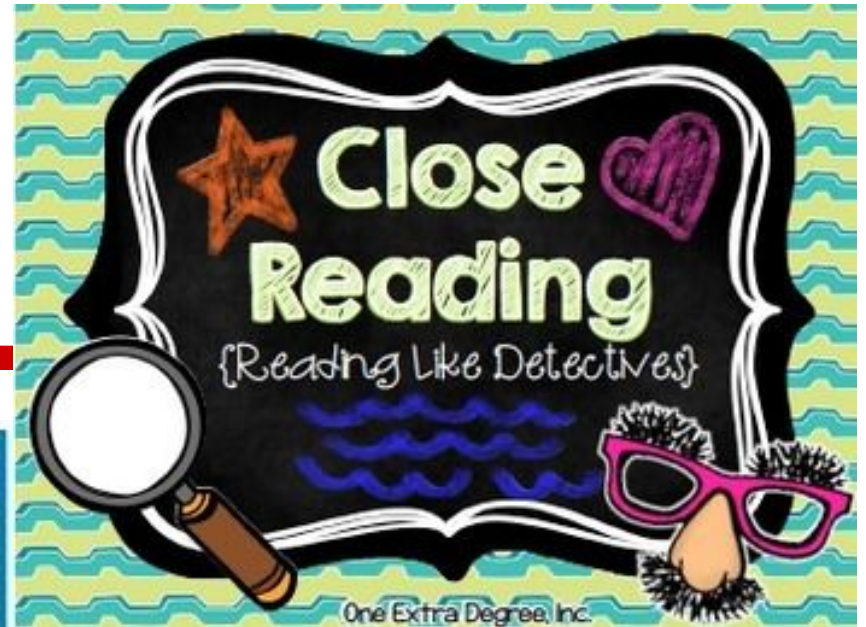


Close Reading



Introductory seminar

CLOSE READING



A CAREFUL AND PURPOSEFUL REREADING OF A TEXT (D. FISHER)

How to Do a Close Reading

- *Read with a pencil in hand, and annotate the text.*
 - *Look for patterns in the things you've noticed about the text—repetitions, contradictions, similarities.*
 - *Ask questions about the patterns you've noticed—especially how and why*
-

Reading with a

PENCIL

helps you

go back INTO THE TEXT

and dig DEEPER

The New York Times

BEASTS
OF THE
SOUTHERN
WILD

November 11, 2007

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Stranger in a Strange Land

By GENE LUEN YANG → Asian graphic novelist

Some of the most accomplished graphic novels in existence are never identified as such.

Maurice Sendak's "In the Night Kitchen" comes to mind, as does

Peggy Rathmann's "Good Night, Gorilla" and David Wiesner's recent Caldecott winner "Flotsam."

Sendak, Rathmann and Wiesner are best known as children's book illustrators, but these particular works are pure comics in the way they construct their narratives.

Shaun Tan's latest book could also end up tucked away with the picture books in bookstores. But it plainly acknowledges its medium by presenting quotations on its back cover from graphic-novel luminaries like Jeannette Winterson, Marjane Satrapi, Craig Thompson and Art Spiegelman.

Tan has been walking the fine line between picture books and graphic novels for years now. "The Rabbits" (2003), written by John Marsden, has a fight montage that reads like a comic, using panels and captions to advance the action. And "The Lost Thing" (2004), both written and illustrated by Tan, could also be classified as a graphic novel. Although the story's prose bears almost all the narrative responsibility, the interplay between text and image, and the paneled layouts, foreshadow Tan's eventual headlong leap into the medium of comics. With "The Arrival," Tan the graphic novelist has finally arrived.

"The Arrival" tells not an immigrant's story, but the immigrant's story. Its protagonist, a young father with vaguely Eurasian features, leaves his home to create a better life for his family in a distant land of opportunity. He struggles to find a job, a place to stay and a sense of meaning in his new existence. Along the way he befriends other, more established immigrants. He listens to their stories and benefits from their kindnesses. The young father reunites with his family as "The Arrival" draws to a close, and the distant land finally becomes home.

By placing photorealistic human figures in abstract, surreal environments, Tan evokes the intimacy of an individual immigrant experience without ever settling on a specific person, time or place. His drawings depict architecture and clothing that are at once historic and futuristic. Shadowy dragons' tails haunt the old country, while the new land consists of structures and creatures that look like a 6-year-old's drawings brought to three-dimensional life.

Tan even avoids pinning his story to a particular language. "The Arrival" is completely wordless. A system

b/c it's wordless w/ crazy symbols

EQ: How does G.L.Y. connect The Arrival to the American Dream?

- all immigrants' story, like America
- finding a home = pursuit of happiness
- getting a job & supporting family economically
- As Americans we are immigrants.
- no mention of politics
- what is G.L.Y. family?

By Shaun Tan.

Unpaged. Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic. \$19.99. (Ages 10 and up)

complex & wordless

I think even in the kids section

wrote Maus

images combined like a collage

a person who inspires others in their life

Better than Batman?

it's rare & obvious just like Shaun Tan

mix of European & Asian descent

all immigrants

Flashbacks?

dream comes true!

Who are they? real stuff in fantasy land

like Ellis Island

The four levels

□ **Linguistic**

You pay especially close attention to the surface linguistic elements of the text – that is, to aspects of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. You might also note such things as figures of speech or any other features which contribute to the writer's individual style.

The four levels

□ **Semantic**

You take account at a deeper level of what the words mean – that is, what information they yield up, what meanings they denote and connote.

The four levels

□ **Structural**

You note the possible relationships between words within the text – and this might include items from either the linguistic or semantic types of reading.

The four levels

□ **Cultural**

You note the relationship of any elements of the text to things outside it. These might be other pieces of writing by the same author, or other writings of the same type by different writers. They might be items of social or cultural history, or even other academic disciplines which might seem relevant, such as philosophy or psychology.

Checklist

- ☐ **Grammar**

The relationships of the words in sentences

- ☐ **Vocabulary**

The author's choice of individual words

- ☐ **Figures of speech**

The rhetorical devices used to give decoration and imaginative expression to literature, such as simile or metaphor

Checklist

- ❑ **Literary devices**

The devices commonly used in literature to give added depth to the work, such as imagery or symbolism

- ❑ **Tone**

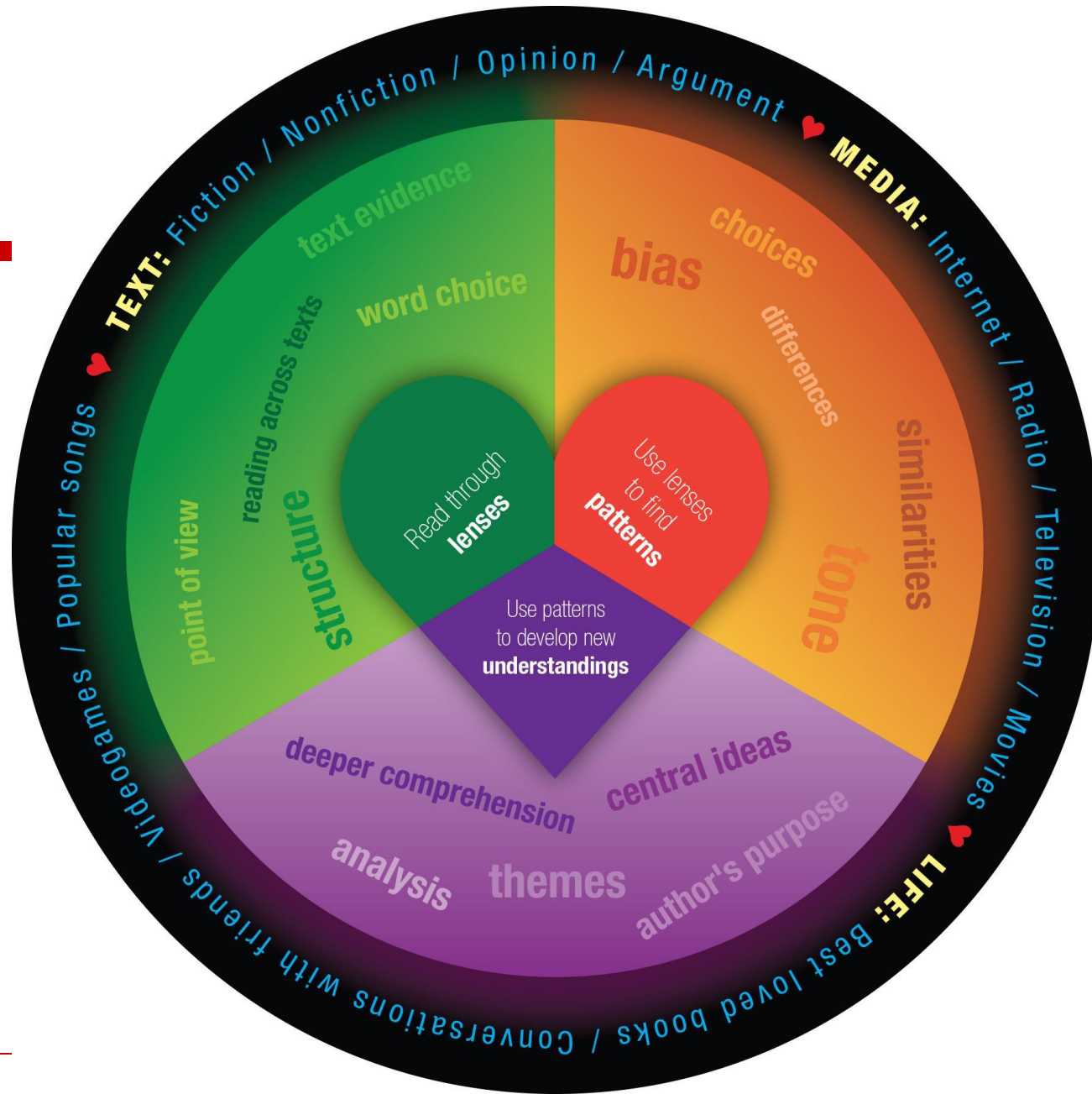
The author's attitude to the subject as revealed in the manner of the writing

- ❑ **Style**

The author's particular choice and combination of all these features of writing which creates a recognisable and distinctive manner of writing

Falling

In Love With Close Reading



3rd person

She was almost through with her figures when she heard a cart drive up to the gate, and looking out of the window she saw her two older brothers. They had seemed to avoid her ever since Carl Linstrum's arrival, four weeks ago that day, and she hurried to the door to welcome them. She saw at once that they had come with some very definite purpose. They followed her stiffly into the sitting-room. Oscar sat down, but Lou walked over to the window and remained standing, his hands behind him.

Brothers = awkward determined

Tension

"You are by yourself?" he asked, looking toward the doorway into the parlor.

"Yes. Carl and Emil went up to the Catholic fair."

For a few moments neither of the men spoke.

Then Lou came out sharply. "How soon does he intend to go away from here?"

"I don't know, Lou. Not for some time, I hope." Alexandra spoke in an even, quiet tone that often exasperated her brothers. They felt that she was trying to be superior with them.

superior attitude

Oscar spoke up grimly. "We thought we ought to tell you that people have begun to talk," he said meaningly.

Alexandra looked at him. "What about?"

Oscar met her eyes blankly. "About you, keeping him here so long. It looks bad for him to be hanging on to a woman this way. People think you're getting taken in."

Alexandra shut her account-book firmly. "Boys," she said seriously, "don't let's go on with this. We won't come out anywhere. I can't take advice on such a matter. I know you mean well, but you must not feel responsible for me in things of this sort. If we go on with this talk it will only make hard feeling."

Lou whipped about from the window. "You ought to think a little about your family. You're making us all ridiculous."

"How am I?"

"People are beginning to say you want to marry the fellow."

"Well, and what is ridiculous about that?"

Lou and Oscar exchanged outraged looks.

"Alexandra! Can't you see he's just a tramp and he's after your money? He wants to be taken care of, he does!"

"Well, suppose I want to take care of him? Whose business is it but my own?"

"Don't you know he'd get hold of your property?"

"He'd get hold of what I wished to give him, certainly."

Oscar sat up suddenly and Lou clutched at his bristly hair.

"Give him?" Lou shouted. "Our property, our homestead?"

"I don't know about the homestead," said Alexandra quietly. "I know you and Oscar have always expected that it would be left to your children, and I'm not sure but what you're right. But I'll do exactly as I please with the rest of my land, boys."

"The rest of your land!" cried Lou, growing more excited every minute. "Didn't all the land come out of the homestead? It was bought with money borrowed on the homestead, and Oscar and me worked ourselves to the bone paying interest on it."

the absent man, Carl

money

She's independent - They're influenced by community

A = Stubborn, self-confident

Small community
family dispute

honour

property/ownership
inheritance
land

When (in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes)

4 actions

1. I all alone beweeep my outcast state,

2. And trouble deaf heaven (with my bootless cries)

3. And look upon myself, and curse my fate, (2 ways)

A. Wishing me like to one more rich in hope

2. Featured like him like him with friends possessed,

B. Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope

With what I most enjoy contented least; → summary S

Yet in these thoughts my self almost despising, → summarizes thoughts

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,

(Like to the lark at break of day arising

From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;

For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings

That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

Consequence

Pure joy

when

all alone

when

Resources:

- ❑ **What is close reading? – guidance notes**

<http://www.mantex.co.uk/2009/09/14/what-is-close-reading-guidance-notes/>

- ❑ **How to Do a Close Reading**

<http://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-do-close-reading>

- ❑ **The Close Reading of Poetry**

<http://web.uvic.ca/~englblog/closereading/>
