

# HIDDEN MEANINGS: CREATIVE FICTION, NON-FICTION, AND FACTS

## SESSION THREE—ASSIGNMENT

Below are the assignment questions for this session

### 1. **Truth of Lies:**

I personally find the line between what we believe we remember or know and what really happened to be one of the most interesting lines to tease in writing. In fiction, the writer's range is completely open; in non-fiction, it is more important to differentiate between fact and lie.

Option a: Write a piece that very clearly explores this theme, by writing one story from two different points of view (ideas: the parent/child; boss/employee; master/pet; adult-self/child-self). You decide the best way to present these different perspectives.

Option b: We all lie sometimes, whether intentional or not. Have you ever had the experience of finding out your sibling/parent/child/friend remembers something completely contrary to your own memory? Write a piece in which you tell the truth about a lie or memory, or tell a lie about the truth or memory. Give us both sides of the story.

### 2. **Even Bots Deserve Love:**

Option a: There is an intriguing line of thought hinted at toward the end of *Astroturfing*—

"...once fake accounts were exposed, 'anyone (even real persons) who tweeted in support of the Guptas would be labelled a 'Guptabot' and ridiculed'."

This inspired in me the idea that *even bots need love*. Do bots (or fake identities stolen from others or *trolls*) feel pain when they are ridiculed, shamed, exposed? Do

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they deserve empathy too? Try writing a story from the POV of the person/entity/AI behind one of these spam accounts. See if you can get us to empathize with them.

Option b, if that doesn't strike your fancy: Write a story or CNF piece that uses tweets or Facebook posts to advance the story line—or maybe these form the entire story. I encourage playfulness: use visual elements, like #hashtags, date-markers, and posts.

### 3. Immersive Voice:

Think about the voices we can use to tell a story: telling, showing, immersive, and more. When we use “immersive voice,” we drop the reader directly into the character's experience without a clue as to what is happening. An example from the text—

“Guess what: her only homework was to watch TV. This was what his daughter announced when he picked her up from ballet class.”

In the first line, we are momentarily immersed in character; the second line clarifies the first. This technique is used in a lot of YA writing, because it quickly develops a rich and relatable voice for a character.

Try inserting this type of voice into a piece of writing you have already been working on, OR create a new piece that uses all three voices. This should be written from a 3rd person perspective.

### 4. Something Else Altogether:

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Think back to Skibsrud's piece, and this quote:

"If she only had some outlet, she sobbed—some way of relating her experiences... creatively, perhaps! Yes! Perhaps that was the answer! She could translate her experiences—everything she had felt and learned—into something else altogether. She could invent a whole other language if necessary!"

Call to mind a specific, clear, and detailed experience you have had. Translate this into "something else altogether." This should, by nature of the exercise, be quite rich with metaphor. Feel free to leave it in this abstract form, or revise with an eye toward grounding it with concrete details.

### **Peer Response Questions (to use with all of the above)**

1. Take a moment to consider the story you think the writer is trying to convey. Write a very short (1-3 sentence) description summing up the plot or theme.
2. Is the story believable? If there are clear lies being told, do you find yourself trusting the writer anyway? If you can identify an area where the story needs to be stronger, please point it out.
3. Which part of the draft interests you the most and why?
4. Where do you feel you would like more detail or explanation? Are there any places where you would like less?