

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

SESSION FIVE—DISCUSSION

Below are the discussion questions for this session:

1. In reflecting on reliable and unreliable narrators in these three pieces and others we've read in this course, how do you think your own understanding and experience of the world has affected your beliefs in someone's version of events, whether fictional or factual? Do you think intimacy and familiarity with some aspects of a narrator affect other's belief in their words? How might these ideas play into the effectiveness of propaganda?

2. Every story, whether fiction or nonfiction, typically has at least three distinct Points of Telling, which are the: 1) reason a story is being told, 2) the point in time relative to events in which the story is being told (a story about the past being told from the present, for example), and 3) the geographic space from which the story is being told. In "Escape from Spiderhead", what do you think are the reasons for the telling, and the temporal and geographic axes upon which the story hinges? Explain your answer below.

3. Note the shifts between first person singular ("I") and plural ("we") Points of View (POVs) in the story. Where do you notice these shifts happen? What effect do you think these POV shifts have on our understanding of the narrative agenda of the primary character, Jeff? In what ways do you think empathy is affected differently by first-person versus third-person narration?

4. In "Five Are the Fingers, Five Are the Sins" by Rebecca Watson, the architecture of Gabriele D'Annunzio's estate, Vittoriale degli Italiani, serves not just as a retreat and storehouse of a lifetime's worth of collecting beautiful items, but it also arguably serves as a cipher for the man himself. In which ways do you see the location, architecture, layout, and decoration of the Vittoriale serving as symbols for D'Annunzio and his life?

5. Points of Entry and Exit (POEs) are the places in a narrative in which we enter or leave the sections in a piece of writing. Oftentimes, anecdotes, examples, imagery, or tableaux are used to enter a story while imagery and foreshadowing are two common ways of leaving a narrative. In the case of "A New Front Line" By Lindsey Hilsum, what are the writer's POEs in and out of the six different sections of the story? What are some other approaches besides anecdotes, examples, imagery or tableaux for entering a story or essay? What are some other approaches besides imagery and foreshadowing for exiting a story or essay?