



+ What Is Creative Non-Fiction?

■ “This may not be exactly what happened, but it’s exactly how it felt.”

- Lex Williford
Touchstone Anthology of Contemporary Creative Non Fiction

+ WHAT IS CREATIVE NON-FICTION?

■ Journalistic writing

■ Began in the 60’s and 70’s

■ New Journalism

+ Basically, it is a “hybrid” of non-Fiction and literature

Non-Fiction

- Essay Format
- Researched Facts
- Focus on Ideas and Facts
- Standard Organizational Patterns

Literary Elements

- Narrative
- Setting
- Characterization
- Author is Personally Involved
- Literary Voice
- Polished Language

+ Creative Non-Fiction Writing

Goals

- Connect with yourself and with your audience
- Create the “vivid and continuous dream” of fiction

Write with clear, elegant prose, without...

- Overstatement
- Melodrama
- Sentimentality
- Overstated sense of “victimhood”

Write with the full power of the imagination. Recognize limits of

- Research
- Faulty memory (yours and others)
- POV (literary and political)

Remain within the ethical boundaries of credible and powerful journalism

+ 3 Main TYPES

- Memoir
- Personal Essay
- Travel- Place Essay

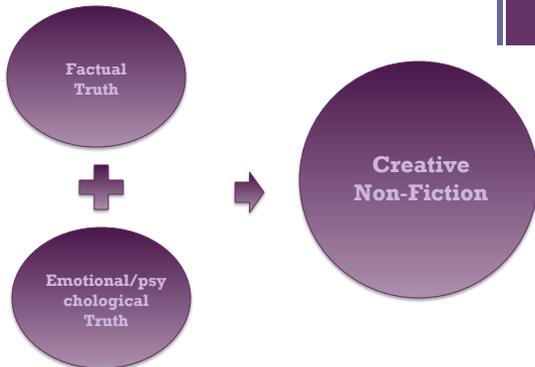
SOME OTHERS

- Food Writing
- Biography
- Literary Journalism
- Reviews (movie/book)
- editorials

+ Creative Non-Fiction Is...

- Genre of writing that uses literary styles and techniques to create effective narratives.
- Ethical.
- The truth is meant to be upheld, but in a literary fashion
- New Journalism
- An artful blend of what happened + how it felt

+ Creative Non-Fiction Is...



Guidelines for Writing Creative Non-Fiction

(from Barbara Lounsberry, *The Literature of Reality*, G. Talese & B. Lounsberry, eds. HarperCollins, 1996, p. 30)

Research thoroughly. If you can't remember something specifically, do not write about it until you have it right.

2. Cultivate relationships with your subjects over a period of time to create trust, absorb information, note change, and know individuals so you can describe their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes correctly. This is very important if you are writing about someone else and not yourself.

3. Never invent or change facts or events. The truth is stranger than fiction.

4. Avoid composites. In other words stick to one story, theme, topic, etc. Don't try to join more than one.

5. Aim for a clear style with rhythm, "texture," color, and a dramatic pace.

6. Write for real people to enrich their lives.

7. Write about real events and people to make them come alive and record them. **MAKE THE READER FEEL LIKE HE OR SHE IS THERE!**

8. "Have faith in the value and importance of human being and human events..."

+ Audience

- When writing, it is important to understand who your audience is. Your audience controls what you write about and how you write it.

+ Tone and Purpose

- The type of language you will use will change with the purpose and the audience of what you are writing.
 - Formal?
 - Moderate?
 - Informal?
- The tone of your writing can also convey a mood. Be aware of it
 - Anger
 - Humour
 - Earnestness
 - Sincerity
 - Dry Wit

+ Voice

- The unique way in which *you* use language.
- Gives the reader a sense of the person behind the words
- Voice is based on many choices you make, whether intentionally or unintentionally.
 - Word choice
 - Sound
 - The way you order ideas

Goals of creative non-fiction Deal with an issue/problem people are concerned about or find a way to make them concerned or interested.

Consider your audience

Use non-fiction techniques to draw the reader in:

Give background to educate your readers

Give your readers new information to help them understand themselves, the world better.

2. Provide accurate data.

Be truthful. Be honest.

Research thoroughly and carefully (the more you look, the more you'll find)

Use a variety of sources:

primary (interviews, trips to the place, personal experience, surveys)

secondary (library research . . .)

Cite your sources so readers know how you gathered the information.

3. Report fairly.

Be objective.

Be logical.

Select information carefully.

Provide details.

Use facts, real people, real situations. Be frank. Don't be too personal.

4. Interpret your information.

*Introduce

*Give facts, examples, quotations, . . .

*Analyze, interpret, explain, synthesize.

5. Draw conclusions.

