

In previous work, I have argued that narrative fiction and narrative non-fiction (history, biography) are constitutively at odds. Narrative non-fiction consists of an *assertoric* core – a speech act governed by a norm requiring truth for its correctness. Fiction consists of a core of *fiction-making* – speech acts governed by a norm not requiring truth for correctness, such as one requiring for correctness that interesting imaginings are invited. This is compatible with fictions involving truth and allowing for the acquisition of knowledge, on at least two counts. In the first place, like other speech acts (say, rhetorical questions), acts of fiction-making can indirectly convey assertions. Secondly, fictions in some genres (historical novels and other forms of realism) assert background facts about the time, the place, or the people setting up the fiction. I present and discuss illustrative examples of the first kind, in McEwan's *Atonement* and Mariás's *Dark Back of Time*, which, I claim, indirectly make assertions precisely about the topic of the paper.