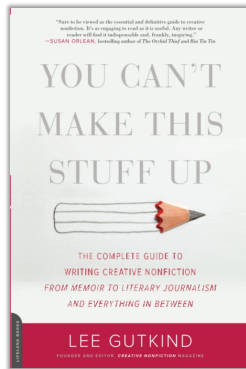


Writing Creative Non-Fiction and Memoir



Unit 1a: What Is Creative Non-Fiction?

Unit 1b: The Truthfulness of CNF

Unit 1c: Ten Writing Recommendations

Unit 2a: Types of Creative Non-Fiction

Unit 2b: Research and Immersion

Unit 2c: Narrative and Narrators

Unit 3a: Reading and Readers

Unit 3b: Scenes

Unit 3c: Information

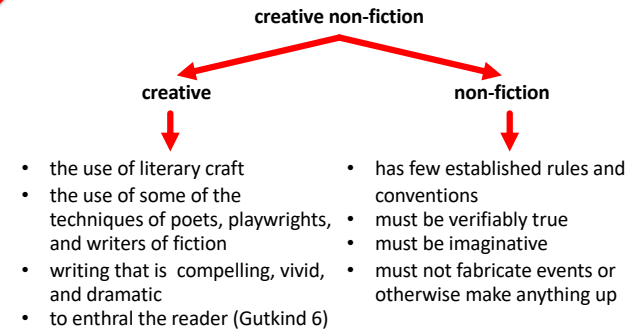
Unit 4a: Recreation and Reconstruction

Unit 4b: Hook, Frame, and Focus

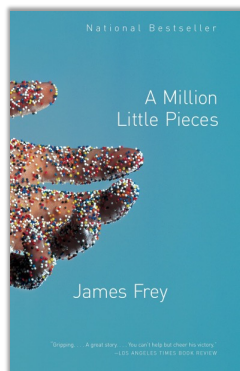
Unit 4c: Revising Creative Non-Fiction

From Unit 1

Creative Non-Fiction as a Hybrid Genre



James Frey, *A Million Little Pieces* (2003)



- memoir written by American author James Frey
- gives a raw account of his experiences as an alcoholic, drug addict, and imprisoned criminal
- so moved Oprah Winfrey that she featured it in her book club, making it a national bestseller
- revealed by an investigative Web site to contain numerous fabrications and exaggerations
- so damaged Frey's credibility that the book is now used as a cautionary tale (Gutkind 14-15)

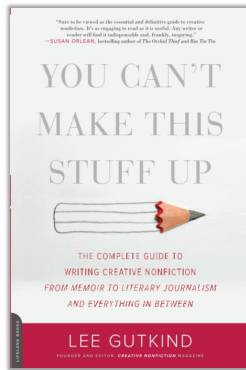
subjectivity vs objectivity

- | subjectivity | objectivity |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when the writer is interested in conveying personal thoughts, experiences, and feelings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when the writer is "outside" of and detached, or writing about characters external to themselves |

In fact, any writer of any merit is simultaneously subjective and objective. He is subjectively engrossed in his work, and the quality and intensity of his personal vision will be dictated in a subjective way. At the same time, he must be removed from and in control of his material. Thus, he is involved in a paradoxical activity: an intellectually creative balancing act in which invention and judgement coalesce or coordinate to achieve and preserve equilibrium. (690)

J.A. Cuddon. "Subjectivity and Objectivity." *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. 5th ed., Penguin, 2013.

Techniques Affecting Truthfulness



- **composite characters:** creating a character who is based on two or more real people
- **compressed scenes:** squeezing together two or more scenes, events, or situations
- **manufactured dialogue:** recreating conversations to eliminate hesitations, deviations
- **changed names:** using a different name for a real person
- **fudging:** changing seemingly insignificant details for practical or aesthetic reasons (34-40)

Author Biographies

Fiona Tinwei Lam

- born in Scotland; based in Vancouver
- edited *The Bright Well*, a poetry anthology about facing cancer
- co-edited *Double Lives*, a creative non-fiction anthology about writing and motherhood
- “Play” first appeared in *Other Voices* (2006) (394, 401)

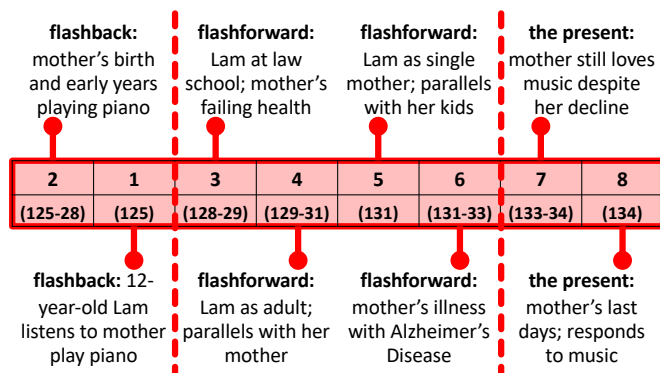
www.fionalam.net

M.A.C. Farrant

- prolific author of satirical and philosophical short fiction, memoir, drama, and other genres
- author of *The Secret Lives of Litterbugs*, a book of humorous essays
- book reviewer for the *Vancouver Sun*, and the *Globe and Mail*
- “We Keep the Party Going” first appeared in *Grain* (2002) (389-90, 401)

@macfarrant

Fiona Tinwei Lam, “Play”



M.A.C. Farrant, “We Keep the Party Going”

- “Dying?” Gabby asked. ↓
- “That’s right,” Nana said. “Dying. What’s at the end of every story.” ↓
- “Don’t say that.” This was Lee, annoyed. “Never, never say that.” ↓
- “And another thing,” Nana continued, ignoring her. “If my feet are cold I can’t get to sleep. For that reason I go around in bare feet. The last thing I want is to be asleep. At ninety years of age my next sleep may be my last. Pour me some more of that wine.” ↓
- “At ninety years of age sleeping is definitely high-risk behaviour,” said her son. ↓
- “You betcha. And another thing I don’t want is a weather report. I like to figure things out for myself. I don’t need anyone to tell me it’s raining.” ↓
- “Look,” Terry said, pointing at the darkened window. “It’s raining!” ↓
- “What did I tell you? A smart ass.” (149)

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