

Gender

Using Gender as a Reading Strategy: Reading Practice One

Definition provided by Brian Moon, Literary Terms A Practical Glossary (1992)

“Gender refers to the social categories of masculinity and femininity. These categories are related to sex differences in complex ways, but they are produced by culture, not biology.”

1. What does the title of the text mean to you? Does it link up with any other text you have read previously? Explain your views.
2. Does it matter if you are a female or male reading this text? Explain your response in a couple of dot points.
3. Do you think the poetic persona is important in this text? Why is this?
4. Does this poetic persona have a particular gender in your opinion? Is this important? Does this alter how you read the text?
5. What poetic techniques have been used in this text? Why have they been used and how does this engage or disengage you?
6. Who is silenced in the text? Why is this? Who resists this silence? Why?
7. Has the poet considered the female’s position in the text? Do you think a feminist would be endorsing this text? Please explain and support your views with reference to the text.
8. Has the text considered a male’s point of view in the text? What do you think about this? Please explain and support your views with reference to the text.
9. What have you learnt from reading this text using gender as a reading strategy?
10. Does gender matter in this text?

Please annotate the text and prepare for a ten minute feedback session on your text. Write up your findings and place in your literature journal. As you listen to other groups make notes on any links or contrasts with your text and include these in your literature journal response.

Context

A Reading Strategy which focuses on Context: Literature: Tara Tuchaai 2009

Reading Practice: Two

Context refers to the multitude of factors which shape the meanings of a text within the social framework of its reading. This framework may include particular ideas about the text's history, but is also powerfully shaped by competing beliefs and practices in the present. Brian Moon, Literary Terms 1992 (p23)

You will need to consider the context of the writer (the producer) and you the reader (the receiver). You will also need to consider the social and historical context of the text and the particular attitudes and values at that time. It is important that you realise that there is no one set of beliefs at a given time, there are multiple, so be open to a range of views from various times. There is no fixed view rather a dynamic interplay of ideas, views and cultural practices.

1. Why do you think the date of when the text was produced is important? You may want to consider the particular values and attitudes at that time?
2. Does the title provide any ideas, clues, connections or meanings?
3. Do you think the poet is challenging or endorsing particular views? Why is this? Give examples to support your views.
4. How does your context position you to respond to the text? Does the time period in which the text was produced make you respond to the text in a different way compared to someone of the same time period? Why is this?
5. Do your values and attitudes conflict with poet's values? Does this make a difference in terms of meaning to you as a reader? Explain your response.
6. Does your text present to you different or similar representations of people and issues compared to your own time? Why is this?
7. What poetic techniques have been used in this text? Why have they been used and how does this engage or disengage you as you read the text?
8. Do you think that the language used in the text has changed over time? Does this create new meanings? How and why?
9. In what way does poetic form locate the text? Has a traditional form been used or is there more experimentation with form? Why is this?
10. What have you learnt from reading this text using context as your primary focus?
11. Does context matter in this text?

Please annotate the text and prepare for a ten minute feedback session on your text. Write up your findings and place in your literature journal. As you listen to other groups make notes on any links or contrasts with your text and include these in your literature journal response.

Class

Using Class as a Reading Strategy: Tara Tuchaai 2009

Reading Practice Three

A definition by Brian Moon, Literary Terms 1992

“Class refers to a way of categorising groups of people on the basis of their birth, wealth, occupations, influence, values, and so on. Class divisions always reflect the beliefs and values of specific groups of people; they are not natural and obvious.”

1. From your reading of the text is there a particular group/s or individual who has position of power or a particular role which allows them to have power? Where is this shown and how do we know this? Give two specific examples.
2. From your reading of the text is there a particular group/s or individual who has little or no position in society and is therefore seen as powerless?
Give two specific examples.
3. How are you positioned to respond to the group who has power and/ or the group/individual who has no power? Do you feel angry or sympathetic? Is there a sense of social justice or injustice between groups or individual in the text? Why is this?
4. Are there particular words and images which make you respond in a particular emotive way? Give two examples and explain your reasons.
5. What poetic techniques have been used in this text? Why have they been used and how does this engage or disengage you as you read the text?
6. What do you think the role of the poetic persona is in this text? Explain this role or function in terms of the meanings being suggested.
7. Do you think the poet is resisting particular representations of groups or individuals by using literature to challenge and subvert conventional representation of groups and individuals? Give an example where you think this might be happening?
8. Do you think this resistant reading is deliberate on the part of the poet OR is it your own personal cultural positioning which is making you respond in this way OR is it both?
9. What have you learnt from reading this text using class as a reading strategy?
10. Does class matter in this text?

Please annotate the text and prepare for a ten minute feedback session on your text. Write up your findings and place in your literature journal. As you listen to other groups make notes on any links or contrasts with your text and include these in your literature journal response.

Race

A Reading Strategy Exploring Representations of Race: Tara Tuchaai 2009

Reading Practice Four

A definition of Race by Brian Moon, Literary Terms 1992 (P100)

“Race refers to a category of cultural difference which is explained in terms of biology or heredity. Textual representations play a role in constructing race as a natural category. Such representations generally serve the interests of dominant groups by defining other races as abnormal.”

When worth is ascribed to groups of people on the basis of cultural value judgements, the interests of some groups are often promoted over others. (Curriculum Council Resources 1995)

1. From your reading of the text is there a particular group/s or individual who has position of power or a particular role which allows them to have power? Where is this shown and how do we know this? Give two specific examples. Does ethnicity play a part in this power group?
2. From your reading of the text is there a particular group/s or individual who has little or no position in society and is therefore seen as powerless?
Does ethnicity play a part in this power group? Give two specific examples.
3. How are you positioned to respond to the group who has power and/ or the group/individual who has no power? Do you feel angry or sympathetic?
Is there a sense of social justice or injustice between groups or individuals in the text? Why is this?
4. Are there particular words and images which make you respond in a particular emotive way? Give two examples and explain your reasons.
5. What poetic techniques have been used in this text? Why have they been used and how does this engage or disengage you as you read the text?
6. What do you think the role of the poetic persona is in this text? Explain this role or function in terms of the meanings being suggested. Does the poetic persona give a voice to those who have been silenced? Where is this suggested?
7. Do you think the poet is resisting particular representations of groups or individuals by using literature to challenge and subvert conventional representation of groups and individuals? Give an example where you think this might be happening?
8. Do you think this resistant reading is deliberate on the part of the poet OR is it your own personal cultural positioning which is making you respond in this way OR is it both?
9. What have you learnt from reading this text using race as a reading strategy? If you read the same text in colonial times how might this alter your views about the text and its subject matter?
10. Does Race matter in this text? Does a post- colonial reading practice enrich our understanding of racial group/s being presented in the text?

Please annotate the text and prepare for a ten minute feedback session on your text. Write up your findings and place in your literature journal. As you listen to other groups make notes on any links or contrasts with your text and include these in your literature journal response.

Psychoanalytical

A Psychoanalytical Reading Strategy: Tara Tuchaai 2009

Reading Practice Six

A definition of psychoanalytic criticism: Brian Moon, Literary Terms 1992 (P97)

“Psychoanalytic criticism sees literary texts as representing the unconscious thoughts and desires shared by members of a culture. It provides a way of exploring the social construction of personal identities, especially through the reader’s interaction with the text.This kind of analysis examines the way in which personal identity is produced as an effect of one’s relations with other people. An important concept is mirroring – the process of producing an identity by identifying with someone else’s position.”

1. In what way does the poetic persona enable you to identify with his or her voice? Perhaps there is a sense of melancholy or angst which represses the persona’s own hidden fears and desires? Does the text unleash these fears? Is this a positive approach enabling the persona to voice what has been silenced?
2. Do you think that a psychoanalytical reading offers a kind of sub-text? Explain your response using examples from the text.
3. Does a psychoanalytical reading reveal the inner conflict of the persona? Where is this shown in the text and give an example?
4. Is there some kind of conflict which the poet has experienced which might have impacted on the particular voices or characters in the text? You may wish to research aspects of the poet’s life to see if there is a connection.
5. Do you think that you own inner experiences help you to understand the complexity of the mental state which the persona may experience? If you have not shared such experiences does this text offer you insights into what this particular inner conflict might be like?
6. Are there particular words and images (such as metaphor) which make you respond in a particular emotive way? Give two examples and explain your reasons.
7. What poetic techniques have been used in this text? Why have they been used and how does this engage or disengage you as you read the text?
8. What have you learnt about this text using a psychoanalytical reading?
9. Does a psychoanalytical reading matter in this text?

Please annotate the text and prepare for a ten minute feedback session on your text. Write up your findings and place in your literature journal. As you listen to other groups make notes on any links or contrasts in terms of reading strategies which may connect with your text and include these in your literature journal response.

Tools of the trade:

Language and generic conventions

A literary reading strategy: the tools of the trade: Tara Tuchaai 2009

Reading Practice Seven

Any reader of literature must have a clear understanding of the range of poetic forms and conventions which the poet uses to express their particular ideas. A reader needs to be aware about the historical context of the text and the poet, the ideological values prevalent at that time and a sense of the reader's own social, historical and cultural context which may be different from the poet's.

1. What do you think the text means to you? What are the central themes/issues?
2. What clues are there: title? author? date? to help your understanding?
3. Which particular form of literature has the poet used and why? Could another form have been used more successfully?
4. What images are used in the text? Carefully examine the use of simile and/or metaphor used in the text. Why do you think these images have been used? Are these images symbolic in any way?
5. What kind of mood (s) is created through the images?
6. Comment on the language used, is it formal or informal? Why is this?
7. Has rhyme been used in the text? How would you describe the rhyme scheme? How does rhyme engage you as a reader? If no rhyme has been used then why is this?
8. How would you describe the rhythm of the text? Does it alter during the text? Why is this?
9. Is there evidence of enjambment? What is the purpose of these run on lines?
10. What particular sound effects are used? Consider alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia. Provide examples of where these sound devices have been used and select two examples and explain why they interested you.
11. What is the purpose of the poetic persona or speaking voice in the text?
12. Has personification been used? Why? Why not?
13. How would describe the tone of the text? Does it change? Why? Why not?
14. Does the text operate on a variety of levels? Does it have multiple readings?
15. Does the text employ the use of irony or satire? Why?
16. Is there an explicit meaning and an implicit one? How does this position you as a reader? Is this dual meaning interesting or annoying? Why?
17. What did you enjoy about this text? Please support your views with particular examples. Does the text connect with any other text you have read? What are these links?
18. Does a literary reading strategy enable you to understand the text?

Please annotate the text and prepare for a ten minute feedback session on your text. Write up your findings and place in your literature journal. As you listen to other groups make notes on any links or contrasts in terms of reading strategies which may connect with your text and include these in your literature journal response

Ecological/spiritual

An ecological/conservationist/spiritual/pantheistic reading practice by Tara Tuchaai 2009

Reading Practice Five

Such a reading seeks to examine and re-examine the holistic aspects of a text by considering the interplay between reader context and writer context, use of poetic conventions, the social and historical context of the text in terms of when it was produced and how this interrelates with the reading of the text at different times. Such a reading foregrounds nature and the environment for poetic inspiration and preservation. In this way it builds upon the Romantic Movement but brings with it a new and fresh way to reading such poets such as Wordsworth in terms of our modern social and environmental consciousness: sustainability, carbon footprints, highlighting the importance of environmental protection at all levels. An ecological reading strategy also links with Thoreau and the Transcendentalists; that is to say the recognition of the 'Other' in nature, the spiritual perhaps, confirming that there is:

“.... An impulse of reverence moving toward the world, toward a new pertinence of speech and a sense of new possibility.” (Wendell Berry 'A Secular Pilgrimage')

New Critical reading (mid 20 th C to present)

Moon's definition from *Studying Poetry*

“The New Critical view... sought to make criticism more 'objective' and 'scientific' by focusing on what was written on the page, rather than guessing about the writer's intentions and feelings. The view was strongly by the growing prestige of science and technology during and after the Second World War.... [New Critics] They valued poems which could be read on a number of levels, and which had complex structures and a 'rich' use of language. They believed such poems worked like complicated machines or living organisms in which each part had an important function.” (p.140)

An example of a poem favoured by New Criticism is, Robert Frost's "Out Out" poem.

"Out Out"

The buzz of the chain saw snarled and rattled in the yard

And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood