



# **The Undeclared War between Journalism and Fiction: Journalists as Genre Benders in Literary History**

*Doug Underwood*

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When Tom Wolfe declared that 'new' journalism had surpassed the novel as the most vital form of literature, he set off a rivalry that Norman Mailer, the novelist and 'new' journalist, labeled an 'undeclared war' between journalism and fiction. Many of the important twentieth century journalist-literary figures in the United States and the United Kingdom rejected so-called non-fictional methods as their favored way to convey social truths. Despite their own careers in journalism, they came to believe that the writing formulas that grew out of industrialized journalism could be an impediment to expressing an authentic view of the world. In this volume, Doug Underwood asks whether much of what is now called literary journalism is, in fact, 'literary,' and whether it should rank with the great novels by such journalists-turned-novelists such as Mark Twain, Willa Cather, and Ernest Hemingway, who believed - as Mailer did - that fiction provided a more expansive way for the realistic writer to express the important 'truths' of life.

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