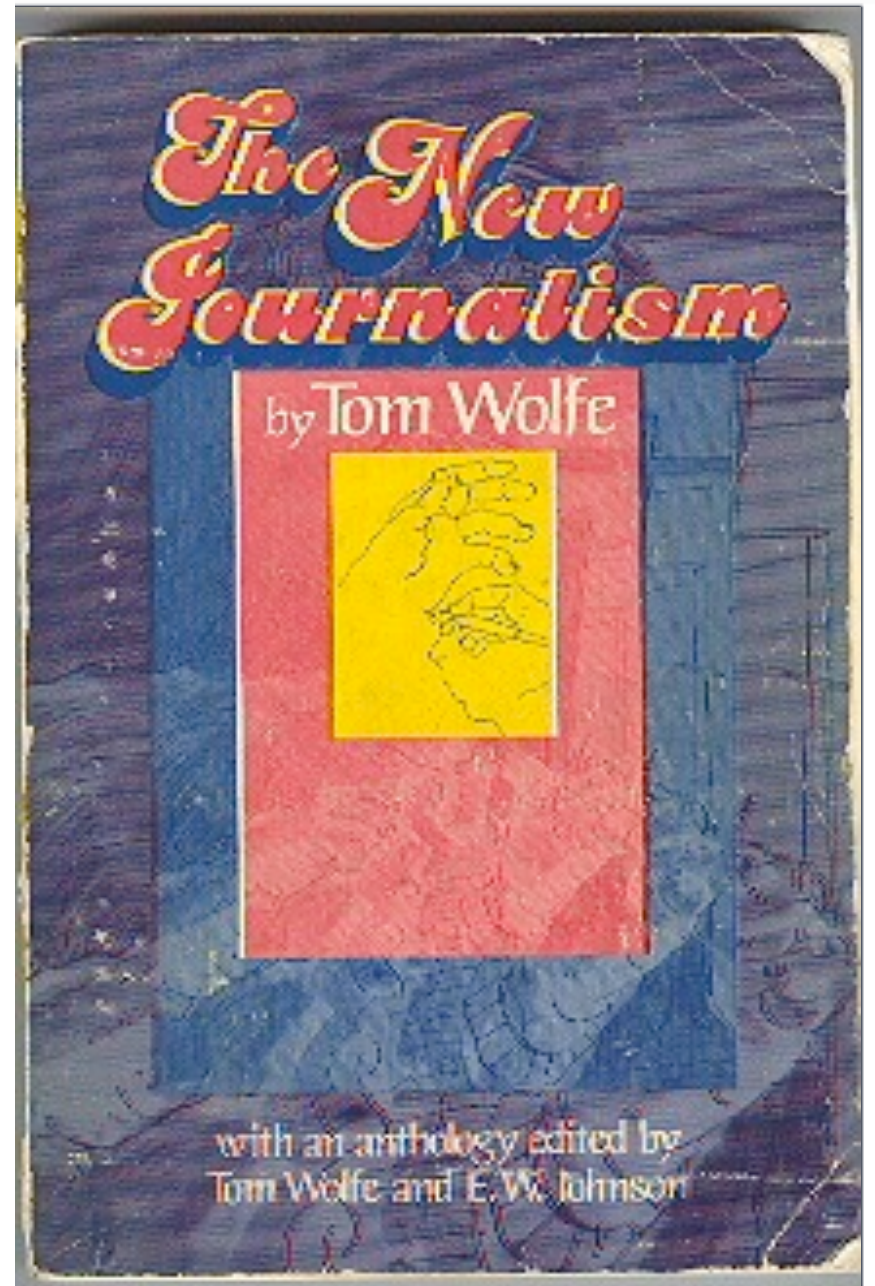
literary journalism

Marcus O'Donnell

JOUR331 2013

literary journalism

- ▶ new journalism
- ▶ narrative journalism
- ▶ intimate journalism
- ▶ immersion journalism
- ▶ creative non-fiction
- ▶ new new journalism



Defoe - Dickens - Capote



a long history

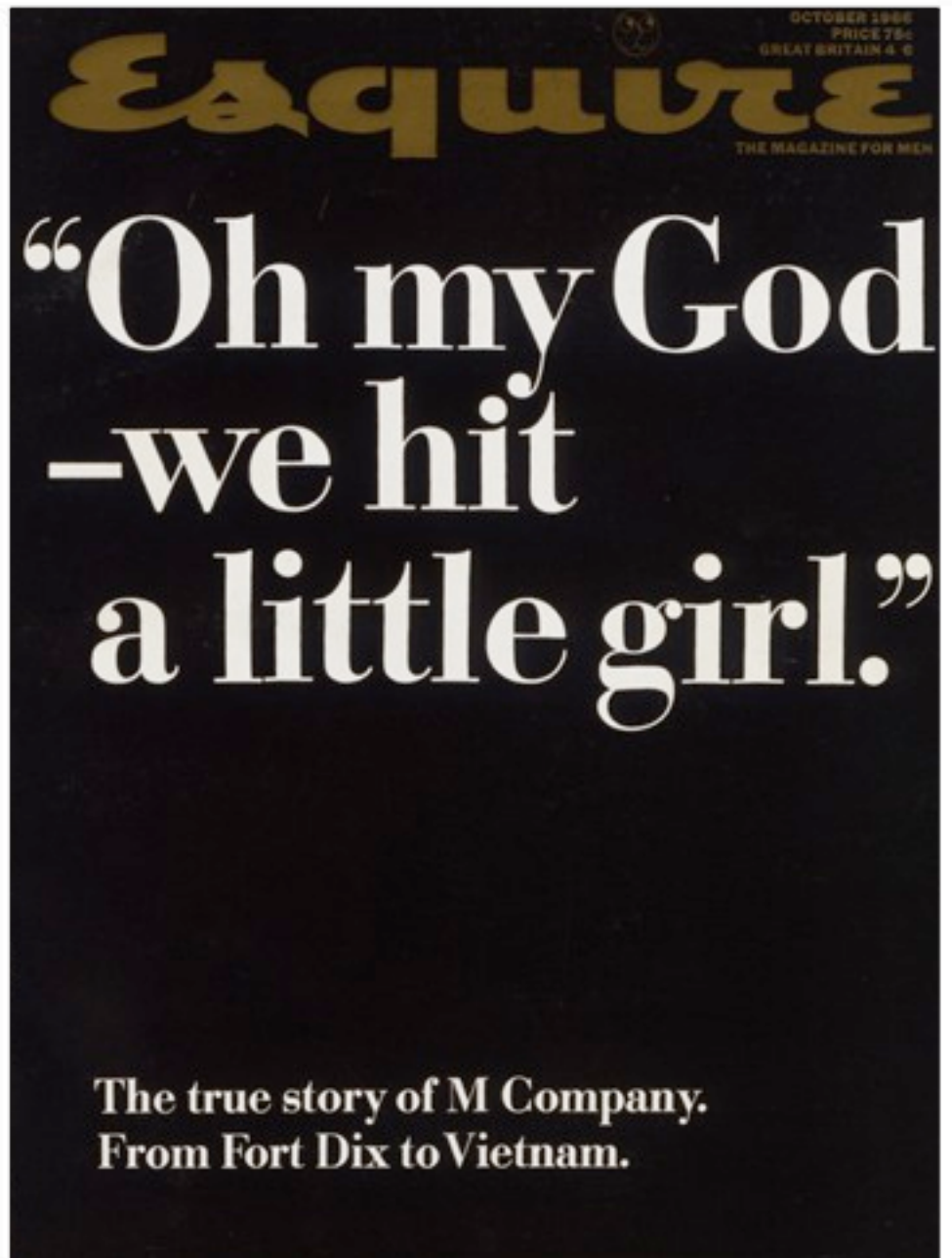
dates back to early literary history

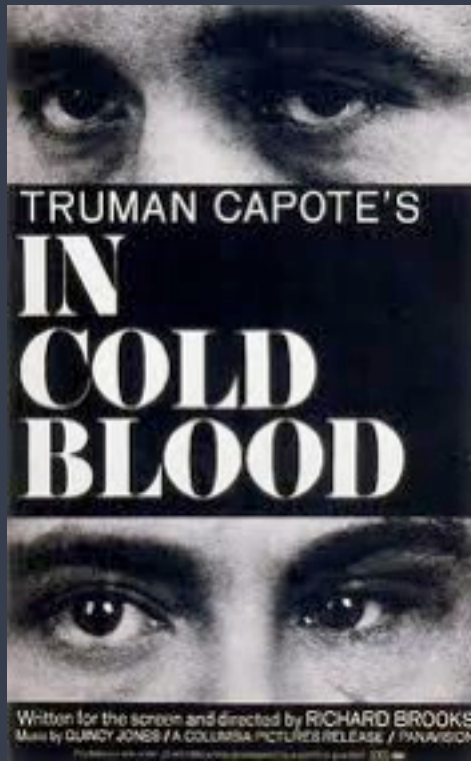


True story created
from

- scenes
- whole dialogues
- point of view
- details of
characters' "status
life"

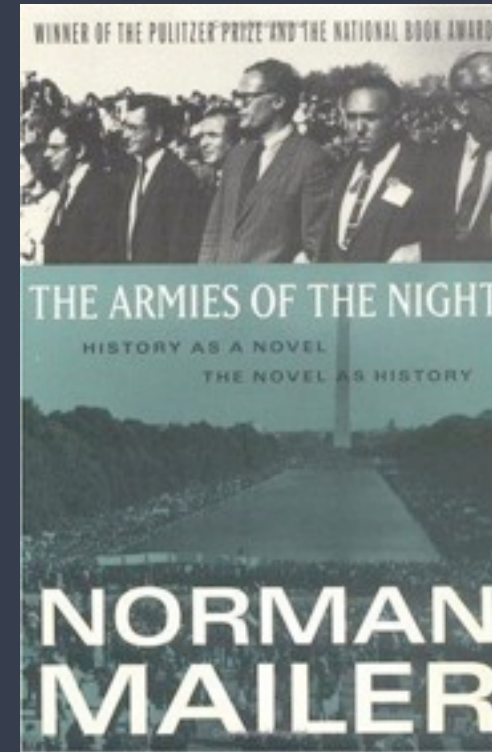
Tom Wolfe





In Cold Blood

- ▶ “objective”
- ▶ unseen omnipotent author
- ▶ 1966



Armies of the Night

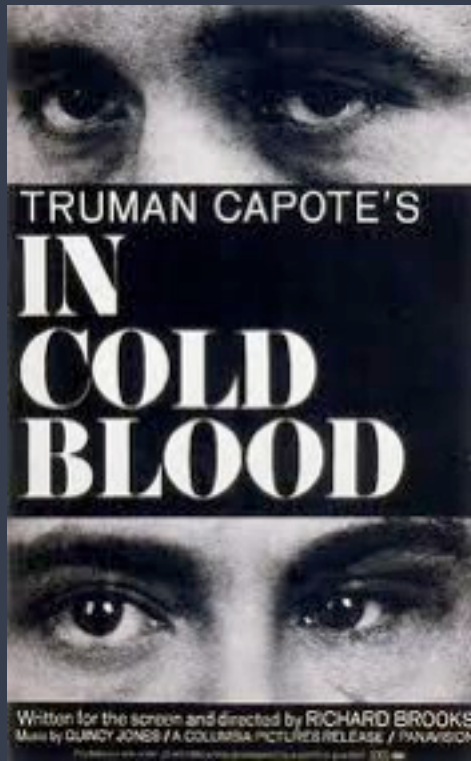
- ▶ “ironic”
- ▶ author as protagonist
- ▶ 1968

- [It was] enormously personalised journalism in which the character of the narrator was one of the elements in the way the reader would finally assess the experience. I had felt that I had some dim intuitive feeling that what was wrong with all journalism is that the reporter needed to be objective and that was one of the great lies of all time.

- Norman Mailer on his first forays into non-fiction:
Superman Comes to the Supermarket

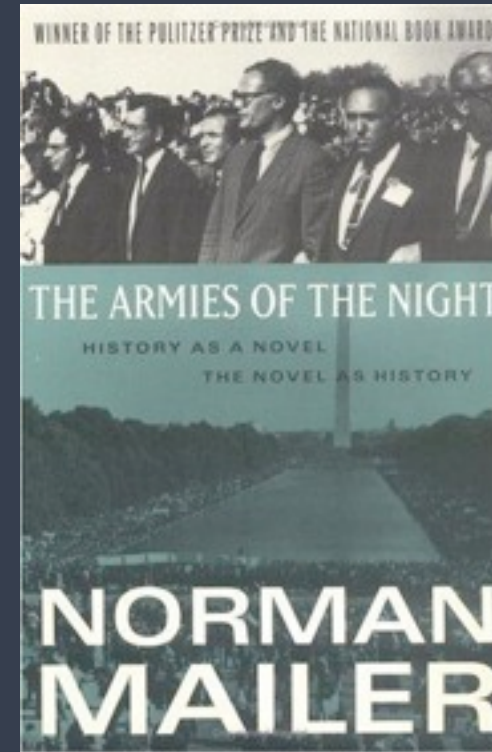
- I don't put myself in the story. I don't want the reader to be even aware that I'm there....I want [the reader] to feel they're getting undiluted reality - that they're getting absolutely objective reporting. Of course, this is a trick - because I have my own values, as to what's important, what's worth saying, and what isn't worth saying. I am choosing what I want to write, and I'm choosing the order it goes in, so though it pretends to be objective, its really subjective, and this is a trick on the reader.

- John Sack: author of "Oh my God - we hit a little girl"



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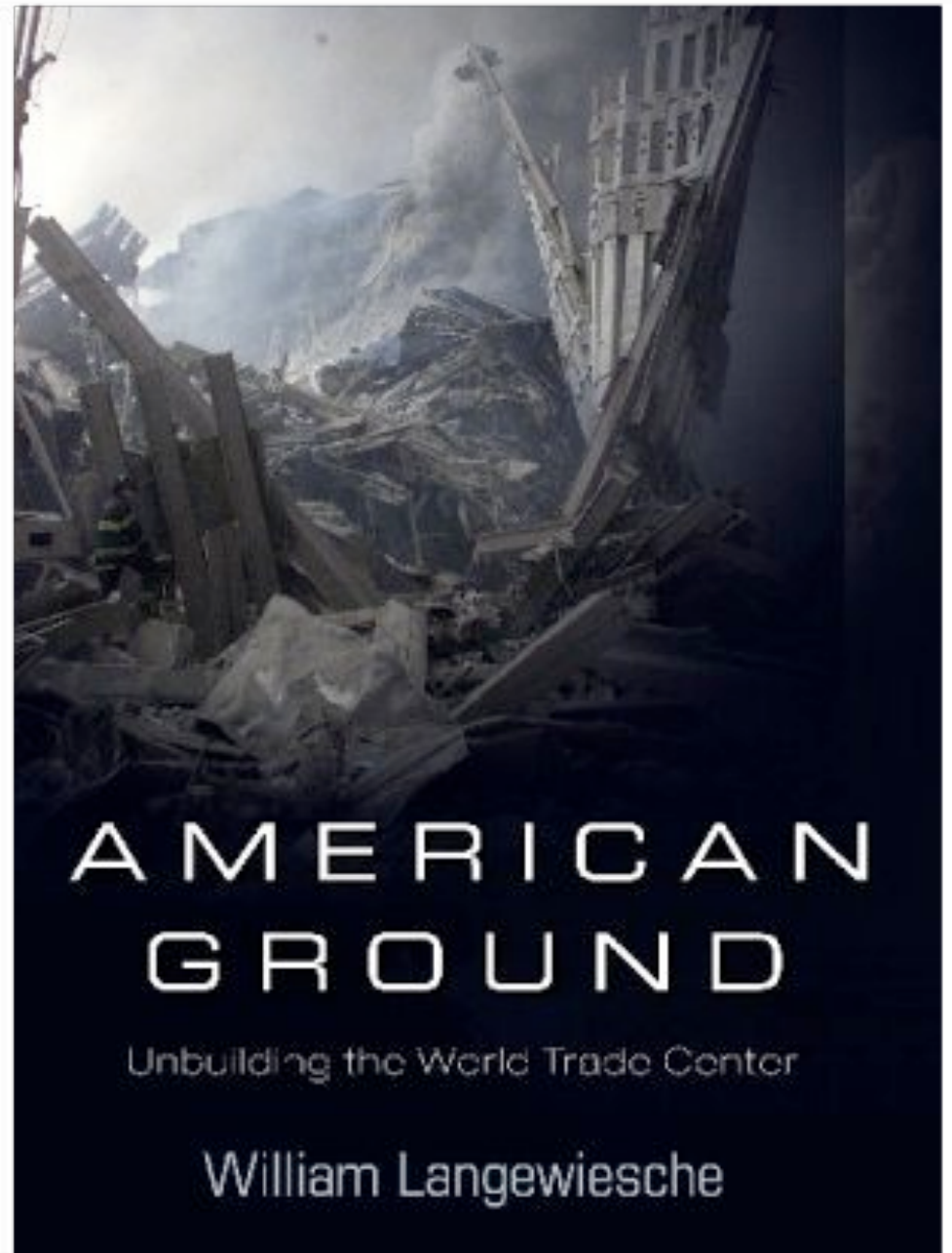
Armies of the Night

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New new journalism

- Rigorously reported,
- psychologically astute,
- sociologically sophisticated,
- politically aware.

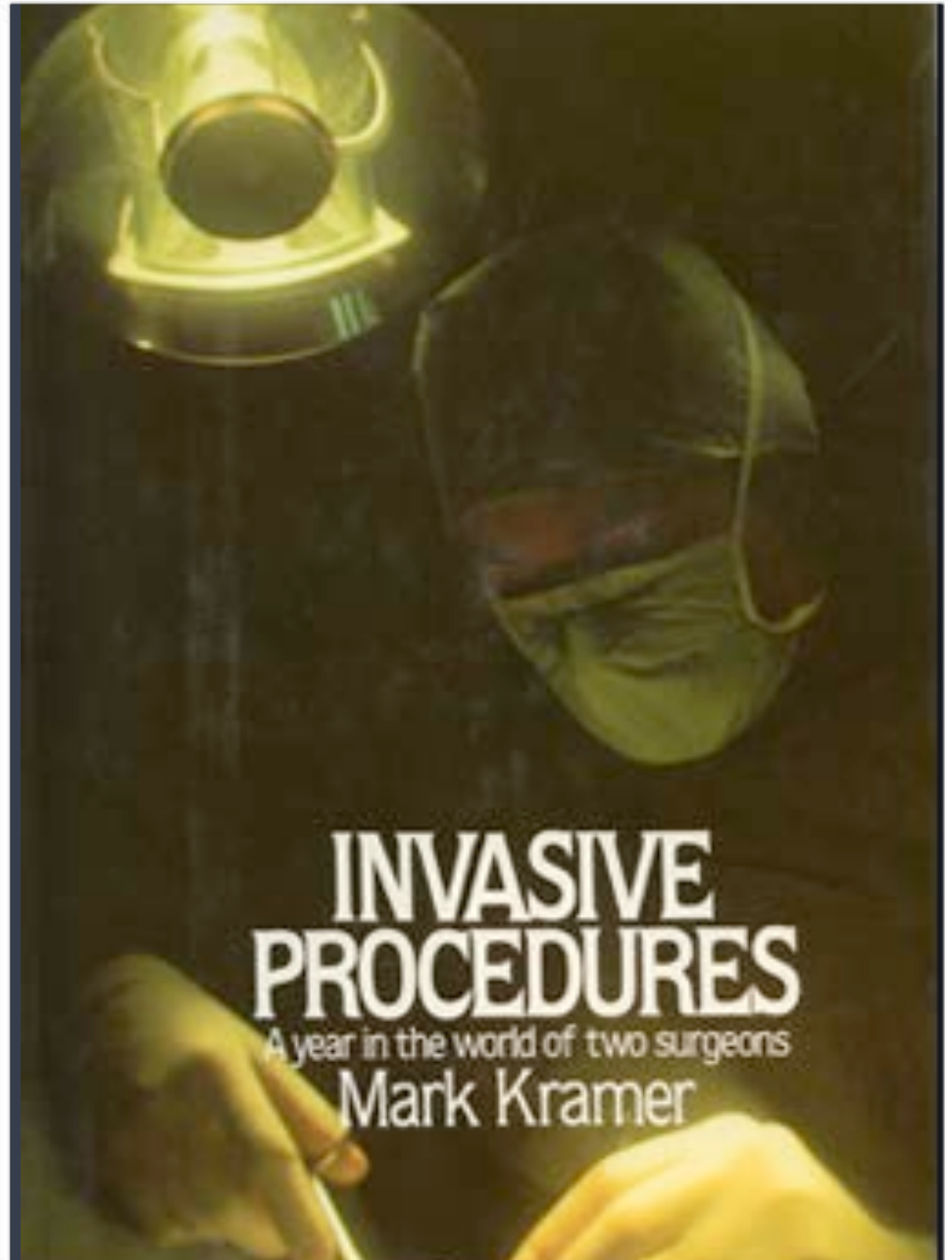
Robert Boynton



Art of personal reportage

- historical sweep
- attention to language
- participation and immersion
- symbolic realities
- accuracy
- sense of time and place
- grounded observations
- context
- voice

Norman Sims



Tom Wolfe

True story
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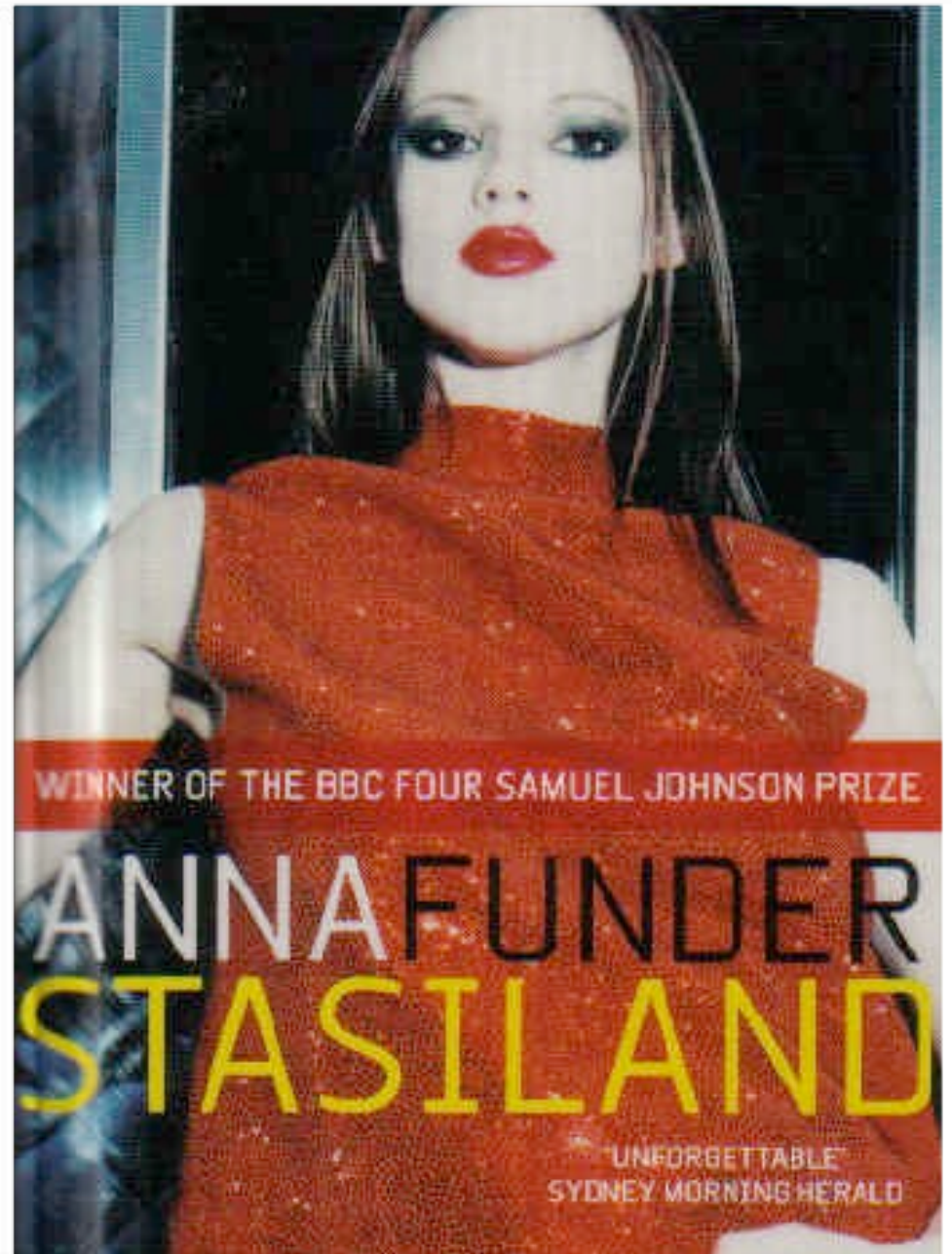
Style and soul

Researched

Personal

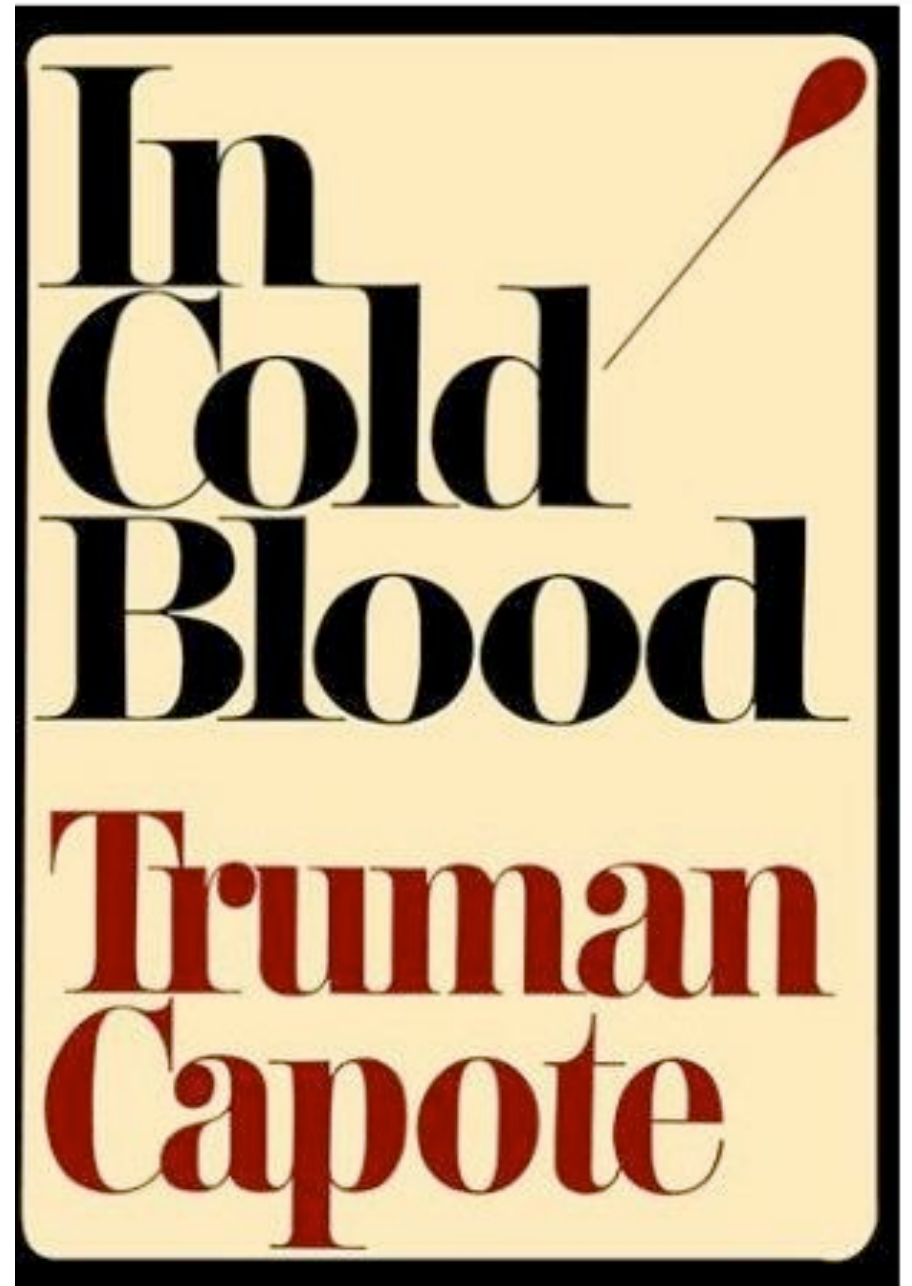
Styled

Symbolic



Researched

- ▶ Capote famously spent five years researching and writing *In Cold Blood*
- ▶ Other writers spend years researching their books
- ▶ This is part of the commitment to fact
- ▶ Also a commitment to detail and depth - more than just the facts
- ▶ Acknowledges that understanding is difficult



- ▶ You have to stay around for a long time before people will let you get to know them. They're guarded the first time, the second time and the first ten times. Then you get boring. They forget you're there. Or else they've had a chance to make you into something in their world. They make you into a surgical resident, they make you into a farmhand or a member of the family. And you let it happen.



Mark Kramer (Sims 1984:11)

Personal

- ▶ Personal - the bias of voice not the bias of inaccuracy
- ▶ The author can choose to be in the story in different ways
 - ▶ Report the reporting
 - ▶ Report the reactions
 - ▶ Alternate personal with other narratives

HELEN GARNER

JOE CINQUE'S CONSOLATION

A TRUE STORY OF DEATH, GRIEF AND THE LAW

'a book which functions at one level as a psychological mystery, but at deeper levels as an exploration of the adequacy of the law to dispense justice, and the responsibilities that human beings have to each other ... It is told with compassion, a singular kind of honesty, and unadorned intelligence'

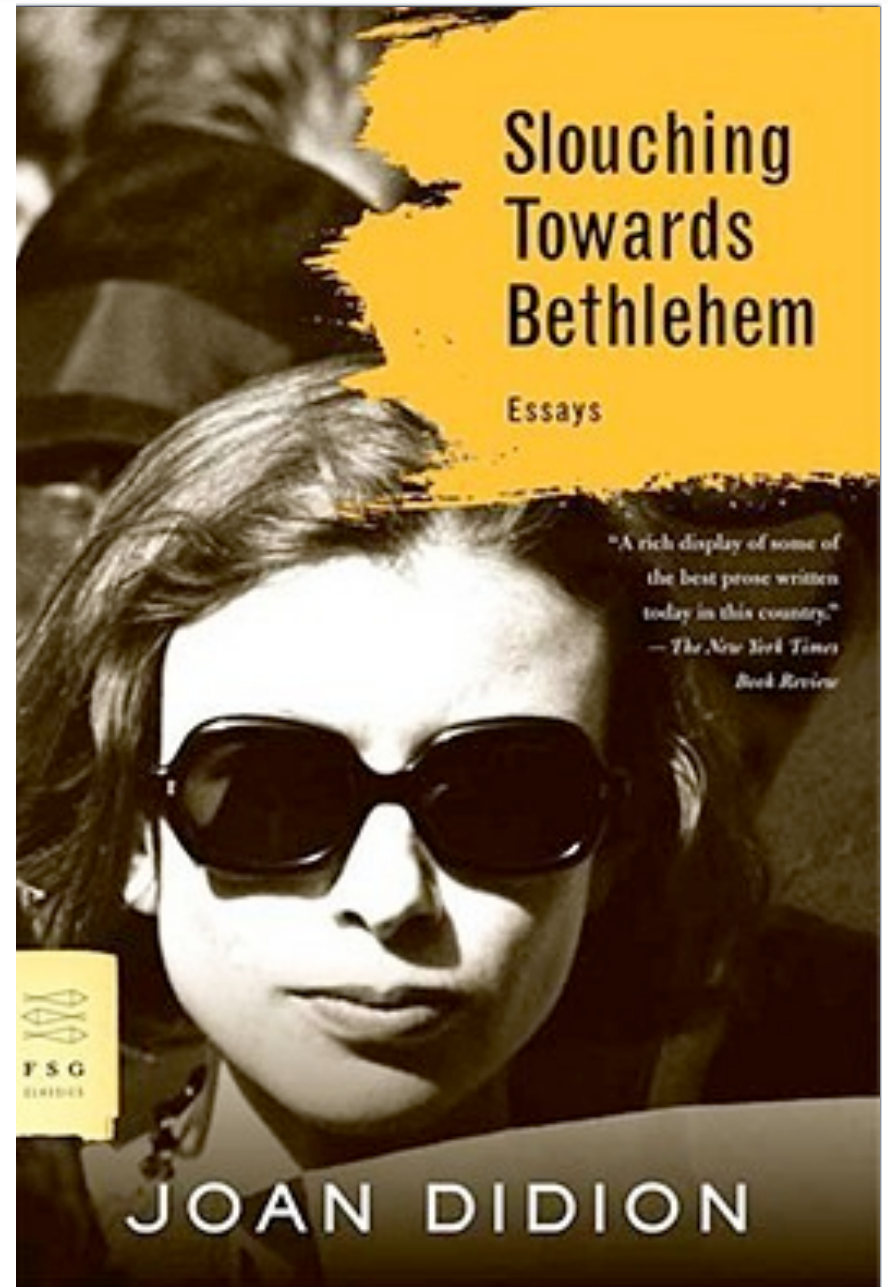
THE BULLETIN



THE NATIONAL BESTSELLER

Styled

- ▶ uses the resources of literary description
- ▶ characterisation
- ▶ plot
- ▶ scenes
- ▶ a created/creative work
- ▶ not about adjectives or devices - it's about rhythms, patterns and structure

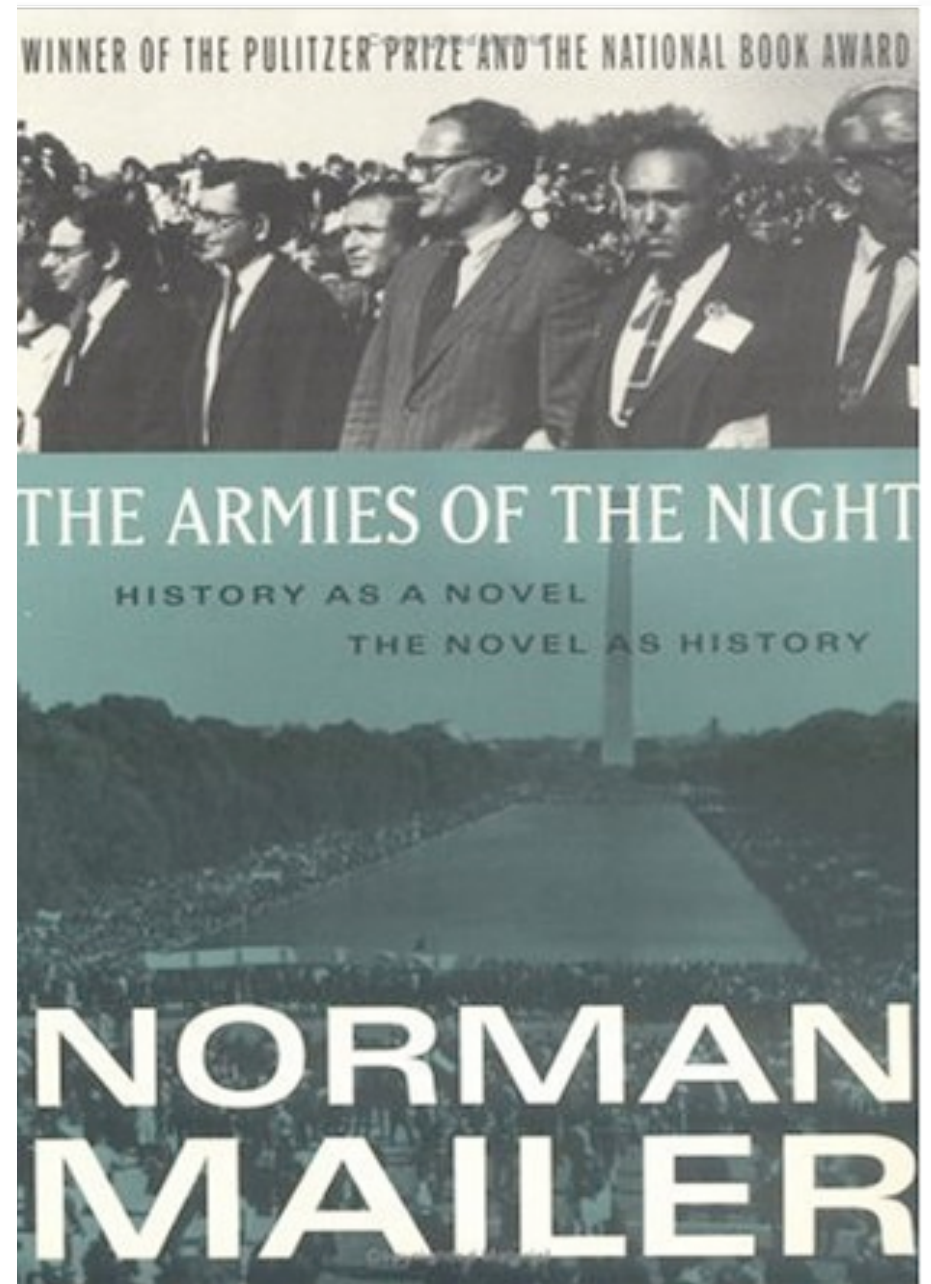


- Grammar is a piano I play by ear, since I seem to have been out of school the year the rules were mentioned. All I know about grammar is its infinite power. To shift the structure of a sentence alters the meaning of that sentence, as definitely and inflexibly as the position of a camera alters the meaning of the object photographed. Many people know about camera angles now, but not so many know about sentences

● Joan Didion: Why I write

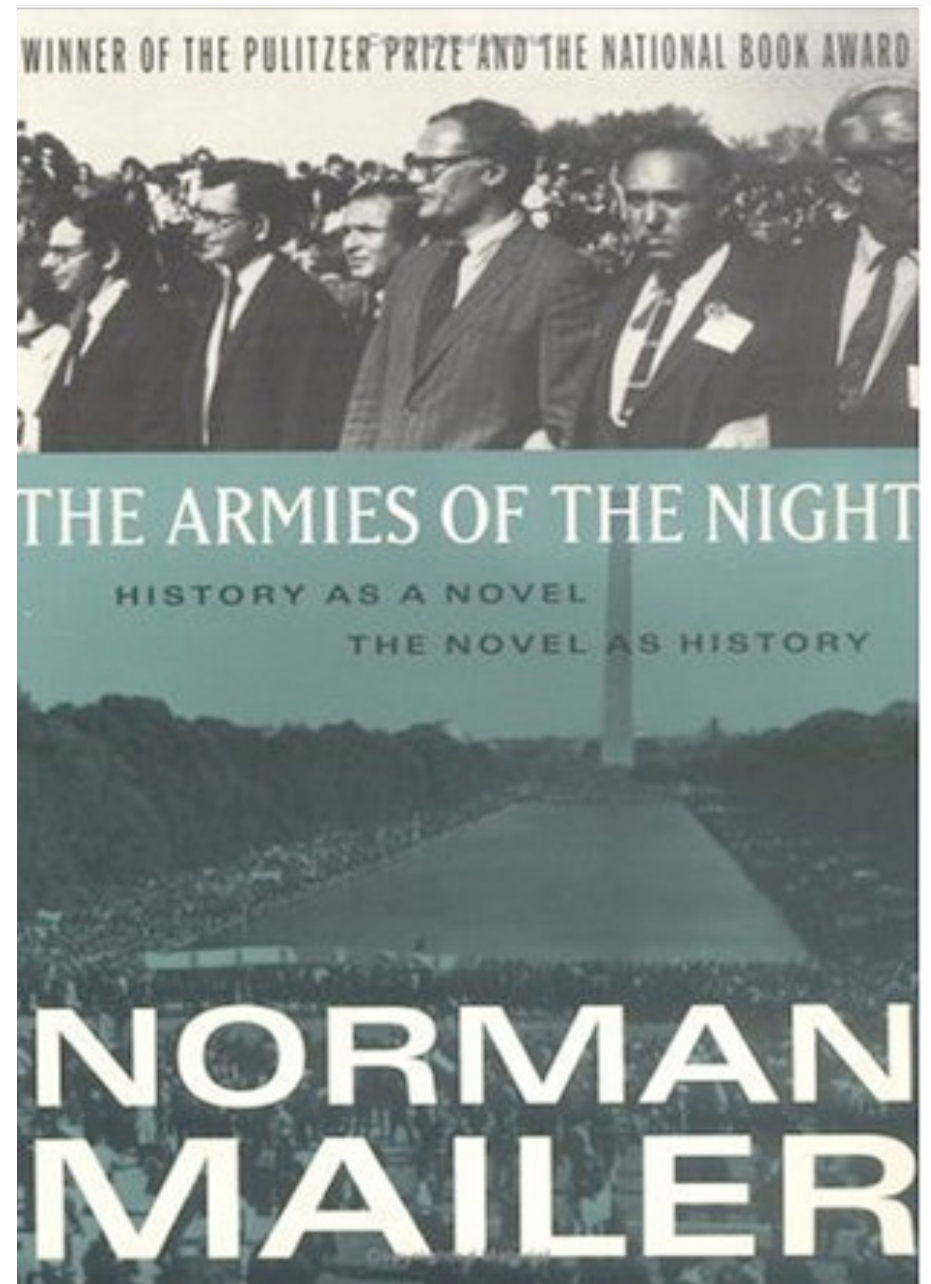
Symbolic

- ▶ the story is always about the meaning of the story not just the chronology of the story
- ▶ stories with mythic resonance
- ▶ brings the everyday into connection with the social the political and the spiritual
- ▶ compassionate



Symbolic

- ▶ “You see, dear fellow Americans, it is Sunday, and we are burning the body and blood of Christ in Vietnam. Yes, we are burning him there, and as we do, we destroy the foundation of this Republic, which is its love and trust in Christ”



Journalism always moves along a horizontal plane, telling a story, while fiction - good fiction - moves vertically, taking you deeper and deeper into character and events. By treating a real event with fictional techniques (something that can't be done by a journalist until he learns to write good fiction), it's possible to make this kind of synthesis.

Truman Capote (Clarke 1988:357)